



Financial Inclusion Program and Household Decision-Making Power Transition to Future Female Generation: Empirical Evidence from Rural Bangladesh

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Abstract: Over the last few decades, poverty alleviation interventions have grown up with a reputation for improving women's empowerment paradigm in developing countries. The female-driven credit program is often criticized for evaluating women's empowerment by anticipating financial determinants, such as loan disbursement and repayment rate, women's investment and income, etc. However, the relationship between female borrowers' gender dynamics about household decision-making practices (HDMP) and how they transfer it to their daughters have never been explored. This study attempts to answer the theoretical dilemma of whether the inclusion of women in financial program(s) can improve the HDMP of the recipients' future female generations. A quasi-experimental research design was used to collect data from 100 female respondents (50 each from microcredit recipient and non-recipients) in the southwestern region of Bangladesh. Independent t-test results suggest that there were no significant differences between the respondents, their fathers, spouse and sons with regard to HDMP, except the respondents' mothers and their daughters. Hierarchical multiple regression indicating microfinance participant parents' HDMP had positively influenced the HDMP of their daughters. Nevertheless, future researchers are well-positioned to investigate how cultural norms and gender practices are qualitatively improving microfinance recipients' HDMP transferences to their future female generations.

Keywords: Microcredit; Gender; Household decision-making practices; Socialization; Generational transformation.

Introduction: After the Second World War, many of the newly independent countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America were struggling financially for long run colonial exploitation [1]. Governments in these countries struggled to accelerate financial mobilization programs, especially for the poor, who lack formal credit facilities. This situation had stretched existing social problems further, such as poverty and income inequalities for traditionally disadvantaged female population [2-5]. Rectifying on women's inequalities, the world's leading finance organizations, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, have advocated the introduction of non-state economic models (e.g. quickest yet most efficient and less expensive) that could handle women's poverty crisis in developing world [6,7]. In response, microcredit programs – a non-collateral female-focused small-scale money lending model – have started spreading over the globe to serve their target groups in generating their own income since the 1980s [8,9]. Nevertheless, consequent global reputations and success stories (e.g. world microcredit summit held in Washington DC in 1997 followed by UN declaration of microcredit year in 2005) of this microcredit revolution awarded the industry with a Noble Prize in Peace when Professor Yunus and his Grameen Bank were nominated for it back in 2006 [10,11].

Bangladesh, one of the most densely populated countries of the world, is squeezing 152.5 million people, half of them are women, in an area of 1,47,570 Km² [12]. In many cases, traditional socio-cultural values and practices, together with gender differentiation, have nurtured women as second-class citizens, enjoying very few opportunities, and they are regularly discriminated within the private and public spheres of social life [13-15]. Women are forced to remain at home and to conduct unpaid labor, allocated either in non-farming or home-based non-formal activities [16,17]. Fighting these socio-cultural difficulties, enthusiasts of microcredit outreach with

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an assumption that operating microcredit would enhance women's self-sufficiency as well as mobility, and eventually capitalize their improved status to make decisions in their households [13,14,18-20]. Scholars have argued that women's lack of access to financial capital is a major obstacle to empowerment as well as equality with men [21-23]. Government organizations (GOs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and other development partners in many low-income countries, therefore, introduced microcredit programs [24], because, apart from addressing women's plight, it is considered as market-friendly and potentially sustainable mechanism for raising 'growth elasticity of poverty reduction' [25]. Hence, microcredit programs targeted women as they were more likely to be credit-constrained, having limited involvement in the labor force, and most importantly, they have an unfair share of authority in household decision-making process [24]. The classical issues of development focused only on economic growth or income-generating activities (IGAs) as remedies to women's development. Now, the intensions and perspectives have changed as economic growth has to consider increasing 'human choices' as well as 'democratic practices' at public and private life to count development [26]. Promoting an egalitarian gender attitude at household level is one of the key indicators of the holistic model of development. Microcredit models of development, in this regard, promote the 'distribution of educational and occupational resources' as well as enlarge 'greater access to educational and occupational resources' for women's choices of personal, professional, political, and educational development [26]. Notwithstanding, the educational and occupational choices are significantly connected to a cultural process, whereby human learning transfers specific gender attributes to an individual's gender roles, such as mothers to take care of their children or involving in unpaid domestic labor where men are meant to be absent. Because one way or the other the discriminatory gender attributes that survives for generations is caused by (re)production, transference and performance of gender roles within the household.

Evaluating microcredit model and developing a gender-egalitarian attitude in borrower's family, this paper investigated if women's microcredit participation is significantly improving their participation in the household decision-making practices (HDMP) for them as well as for their daughter(s) in the family. This study is a sociological contribution towards understanding women's microcredit participation and their intergenerational influence on daughter's HDMP in the context of Bangladesh.

Literature review: The microcredit industry promulgates with an assumption that women's access to working capital as well as training mobilizes their productive capacity to alleviate poverty and maximize economic output [27,28], and satisfies household requirements, both socially and financially [29,30]. Apart from economic mobilization, the weekly group meetings, organized by microcredit institutions (MCIs), expand the recipients' knowledge about the world beyond their households, and subsequently allow them networking and sharing experiences regarding socioeconomic, politico-cultural as well as legal aspects [22,24,31,32]. Since its inauguration, nearly 80 percent of the villages in Bangladesh are covered under microcredit programs [33], and recently benefiting about 48.89 million recipients with the lion's share of (91%) women among them [34]. The socioeconomic empowerment talks and microcredit programs in Bangladesh connect substantial factor to bring changes, however, not equal at all levels in society. Women's involvement and contribution in IGAs allowed them to take control – partial or full – over household income and loans, and to make decisions or to express opinions, which were vested solely on their husbands [16,35,36]. Evidences showed that increased intra-household bargaining power of female borrowers subsequently decreases their exposure to domestic violence and threat of divorce [24,35,37,38], which signifies development of egalitarian attitude among women. Moreover, it was observed that development of egalitarian decision-making within households eventually increases consumption of nutritious foods, availing better health facilities, hygiene sanitation and safe water, recreational facilities and better quality of life [39-42]. Improving egalitarian attitude has also changed women's perceptions and attitudes about gender differentiation and socialization, such as reducing the preference for son, emphasizing on the educational attainment and opposing strongly against early marriage for daughters [13,37]. Female recipients of microcredit were also found to instruct their daughters to behave politely and speak softly, simultaneously advised them to protest against harassment of any form at or outside home settings [35-37]. So, it is evident that microcredit programs, apart from socioeconomic and politico-cultural empowerment, can influence gender socialization process of the microcredit recipients. On the

contrary, there are some studies suggesting appalling outcomes of microcredit exposure, such as male control over female loans [28,43-45], new forms of domestic violence [46-48], increase of female debt, as well as MCIs initiated desperate loan recovery strategies, including public shaming, defaulter's housebreaking [10,49,50]. Answering why economic emancipation is still struggling to incur women's empowerment, many of the researchers (see Ahmed [51], Karim [10,49], Kabeer [28,45,52], Rahman [50,53]) held the presence of patriarchy responsible for women's subjugated status within their household. Despite their improved economic self-sufficiency and better contribution in household well-being, female recipients are presumed to gain authority to confront patriarchy, recent research findings (see Chin [44], Murshid [46,48], Murshid et al. [47], Paprocki [54], Karim[10]) show little evidence of women's successful confrontation with patriarchy. In fact, female borrowers in Bangladesh found justifying male domination (e.g. wife-beating, mobility confinement, control over money) in many cases [44,55].

Although empowerment, a process of improving the socio-economic and politico-cultural status of an individual, is profoundly generated from social structure, researchers have overlooked the basic construction of borrower's gender roles, while presenting both positive and negative feedbacks on MCIs program on participation. Analyzing how the gender attributes are constituted in borrower's role is equally important to know the ways they have been transferring these roles to their future generations. This is, therefore, important to examine the impacts of economic development model (e.g., microcredit) on gender empowerment and equal treatment between sexes [26], as well as how potentially gender-egalitarian attributes are transferred towards generations (if there is any), particularly for the upcoming female population.

The relevance of gender socialization through microcredit in the context of Bangladesh: Research evidences from different societies exhibit that most of the society liked to practice the supremacy of boys over girls, both traditionally and historically [56], and the separation begins with the birth of a child where a primary question arises, 'is it a boy or a girl' [57]. However, economic empowerment approaches (e.g. microcredit) were directed to restore women's equality parallel to men and often praised for continuing with an egalitarian attitude within the household. This current research incorporates gender socialization theory emancipating how microcredit participation has influenced the recipients on transferring egalitarian gender-roles to their future female generations. Gender socialization theory is developed and expanded by many scholars, such as Cooley [58], Mead [59], Beauvoir [60], Goffman [61]. Cooley [58], for example, explained that gender roles are embedded in developing an individual's 'social self,' which is entirely a social process and matter of experience, and these experiences are by-products of the surrounding environment. Cooley identified this as internalization through the socialization process. In his theory, he explains that 'self' develops with the imagination of other's roles, and then to internalize those roles within itself and it starts from early childhood. Cooley described that children develop their self-understanding by incorporating others' roles [59]. He advocated that the 'self' is a continuum of a social process that begins from birth and continues onwards with surrounded social settings. In this social process, past experiences are always important for future arrangement, and it initiates a kind of habitual reaction during social interaction.

Beauvoir [60] explained that becoming women is a process that surpasses the biological, psychological, economic, or sexual doctrine, rather the civilization as a whole regulates this process to specify 'male,' and 'them' (female), where who does not have male character and potentiality within is 'described as feminine.' She claimed that 'one becomes a woman, but always under a cultural compulsion to become one' and this compulsion has not resulted from biological stimuli, and yet, it is not necessary to be a female to have the identity like females. Women have gender identity signified as 'the other,' by what Beauvoir meant that women construct their identity as 'negative of man,' lack against the masculine identity, and what man has within they lack off [62]. Goffman [61] used the term 'sex-class' (male/female) as a code that appears in all societies by observing the new-born baby's genitalia. He argued that an individual is sorted into male/female classes – a way of characterizing an individual, known as gender and the ways of characterizing a society can be called sexual subculture'. He claimed that sex code is the primary foundation to build social interaction within the structure, which 'establishes the conceptions of individuals have concerning their fundamental human nature' [61]. Whereby, 'male' and 'female' are determined by their biological differences and abilities with social conditioning. Different societies, however, establish different ideas and ways of

attributing essential differences over the sex class, and this is how the ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity,’ based on ‘objective differences between sex classes,’ come into practice. Such as, on biological ground, female breastfeed baby, whereas male cannot, which culturally extended some attachment of women to reside household sphere, and with such limitations or advantages, males were significantly placed to perform mostly out of household boundary [61].

This paper employed the understanding of gender socialization on gender role development and transference to the future generation in Bangladeshi community. By tradition, patriarchal society is dominant in Bangladesh, where preconception worked as ‘men are better than women’, and parents can rely more on sons than their daughters [63]. This preconception works simultaneously with other factors, such as social insecurity, sociocultural disapproval of mobility as well as violence against women at home or outside and so on, that led the parents to ‘keep their girls within the four-walls of home’ [63]. Microcredit, considered as one of the catalysts for women empowerment [27,28,64], is cherished overwhelmingly for increasing women’s asset, knowledge, motivation and capacity in social surface [33,64]. Empirical studies, in Bangladesh, shows that women are empowered gradually through participation in microcredit programs, at socioeconomic domain [30,65], and they are contributing to changing the perception regarding traditional female subordination/male domination [24,35,37]. There is, indeed, a research gap between the theoretical understanding and the empirical research context apparent in Bangladesh, hence, raising a fundamental question regarding how well the economic empowerment model can possibly reshape or change the existing cultural practices, such as does a female beneficiary play a significant part in changing the stereotyped role in HDMP? And, does microcredit participation significantly influence the construction of egalitarian gender roles about HDMP for future female generations, the daughter(s)?

Materials & Method:

Study location and participants: This study was carried out in two Upazilas (sub-district) of Khulna district, Bangladesh, namely *Batiaghata* and *Dumuria*, considering the number of operational MCIs that existed in these areas. This study was quasi-experimental in nature assessing the impact of microcredit exposure on social learning of gender-stereotyped decision-making process. Hence, two groups of individuals were picked – an experiment group (microcredit recipients [MCR]) and a control group (microcredit non-recipients [MCNR]) – considering certain specifications: (i) a mother of two living children, one male and another female child of 15 or more years old; (ii) having a brother of her own, younger or older; and (iii) a permanent resident of the selected areas (to avoid spatial variance in sociocultural practice). Based on the aforesaid criteria, a total 100 women, 50 for each group, were selected following stratified random sampling from an inventory list of 181 eligible women by maintaining intra-group homogeneity of the control variable as well as inter-group heterogeneity. The involvement in microcredit program has been taken as the action variable to compare between MCR and MCNR.

Procedures: Based on the theoretical understanding, e.g., Cooley [58], Mead [59], Beauvoir [60], Goffman [61], and empirical literature, e.g., Nasreen and Tate [66], Crespi [57], Blakemore and Centers [67], Kabeer [45], Karim [10], an interview schedule in English considering relevant variables was developed and finalized through pre-test, and used for data collection. Both groups of literature designed to understand the gender role socialization aspect and context of developing household decision-making process for women. Microcredit related researches, e.g., Pitt and Khandker [13], Kabeer [28], Hashemi et al. [22], Rahman [53], were the basis of incorporating microcredit related information in the interview schedule. However, Bangladeshi cultural practices and perspectives were also considered during interview schedule development and creating categories under the question sets. After developing an interview-schedule, one pre-test was done to see the field survey condition and to assess the efficacy of the research tool, whether it required further modification or not. Afterward, the interview-schedule was translated into Bangla considering the respondents’ language, level of education and comfort zone to answer. Data were collected at their home settings from January to March 2014.

Measures: Socioeconomic background: Socioeconomic background, in general, refers to the socioeconomic condition of an individual. A wide range of variables was considered, in various studies (such as Pitt and Khandker

[13], Kabeer [28], Hashemi et al. [22], Rahman [53]), to assess the socioeconomic background. In this study, however, the socioeconomic background was evaluated by participants' age, their religious affiliation, year of schooling, monthly personal as well as household income, type and size of family.

Microcredit status: Active microfinance recipients (experimental group) and a group of non-recipients (control group) were selected as participants for this research. Two groups of respondents were coded separately in SPSS dataset. We chose women with two children (above 15 years of age) of both sexes, assuming it would help us to understand best the experience-based practicing and (re)producing of HDMP. These two different groups helped to understand how microcredit respondents practice HDMP and transfer to their future female generations. This comparison with a non- participants group explains if there is any impact of microcredit participation on HDMP of respondents' daughters.

Household decision-making practices (HDMP): In our survey, we included nine questions, measured by 5-point Likert-scale, about HDMP regarding various aspects, including 'daily and monthly shopping', 'selling or buying land property', 'education and marriage of children' and so on. Responses include respondents' husbands' and parents' decision-making practices provided (based on their experience) by the respondents. Respondents were familiar with the nine decision-making areas, and they practice this in their day-to-day life. Therefore, in this study, we consider respondents providing husbands' and parents' scores as reliable for documentation.

Analysis: We coded and computerized the statistical data in SPSS software (version 25) for further analysis. Data were analyzed in three consecutive but complementing stages. At the first stage, the personal details of the respondents, such as their age, religion, education, income, household income, type and size of family as well as their status of being recipients or non-recipients of microcredit, were presented by descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean and standard deviation. In the second stage, the mean difference between MCR and MCNR, their parents, spouses and their offspring with regard to HDMP was drawn by executing independent samples *t*-test. Additionally, Cohen's [68] 'd' was reported to assess the effect size of *t*-test test. In the third and final stage, hierarchical multiple regression was performed as it weighs the values added by each block of independent variables, entered stepwise, after controlling other predictors at its own point of entry [69,70]. The hierarchical multiple regression is generally described as equation (1).

$$Y' = A + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e \quad \text{eq. 1}$$

Here, Y' stands for the predicted value of the criterion variable. A is the value of the y -intercept when all predictor variables have values of 0. The values of β are the best fitting coefficients assigned to each determinant during the regression, whereas the values of X_k are the predictors and e represents the residuals or error. For this study, we used three blocks of hierarchical multiple regression equations in which the first block includes the socioeconomic variables as predictors, while the second and third blocks include the recipient/non-recipient status and HDMP variables, respectively (see equation 2-4).

$$\text{Model 1} - Y' = A + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + e \quad \text{eq. 2}$$

$$\text{Model 2} - Y' = A + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + e \quad \text{eq. 3}$$

$$\text{Model 2} - Y' = A + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10} + \beta_{11} X_{11} + e \quad \text{eq. 4}$$

Ethical consideration: Before designing the data collection tool, all the risks and ethical issues were taken under consideration. The data collection tool avoided any question offensive to the respondents. Safety protocols were also used during the data collection, and consent was provided at the top of the priority list. Informed consent was attained before conducting interview of the respondents, providing a statement and purpose of the research, and explaining respondents' right to withdraw themselves from the interview as well as data before the findings have been published for academia.

The validity of the research: This study explains an understanding of microcredit participation and household decision-making practices among women but by no means conclusive evidence for further research. The study made every effort by using a random technique to understand the variety of microcredit and non-microcredit respondents'

gender roles in rural Bangladesh. However, the perception must not be generalized to a wider population of Bangladesh, which may require a larger sample and varieties of location for further study. The current research findings, however, may be used as a potentially important reference to compare results on microcredit participation in a wider variance of academic research.

Results: As shown in Table 1, no major difference was observed between MCR and MCNR groups. The average age of both MCR and MCNR was between 43 to 45 years, and more than three-fourths of the respondents of both MCR (78%) and MCNR (86%) were Muslims and the rests followed Sanatan religion. Likewise, more than 80% of both MCR and MCNR had nuclear families with up to 5 members for each household. The average year of schooling of MCR (3.8 years) was relatively lower than that of MCNR (4.3 years). However, the former reportedly had a higher monthly income than the latter. In contrast, the MCNR had more family income (BDT 11,128) than the MCR (BDT 8,725), signifying their better socioeconomic background.

Table 1. Background Information of the Respondents.

Variables	MCR (% N=50)	MCNR (% N=50)	Statistics <i>M & SD</i>
Age			
≤43	64.0	48.0	44.98 & 5.65
44-53	24.0	44.0	
≥54	12.0	8.0	
Religion			
Islam	78.0	86.0	4.32 & 3.43
Sanatan	22.0	14.0	
Education			
Illiterate	26.0	26.0	4.32 & 3.43
Primary (Class I-V)	44.0	34.0	
Secondary (Class VI-X)	26.0	38.0	
Higher Secondary (Above Class X)	4.0	2.0	
Income			
≤999	92.0	98.0	94.0 & 568.71
1,000 – 9,999	8.0	2.0	
≥10,000	58.0	52.0	
Type of family			
Nuclear	84.0	92.0	4.60 & 1.42
Extended/Joint	16.0	8.0	
Size of family			
≤5	80.0	86.0	4.60 & 1.42
6-8	16.0	10.0	
≥ 9	4.0	4.0	
Income of household			
≤19,999	42.0	40.0	11,128.0 & 7,597.34
≥ 20,000	0.0	8.0	

Notes: MCR = Microcredit recipient; MCNR = Microcredit non-recipient
M = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation

An independent *t*-test was executed to differentiate between MCR and MCNR with regard to the HDMP of their parents, spouses and offspring (see Table 2). Findings suggest that there were no significant differences between the respondents, their fathers, spouse and sons with regard to HDMP, except the respondents' mothers and their daughters. For the respondents' mothers, there was a significant difference, $t(98) = -2.073$, $p < 0.05$, with mothers of the MCR ($M = 31.92$, $SD = 4.58$) enjoyed more decision-making power than the mothers of the MCNR ($M = 29.42$, $SD = 7.18$) within their households. The magnitude of mean difference (mean difference = -2.50, 95% CI: -4.89 to -0.10) was large ($\eta^2 = -0.20$). Likewise, the difference between the respondents' daughters was significant, $t(98) = -3.007$, $p < 0.01$, with daughters of MCR ($M = 22.56$, $SD = 6.08$) participated more in HDMP than the daughters of MCNR ($M = 19.10$, $SD = 5.39$), and the magnitude of mean difference (-3.46, 95% CI: -5.74 to -1.18) was large ($\eta^2 = -0.29$).

Table 2. Differences between MCR and MCNR in Household Decision-Making Practices.

Variables	Status	N	Statistics		t-test	η^2
			M (SD)			
HDMP of fathers	MCNR	50	44.98	5.65	1.516	0.15
	MCR	50	43.06	6.94		
HDMP of mothers	MCNR	50	29.42	7.18	-2.073**	-0.20
	MCR	50	31.92	4.58		
HDMP of respondents	MCNR	50	30.42	6.80	-0.960	-0.10
	MCR	50	31.58	5.16		
HDMP of spouses	MCNR	50	19.34	3.55	-1.766	-0.17
	MCR	50	20.68	4.01		
HDMP of daughters	MCNR	50	19.10	5.39	-3.007***	-0.29
	MCR	50	22.56	6.08		
HDMP of sons	MCNR	50	19.58	6.20	-1.324	-0.13
	MCR	50	21.24	6.32		

Notes: ***: Significant at 0.01%; **: Significant at 0.05%

MCNR: Microcredit non-recipients; MCR: Microcredit recipients; *M*: Mean; *SD*: Standard deviation; η^2 : Cohen's 'd'

Table 3 presents the results of hierarchical multiple regression predicting HDMP of daughters in three models. Step 1, where control variables were added, however, was not statistically significant, $F(7, 92) = 0.249$, $p > 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.09$, suggesting that this model collectively explained only 9 percent of the variance in the HDMP of daughters. Among the socio-economic variables added, only religion had a significant association with the daughter's HDMP both in model 1 and step 2 of hierarchical multiple regression. Adding the microcredit recipient/non-recipient status in step 2 increased R^2 by 0.10 percent with the overall model remaining significant, $F(8, 91) = 2.654$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.19$ (an increase from 0.09 in step 1), suggesting that the affiliation with MCIs played a decisive role in daughters' HDMP in Bangladesh. Adding the HDMP of mothers, respondents and their spouses in the third and final step, the model yielded 0.37 percent with overall model remaining significant, $F(11, 88) = 10.227$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.56$ (an increase from 0.19 in step 2), indicating parental HDMP positively influenced the HDMP of their daughters.

Table 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting HDMP of Daughters.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
R^2 (ΔR^2)	0.091	0.189 (0.098)	0.561 (0.372)
ΔF	1.321	10.976***	24.859***
<i>Step 1 (Control variables – Socioeconomic background)</i>			
Age	-0.068 (0.103)	-0.001 (0.100)	-0.016 (0.075)
Religion	-0.267*** (1.562)	-0.241** (1.488)	-0.120 (1.135)
Education	0.015 (0.178)	0.040 (0.170)	0.089 (0.129)
Income	0.070 (0.001)	0.022 (0.001)	-0.022 (0.000)
Household income	0.145 (0.000)	0.232 (0.000)	0.034 (0.000)
Type of family	0.067 (2.693)	0.084 (2.560)	-0.171 (1.990)
Size of family	-0.016 (0.646)	-0.114 (0.626)	-0.212 (0.477)
<i>Step 2 (Recipients versus non-recipients)</i>			
Status		0.342*** (1.229)	0.204** (0.948)
<i>Step 3 (Household decision-making practices)</i>			
Mothers			0.077 (0.089)
Respondents			0.521*** (0.093)
Spouses			0.184** (0.133)

Notes: ***: Significant at 0.01%; **: Significant at 0.05%

β : Standardized coefficients; *SE*: Standard error

Discussion: The study findings are analyzed with gender socialization theory to discuss how mother's gender learning significantly influences the gender attributes of future female generations in rural Bangladesh. Professor Yunus, one of the forerunners of microcredit in Bangladesh, propagated that the potential development of children is possible by engaging women in microcredit programs. He hypothesized that improving microcredit recipients' quality of life will improve their children's quality of life, because women contribute more to their children compared to men [71,72]. This discussion answers the question whether the positive gender attributes can potentially be attributed to microcredit beneficiaries' HDMP roles compared to the non-beneficiaries, and whether the changing HDMP of beneficiaries contributing to the egalitarian gender construction for the next female generation.

The findings of the current study suggest that there is no significant difference with regards to HDMP between the microcredit recipients' father, spouse and son with non-microcredit recipients. However, the microcredit borrowers' daughters and mothers had better HDMP at home compared to non-borrowers. This finding corroborates with those of the scholars who reported that taking part in microcredit programs brings qualitative changes in women's empowerment determinants, such as in decision-making practices [13,14,21,23,73]. Although this finding is analyzed based on small-scale quantified facts, it further contributes to the gender socialization perspective that the female microcredit recipients observed their mothers having a better HDMP, which, in turn, may have helped them conceptualize better HDMP for women. Therefore, they were found practicing and transferring better HDMP to their daughters compared to the MCNRs. This finding further opens research option(s) for future large-scale quantitative research and in-depth qualitative studies. The future investigation may look at if early life gender socialization process and cultural learning could play a significant role in conceptualizing HDMP of the (microcredit recipient) women in rural Bangladesh? Or, if financial inclusion programs, like microcredit are able to improve women's HDMP alone? Based on our quantitative analysis, the multivariate findings contribute to the microcredit literature, which is respondents' socioeconomic background such as age, education, income, types of family or family size collectively, with an exception of religion, had no significant impact on their future female generation's HDMP. However, combining respondents' microcredit participation, HDMP (of their spouse, mother and own) and socioeconomic variables were significantly influencing their daughters HDMP. No such studies have probably looked at what types of model bring significant impact on respondents' future female generations HDMP. We suggest that women's empowerment is neither static nor an issue for a single generation. Rather, women's empowerment is a multidimensional approach [28,74,75] and it must be carried out and transferred towards the future. Because, women's empowerment is culturally constituted and traditionally conceptualized within the gender roles [60-62], therefore, it is also important to understand how the multidimensional improvement is carried out to the future generations. Generally, mothers in patriarchal societies experience and internalize gender stereotyped household decision-making roles from their parents as well as from their surroundings since childhood, and they repeat the same to the next generation. However, changes in quality of life may have brought changes in women's perception and practices on HDMP. In this regard, our study finding showed that microcredit participation could positively change the perception and practice of recipient women's HDMP and they could transfer the changes in a positive way to their future female generations.

The results of the current study showed that microcredit recipients' gender learning from parent's house and practices in the current about HDMP have significant influence on developing gender role of their daughter(s). The result further indicates an association, but not conclusive, that respondents' microcredit participation has an impact on positive gender role development to their future generations. Supporting literatures suggest that women participating in microcredit program play a significant role in improving their children's quality of life [13,37,73]. Our findings also corroborate this fact of improving daughter's HDMP among the microfinance participants, however, not without its limitations. A key limitation of our finding is that we draw our assumption from quantitative results on some cultural aspects of women's empowerment process, such as gender tradition, gender roles and socialization process. The second limitation is that the responses were taken only from the mothers (MCR and MCNR) about their parents, spouses and children. However, a holistic approach of multiple groups of

respondents, such as parents, spouses and children, would provide better understanding of multiple realities and facts hidden in the domain of HDMP. Therefore, we further suggest an in-depth query for future researchers to investigate how cultural factors and economic participation could jointly anticipate women's HDMP including multiple layer of respondents such as parents, spouses and children. Acknowledging all the limitations, we assume that this study generates an optimistic outcome for microcredit industry and its female recipients that microcredit participation could be assumed as an emancipatory economic approach for women which could provide significant impact on changing the strong cultural hold of patriarchy, such as transferring positive decision-making practices on respondents' future female generation. This study provides a perspective that apart from women's socio-economic states, multiple dimensions of empowerment attributes need to be included to associate women's HDMP. Further studies would find this study useful to conceptualize women's household decision-making process and its transference to future female generations, combining multiple layers of concept and variable.

Conclusions: In explaining the findings in relevance to gender socialization theory, this paper showed that microcredit participation has significantly improved the HDMP of respondents' daughters. MCR's early life gender learning on HDMP, considering their mother's HDMP, was documented better than that of MCNR's mother. Although the learning and practicing HDMP was developed following a cultural process, microcredit participation is significantly influencing the HDMP of recipient's daughter as they were found developing better HDMP on their gender attributes. This quantitative study reveals interesting findings on microcredit participation and its impact on the stronghold of patriarchal culture. Specifically, the findings support the positive argument made on microcredit program that financial inclusion program is a solution to women's empowerment process, such as reducing gender-based discrimination on HDMP of women. This study infers a significant addition to the existing literature that the women's empowerment process claimed by the microcredit industry could be carried further to the respondents' future female generation. We, therefore, suggest an extensive sample based quantitative query as well as in-depth qualitative investigation on this issue.

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