



Microfinance Institutions and Women Entrepreneurs in Ethiopian Development Contexts,

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Abstract

Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) have been a focal point in supporting women entrepreneurs in developing economies, including Ethiopia. This study examines their role within Ethiopian development contexts. Qualitative research methods were employed through semi-structured interviews with female entrepreneurs, MFI managers, and relevant stakeholders to understand the dynamics between MFIs and women's business ventures. The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.72$) between the number of women clients served by MFIs and their overall business growth rates, indicating that higher client engagement leads to better economic outcomes for entrepreneurs. MFIs play a crucial role in empowering women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia through tailored financial services and support systems, fostering entrepreneurship and economic development. Policy recommendations include enhancing regulatory frameworks, improving access to technology, and increasing awareness of MFI benefits among potential clients to maximise their impact.

Keywords: *African geography, microfinance, gender economics, empowerment studies, development theory, participatory evaluation, community lending programmes*

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