



Microfinance Institutions and Women Entrepreneurs in Ethiopian Context: An Empowering Role Analysis

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Abstract

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) are increasingly recognised for their role in empowering women entrepreneurs globally. However, there is a lack of detailed qualitative studies focusing specifically on their impact in Ethiopia's extractives sector. A purposive sampling strategy was employed, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of women entrepreneurs and representatives from selected MFI branches operating in Ethiopia's extractives sector. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings reveal that MFIs have successfully facilitated access to financial resources for female entrepreneurs by providing microloans, training, and support networks, which are crucial for their business growth and sustainability. This study underscores the significant role of MFIs in empowering women entrepreneurs within Ethiopia's extractives sector through tailored interventions and supportive services. Policy makers should consider integrating MFI assistance programmes into existing entrepreneurship development initiatives to further enhance female economic empowerment.

Keywords: *African geography, Empowerment studies, Gender economics, Microfinance impact, Qualitative analysis, Small business development, Women's entrepreneurship*

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