Chapter-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides the review of existing research work done in the area of microfinance and empowerment of rural women. Detailed survey of literature has been done with more emphasis on the effects of microfinance on empowerment of women especially in rural areas. An attempt has been made to assimilate studies, observations and recommendations by earlier researchers.

The review will help to identify the research gaps which will play a guiding role in setting up objectives and scope of study.

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

The Literature Review is an attempt to understand and comprehend and nor merely a list of books and magazines that have been read during the course of the research. It includes the various views on “Effect of Micro-Finance on Empowerment of rural women” being researched. The effect has been studied especially in the context of rural women. What all factors affect their living standard. And also to what extent the factors are responsible to bring change in their living.

2.2 Classification of Literature Review

The literature review can be broadly classified in to three broad categories namely:-

1. Studies measuring various factors responsible for empowerment.
2. Studies making comparisons between various groups or parameters.

2.2.1 Studies measuring various factors responsible for empowerment.

T. Dheepa & G. Barani (2014) have studied in the article that there was a vision to rise the womanhood in true sense. It was the rise of the essence of womanhood in the physical, mental, intellectual and the spiritual planes. It called for the beginning of a campaign for the true rise of women in all spheres of life for the restoration of the balance in nature. The effectiveness of the program is dependent on the social awareness and acceptance of such efforts.
Festus Nkpoyen et al. (2013) have assessed that Micro-lending is as an empowerment strategy for poverty alleviation among women in Yale, Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria in this study. Three null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. 300 respondents participated in the study and data was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study showed that increased savings, promotion of local cooperatives societies and creation of self-employment opportunities significantly related to poverty reduction. The study recommended that Micro-lending programmes should be encouraged in communities because of impact on household income and more non-governmental organizations should be involved in Microfinancing in rural areas.

Urmila Moon (2012) has studied the role of Self Help Group– Bank Linkage Model in Women Empowerment in this paper. The author has studied the status, progress and trends of Self-help Groups(SHGs) linkage with banks in India. The objective was to study the role of micro credit and its performance as a tool for women empowerment. The study was based on secondary data and the sources include reports and studies of various agencies, organizations, newspaper articles, journals and books. The empowerment of rural women will lead to the overall development of our economy. With these perspectives, this paper revealed whether the empowerment process had really helped the women community to develop them on economic, social and political basis.

Jigna Trivedi, P K Priyan and Vinay Bhinde (2011) have studied the role of Dairy Cooperatives in Women Empowerment. They have made an effort in the paper to study the role of district cooperative dairies in helping the women to be self-reliant, self-employed, self-diligent, and empowered. In this study they have concluded that the income of the respondent is dependent on the number of cattle reared, but the quantity of milk does not vary directly in proportion to the number of cattle reared. This occurs because, (a) all the cattle may not give milk at the same time; (b) at the time of artificial insemination the calving intervals are not timed properly among cattle; (c) difference in length of lactation; and (d) fertility problems in cows and buffaloes leading to low yield of milk. Due to these reasons, the quantity of milk varies, irrespective of the number of cattle reared, and so the monthly income also varies. The findings have also suggested that respondents face price discrimination on
the basis of the quality of milk, i.e., the fat content, but they do not face any price discrimination with respect to the place from which they supply the milk.

Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo (2011) have studied a radical way to fight global poverty to understand the basic insights and incentives that guide poor people’s decisions and lives. They argue that these people are not irrational. Instead, they are perhaps more rational than most of us because they have to live with little resources. They have discussed how the poor make decisions regarding food consumption, health, education, family size, financial services, etc. What are their motivations in their decisions? Are these decisions making them poor or do they have to make these decisions because they are poor?

Venkatesh Kumar R et al. (2010) have studied women empowerment in Sericulture. The article has highlighted the scenario of women in the field of sericulture and focuses on the constraints the women are facing. It was well accepted that the participation of women in sericulture and their contribution to cocoon production is substantial. And that was in addition to the usual household chores requiring four to eight hours a day, depending on the region, season, socio-economic status of the household and the family type. While the relatively high profitability of sericulture, its potential in generating additional employment, etc. are widely acknowledged, it was also necessary to highlight the enormous promises that sericulture holds for women’s development. Except for dairying, there was probably no other off-farm activity which would promise as great a scope for women’s development as sericulture.

Maiga Kruzmetra et al. (2009) studied risk reduction as the pre-condition for sustainable development. The aim of the research was to examine the possibility, manifestation, levels and models of partnership. The objective of the paper was to analyze the existing cooperation features in the micro credit movement, its transformation into partnership and application possibilities in reducing risks. The system of the micro credit movement contains four blocks. The results of the analysis of partly structured interviews with experts show that micro credit movement consists of a complicated networking system; the mutual cooperation within the system has the tendency of developing towards partnership. The move towards partnership in the micro credit movement would influence further reduction of risks and promote the sustainable development of small businesses in rural territories. Micro-crediting has been used as one of the methods for increasing economic activity of women in Latvia.
encouraging new businesses and employment (self-employment). Micro-crediting in Latvia is based on such well-established support instruments and complex activities as the linking micro credits with the so-called mechanism of social guarantees (granting a loan for the group of 3-5 individuals, one of which uses the loan for starting a business in the order of rotation; other group members share the commitment as guarantors and carry out support activities) that are closely connected with NGO activities. The authors of the paper created the risk evaluation system in the micro credit groups on the basis of the above analysis of the risks. The risks were divided into two groups - social and economic risks. The social risks included the lack of information, the lack of experience, insecurity, problems in group formation, the lack of the family support; the economic risks included the lack of money, the lack of premises/equipment, insufficient demand, the lack of initiative, and changes in law, the lack of employees.

The results of the survey provide the information for the analysis of the risks faced by those rural women who intend to start their business in the future, and the attitude towards risks by those women who have experience in micro crediting. The knowledge of law has improved, the family support has increased, the experience has grown, and the information gap has decreased as a result of the use of social capital. On the other hand, insecurity has decreased only slightly, because women have doubts about the demand of their product or service; the need for financial resources has remained the same.

**Prema Basargekar (2009)** in this study has done an Impact Analysis of Annapurna Mahila Mandal (AMM), an Urban Microfinance Institution in India The paper had dealt with the factors responsible for the inception of AMM, the role of a social entrepreneur in its development, its objectives, its strategies, and its growth over the years. The second part had dealt with the assessment of economic and social empowerment of member beneficiaries due to this movement, by using the survey method. The survey revealed that while economic empowerment of members, in terms of income generation, asset creation and monthly expenditure, were marginal, it is significant in terms of savings. The survey also revealed that the members of AMM experienced a significant rise in self-esteem, self-respect and leadership qualities. The objective of the research paper was to understand the forces responsible for the emergence and growth of one of the leading microfinance movements in urban India and to make impact assessment on its beneficiaries through a case study method. The
promoters of AMM believed that all these four forces are interlinked and reinforce each other, finally leading to women empowerment. The impact of AMM’s micro credit movement on the development of self-empowerment was significant. There was a substantial improvement in various parameters of self-empowerment such as self-awareness, economic independence, self-esteem, social status, group bonding and leadership qualities. It has also been stated that years of association with AMM has been an influencing variable to bring out a desired impact. The years of association has been significantly correlated to develop the feeling of self-esteem, group bonding and social awareness. Thus, AMM has successfully tried to imbibe these core values by building their trust in the long run.

Deininger K. & Liu Y(2009) has evaluated the SHG-based micro credit model using a large-scale World Bank-supported intervention in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India in this paper. They have studied the “Longer-Term Economic Impacts of Self-Help Groups in India.” They used two rounds of a 2,400 household panel, and used double differences, propensity score matching and pipeline comparison to assess economic impacts of longer exposure of a program that promoted and strengthened self-help programs. The analysis found that the longer program exposure had positive impacts on consumption, nutritional intake and asset accumulation. Also, the study results suggested that the program that not only fostered group formation, but also supported more mature groups through federation and credit access can have significant economic benefits in the long term. However, they also suggested that a research to be conducted to determine the extent to which benefits would be maintained once outside support is terminated and that would also help assess the overall desirability and impact of such programs.

D. A. Patil et al. (2009) have studied ICT and Empowerment of Rural and Deprived Women in Asia in this study. The Role of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) as a tool for development has attracted the sustained attention of the government and NGOs. The millennium declaration adopted in 2000 underscored the urgency of ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, especially ICTs, are made available to all. ICTs can be a powerful catalyst for political and social empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality.

The paper had examined some key ICT-based initiatives in Asia in general and India in particular which are specifically designed for the empowerment of rural and deprived
women. It has shown how ICT-based initiatives empower rural and deprived women; it tried to clarify a theoretical dilemma between meaning and measurement of empowerment and provided a holistic definition of Empowerment. Also, it focused on the twofold need to address some of the social and technical challenges as well as policy suggestions to use ICTs proactively and effectively to promote gender equality and for the empowerment of rural and deprived women. The main Objectives of the study were:

- To understand the role of ICTs for women empowerment.
- To study how ICTs are helpful for the empowerment of rural and deprived sections women.
- To suggest policy implications for the effective implementation of further ICT based programmes.

The study was based partially on the primary data of the Warana Wired Village Project (WWVP), Kolahpur, SEWA, Gujarat, NIRD, Hyderabad. The study had also used through Personal Interviews, Observations, Focus group discussions to collect primary data. Thus, the study concluded that woman’s social disempowerment is often strongly linked to her isolation from information that she needs and this includes her ability, opportunity and space (both virtual and non-virtual) to communicate in her own language with others for this information. However, social empowerment includes two basic areas like health and education during the last ten years several ICT based initiatives have been implemented to empower rural and deprived women.

Sureswari Prasad Das (2009) in this article the effect over the dairy business programme was undertaken by the Women members of an SHG members promoted by an NGO, Gram-Utthan in the district of Kendrapara, Orissa is studied. The main aim of the programmes of Gram-Utthan was to provide credit support to the rural women to develop household dairy units as a method for sustainable livelihood. The project objectives have been formulated as:

To improve credit absorption capacity of rural women and thereby increase their credit worthiness. To expand livelihood options for rural households in the non-farm sector through identification of economic opportunities and provision of business support services. To promote self-mobilized, self-managed and self-owned primary cooperatives of women. The project duration was of three years and had its quarterly, six
monthly arrangements for release of funds to Gram-Utthan for organizing the envisaged capacity building programmes. The consulting team had conducted a survey of the dairy business as a case, taking a sample of 50 beneficiaries in 10 villages out of 20 that were covered under the dairy development project promoted by Gram-Utthan. The survey covered caste wise composition, social groups, income groups, investment category, loan status, status of milk production, income from dairy activities, profit from dairy activities, purchase and sales price of milk, milk collection by societies, other business by societies, problems in backward and forward management, social and economic impact and finally expenditure on different items. The contribution of Gram-Utthan was also noteworthy in the sense that it provided the land and facilitated the process of establishing the plant. Apart from the economic aspect, the women were also empowered in social aspects through their respective cooperatives as they addressed the personal and social issues together. This change itself had been a way forward to providing alternate livelihood to people and thereby reducing poverty.

Shoma Mukherji and Neera Jain (2009) have studied about women and non-governmental organizations in Kuwait. In this study they have undertaken to explore the efforts of a woman who were seeking alternative lifestyle embedded in the sustainable living resulted in the empowerment of a group of destitute women. It has been found that the model could be adopted by other persons and groups as well to bring about the transformation in the society thereby resulting into a social and economic development. The case has described the power of transformational leaders and has looked at what leaders could do and achieve for the community, with their limited resources. The project is about the joint efforts of Jyoti and Kakoli’s, which have resulted into the formation of Satya-Jyoti Trust which is a registered nonprofit organization. The trust has been promoting sustainable farming through adopting socially and environmentally responsible business practices. The farm provides place for the operation of this Trust which seeks to work with the people of this region as well as others by means of skill based education and training, income generation for self-sustenance, healthcare and preservation of natural resources. Their aim was to make such women stronger from within, make them able to recognize their potential and become confident about their worth. They are also taught to focus on the present while using their past as a tool to build a firm foundation for the future. They are given love and understanding to enable them and find their own feet. Their greatest
achievement has been providing a platform for women from the lower rung of society to learn and empower themselves and bring about their own development and growth. This empowerment at grassroots level will create momentum for societal transformation to take the community forward.

Swain R. and Fan Yang Wallentin (2009) have argued in this paper that women’s empowerment takes place when women challenge the existing social norms and culture, to effectively improve their wellbeing. The article shows both conceptually and empirically that the SHG programmes microfinance services positively contribute to the change and empower women. The hypothesis has been empirically validated by using quasi-experimental household sample data collected from five states in India for 2000 and 2003. A general model has been used to estimate the same by employing appropriate techniques to treat the ordinal variables in order to estimate the impact of the Self Help Group (SHG) on women’s empowerment for 2000 and 2003. The data for the year 2000 is recall data. The respondents were randomly selected from the SHG members at the district level. The members of the control group were chosen to reflect a comparable socio-economic group to the SHG respondents. The household sample consists of 961 women respondents. The sample includes a group of SHG members who have participated in the programme (805) and a control group (156). They have made use of the household survey data with a quasi-experimental design to address the ‘problem of attribution’. As such the information is collected on the SHG households and a control group, which contains information on non-participating households with similar characteristics. The results strongly demonstrate that on an average, there is a significant increase in the empowerment of women in the SHG members group. No such significant change is observed however, for the members of the control group. The elegance of the result lies in the fact that the group of SHG participants show clear evidence of a significant and higher empowerment, while allowing for the possibility that some members might have been more empowered than others.

Mayoux L. & Valley Research Group (2008) found in this paper that apart from wealth creation, women also had additional benefits of increased access to healthcare, reduction in gender discrimination, increase in self-confidence, reduction in domestic violence. Women empowerment program called WORTH took place in Nepal and reached out to 125000 women and implemented a core concept of Village Banks which helped in wealth creation for village women. Moreover, WORTH program also
encouraged women to become literate. This program also taught entrepreneurship to women, to enable them to start small businesses with microfinance. The model of microfinance used by WORTH, was savings based microfinance as opposed to the more common credit based microfinance. Savings based microfinance relies on contributions of equity holders whereas credit based microfinance rely on an external source of funding. The program enabled women to be agents of overall poverty reduction.

**Lia CH Fernald et al. (2008)** studied in the developing world, access to small, individual loans has been variously hailed as a poverty-alleviation tool. At the same time it has been concluded that micro credit has also been criticized as "usury" and harmful to vulnerable borrowers. Prior studies have assessed effects of access to credit on traditional economic outcomes for poor borrowers, but effects on mental health have been largely ignored. In this study the authors investigated the effects of participating in a small, individual cash loan program on depressive symptoms and perceived stress in a sample of adult women and men in the article. They hypothesized that improved access to a credit program and consequent improvements in SES would be associated with positive impacts on mental health in this population due to the alleviation of stress related to poverty. Applicants who had previously been rejected (n = 257) for a loan (200% annual percentage rate – APR) from a lender in South Africa were randomly assigned to a "second-look" that encouraged loan officers to approve their applications. The randomized encouragement resulted in 53% of applicants receiving a loan they otherwise would not have received. All subjects were assessed 6–12 months later with questions about demographics, socio-economic status, and two indicators of mental health: the Center for Epidemiologic Studies – Depression Scale (CES-D) and Cohen's Perceived Stress scale. Intent-to-treat analyses were calculated using multinomial prohibit regressions. The randomization into receiving a "second look" for access to credit increased perceived stress in the combined sample of women and men; the findings were stronger among men. Credit access was associated with reduced depressive symptoms in men, but not women. In conclusion the findings suggest that a mechanism used to reduce the economic stress of extremely poor individuals can have mixed effects on their experiences of psychological stress and depressive symptomatology. The data supported the notion that mental health should be included as a measure of success (or failure) when examining potential tools for poverty
alleviation. Further longitudinal research is needed in South Africa and other settings to understand how borrowing at high interest rates affects gender roles and daily life activities.

**Amanda M. Heter (2008)** in this thesis has examined Fundación Paraguaya’s Comité de Mujeres Emprendedoras (village banking) program and analyzes its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation, female empowerment and social change in Paraguay. The data for this thesis was collected over a three month period in 2007, and is based on interviews and file data from clients of the CME program. The research focuses on clients’ work histories, their roles as micro-entrepreneurs and caregivers, and their experiences within the CME program. This thesis argues that in order to comprehend the significance of village banking in Paraguay, one must take into consideration the importance of self-employment for women who balance family and work, as well as the impact of capital and non-financial services. Although the CME program appears to be contributing to poverty alleviation and empowerment in Paraguay, this thesis contends that by adopting a more gender oriented approach, and incorporating aspects of the “feminist empowerment paradigm.”Fundación Paraguaya could create a more complete development tool, thereby increasing the potential benefits to women and promoting greater social change.

**A K Makar and D C Kalita (2008)** attempted to analyze women’s empowerment through participation in rural development. The paper had mainly used the secondary data from various sources to justify the role played by women in various fields of development activities towards removal of gender inequality, work force in agriculture, political participation, entrepreneurship development, and rural development. In the context of globalization, the paper was meaningful from the viewpoint of exploring potentialities for empowerment of women and the required policy prescription suited to different socioeconomic environment. It revealed that women were participating in every activity which is sine-qua-non for rural as well as economic development of any country. Therefore, the government should take appropriate policies towards reservation of women, information access with proper data base system exclusively for women, paving the way for integrated women’s development in rural areas. Besides, appropriate education facilities for rural women should be provided for their socio-economic up liftment as per situation—specific technical feasibility, coupled with effective information access system to make any policy fruitful. The female workers
are mainly confined to rural areas. They are playing a great role in rural areas by participating in the work force. Although their rate of participation is less, their service as workers is very important in the development of economy as well as society. The female participation rate in India was more in Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. While in some other states, like Punjab the Female participation is very less. It had also been seen that the female workers are playing a significant role in the economic sector. Women can play a vital role in rural development program, the idea of ‘cluster entrepreneurship’, combining entrepreneurship and development strategies (e.g., in fruit processing industry), will ensure a symbolic relationship between women entrepreneurs and the rural areas. But women’s participation in politics is still very low as compared to men’s participation. In India, women constitute nearly half of the rural population and play a vital role in the rural economy. They need to be considered equal partners along with men in the development process. Education and training will go a long way in achieving this goal and help in raising the status of women enable development of their potential as independent and equal partners. The purpose of providing education to women is to enable them to think critically, identify their strengths and take conscious, informed decisions, empower them to play a positive role on their own in the development of the nation.

**Rafiqul Bhuyan Rafiq et al. (2007)** analyzed in the paper and identified the factors affecting women’s decision making out the loan use. They had used primary data from two microfinance institutions in Bangladesh—Grameen Bank, the pioneer of microfinance institutions, and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the largest NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) in Bangladesh. The authors have identified certain factors that would influence the women to take more independent decisions about the loan use. The analytical framework of the study had been used to examine the relationship between decision making of the loan use and the empowerment of the women (borrowers). The paper was developed and analysed based on the questionnaire survey. One hundred and eighty individual borrowers were selected randomly who are involved in the credit programs of BRAC and Grameen Bank. Of the total sample, ninety borrowers of Grameen Bank were randomly selected from three villages in the Comilla district and the other ninety BRAC borrowers were randomly selected from five villages in the Joydebpur district. The names of the
borrowers were obtained from the offices of BRAC and Grameen in the mentioned districts. Semi structured questionnaires were used to collect information from the borrowers. This method had made it possible to obtain accurate and sensitive information on decision taking behaviour of the borrowers. They also suggested the future directions for research the following areas are proposed to be looked at: Whether the household surveyed can keep their higher standard of living in future is questionable? Can the women use their empowerment to the successful future investment? Future research in this area with longitudinal time series data taking the same household under the above study after one year or two years could yield insightful results is recommended? Another obvious future avenue of research is to explore further the impact of assets holding by the women.

**Jyotish Prakash Basu (2006)** has studied Microfinance and Women Empowerment with special reference to West Bengal. The paper has examined the two basic research questions. First, how a woman’s tendency to invest in safer investment projects can be linked to her desire to raise her bargaining position in the households. Second, women empowerment is examined with respect to control of savings, control of income, control over loans, control over purchasing capacity and family planning in some sample household in Hooghly district of West Bengal. The study is based on Nash bargaining game theoretic model. They have also done an empirical study based on 100 SHG members in the Hooghly district, West Bengal in 2006. The empirical findings have show that the empowerment of women is established in weak form using the above indicators. This paper has important policy implications; they have emphasized the strategy of financial inclusion in the wider context of economic growth and financial deepening.

**M. Pilar Ramirez (2006)** has studied the achievements and limitations of Empowering Women through Microfinance at Bolivia. It has been found that Microfinance is an effective development tool for poverty reduction for the simple reason that financial services enable poor low – income households to take advantage of economic opportunities, to build assets, and to reduce their vulnerability to external shocks that adversely affect their living standards. The author has felt that microfinance has made impressive strides to reach out to women and the poor to provide them financial services. He also believes that the growth in microfinance is spread to urban areas and women in rural areas are largely excluded. He is also of the opinion that microfinance
plays a limited role in empowerment of women. Empowerment of women also depends on other aspects such as political choice of communities and not microfinance alone.

**Emily Esplen, Shirin Heerah, and Chris Hunter (2006)** have discussed the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on gender equality and women’s empowerment in this paper. They have highlighted ways in which the indicators associated with this goal – women’s access to education, share of non-agricultural wage employment, and political participation can contribute to women’s empowerment. Each of these indicators has the potential to bring about immediate changes in women’s lives, along with long-term transformations in patriarchal power structures. They have also seen that unless provision is made to ensure that policy changes are implemented in ways that allow women themselves to participate, monitor, and hold policy makers and corporations accountable for their actions, the potential for women’s empowerment will be limited.

**M-CRIL (2006)** has found in this paper that the needs of microfinance industry of India in 2006 can reach 72 million households in 5 years, if the required funds are made available to them in time. To achieve this, the microfinance industry required Rs.6295 crores. The paper argued while majority of this funding would need to be provided by Govt., private investment also needed to be encouraged. Apart from that, a legal framework for microfinance institutions would have to be created to supplement and regulate this growth and ensure microfinance reaches poorest sections of society.

**M S Sriram, (2005)** In this article the author has looked at certain design features of microfinance in order to understand the innovation of microfinance and how it has proved to be effective. He had first started by identifying the need for financial service institutions which is basically to bridge the gap between the need for financial services across time, geographies, and risk profiles. In providing services that bridge this gap, formal institutions have limited access to authentic information both in terms of transaction history and expected behavior and, therefore, resort to seeking excessive information thereby adding to the transaction costs. In this paper, the author has attempted to examine the trajectory of institutional intermediation in the rural areas, particularly with the poor and how it has evolved over a period of time. It has identified a systematic breach of trust as one of the major problems with the institutional interventions in the area of providing financial services to the Poor and argued that microfinance used trust as an effective mechanism to address one of the issues of
imperfect information in financial transactions. The paper has also distinguished between the different models of microfinance and identified which of those models used trust in a positivist frame and as a coercive mechanism.

Kabeer N (2005) have argued in this paper that the poor are vulnerable to all sorts of social and other risks, more than anyone else. Of these, women are almost every time at receiving end. They are denied mainstream financial services and have to depend on moneylenders with high rates of interest. Microfinance fills this gap and provides the poor with a viable financial option. However, the author has stated that microfinance helps implement economic, social and political changes in the poor. The author has noted with a caution that even there is little evidence to prove that microfinance has actually lifted a lot of women out of poverty to an extent that they become eligible for mainstream financial services. There is no ‘magic bullet’ to empowering women through microfinance. The author has concluded that empowerment included other factors such as development, education programs for women, which cannot be substituted by microfinance.

Padia, V. (2004) have studied on Micro Finance and Social Mobilization for Women's Empowerment - A Case Study of DHAN Foundation. It has been found in this article that microfinance empowers women financially and socially. It also enabled women to be more mobile. Social status of women also improved. Working closely within a group helped women in discarding caste based hierarchies. Also, it reduced dependence on money lenders and gave women significant control over income. However, this process of empowerment is still evolving into more sustainable models.

Chitauro L. (2004) has studied about The Economic Empowerment of Women through Microfinance in this article. It has been concluded in this article that microfinance raised standard of living of women. However one of the biggest challenges in sparsely populated areas where women have difficulty in creating large economic groups was to create a sustainable business. There were social challenges as well such as spouses using the micro credit money. In this report they have dealt with economic impact of women’s empowerment through microfinance in Mali, Africa. It was generally concluded other important aspect for success of microfinance is training and education. The participants of workshop agreed on that instead of cash, micro credit should be used to provide equipment to women.
Mayoux L (2003) has studied, in Women's Empowerment and Participation in Micro-finance: Evidence, Issues and Ways Ahead, about has argued about methods used by microfinance agencies to sustain themselves financially, which sometimes go against interest of the women. He has further argued that microfinance programs should be specifically designed to empower women, rather than that component being an add-on. It has been argued that microfinance is used as a major tool for poverty alleviation and gender equality since 1990’s. Microfinance does play a role in empowering women. However he has found that it is not an automatic path to women’s emancipation and in some cases the effect of microfinance is minimal in lifting the status of women.

Naila Kabeer, (2000) has argued that there are three dimensions of choice which are indivisible in determining the meaning of an indicator and hence its validity as a measure of empowerment. In this paper the author has seen that understanding women's empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability. A wide gap separates this procedural understanding of empowerment from the more instrumentalist forms of advocacy which have required the measurement and quantification of empowerment. The ability to exercise choice incorporates three inter-related dimensions: resources (defined broadly to include not only access, but also future claims, to both material and human and social resources); agency (including processes of decision making, as well as less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation); and achievements (well-being outcomes). The notion of choice is further qualified by referring to the conditions of choice, its content and consequences. These qualifications represent an attempt to incorporate the structural parameters of individual choice in the analysis of women's empowerment.

Mary E. Vermeulen, Carole W. Minor (1998) have studied about the women reared in a rural community in this study. They have studied and investigated the influences on the career decisions of women who grew up in a rural community. This study has identified influences on the career decisions of women reared in a rural community. Specifically, two questions have guided the research (a) What factors have influenced the career decisions of women from a rural area? And (b) how have these factors differed over time? The influences on the occupational decisions of the participants in this study were grouped into three components: context, gender role beliefs, and factors. In the following sections, each of these components is described in detail and
illustrated by participants’ quotations that specify the comments that resulted in identifying that component.

**Reaching and Empowering Women: Towards a Gender Justice Protocol for a Diversified, inclusive, and sustainable financial sector.** The paper aimed to be a catalyst for serious debate about ways forward, and the starting point for future lobbying to establish an agreed gender justice protocol for the microfinance sector. It argued that there are steps that all financial institutions can take to improve women’s access to finance, ensure financial products are appropriately designed, utilize gender-based indicators for effective monitoring and assessment of impact, enact consumer protection measures, and advocate on behalf of women in the public sphere. The above framework has been taken as its starting point that the idea of a diversified financial sector, where different players may have different focuses and roles, but where each stakeholder would make a firm commitment to gender equality of opportunity and women’s empowerment, and would integrate these principles into their organizational structure, product and service delivery, and role at macro- and policy-levels.

It has been observed that different factors are affecting women in different ways. In few studies, it has been found that microfinance is not an automatic path to women’s emancipation and in some cases the effect of microfinance is minimal in lifting the status of women. But the overall scenario is that whether it is the economic, social, political empowerment, microfinance has made a considerable effect on the lives of people especially the women. At times women are not the direct end-users of the money, their husband or son or father may be using the same but ultimately the condition of the family improves which brings effectiveness in the whole system.

**2.2.2 Studies making comparisons between various groups or parameters.**

**Punita Bhatt Datta, Robert Gailey (2012)** have studied about empowering women through Social entrepreneurship. Women’s cooperatives offer self-employment opportunities that can contribute to women’s social inclusion and empowerment. This article has sought to broaden existing understandings of women’s entrepreneurship by focusing on less studied types of ventures and contexts—namely, a social entrepreneurial venture in India. Here, a case study analysis has been used to assess two primary areas of interest:

1. elements of empowerment embedded in the venture’s business model and
(2) individual perceptions of empowerment.

The study had utilized a persuasive case study approach to examine both the institutional structures, or business models, that support women’s empowerment and the self-perception of empowerment by the women-owners of the institution. While a persuasive case study can never be used to prove a theory, it can be useful to illustrate, motivate, and inspire readers to better understand and appreciate a particular theory for the study. Seven women were interviewed and their qualitative responses provide the basis on which we deduce our research findings (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). An interpretive approach to the women’s answers was used to allow cultural values to help define the meaning of “empowerment.” We also considered the agency of the participants and their ability to bring about their own social change (Calás et al. 2009). Through the interview process and document analysis, they sought to better understand how the women owners of Lijjat felt about their own empowerment. The personal accounts of sister members reveal that this collective form of entrepreneurship has empowered them in three ways: economic security, development of entrepreneurial behavior, and increased contributions to the family.

Supriya Garikipati (2012) has examined the impact of micro credit on male and female time use, and drawn analysis to explore the linkages between credit and women’s empowerment in this study. She has concluded that study of time use can help understand these linkages, because if credit is intended to improve women’s livelihoods, it can also be expected to influence the way women allocate their time. Its other advantages are that it does not suffer from much time lag and can be objectively measured. Using household survey data from rural India, the findings show that while micro credit has little impact on women’s time use, help their husbands move away from wage work (associated with bad pay and low status) to self-employment. This is because women loans are typically used to enhance male ownership of the household’s productive assets. Further, it has been found that it is only women whose loans in self-managed enterprises who are able to allocate more time to self-employment. If credit is intended to increase the value of women’s work time, it follows that it is not access to loans but use of loans that matters. Ensuring women’s control over loan-created assets must therefore be a critical policy objective.
R. Subashini and K Jeyakod (2012) have studied the impact of Institutional Finance on Women Empowerment. The micro credit was initiated to develop the rural poor. The commercial banks and microfinance institutions are playing an important role in disbursement of micro credit. The ultimate aim of micro credit is to uplift the economic and other empowerment among the women. The present study has made an attempt to examine this aspect in Madurai district, Tamilnadu. The study revealed that there is a significant increase in leadership, decision-making, personality, economic, social, managerial and political and legal empowerment due to the micro-credit offered by the commercial banks.

Kazi Abdur Rouf (2011) has studied the impact of the GRAMEEN BANK upon their patriarchal family and community relations of women borrowers in Bangladesh. The purpose of the study has been to: (1) examine the degree to which women borrowers of the Grameen Bank are being empowered to participate in familial decision-making around the management of income and expenditures like food, children’s education, dowry and teenage marriages; and (2) to examine women borrowers’ engagement in community activities such as the degree of freedom women are granted to visit public places like schools, local councils, banks and markets. The study has found that the Grameen Bank program has had a positive impact upon the borrowers’ relations in the family and community.

Sarahat Salma Chowdhury, Sifat Adiya Chowdhury (2011) have done a panel data analysis Using Evidence from Rural Bangladesh. In this paper they studied the fact why demand for credit is rising among women has offered a way to empowerment of women. They had utilized the above fact and used a panel data survey to measure individual level outcomes such as labour supply, asset accumulation and family planning and household level outcomes such as children education and household expenditure per annum from participating in a credit program. The outcomes have been compared to outcomes that can be achieved from borrowing loans from a non-program source. By comparing the outcomes, the benefit of microfinance is extracted, which in turn, is further analysed in terms of whether they indicate empowerment of women. This paper has thus proved that there are intra-household benefits of borrowing by women which, overtime, can bring them the support from family members and eventually lead to independence over self-decision making.
Naila Kabeer (2011) has studied between Affiliation and Autonomy: Navigating Pathways of Women’s Empowerment and Gender Justice in Rural Bangladesh in this article. In as much as women’s subordinate status is a product of the patriarchal structures of constraint that prevail in specific contexts, pathways of women’s empowerment are likely to be ‘path dependent’. They will be shaped by women’s struggles to act on the constraints that prevail in their societies, as much by what they seek to defend as by what they seek to change. The universal value that many feminists claim for individual autonomy may not therefore have the same purchase in all contexts. This article has examined processes of empowerment as they play out in the lives of women associated with social mobilization organizations in the specific context of rural Bangladesh. It has also drawn the narratives to explore the collective strategies through which these organizations sought to empower the women and how they in turn drew on their newly established communities of practice to navigate their own pathways to wider social change. It was concluded that while the value attached to social affiliations by the women in the study is clearly a product of the societies in which they have grown up, it may be no more context-specific than the apparently universal value attached to individual autonomy by many feminists.

Vanaja Menon, Mili Sarkar (2011) have studied women participation and paradoxes in Management of Small Scale Industries in this study. The study has attempted to identify the regional dichotomy in the level of women participation by focusing on nine urban and six rural small business units purposively selected from two States in India. Hypotheses were tested with primary data collected with questionnaire administered in aforesaid regions focusing on a sample of 200 women entrepreneurs. Chi and z tests were used and results were modeled to express regional disparity in level and nature of women participation. This study has developed a new paradigm that facilitates further research in this field. This paper had concluded with a hope that more women enrolling to higher education could enhance interest and skill to manage own business by the future generations.

Lubna Al-Kazi (2011) has studied Women and non-governmental organizations in Kuwait. The article has critically reviewed the role of women’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kuwait in supporting human and educational development. The spread of NGO’s in any society is an indicator of the involvement of citizens in the events around them, whether in human resource development (HRD) or political
advocacy. They act as a check and balance of the government, as they represent the public. This article has specified the historical development of women’s NGO’s in Kuwait and the challenges they faced in building commitment to gender equality. Author has illustrated how they lobbied with government and have become key stakeholders in national HRD planning. The article provides an overview of the lives of Kuwaiti women from the mid-1950s to the present to introduce the changes that took place in the oil era, from 1970s onwards. Also in the next section she has described some of the structural constraints that prevented society gaining the optimum benefit from women’s involvement in development. Finally, this article has concluded that both men and women need to know that gender equality is a core development issue. By spreading awareness on the disparities that exist whether in jobs, credit or ability to participate in public life, NGOs can garner support from the public and perhaps influence women members of Islamic and secular NGOs to promote change that will lead to effective development. This article also shows how NGOs are a platform for social change. Furthermore, the article emphasized that there is a need for collective action among women and NGO’s involving a wide spectrum of women. The aim of the author in this article is to explore how women have contributed to the development process and human capacity building by their involvement in women’s NGOs. Thus, they have the power to lobby and affect change. However, a major task is to involve more women from the grassroots level.

**Rupinder Kaur (2010)** has studied the Institutional Structure and Women Empowerment. The study was based on primary data collected from dairy farming households in Punjab, India. An effort was made to examine the women’s access to resources and control over produce and earnings, particularly in the context of certain institutional innovations introduced by the District Co-operative Milk Producers Union Limited (DCS). The study also brought out that institutional innovations have some positive impact. Nevertheless, women in DCS have not brought any major change in the established hierarchy. The objectives of the present study were as follows:She had also assessed the gender differences in a.) Levels of Education, b.) Membership of institutions (organisations relating to milk collection and processing), c.) Access to credit, d). Access to information, and e.) Control over resources in the study area. The primary data were collected in year 2000 from rural milk animal households in the state of Punjab India. A sample of 200 households was drawn on the basis of three
stage stratified sampling design. The first step was to choose two milk plants; one in the private sector and another under the co-operative ownership and management. It was decided to opt for two largest units, one each from co-operative and private sector. An MNC, Nestle India Ltd. at Moga and a co-operative sector unit at Ludhiana were selected on that basis. One of the objectives was to see the impact (and hence its implications) of these two different institutional structures on the welfare of the milk producers, especially women. In total four villages from Ludhiana and Moga (catchment areas of the above stated two milk plants) were selected for primary survey. Equal number of milk animal households was surveyed from these areas. One of the aims of Operation Flood Programme in India was to utilise female family labour productively for dairy production. Purpose was to enable them to change their status from non-earners to earners. It was visualised that this will break the isolation of women through interaction with others, improving their status within the family and society. For collection of household data, a comprehensive questionnaire was canvassed through direct personal interview method. Invariably information was collected from the women members of the household. It was concluded that to increase women’s access and control, affirmative action was required in a number of areas. It includes-financial incentive schemes like credit, more effective women membership of DCS by increasing their control, increased representation of women in administrative and field staff. Finally, gender sensitization of both male and female staff was also very important in achieving desired results.

Sayma Rahman et al. (2010) have studied the factors influencing women’s empowerment on micro credit borrowers in Bangladesh. The study had viewed women’s empowerment from an emancipation perspective. The study has used quasi-experimental approach to compare women’s empowerment between micro credit borrowers and non-borrowers. Using control-group method (non-borrowers from non-programme villages), the study had identified factors that influence women’s empowerment. It has also examined the impact on women’s empowerment of borrowers having different levels of income. Results show that non-borrowers are equally empowered as micro credit borrowers. It has also been found that age and education levels of women are significant factors in such an empowerment. Control-group method has been used in this study by comparing micro credit borrowers with non-borrowers from non-programme villages. Since there are no two identical villages
or households, again comparison studies will not give unbiased results. The uniqueness
of the study lies on the way the women’s empowerment has been defined. The study
attempts to identify factors that affect women’s empowerment. The underlying research
question was, ‘Are there any differences between borrowers and non-borrowers in
terms of empowerment? They have used primary data from borrowers of two major
micro credit institutions in Bangladesh, such as the Grameen Bank and BRAC,
collected through a structured questionnaire. The samples of borrowers are randomly
selected without replacement from the list of households available from the
programmes’ local office in each village. From all three districts 387 borrowers and
184 non-borrowers were interviewed through a structured questionnaire. To reduce
heterogeneity bias in this study they used quasi-experimental approach by comparing
micro credit borrowers with non-borrowers as control group selected from non-
programme villages.

The overall picture showed that in terms of awareness there is no difference between
borrowers and non-borrowers. However, the individual depiction shows that borrowers
of Gazipur and Chokoria are more empowered in terms of general knowledge
compared with non-borrowers, but not in Dinajpur. It had been observed from the
analysis that the age of female has negative effects on empowerment. That implies that
younger females are more empowered. They have also found that the education of
female affects empowerment positively – this showed the importance of education
towards women’s empowerment. The most interesting finding is the age and education
of the male partner. It appeared that young and educated males encourage females to
be more empowered. It has been further observed that assets are positively related to
women’s empowerment.

**Vetrivel S.C. and Chandra kumaramangalam S. (2010)** have studied the IPO in the
India Microfinance Industry. They have found that Micro finance is emerging as a
powerful instrument for poverty alleviation in the new economy. In India, micro
finance scene is dominated by Self Help Groups (SHGs) Bank Linkage Programme
aimed at providing a cost effective mechanism for providing financial services to the
"unreached poor". Based on the philosophy of peer pressure and group savings as
collateral substitute, the SHG programme has been successful in not only in meeting
peculiar needs of the rural poor, but also in strengthening collective self-help capacities
of the poor at the local level, leading to their empowerment.
Vinita Kalra & H.P. Mathur (2010) have studied Kudumbashree – A Silent Revolution for Reaching the Unreached. Kudumbashree, the State Poverty Eradication Mission in Kerala, is a holistic, participatory, women oriented innovative overarching poverty reduction approach launched by State Government, with the active support of the Government of India and the NABARD for wiping out absolute poverty from the State. The mission had been started in the context of the need to wipe out poverty through microfinance intervention programme.

Thus, the programme covered not only credit but also a number of non-credit services (like insurance, vocational training, literacy, leadership skills, social empowerment, etc.). The Kudumbashree programme was classified as a Neighborhood Group (NHG). In the initiative three-tiered structures, composed of NHGs federated into area development societies at the ward level, which were in turn federated into a community development society (CDS) at the municipal level, were formed. Quality of Kudumbashree NHG microfinance and NABARD linkages have infused confidence to the extent that nine banks, for the first time in the country had given housing loans to women run microfinance groups. By-products of the state’s microfinance model include S3 (self-sufficient, self-reliant, sustainable Panchayat) that provides resource-utilization, and Balasabhas.

Nahid Aslanbeigui et al. (2010) have assessed Micro credit in Bangladesh in this research. It has been suggested that in assessing the impact of micro credit, it is essential to consider generational and inter-generational differences in the lives of borrowers and their families. The paper had employed results of ethnographic work conducted in January 2008 on long-term borrowers of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. They have interviewed ten village women in three districts located in the vicinity of the capital city: Manikgonj, Dhaka and Gazipur, each interview has lasted for approximately two hours. To maintain uniformity across subjects, they have used a structured questionnaire. Many questions were open-ended, and subjects were encouraged to respond with as much detail as they felt comfortable. After that the representatives of Grameen Bank identified interviewees on the basis of our two criteria. Because of time constraints, subjects would be located within commutable distance from Dhaka, where they were based. Since they were investigating long-term impacts of micro credit, subjects would have an extensive micro credit history. Subjects were chosen on interview days depending on the availability of Grameen’s branch.
officers and the interviewees themselves. The services of an interpreter fluent in several Bengali dialects were also utilised. Interviews were conducted in the homes of the subjects. Periodically, family members, Bank officers, or neighbors dropped in on the conversations but did not stay for the entire duration of the interviews. The observed composure of subjects did not vary with the number, status, or gender of observant. The sample was small and not random because they do not perform statistical analysis on the data, these considerations are immaterial to the conclusions. The proposal had called for an analysis of long-term trends in life histories and intergenerational effects of micro credit that is missing in the literature.

Malhotra Gunjan et al. (2010) have analyzed whether launching an IPO is a viable option for a microfinance company like S.K. S Microfinance. They had employed the approach of identifying the dimensions of the business decision to launch an Initial Public Offer while maintaining a trade-off between the mission of the microfinance companies of poverty alleviation and their vision of attaining economic profitability in the paper. Towards the end a comparative analysis has been made between three microfinance companies namely SKS Microfinance of India, Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and Banco Compartamos’ of Mexico to analyze their business models and to find out which model is SKS Microfinance more close to. The paper had compared between the three microfinance companies based on secondary data, but the data has been analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to come up with an independent conclusion about the similarities and dissimilarities among the three business models of the respective companies. After critically analyzing the data the paper concludes that a successful IPO can be launched by a microfinance company like SKS Microfinance without disrupting the balance between its inherent mission of poverty alleviation and vision of economic profitability. To reach out to the millions of needy people the MFI has to become financially strong which would only be possible with launch of an IPO. Also an IPO will be the right step forward as it makes the company accountable to its shareholders and hence increases the responsibility of the company towards its decisions.

Darakhshan Anjum (2010) has studied Women Empowerment and Child Development in JAMMU AND KASHMIR. The paper has provided a complete look about present status of women in J&K, Occupational Status of Women, Unemployment rate for J&K State, vis-à-vis All India, and Funds received under
Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Supplementary Nutrition under ICDS, Non-nutritional Assistance under ICDS, Number of beneficiaries under ICDS and also suggested suitable measures to overcome the problems.

Emma Tomalin (2009) has studied the Buddhist Feminist Transnational Networks, Female Ordination and Women’s Empowerment in this paper. They have discussed the emergence of a transnational movement across Buddhist traditions and countries that is concerned to make full ordination an available option to women in contexts where it is currently prohibited. The subsequent section of the paper has looked more closely at the campaign to revive the bhikkhuni ordination in contexts where it was not available to women and its role in bridging the gap. Also, the paper has concentrated on the role of transnational networks in reviving the bhikkhuni ordination across traditions and the implications of the same for addressing women’s strategic gender needs with respect to their development and empowerment. It was found that Women in Buddhism have been outstanding for what they have done in the maintaining of world peace, community development, alleviating human suffering, promoting religious tolerance, offering childcare, and protecting human rights. They had positive role models inspiring and empower women and girls to share and claim cultural space in the public sphere for addressing gender issues of: violence against women, sexual exploitation industry, poverty, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, and protection of the vulnerable in society. They aim was to improve the lives of ordained women, including their conditions and opportunities, to encourage the full ordination of women, and to highlight and encourage the social benefits. The paper has suggested more broadly that “religious feminism” (which argues for reinterpretations of religious systems that are consistent with the “core” values of the tradition as well as various types of feminist thinking) is an important and even inherent part of transnational feminism.

Sethuraman, K., (2008) has studied the role of Women’s empowerment and Domestic Violence in Child Growth and under nutrition in a Tribal and Rural Community in South India. Author has explored the relationship between women’s empowerment, domestic violence, maternal nutritional status, and the nutritional status and growth over six months in children aged 6 to 24 months in a rural and tribal community. The longitudinal observational study had been undertaken in rural Karnataka, India included tribal and rural subjects. Structured interviews with mothers had been conducted and anthropometric measurements were obtained for 820 mother-child pairs, the follow-up
After 6 months, the rate was 82 per cent. The data was analyzed by multivariate regression. Some degree of under nutrition was seen in 83.5 per cent of children and 72.4 per cent of mothers in the sample, moreover the prevalence of under nutrition increased among children at follow up. Domestic violence had been experienced by 34 per cent of mothers in the sample. In multivariate analysis, biological variables explained most of the variance in nutritional status and child growth, followed by health-care seeking and women’s empowerment variables; socio-economic variables explained the least variance. Moderate under nutrition continued to affect 46 per cent of children under 5 years of age and 47 per cent of rural women in India. Women’s lack of empowerment is believed to be an important factor in the persistent prevalence of under nutrition. In India, women’s empowerment often varies by community, with tribes sometimes being the most progressive. Women’s empowerment variables have been significantly associated with child nutrition on enrolment and child growth at follow-up.

**Cull R, Demirguc-Kunt, A & Morduch J (2008)** studied in this paper about the mainstream financial services companies and microbanks. It was analyzed that if microbanks had grown in countries which have less developed financial services industry by citing example of two countries Bolivia and Bangladesh which have a low per capita mainstream banking penetration, but microfinance has thrived in these countries. The author has tried to prove if lack of mainstream competition is one of the reasons of growth of microbanks and he concludes that microfinance, until recently has filled the niche that is not served by mainstream banking. However as microfinance is expanding along with mainstream banking, the prospect for competition and direct interaction had increased.

**Koen KA Van Rompay et al. (2008)** have studied the HIV affected patients. Despite ample evidence that HIV has entered the general population, most HIV awareness programs in India continue to neglect rural areas. Low HIV awareness and high stigma, fueled by low literacy, seasonal migration, gender inequity, spatial dispersion, and cultural taboos pose extra challenges to implement much-needed HIV education programs in rural areas.

Thus, the paper has described a peer education model which was developed to educate and empower low-literacy communities in the rural district of Perambalur (Tamil Nadu, India). The program had used participatory methods to train 20 NGO field staff (Outreach Workers), 102 women's self-help group (SHG) leaders, and 52 barbers to
become peer educators. The program was estimated to have reached over 30,000 villagers in the district through 2051 interactive HIV awareness programs and one-on-one communication. Outreach workers (OWs) and peer educators distributed approximately 62,000 educational materials and 69,000 condoms, and also referred approximately 2844 people for services including voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), care and support for HIV, and diagnosis and treatment of sexually-transmitted infections (STI). At least 118 individuals were newly diagnosed as persons living with HIV (PLHIV); 129 PLHIV were referred to the Government Hospital for Thoracic Medicine (in Tambaram) for extra medical support. Focus group discussions indicate that the program was well received in the communities, led to improved health awareness, and also provided the peer educators with increased social status.

Denise M. Lucy et al. (2008) have examined one Bangladeshi NGO founded in 1992: Nad Udyog Kendra (NUK), which translated into English as Center for Women's Initiatives. The major purpose of the case study was to understand the level of empowerment women exhibited by participating in a micro credit loan program. To that end, information had been gathered about the subjects' personal and family background, current family situation, educational history, economic situation, experience with the micro credit loan program, role in personal, family and business decision making, participation in community activities, and experience with NUK's empowerment and leadership training programs. The subjects for this study included 100 women from 14 different villages participating in the micro credit loan groups of NUK in the Kishoreganj District in Northeast Bangladesh. The subjects, who were guaranteed anonymity, completed a survey through a translated interview conducted in their native language, Bangla. The survey instrument included 105 items. Interviews were conducted by a local team of researchers who spoke both Bangla and English. The interviewers asked the subjects a survey question in Bangla, the subjects answered in Bangla, the interviewer reported the subjects' response in English to a university researcher, and the researcher wrote the responses on the survey instrument. The survey data on literacy and contraception are comparable to Bangladesh's national average where approximately half of the population is literate and half of the women use contraception (Population Reference Bureau, 2007). In this study, 49% of the women were literate, while 98% were defined as empowered. The data indicate that NUKs micro credit program has empowered its micro credit participants by increasing their
family income, landownership, political participation, freedom of movement, and primary and joint roles in decision making.

Amanda Cahill (2008) has suggested how a post-structural approach to power can be enacted by building on the existing local resources and practices of everyday life. This paper had suggested that a post-structural conceptualization of power as dynamic, multiple and mediated at the local level offers a more productive starting point for thinking about approaches to empowerment. Drawing on data from an action research project designed to initiate community enterprises in a small rural municipality in the Philippines, The paper has taken up the shift and focused on how the project methodology created a space for exploring, challenging and mobilising existing power relations. The main premise informing the action research methodology of the Jagna Community Partnering Project was that power is multiple, relational and contextual. The first objective was to reframe local relations, knowledge and resources as potential forms of economic power that disadvantaged groups could mobilise to challenge structural notions of power in the community. The second was to provide a safe environment in which people could start to experiment with existing forms of economic power to construct a new local vision of development. The final objective was to build on existing relations of power within the community. In this research, three community enterprises were formed and three and a half years after the inception of the project, they continue to grow and generate income for their members. One involves a group of eight women who produce ginger tea. Another consists of 13 small-scale farmers (both men and women) producing a local coconut confectionary called *nata de coco*. The third enterprise is made up of six women dressmakers who accept large orders for hire clothing, uniforms and costumes. A fourth group consisting of 48 local men who work part-time at the port was initiated to explore the feasibility of a trucking business. To facilitate collaboration between the implementing agencies, one field researcher was employed from each agency to work on a full-time basis. The aim of the action research project was to explore the possibility of stimulating local economic development through the establishment of group enterprises that mobilised locally available resources, knowledge and economic practices. It has been concluded that the Power relations are always changing and any gains may shift with time. It is difficult to shift deeply embedded patterns, but at least the project has opened up the possibility for
change by creating a space where participants have started relating differently to others and experiment with their own multiple forms of power at a local level.

**Beverly Dawn Metcalfe (2008)** has studied in the paper about new theoretical insights into the interconnections and relationships between women, management and globalization in the Middle East (ME). The discussion has been positioned within broader globalization debates about women’s social status in ME economies. The article critiques social, cultural and economic reasons for women’s limited advancement in the public sphere. These include the prevalence of the patriarchal work contract within public and private institutions, as well as cultural and ethical values which create strongly defined gender roles. The discussion has examined the complexities of conceptualizing women’s equality and empowerment in Islamic states. The paper has revealed that there have been significant achievements in advancing women in leadership and political roles, but that there are still institutional and cultural barriers embedded in business systems. They have suggested that scholars should integrate literatures from gender and management, development and Middle East studies, and should also consider the interrelations of the national and transnational in critiques of contemporary global capitalism to understand the complexity of women and social change in the ME. They have also explored the relationship between women, management and globalization in the ME in the study.

**Julia C. Kim et al. (2007)** have studied in the article about the scope of women's empowerment and the mechanisms underlying the significant reduction in intimate partner violence documented by the Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) cluster-randomized trial in rural South Africa. The method adopted here was the IMAGE intervention combined a microfinance program with participatory training on understanding HIV infection, gender norms, domestic violence, and sexuality. Outcome measures included past years’ experience of intimate partner violence and 9 indicators of women's empowerment. Qualitative data about changes occurring within intimate relationships, loan groups, and the community were also collected. Thus, it had been found that after 2 years, the risk of past-year physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner was reduced by more than half (adjusted risk ratio= 0.45; 95% confidence interval = 0.23, 0.91). Improvements in all 9 indicators of empowerment were observed. There were reductions in violence resulted from a range of responses enabling women to challenge the acceptability of violence etc. Thus, the
findings, both qualitative and quantitative, indicate that economic and social empowerment of women can contribute to reductions in intimate partner violence.

**Peter Edward and Wendy Olsen (2006)** studied Paradigms and Reality in Micro-Finance in The Indian context. The authors had examined qualitative local data on micro-finance in southern Andhra Pradesh. They have compared and contrast Mayoux’s three paradigms of microfinance as being differentiated by their assumptions, their claims, and the mode of operation of those who adhere to them. Each paradigm has offered grounding for practice as well as a mode of discourse for microfinance practitioners. In Andhra Pradesh, the empowerment paradigm was fading away compared with the financial sustainability paradigm of micro-finance. In this paper the study of micro-finance has been combined with a discussion of paradigms in social research. Building on our strengths and past research experiences, they have applied pluralism of theory—cutting across disciplines—to the study of Indian labor relations and to the study of changing management practice in India’s newly privatized sectors. The paper has provided some insights into how the paradigms are playing out “on the ground” in southern India. The paper describes the findings of a research visit by Edward to two villages in the Chittoor District in Andhra Pradesh (AP) in early 2005. The villages visited were typical of the area, but only in so far as any village can be said to be typical. The findings were presented to illustrate how the contradictions of the “virtuous spiral” myth appear to be playing out in a very specific area. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable to imagine that similar dialectics occur also in other districts and states of India where micro-finance has been heavily promoted. Field research was conducted in 2005 within a triangulation methodological framework. Translation support was received from local people during the course of the research. A range of secondary quantitative evidence (mainly from Annual Reports of a variety of banks and other organizations) was combined with qualitative interviews. The purpose of the limited paper was to set the broad findings in the context of the debate about how to perceive micro-finance—how to theorize it, how practitioners should be trained, and in what discourse or paradigm we should couch our analyses of it. In conclusion, micro-finance has expanded rapidly and extremely successfully in AP. It has doubtless brought considerable benefits for many women, particularly among the non-poor and the marginally poor. The evidence from recent visits to two villages in Chittoor is that the expansion of micro-finance is failing to meet the needs of the poorest of the poor.
and is promoting a deradicalised concept of empowerment that has more to do with co-option than transformation.

ZAMAN, H (2004), has studied Microfinance in Bangladesh. He has analysed the growth and achievements of microfinance in Bangladesh. Micro credit revolution started around 3 decades back and gradually evolved into ‘Grameen’ model. The high growth of this model was due to decentralized structure of the model. Donors also contributed to the growth along with franchises of the big micro credit lenders. There was a general consensus that micro credit in Bangladesh has not only reduced vulnerability of poor households, but also empowered poor women. Their status improved because of them being seen as income earners in largely conservative society. Microfinance has been a success story in Bangladesh with more than 13 million poor households benefiting from the same. There are several large organizations such as Grameen Bank which lend credit to hundreds of small microfinance banks.

Seela Aladuwaka (2003) have studied the credit programs, poverty alleviation and women’s empowerment from Sri Lanka. In this study the author has examined the role of micro-enterprise credit in poverty alleviation and women’s empowerment at both the household and community levels in Sri Lanka’s Kandy district. The differential impact of credit on women’s empowerment in various localities and with different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds is emphasized. The empowerment and bargaining theoretical approaches to gender and development are employed alongside participatory methodologies that include semi-structured interviews, gendered activity profiles, focus group interviews, and participant observation. Findings indicate that although access to credit was not enough to alleviate poverty, many women were empowered in their households and communities as their material circumstances improved and they gained confidence and skills.

National study of MFIs in India for Small Industries Development Bank of India (2000). It has been found in this study that MFIs are moving towards greater outreach to the unreached (to the poor, to women – including women headed households and to marginal social groups). Microfinance provides a safe savings mechanism and options for micro credit (both from the MFI and from internally circulated group savings) which compare favorably with formal bank loans in terms of accessibility, and with alternative informal moneylenders in terms of cost. The research also coincided with the implementation of the MFSP, and has combined longitudinal design (panel data)
and impact monitoring. The comparison of panel data (baseline and follow-up) has provided evidence for impact at the end of the project (impact being defined as ‘change that can be plausibly associated with involvement in a microfinance programme’). Interim findings have already emerged from outreach analysis, cross-sectional analysis of the baseline data, and client feedback. The research summary presented some of the findings from the first baseline sample of ten microfinance institutions.

Linda Mayoux (1999) has attempted to piece together existing and largely unpublished evidence on 15 programmes in Africa. She has compared secondary source material and her own exploratory research in the paper. The evidences have indicated that for some women in some contexts, even very poor women, micro-finance programmes can indeed contribute to empowerment. However, for many women impact on both economic and social empowerment appears to be marginal and some women may be positively disempowered. These diverse outcomes indicate extremely complex inter-relationships between women's own strategies for use of micro-finance to further their perceived interests, contextual opportunities and constraints and programme policies. It was assumed that women will be interested in using their economic independence and/or group membership in ways envisaged by feminist gender lobbies in development agencies. The discussion in the paper focused on 15 micro-finance programmes in Cameroon. The information is supplemented by evidence from general impact studies and/or discussions and subsequent correspondence with programme state who attended three recent regional workshops in East, West and Southern Africa co-facilitated by the author. The programmes have different origins, follow different models and strategies and operate in differing social, political and legal environments.

It was nevertheless clear that some micro-finance programmes in some contexts can make a significant contribution to all dimensions of empowerment for some women, pointing to the potential of micro-finance as a development intervention for women. At the same time the evidence does raise serious questions about any automatic contribution of micro-finance per se to any of the links in any of the assumed `virtuous spirals'. All studies for which data exist and all the interviews conducted by the author found that much of women's increased income or loans are spent on household consumption and children's welfare or repayment of old debts which would otherwise be met from production income or loans from elsewhere.

There has been studies in which various groups have been compared like the borrowers
and non-borrowers and the effects have been studied. Also, the comparisons have been studied at various levels like, household, society, communities etc. Certain findings indicate that although access to credit is not enough to alleviate poverty, many women were empowered in their households and communities as their material circumstances improved and they gained confidence and skills. But some were struggling with the restrictions thus, can’t get access to the outside world.

Different levels of income have also been studied and the results show that non-borrowers are equally empowered as micro credit borrowers. At the same time it has also been found that age and education levels of women are significant factors in empowerment. Women are also empowered to decide in the social, financial and political issues.

2.2.3 Studies measuring effect of microfinance on women empowerment.

Vachya Lavoori et al. (2014) have examined the impact of microfinance and other socio-economic factors on women empowerment as viewed from their participation in decision making, income as well as employment generation activities. The findings of the study based on a field study conducted in two villages of Andhra Pradesh suggest that factors such as member and her husband’s income, family size and frequency of Self-help group meetings have overall positive influence on women empowerment. In case of income and employment generation activities, age and income of Self-help group members, their household income and amount of loan are found to have positive effect.

Ravim N et al. (2011) have studied Micro-Finance as a tool for rural women empowerment and in this case study the authors have studied women based SHGs of Channarayapatna Taluk in HASSAN District, Karnataka They have revealed that the Micro-finance has given women in India an opportunity to become ‘agents of change’. The movement has made them more confident than ever, helping them to explore new possibilities in the generation of income leading to self-sustenance. It has also helped them to explore new horizons, new dreams and new hopes.

A S Shiralashetti (2010) has studied women empowerment through Self-Help Groups in Bijapur District. The main objective of the study has been to examine the level of women empowerment in Bijapur. The study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. To collect the primary data, questionnaires were prepared and
presented personally to 150 women members of SHGs. The sample members were selected from 15 SHGs from 10 villages of Bijapur District. The collected data was analyzed by classifying and tabulating. The percentage tool is used to examine women empowerment through SHGs. The secondary data was collected from newspapers, books and journals, etc. environment in India. It has been seen that women are now participating in all productive activities and are at par with men. No doubt, the SHG movement in India has been working in the right direction, but it is necessary to empower more and more women in social, cultural, economic, political and legal matters, for the interest of the family in particular and the nation in general.

**Sujata Shetty (2010)** has studied in this paper that micro credit can have a much greater impact when it is part of a larger intervention that addresses the needs of the women borrowers and their households individually and collectively, and when it has a local presence. She has explored the connection of Micro credit, Poverty, and Empowerment. The micro credit industry has grown, so the emphasis which was initially on poverty alleviation and empowerment has changed. In order to increase the reach and loan portfolios, micro credit programs have to tap commercial and quasi-commercial financing, therefore requiring consistent profitable returns. So, the paper has examined the assumed link between micro credit, poverty alleviation and empowerment, by seeking answers to two sets of questions. First, does micro credit help to alleviate poverty? And second, what impact does such credit have on participants’ lives? Does credit empower, or is it the manner in which credit is delivered that is empowering? Thus, it has been concluded that the loans do not permanently move participants out of poverty; however, they do reduce some of the vulnerabilities associated with poverty. The empowerment effects attributed to credit are murkier, but the impacts reported by the participants seem to have more to do with program elements than the loans per se. Micro credit can incrementally increase the income and wealth of a household, and it can have important impacts even when credit is provided without any other services.

**Jay A Pandit et al. (2010)** studied how HIV/AIDS negatively impacts poverty alleviation and food security, which reciprocally hinder the rapid scale up and effectiveness of HIV care programs. Nyanza province has the highest HIV prevalence (15.3%), and is the third highest contributor (2.4 million people) to rural poverty in Kenya. The article has tested the feasibility of providing a micro-irrigation pump to
HIV-positive farmers in order to evaluate its impact on health and economic advancement among HIV-positive patients and their families. They studied thirty HIV-positive patients enrolled in the Family AIDS Care and Education Services (FACES) program in Kisumu, Kenya were provided a micro-financed loan to receive an irrigation pump and farming guidance from Kick Start, the developer of the pump. Economic data, CD4 counts, household health and loan repayment history were collected 12 months after the pumps were distributed. The result was that the mean annual family income increased by $1,332 over baseline. CD4 counts did not change significantly. Though income increased, only three (10%) participants had paid off more than a quarter of the loan. The conclusion was that the feasibility of an income-generating micro-irrigation intervention among HIV positive patients and the collection of health and economic data. While family income improved significantly, loan repayment rates were low-likely complicated by the drought that occurred in Kenya during the intervention period. There has been a positive impact of microfinance programs on HIV prevention by reducing risky behaviors and providing opportunities for women's empowerment. The article also refers further exploration of the health and economic benefits of such interventions coupled with an improved microfinance component may demonstrate a novel approach to economic development for HIV-infected farmers in rural Africa.

**Gulnoz Bikbaeva and Malohat Gaibnazarova (2009)** have studied the impact of Microfinance on Alleviating Rural Poverty in Uzbekistan. They have analyzed in this article the effectiveness of microfinance policies, institutions, and tools for improving living standards and regional development. It has focussed on the role and importance of microfinance as an effective measure in regional development and alleviation of rural poverty. They have presented a detailed analysis of demand for microfinance. The principal goal of the initiative was to develop the capacity of economic policy institutes in order to provide these countries with independent, sophisticated voices in policy issues. Microfinance is the most effective and important factor providing productive employment, as opposed to direct state subsidies and payments the demand for microfinance services in these countries is quite high. In particular, microfinance services are used not only to reduce poverty and support small businesses but also to develop backward regions. The study had presented a model simulation of econometric estimation of the number of enterprises, the economic environment in rural areas, and
the general socioeconomic environment in the country at the level of demand for micro credits. The regression model was based on the Microeconomic model of the profit maximization of microfinance organizations. The simulated model reveals that the level of demand for micro credits is based on three determinants. If statistical data show a high degree of relationship between these indicators and the level of micro credits obtained, it means that the model is properly constructed and the main factors influencing the demand for micro financial services in Uzbekistan are correctly defined.

**Pollio and James Obuobie (2010)** have studied Default Rates in Ghana in various MFIs. In this article, they have investigated repayment rates among MFIs and various parameters which effect the same in different ways. They employed Multivariate and concluded that the probability of default increases with the number of dependents, whether the proceeds are to acquire fixed assets, and the frequency of monitoring, and decreases with the availability of non-business income, years in business, the number of guarantors, whether the proceeds were for working capital, and if the client is a first time borrower or old one.

**Niti Nandini Chatnani (2010)** has examined the role and potential of micro franchising as a tool for women’s empowerment. Empowerment of women will enable them to gain both visibility and a voice in their homes, their workplace and their society. Non-availability of credit has been a critical constraint in the efforts of poor women of our country to achieve economic self-reliance. A major shortcoming of the credit system has been its apathy towards the issue of empowerment of women. Micro credit has been acknowledged the world over as a brilliant, enterprise-based, partial solution to economic empowerment of women, and it has certainly been able to address issues of their financial inclusion and poverty alleviation to a large extent. Yet, the search for effective economic empowerment strategies is far from over. Micro franchising is one such strategy that is currently being researched and tested for its efficacy in contributing to economic self-reliance among poor women. That’s where micro franchising adds value- as a ‘turn- key’ business; a micro franchisee can rely on the franchisor, which reduces the risk of failure by providing high quality initial and ongoing training.

**Roni Strier (2010)** has studied about Women, Poverty, and the Microenterprise: Context and Discourse. The article has discussed about the claims of success of microenterprise development programmes (MDPs) in poverty reduction and gender
equality. It has also dealt with the broader theoretical and methodological issues related to the ways in which context and discourse interact in the assessment of antipoverty and gender equity strategies. MDPs are considered among the most viable strategies for helping women overcome poverty and promoting gender equity. The article has adapted a bottom up, context-informed, discourse analysis perspective, and used a qualitative methodology to examine the voices of women engaged in a microenterprise (ME). Semi-structured personal interviews have been conducted in the participants’ homes. Each interview had lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. The interviews consisted of four questions related to central themes: their perspectives and views of MEs; an assessment of the skills and qualities required to succeed in the venture; their perceptions of barriers and opportunities; and their assessment of the small business and self-employment strategy as a way to overcome the circle of poverty. ME is only a partial solution of breaking the circle of poverty for low-income women. Women in the study who have succeeded in establishing an independent source of income were satisfied with their new occupations. They also found in the ME initiative new opportunities for renegotiating their oppressive multiple identities as working women in the labour market as well as women, wives and mothers.

**Smriti Rao (2010)** has studied about work and empowerment of Women and Agriculture in South India in this article. The author has explored the implications of women’s work in agriculture in Telangana, a region in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. It was suggested that higher capital costs for cultivators’ post-liberalisation increased the pressure to contain wage costs in a region where women form the majority of the agricultural wage labour force. It was found that under such conditions, when women perform both own-cultivation as well as agricultural wage work in the fields of others, they face pressure to restrict bargaining for higher wages, contributing to a widening gender wage gap. To the extent that wages shape intra-household bargaining power, the empowering effect of workforce participation for such women would thus be blunted. From available NSS data provide some preliminary evidence in support of this argument.

**Microfinance Information Exchange, Inc. (MIX) & Intellecap (2009)** have studied the paper growth of microfinance industry in Asia, especially South Asia in 2008. According to the research conducted, though the industry had grown as compared to 2007, it predicted that Global Financial Crisis would create liquidity problems for the
industry. The profitability would be lower and institutions would face the challenge to grow as well as secure funding in those circumstances.

**Salman Asim, (2008)** has evaluated *The Impact of Micro credit On Women's Empowerment in Pakistan* in this study. He has studied empowerment in the urban slums of the Lahore district of Pakistan. A household-level instrument that contains information on different dimensions of household decisions: child-related, health, social mobility, economic and major household purchase decisions was specifically designed and implemented to explore the link between micro credit and women's empowerment. After controlling for endogeneity in the estimation by using proxies for initial levels of empowerment, matching the controls and treated units on observable characteristics and finally instrumenting for the treatment, there are no differences found between the level of empowerment of treated and control units. Participation in the micro credit program is found to be insignificant in explaining all the outcome indicators of empowerment for the sampled households.

**M J Xavier, J Raja, Usha Nandhini S (2008)** have studied the *Impact Assessment of a Rural Women’s Micro Entrepreneurship Project using Path Analysis Models Round Table*. The research had measured the outcomes of Project Shakti, an initiative of Hindustan Unilever Limited in creating rural women micro entrepreneurs in India. They had used narrative analysis and path analysis models to examine the impact of the project on the rural women. The findings have been positive on the fronts of entrepreneurial development, economic empowerment and social empowerment. The project provides an opportunity for rural women’s entrepreneurship by which women become direct-to-home distributors of HUL products in rural markets. The women become micro entrepreneurs and service the communities they live in. Their study has assessed the impact of the Shakti programme using Path Analysis. The study also included cost benefit analysis to justify intervention in terms of income. The key objective of empowering rural women had been extended to engage thousands of villages spanning thirteen states in the country and had involved thousands of rural women for more than five years, the number exceeding 30,000 in 2006. to the questions of what specific factors created impact and the extent to which these factors influenced the Shakti dealers. The objectives of Project Shakti are two-fold: to improve the incomes of rural people by providing them with economic opportunities and to improve their standard of living by educating them about health and hygiene. The
research had used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative study uses methods that are interpretative and naturalistic, using narrative analysis to evolve themes from the narrations of experiences. The qualitative technique was followed by a survey research method to obtain quantitative data. The Path Analysis method was used for examining complex and multidimensional relationships among variables. To confirm the economic impact, the researchers had posed proxy questions by making an inquiry into the amount of cash the Shakti dealers maintained at hand. Social impact was divided into two sub parts: empowerment at the household level and empowerment at the societal level. These data were substantiated by a Most of the Shakti dealers indicated that there were positive changes on various fronts after taking up Shakti dealership. As hypothesized, entrepreneurial development leads to economic empowerment and that in turn leads to social empowerment. Real upliftment of people in the lower rungs of the economic ladder can happen only when the overall standard of living of these people is raised. An elevation in the living standards enhances the ability of a community to afford a wider range of products and services, in turn leading to the creation of new consumers. The study resulted in the women entrepreneurs getting recognized in their local communities as opinion leaders.

K. KALPANA (2008) has studied the Vulnerability of ‘Self-Help’: Women and Microfinance in South India. In this study it has been found that research on micro credit demonstrates that micro credit / finance programs do not have any inherent quality by which they empower their women clients or address concerns of poverty alleviation. She has studied the practical impact of coordination Self Help Groups(SHG’s) and state run institutions in delivering microfinance. She has studied 27 SHG’s in 3 villages. Rural finance has become a profitable industry in India. This has enabled a lot of big players in microfinance industry. However the author has observed that there had been initial issues in delivering loans to people of some sections by banks, such as SC over fears of default. However with time this prejudice disappeared as the repayments were prompt.

Responsibility Social Investments Ltd.(2008) have studied about Consumer Credits for the Poor – Risk or Opportunity. They have argued that while microfinance industry had a responsibility to offer a range of financial products to the consumers, including consumer credits. However it needs to have adequate risk management practices in place along with transparent product management practices.
Swain R. & Wallentin, F (2007) In this article had discussed that microfinance is a tool for social change and economic benefits for empowerment of women in co-relation to the IMAGE project. It has been stated in the study that women with more financial power were less likely to face domestic abuse. However it also stated that the benefits of microfinance on women’s empowerment are not automatic, it is a complex relationship. Microfinance is a critical starting point which enables the long process of women empowerment. They studied how by using Microfinance they could Fight Poverty, Empower Women and Address Gender-based Violence and HIV.

Chowdhury J (2007) has done an empirical analysis of impact of microfinance on consumption of the beneficiary households in this paper. They chose Garmin Bank’s customers via a household survey to collect data. The data analysed concluded that old member households consumed 19% more than new members. The growth in consumption decreased after 5 years of membership before declining. But the overall consumption increased after households participate in a microfinance program. Thus, microfinance helped to improve their living standard.

Krauss N & Walter I (2006) analyzed whether microfinance represents a distinct financial asset class, thereby forming the basis for access to global capital markets and performance-driven investors in their search for efficient portfolios. Based on a scientific study, they concluded that microfinance institutions in developing countries are less exposed to market risks than commercial banks and hence can be form a distinct asset class.

Dessy S & Ewoudou J (2006) have concluded in the study that women’s access to credit should be conditioned to their involvement in coordinated, high productivity activities and also is lined to their success in Microfinance. They had also explored implications for women’s choice of business, demand for capital and interaction between social and economic factors. It also explored necessary conditions for microfinance for empowerment of women. The author has used mathematical and statistical analysis techniques to investigate and draw his conclusions. From his data, he analyzed the possible cause for failure of microfinance for women. According to the author, lack of ability of women to form large business networks is one factor of failure of microfinance.
Mark M. Pitt et al. (2006) have estimated the impact of participation in micro credit programs on an index of empowerment and its proxy indicators using a large set of qualitative responses to questions that characterize women’s autonomy and gender relations within the household with due attention to heterogeneity bias. The data was collected from an extensive household survey collected in rural Bangladesh in 1998–99. They tested the assertion that participating in micro credit programs is an empowering experience for women whose life choices are otherwise restricted through poverty, patriarchy, and societal or religious norms. In addition, the effect of men’s credit program participation on these same measures of female empowerment was also examined. Women’s empowerment has been measured as a latent variable encompassing a number of indicators that proxy for a woman’s autonomy, decision making power, and participation in household and societal decision making. Of the 1,798 households selected, 1,538 were target and 260 were non-target households. Among the target households, 905 (59%) participated in a credit program. The results have been consistent with the view that women’s participation in micro credit programs helps to increase women’s empowerment. Credit programs lead to women taking a greater role in household decision making, having greater access to financial and economic resources, having greater social networks, having greater bargaining power vis-a`-vis their husbands, and having greater freedom of mobility. They also tend to increase spousal communication in general about family planning and parenting concerns. The effects of male credit on women’s empowerment have been generally negative. However, the analysis of the relationship of subjectively measured empowerment to micro credit has added another piece of evidence suggesting that program-induced changes in women’s empowerment may be a powerful mechanism underlying the differential welfare impacts by gender of participant.

Robert M. Townsend (2005) has used variation in policies and institutional characteristics to evaluate the impacts of village-level microfinance institutions in rural Thailand in this paper. To identify impacts, they had used policies related to the successful/unsuccessful provision of services as exogenous variation in effective financial intermediation. They had found that institutions, particularly those with good policies, can promote asset growth, consumption smoothing and occupational mobility, and can decrease moneylender reliance. Specifically, cash-lending institutions—production credit groups and especially women’s groups—were successful in providing
intermediation and its benefits to members, while buffalo banks and rice banks are not. The study has examined a large set of heterogeneous village-level microfinance institutions, links impacts on households to variation in the characteristics and policies of these institutions, and evaluates whether the observed impacts of these types of intermediation are consistent with what theories predict. Furthermore, the two models together lead us to consider a broad definition of financial intermediation, including credit, savings, and informational advantages. The villages in the study were located in rural and semi-urban Thailand, a promising environment to look for the micro impacts of financial intermediation. That is, the Thai growth experience has been both qualitatively and quantitatively consistent with the above models of growth and financial intermediation. The fact that the institutions are operated at the village level is also a virtue. Since the institutions uncovered in the survey were promoted by a variety of agencies and ministries, the data shows a great deal of important variation in institutional types and policies. This variation is related to an institution’s success in providing financial services (lending, savings, and membership). The results of the analysis are predominantly consistent with theory.

**Nathalie Holvoet, (2005)** has studied the Impact of Microfinance on Decision-Making Evidence from South India and it has been found in this study that direct bank–borrower credit delivery does not challenge the existing decision-making patterns, regardless of whether men or women receive the credit. These findings change when credit is combined with financial and social group intermediation. The article has tested the impact of some of the suggested changes in programme features on one particular dimension of empowerment: decision-making agency. The author has explored the importance of the borrower’s gender and the lending technology for intra-household decision-making processes by using household survey data from South India. It has shown Women’s group membership seriously shifts overall decision-making patterns from norm-guided behavior and male decision-making using more joint and female decision-making. Longer-term group membership and more intensive training and group meetings strengthen these patterns. There is, overall, a remarkable shift from norm-following and male decision-making to more bargaining and sole female decision-making.

**Daniel Makina & Louisa M Malobola (2004)** studied the Impact assessment of microfinance programmes, including lessons from Khula Enterprise Finance. The
article discussed approaches to impact assessment of microfinance programmes
through a survey of empirical literature and findings of an impact study of Khula
Enterprise Finance, a South African wholesale finance institution that facilitates access
to financial services by small, medium and microenterprises. The article also noted the
impact assessment has now opened up to the needs of a mix of stakeholders and a wide
range of purposes. There has been a shift from a donor-driven approach to a
practitioner-led approach that emphasizes learning and improving practice. The impact
assessment could be categorised as a one-off, cross-sectional study whose objective has
been to prove impact so as to justify donor funding contracted to external experts. The
methodology adopted for impact assessment has largely been based on the following
four lines of enquiry. Qualitative enquiries using semi-structured interviews, and
discussions with stakeholders (intermediaries and clients) were held to determine the
impact of the intervention. The study indicates a positive impact on the beneficiaries of
microfinance, especially women in rural areas where they have been specifically
targeted. Furthermore, the impact showed that lower-income communities in rural areas
have been benefited less than their not-so poor counterparts in the urban areas, an
observation that is consistent with findings in other studies. Also, the study albeit with a
narrow, traditional donor-driven focus, shows that microfinance programmes have led
to improvements in the economic welfare of households, enterprise development and
increased empowerment of women. Notably, it has emphasized the importance of
targeting specific groups, as findings have shown that when this is not done, more men
are likely to benefit more than women.

Michael J. Hicks., (2004) has studied whether rural areas in the USA need
microfinance? In this paper the impact of loans directed primarily to small businesses
in West Virginia have been evaluated. In order to provide evidence on the efficacy of
microfinance this paper has evaluated the impact of loans directed primarily to small
businesses in West Virginia. The relatively strong functioning of capital markets at the
national level challenges the efficacy of microfinance programmes in the USA. Despite
that, these programmes have enjoyed considerable appeal in the USA. Whether or not
there is widespread failure of traditional lending practices to impact small business is
therefore an important question. The intention has been to test the aggregate
employment impact of these loans on small business. West Virginia is a natural
location for this type of analysis since it has both rural and urban areas and a
homogeneous set of state banking laws. The research has been designed to ask the crucial question to microfinance researchers and practitioners—did small loans affect employment in small business. The model has included a trend component that provides for a correction necessary for observing changes over time in a model that does not include random or time varying effects. The use of a common intercept is appropriate due to the short time period under observation and the necessity of including spatial interaction terms. The specification permitted both cross-sectional and time varying components to be estimated. The model also incorporated a spatial autocorrelation function. This spatial component is a common technique in regional analysis. The interpretation of the result is: First, the parameter estimated for human capital and physical capital are both typical of similar growth models. Notably, it is human capital that dominates inter-regional growth differences. Also, the larger firms benefit more from infrastructure growth as proxied by construction income. These results permit confidence in the model’s specification as they are supported by the bulk of existing growth research.

Anolin A.L.C (2004) have found in the study that Microfinance benefited women at individual level by increasing their self-confidence and mobility. At community level, it has enabled women to take up each other’s issues and highlight them. This case study has dealt with impacts of microfinance on Filipino women. It dealt with how microfinance had affected political participation of these women and how it affected the quality of political governance. The main challenges to women’s empowerment still remain, mainly due to deep rooted social and historical prejudices against women and age old social orders.

The Case of Swayam Shikshan Prayog in Microfinance and Women's Empowerment (2004) have studied in this paper that there is impact of SCG’s in empowering women. The creation of these groups has led to a social change in women. They collectively had taken up social issues such as alcoholism and household violence. Economically, these women from lowest strata of society have benefitted their families as income earners. This study discusses several methods used towards achieving this goal. This paper also covered the case study of savings and credit based microfinance programme of Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India with respect to empowerment of women in various districts of Maharashtra. The study also involved
study of groups of women belonging to different caste, who were organized into various SCG’s (Savings and Credit Groups).

EDA Rural Systems (2003) has studied the Impact Assessment of Microfinance. In this paper impact assessment of SIDBI Foundation of Micro Credit (SFMC)’s microfinance program has been studied. SFMC provides funds for several microfinance institutions. Most of these institutions follow Self Help Group model. The findings have indicated that in terms of savings and access to loans, contribution to household income and role in household decision-making, there is a positive direction of change, especially for women who are directly earning. In addition, the study has showed that women have gained self-respect and confidence from participating in the SHG. The research has also aimed to find out whether microfinance was actually playing a role in empowering women. However, in terms of gender equality, the impact has been at the most neutral, especially in North India, mainly due to cultural factors.

Ahmed H (2002) has argued in this paper that while conventional microfinance institutions have grown over time, Islamic microfinance institutions are yet to take off. The author has described a theoretical basis and operational framework for Islamic microfinance in this paper.

Cheston S & Kuhn L (2002) has found in this paper that in the current structure, microfinance does not address all the issues involving empowerment of women. However when properly designed, it can contribute more significantly to the issue has explained by citing a case for empowering women through participative governance e.g., Agricultural and Rural Development for Catanduanes, Incorporated as a success case for participative governance. He also studied the impact of microfinance in empowering women and its challenges and limitations.

L MAYOUX (2001) has studied about Poverty Elimination and the Empowerment of Women, ILO, Geneva. In this study she has studied definitions of women's empowerment, gender equality and equity. Also, the relationship between gender issues and sustainable enterprise development, and the implications for impact assessment of gender-focused strategies had been looked into. The paper concludes that even female-targeted development interventions may fail to make the contributions assumed unless gender equality and women's empowerment are strategically planned as an integral part of program design.
Tiyas Biswas (1990) has studied Women Empowerment through Micro Finance as a Boon for Development. Under the trickledown theory in the planning process it was expected that women would equally benefit along with men. This has been belied by actual development. The ninth plan document recognized that in spite of development measures and constitutional legal guarantees- women have lagged behind in almost all sectors. This paper has put forward how micro finance has received extensive recognition as a strategy for economic empowerment of women. This paper has sought to examine the impact of Micro finance with respect to poverty alleviation and socioeconomic empowerment of rural women. An effort has also been made to suggest the ways to increase women empowerment.

L Mayoux has discussed that there is a need for a serious rethink of many currently accepted 'tenets of Best Practice' in the light of the existing evidence of gender impact. The paper gives an overview of three contrasting paradigms of 'Best Practice', each of which have differing understandings of women's empowerment and the aims of microfinance – feminist empowerment paradigm, poverty alleviation paradigm and financial self-sustainability paradigm. This paper also argues that there is a need to make gender 'Best Practice' integral to microfinance design, rather than as a marginal and marginalized add-on to financial sustainability or poverty reduction. The paper challenges assumptions about the automatic benefits of microfinance for women.

BL Centre for Development Research and Action Sponsored by Planning Commission Government of India-Micro-Finance and Empowerment of Scheduled Caste Women. They have done an Impact Study of SHGs in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and have found out that the impact of micro-finance programme through SHG’s has been effective in making positive social change to all members, irrespective of the direct borrowers of the micro-credit. Importantly, in the rural context, the SHG’s have facilitated the poor, especially the women to overcome the existing constraints grappling the formal credit institutions. The groups have provided considerable social protection and income opportunities to the members. The SHG’s have acquired a prominent status in maximizing social and financial returns. The promotion of income generation activities for the poor rural women is perceived as a powerful medium to resolve several socio-economic problems such as reduction in poverty, provision of goods and services appropriate to local needs, redistribution of income and opportunities in the community, etc. SHG’s are necessary to overcome exploitation,
create confidence for the economic self-reliance of the rural poor, particularly among women who are mostly invisible in the social structure. These groups enable them to come together for a common objective and gain strength from each other to deal with exploitation, which they are facing, in several forms. A group becomes the basis for action and change. Significantly, credit is a major factor in boosting economic development if it is effectively utilized. The government’s recent initiatives to streamline credit operations and delivery system through micro-finance movement and strengthening and expansion of credit institutions (SHG’s) can definitely help in the revival of rural economy and empowerment of the rural poor. Micro-credit intervention programme has been well-recognized world over as an effective tool for poverty alleviation and improving socio-economic conditions of rural poor. In the above studies the impact of Microfinance has been studied. It has been observed that in some of the studies it has been concluded that loans do not permanently move participants out of poverty; however, they do reduce some of the vulnerabilities associated with poverty. The empowerment effects attributed to credit are murkier, but the impacts reported by the participants seem to have more to do with program elements than the loans per se. In few of the studies it has been found out that Micro-credit can incrementally increase the income and wealth of a household, and can have important impacts even when credit is provided without any other services. However, on the whole it has been observed that Microfinance increases the women empowerment by having greater social networks, having greater bargaining power vis-a`-vis their husbands, and having greater freedom of mobility. Women also tend to increase spousal communication in general about family planning and parenting concerns. And women feel empowered not only at the individual level by increasing their self-confidence and mobility but also at community level, it has enabled women to take up each other’s issues and highlight them.

A total of 90 related studies have been mentioned here whereas, the researcher has reviewed many more articles. There have been mixed responses but the overall picture is positive. Like for example SWAIN R, L. Mayoux, Salman Asim, Ranjula Bali and many have concluded that there is a Positive effect on women’s empowerment with microfinance schemes. The researcher has also concluded that microfinance has a positive effect on women empowerment.
There is a positive effect on empowerment on women with the number of years of microcredit membership which is also reflected in the studies conducted by Prema Basargekar, Chowdhury J, DEININGER, K. & LIU, Y. The researcher has also concluded the same result. Also, there is a positive effect on the Monthly Household expenditure on women’s empowerment and like-wise studies have been conducted by Jyoti Prakash Basu (2006), Sarahat Salma Chowdhury (2011) and others.

Also, with regards the small land holdings on women’s empowerment it has been studied by Sureswari Prasad Das (2009), Gerald Pollio (2010) and James Obuobie that there is a positive effect and similarly the researcher has also concluded the same in the current study.

The review of literature has provided great insights into the evaluating the effect of Micro-finance on Empowerment of rural women. This has helped to identify the gaps in existing literature and formulate the objectives for this study. The identified research gaps are provided in the next chapter.