Microfinance Institutions' Role in Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Ethiopia: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have been recognised as pivotal actors in promoting economic empowerment among women entrepreneurs in developing countries. A mixed methods approach was employed, integrating qualitative interviews with quantitative survey data collected from a sample of female entrepreneurs across different regions of Ethiopia. Analysis revealed that MFIs significantly enhanced credit access for women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas where financial inclusion was previously limited. The study underscores the critical role of MFIs in bridging gender disparities and fostering economic growth among women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. Policy makers should consider enhancing MFIs' outreach strategies to ensure greater coverage and support for female entrepreneurs across diverse geographical regions.

Keywords: *Ethiopia, Geographic Focus, Empowerment Studies, Feminist Theory, Mixed Methods Approach, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Analysis*

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