

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

MICROCREDIT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE “WOMEN IN  
DEVELOPMENT” PROGRAM IN LA DADE-KOTOPON MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

By

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DECLARATION

I, Dorcas Awonnate Adaawen hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work towards the award of a Master of Arts degree in Development Studies and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person which has been accepted for the award of any other degree by any university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in text.

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## ABSTRACT

Microcredit has been identified to be an effective tool for empowering women. Evidence from the literature suggests that access to microcredit has the power to improve their productive capacity. The La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly introduced the “Women in Development” program to provide credit to women groups to expand on their income generating activities.

The main objective of this study was to assess the effect of microcredit on women empowerment. The study also sought to investigate the type or kind of income generating activities beneficiaries engaged in. Finally, the study sought to assess the challenges beneficiaries encountered in managing and using their credit. The study employed the survey method using structured questionnaires and interview guide. It also used face-to-face interviews and in-depth interviews. All the 100 beneficiaries took part in the face-to-face interviews and 8 beneficiaries were engaged in the in-depth interviews.

The results revealed that access to microcredit helps expand the income generating activities of the beneficiaries. It was also established from the study that access to microcredit affected beneficiaries’ decision-making positively in terms of decisions regarding their own health, children’s education and health, making purchases and decisions regarding their mobility. Access to credit has also improved upon the family and social relationships of these women.

A major challenge encountered by the women was the size of the credit, which affects the progress of their Income Generating Activities (IGAs). It was therefore recommended that government should increase funding to District Assemblies to enable them increase the amount of loans given to them. **Key words:** Microcredit, Income Generating Activities, Empowerment, LaDMA.

## DEDICATION

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## **List of Acronyms**

GAMA	Greater Accra Metropolitan Area
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	Microfinance Institutions
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
PHC	Population and Housing Census
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHG	Self-help Group
UN	United Nations



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background to the Study

Women empowerment has been a global agenda for several decades but finally attracted world leaders attention in the year 2000 and 2015 when the UN drafted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) respectively. While goal 3 of the MDGs was meant to promote gender equality and empower women, SDG 5 aims at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (UN, 2000; UN, 2015 cited in Higgins 2013).

Even though women are said to constitute 50 percent of the world's population, about 70 percent of these women are poor (Dennis and Zuckerman, 2006). This could partly be associated with difficulty in accessing available opportunities like credit facilities, challenges of managing such facilities even if they are extended to them or difficulty in finding the most lucrative economic activity to invest in. Many researchers have also criticized the extension of micro-credit to women because they argue that the impact of micro-credit on women empowerment has not been convincing enough (Sahu and Das, 2007).

Women empowerment according to George (2014) is “the process by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and gender based discrimination against women in all institutions and structures of the society”. This clearly indicates that empowering women goes beyond financial and material sufficiency to their mental prowess and their ability to exercise same for their benefit and that of the society at large.

It is however important to note the role of financial empowerment in contributing to the progress of women in their communities.

The increasing enthusiasm to empower women and to ensure gender equality has led to the search for innovative strategies to contribute to women empowerment. Microcredit which refers to the advancement of small loans by registered institutions to the poor is proven to be one of the most innovative strategies for the empowerment of women (Yogendrarajah, 2012). Yogendrarajah opined that, there is a positive relationship between microcredit and women empowerment. According to the author, other factors such as training facilities, social awareness, advising regarding to the use of microcredit among others are said to also have some impacts on women empowerment.

Graflund (2013) found in the Tangail district in Bangladesh that microcredit was a strong determinant of women empowerment especially in the area of household decision making. Despite the similarities between his findings and other studies like Kabeer (2001) and Holvoet (2005) as cited in his study, they pointed out the need to explore how microcredit impact the different dimensions of women's empowerment like freedom of mobility. The relationship between years of membership and women empowerment in the future was another gap identified by Graflund.

Access to microcredit appears to be one of the major challenges that rural or urban poor women face in developing countries. After reviewing the empirical literature on women empowerment, Awaworyi (2014) found access to credit and length of involvement in microcredit programmes to have no significant associations with female empowerment indicators such as mobility, decision

making, financial control, awareness and women assets. One major gap they discovered in their study was the lack of empirical literature on the impact of microcredit on women empowerment.

There have also been some studies which have proposed some strategies such as literacy and numeric training, training in legal literacy, rights and gender awareness and uniformity in the extension of financial assistance among others to improve access and efficiency in the utilization of micro-credit (Sahu and Das, 2007).

The La Dade-Kotopon Municipality in their attempt to empower women as well as curb unemployment in the municipality introduced a program called “Women in Development” which is aimed at offering soft loans to women groups engaged in income generating activities (IGAs) in order for them to expand them. The scheme is unique such that these credits do not attract any interest and also these women do not need collateral in order to access the loan. The Municipality also provide training and education for beneficiaries so as to ensure effective use of their loans.

Based on the above and the researchers own field experiences, it will be revealing to assess the extent to which the “Women in Development” program has contributed to women’s empowerment in the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

The agenda for the alleviation of poverty by 2030 might not succeed until the needed attention is given to efforts to empower women as indicated in the UN SDG 5. Poverty has been identified over the years as one of the world's biggest problems that need creative and innovative strategies to deal with. This concern has gained the attention of global leaders as it is captured in SDG 1 which is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030 (UN, 2015).

Presenting a microcredit report in 2007, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that, 133 million clients were able to access microcredit from over 3300 million microfinance institutions in 2006. They noted that 93 million of the clients were among the poorest when they took their first loan and a whopping 85 percent of these clients were women. The report further explains that microcredit plays a very critical role in the empowerment of women which have increased women participation and independence (ILO, 2007). According to the ILO, over 79 million of the poorest women in the world had benefited from microcredit by the end of 2006. They however opined that, despite the benefit of microfinance, their review of literature shows that, some women either have little or no control over their microcredit because their husbands or partners make decisions regarding the utilization of their credits.

Difficulty in accessing microcredit is another barrier to the utilization of microcredit in many rural communities. Barriers such as groups formation, mandatory savings accounts, collateral security and need for guarantors were proven to constitute a major barrier to accessing microcredit in the Asuogyaman district of the Eastern Region of Ghana (Appiah, 2011). Many more women in other

rural communities may be faced with these challenges which may constitute major barriers to their empowerment. This is because a condition like formation of groups before they can access microcredit from MFI may be too difficult and cumbersome. This according to the author may be due to the fact that these women are not related or do not know themselves before forming these groups hence making it insecure to guarantee for each other. Collateral security continue to be one of the major challenges bedeviling access to credit facilities especially among women in rural communities and those of the urban poor.

Appiah (2011) found that strategies such as training for women regarding management of microcredit and financial intermediation and enterprise development services were some strategies adopted by Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) to improve microcredit access and impact of clients. She however noted that there was still a huge gap as interest rates were high and most women were not given adequate information about these interest rates.

Another study in Ghana identified challenges with regards to microcredit repayments arguing that the period of repayment especially for first time creditors is relatively short (Asamoah, 2006). The author lamented that some women are given a period as short as bi-weekly or even weekly with the longest period being 36 months for those who have a track record of repaying. The author also observed that the impact of microcredit on its clients can be felt if Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) establish a link between them and formal financial institutions to facilitate a successful graduation of beneficiaries into the mainstream banking or into individual credit so as to increase their access to financial services.

Issues of women empowerment through microcredit have been one of the strategies employed by the La Dade-kotopon Municipal Assembly to reduce poverty and unemployment among under privileged women. They run a “Women in Development” Program, which has contributed to the expansion of beneficiaries IGAs. This program is however faced with challenges such as limited funds thereby limiting the number of women beneficiaries, delay in loan repayment on the part of beneficiaries and many others. The Municipality however, is putting up strategies to minimize these challenges. An assessment of microcredit and women empowerment in the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly with the main objective to assessing the effect of microcredit on women empowerment is deemed pivotal in discovering innovative initiatives to improve microcredit disbursement and utilization.

## 1.2 Justification of the Problem

In recent times the eradication of poverty has gained global prominence as world bodies such as the UN has prioritize this agenda in 2000 and 2015 when the MDGs and SDGs were being designed. Since then the search for sustainable answers to the alleviation of poverty, ensuring gender equality and empowering women has been unrelenting. The uneven distribution of poverty in different parts of the globe and among the different sexes with the greater burden experience in less developed countries and among women makes the phenomenon worthy of global attention.

Globally, over 17 million women live in poverty in 2010 and 44 percent constituting 7.5 million of these women live in extreme poverty. With a rise from 5.9 percent in 2009 to 6.3 percent in

2010, black and Hispanic women as well as single women are said to suffer the greater burden of the phenomenon (National Women Law Centre, 2011).

In the United states for instance while poverty among natives is found to have reduced significantly, it is said to be increasing among immigrants with very small decreases in immigrants who have stayed relatively longer in the United States (Rapheal and Smolensky, 2009). Their findings indicate that, poverty is more prevalent in vulnerable populations than those who are somewhat economically empowered. Their findings also confirm the relationship between one's geographical location and his/her risk of poverty.

Even though sub-Saharan Africa have been experiencing a decline in poverty in percentage terms, absolute figures has shown that the number of people living in extreme poverty, the burden of which is experienced by women has been on the rise (UN, 2010). The UN noted that the distribution even in sub-Saharan Africa has been uneven with Gabon experiencing the lowest of 4.8 percent as at 2005 and Liberia the highest of 86.1 percent within the same time period.

Anyanwu (2010) found in his study on the “gendered analysis of poverty” in Nigeria that, about 72% of the population living in rural Nigeria were living below the poverty line. This was an increase from the 1992 figure of 48 percent. The burden of this poverty according to Anyanwu was experienced among female headed households in 1980 but by 1985 his analysis revealed that male headed households had demonstrated an increase in poverty levels up until 1996. The area of

residence also has a strong association with poverty as those in rural parts of Nigeria were found to be poorer than those in urban Nigeria (Anyanwu, 2010).

The inequality in terms of poverty that exist between men and women was highlighted strongly in Awumbila's study in 2006 when she explored the implications for poverty reduction strategies on gender equality and poverty in Ghana. She opined that gender inequality has been one of the major setbacks to sustainable development and calls for any strategy aimed at ensuring development to prioritize gender equality, equity and women empowerment (Awumbila, 2006).

The La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly of the Greater Accra region is one of the few municipalities that has prioritize the empowerment of women through microcredit. Even though about one hundred women have benefited from the women in development microcredit disbursed by the district, there are still some challenges that militate against the success of the programme. The short time with which the microcredit must be paid, the problem of limited funds as well as other conditions attached to the microcredit are some of the barriers to the success of the program. Difficulty in managing the credit facilities and the lack of empirical data to evaluate the impact of the microcredit on women empowerment as well as the economic activities women invest the microcredit advance to them and the level of profitability of such investment has been a major challenge that the district faces. These and many other problems bedeviling microcredit and women empowerment makes the topic worthy of studying in the La Dade-Kotopon municipality.

### 1.3 Research Questions

- What income generating activities do women in La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly invest their micro-credit in?
- What challenges do women in managing micro-credit in La Dade-Kotopon face?
- What is the effect of micro-credit on women in La Dade-Kotopon Municipality?

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problem identified, the study seeks to investigate the following objectives.

#### 1.4.0 General Objective

To assess the effect of microcredit on women empowerment among women beneficiaries in La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly.

#### 1.4.1 Specific Objectives

The study seeks to find solution to the following specific objectives;

- Investigate the types or kinds of income generating activities the micro-credit beneficiaries engage in
- Assess the challenges faced by women in managing/using micro-credit
- Examine the effect of micro-credit on women's empowerment.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study shall be of importance to the La Dade-Kotopon Municipality, Non-governmental organizations, Philanthropies, donor agencies, residents of the municipality, academia and Microfinance institutions.

### *1.5.0 The Municipal Assembly*

The District Assembly is responsible for the implementation of policies formulated at the top in the district. They will find results of the study useful because the objectives of the study are to explore economic activities beneficiaries of microcredit engage in, the impact of microcredit on women and the difficulties women face in managing such credit facilities. The district can use results of this study to improve upon their “Women in Development” programme to make it more accessible and beneficial to their clients.

### *1.5.1 NGOs*

These are organizations that base their programmes on empirical data to implement interventions. Findings of the study is useful to these organizations because challenges with regards to access to microcredit and the extent to which microcredit contribute to women empowerment in the district as well as the economic viability of how women invest their microcredits is identified. These results will serve as empirical information for the training and retraining of women on how to utilize the credit facilities to their own benefits.

### *1.5.2 Donor agencies*

These are development partners who always want their support to be used in areas that are most beneficial. To do this, they expect to see empirical information on the magnitude of the problem and the extent to which their contribution can help to alleviate the suffering of the victims of such problem. This study provides a better understanding about microcredit and women empowerment in the La Dade-Kotopon Municipality.

### *1.5.3 Research/Academia*

This study also provides information that will serve as future reference point for students and researchers as well as other individuals in academia. As the world strive to achieve the SDGs by the year 2030 with much emphasis on poverty alleviation, women empowerment and gender equality, the study provides some answers to the pressing issues that limit the contribution of microcredit to women empowerment in La Dade-kotopon municipality and by extension Ghana, Africa and the world in general.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to microcredit and women empowerment. There is a wide range of literature concerning microcredit and women empowerment which reveals interesting and divergent views. This chapter will focus on an overview of what has been written. The first section of this chapter begins with a discussion on the key concepts of the study, thus microcredit and empowerment. Followed by this section is a review of literature on the income generating activities of women microcredit beneficiaries, a review on the challenges faced by women in managing microcredit facilities and the effects of microcredit on women's empowerment respectively. The final part is the conceptual framework for the study.

#### 2.1 Definition of Concepts

##### *2.1.1 Microcredit*

Globally, microcredit has been identified especially by governments as well as development partners as an effective tool for poverty alleviation among the poor and vulnerable, especially women (Yunus, 1999, p. 150, 2003; Daley-Harris, 2002 cited in Leikem, 2012). Microcredit is said to be an extension of small loans to poor people especially women to enhance their income generation potential through starting their own income generating activities (Microcredit Summit, 2007).

There have been several literatures commenting on the role of microcredit in the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) (Littlefield, Murdugh and Hashemi (2003), Simanowitz and Brody (2004).

Simanowitz and Brody (2004) identified microcredit to be a key strategy in attaining the MDGs and improving financial systems to meet the needs of the poor. This was further confirmed by Littlefield et al., (2003) who stated microcredit as a critical contextual factor with strong impact on the achievements of the MDGs. According to them Microcredit is a unique development intervention which can help deliver the poor.

However, despite the fact that microcredit helps the poor and vulnerable out of poverty especially in the developing countries, it is not entirely accepted because there is still some amount of doubt about its ability to make a significant change to the poverty situation in developing countries (Elahi and Danopoulos, 2004). They argued that the various lenders including traditional moneylenders, informal groups, and conventional banks providing specialized credit pawnshops, friends and relatives among others have various intentions for providing these loans. Moneylenders for instance are motivated by profits, hence the poor are not their priority.

Furthermore, Hulme and Mosley (1996), having acknowledged the role of microcredit in helping to reduce poverty concluded from their research on microcredit that "most contemporary schemes are less effective than they might be". They assert that microcredit is not a panacea to poverty-alleviation and that in some cases poor beneficiaries are made poorer after accessing microcredit.

This notwithstanding, microfinance has emerged globally as the leading and most effective strategy for alleviating poverty among the poor (Iddris & Agbim, 2015).

### *2.1.2 Empowerment*

Gender equality and women empowerment is the third goal of the eight millennium goals set by the United Nations in their attempt to bring development to the least developed countries. This has therefore made women's empowerment a central concern in the development strategies of developing countries since they are the most vulnerable.

The concept of empowerment has been used to relate to terms such as agency, autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization and self-confidence (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). The concept has also been defined differently by different scholars, given their different meanings to the concept.

A widely cited definition of empowerment is that of the World Development Report 2000/2001, which defines empowerment as the process of “enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making. And it means removing the barriers-political, legal and social—that work against particular groups and building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets” (World Development Report, 2000/2001 cited in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007 p.7).

Empowerment according to Sen (1993) is reflected in a person's capability set. "The 'capability' of a person depends on a variety of factors, including personal characteristics and social arrangements. "Empowerment is the capacity to fulfil this capability and not just the choice to do so. Sen's view on women's empowerment is indicated in his discussion on measurement of empowerment" (Sen 1990 cited in Sen, 1993). According to him, the focus should be on certain universally valued functioning's which relate to the basic fundamentals of survival and well-being regardless of context. These include proper nourishment, good health and shelter.

Empowerment is also perceived as "the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability" (Kabeer, 2005). In other words, empowerment entails a process of change. Kabeer identified three different levels whereby empowerment can be achieved or failed. The first of which she identified is *Agency* which relates to the processes by which choices are made and put into effect. One can only make a choice if he or she has the power, ability or audacity to make such choices. A woman's ability to initiate their own non-farm activities will grant them an ability to make decisions independently since they will have their own income which will give them the capacity to take decisions, protest, negotiate and bargain in their own favor (Hudu, 2009). According to Kabeer, this dimension is affected by institutional factors especially socio-cultural norms. For this reason, for one to be empowered, they must have the ability to challenge such existing cultural norms. Thus, cultural change is a necessary requirement for women empowerment (Kabeer, 2005). The second dimension she identified is *Resources* which she said is the medium through which agency is exercised. These resources according to her can be distributed through the various institutions and relationships in the society. Empowerment according to Kabeer requires a change in the various conditions through which resources are being

acquired as well as an increase in access to these resources (Kabeer, 2001 cited in Kabeer, 2005). Thus, women's choices can be limited or enhanced depending on their resource position and access; what this means is that a woman's choice will be limited if she depends on her partner or family members for resources. Finally, she identified *Achievement* as the last dimension. Kabeer defines achievement as "*the extent to which women's potential to achieve empowerment is realized or failed*". These achievements should not just be women's ability to meet their survival needs but also it should be one that will allow them to be independent in order to challenge the existing cultural norms which has always kept them in a subordinating position.

This study however sought to investigate women's empowerment base on their decision making in the family, their mobility and also their decision in terms of assets acquisition; the research sought to explore the ability of women to visit the market, friends and family base on their own decision. It also sought to explore women's ability to make purchases on their own as well as take part in decisions concerning childbirth.

Another measure of empowerment which is explored in this study is the changes in family and social relationships after accessing the credit. Thus, whether access to microcredit has changed or influenced their relationships in the family and society

## **2.2 Income Generating Activities of Women Beneficiaries**

Women beneficiaries of microcredit often engage or invest their credits in income generating activities. Most of the women microcredit beneficiaries in Ghana according to Dzisi and Obeng (2013) mainly engaged in economic activities such as farming, petty trading, food processing and

vending; and service provision. This is to help them meet their immediate needs. It is also to assist them in the repayment of their credits.

It is found in the literature that prior to the acquisition of microcredit, most women engaged in farming activities mainly for subsistence. Others also just stayed at home as house wives whereas some engaged in petty trading. However, upon acquiring credit, most of them engaged in income generating activities (IGAs) and for those who were already engaged in IGAs expanded them with their credits (Alhassan and Akudugu, 2012; Ganle, Afriyie, & Segbefia, 2015).

A study conducted by Alhassan and Akudugu (2012) in the Tamale Metropolitan area revealed that, the women beneficiaries perceived their access to microcredit to have a positive impact on their capacity to generate income from IGAs with about 90 percent of them confirming that microcredit had a positive impact on them. According to Alhassan and Akudugu, most of the women indicated that they were not engaged in any IGA prior to their acquisition of credit. For those who were already engaged in IGAs did so mainly for consumption and surpluses if any were sold. The women who were married to farmers helped their husbands on their farms without generating any income, and for many others, they just stayed at home without doing any job. Alhassan and Akudugu also found that, access to microcredit had changed all these dynamics among the women with the beneficiaries now engaging in IGAs primarily to generate income. The beneficiaries according to them also indicated that, microcredit has enhance their ability to expand their activities as well as increase their social status in their household and community because they now earn income (Alhassan & Akudugu, 2012).

Ganle et al. (2015) in their study found that, prior to receiving credit from World Vision, some of the women were already engaged in some IGAs whereas others were not. Their findings showed that only 29% of their respondents were already engaged in IGAs before accessing the credit. However, after World Visions credit intervention, this number rose up to 62% implying that 38% of the women beneficiaries were still unable to start any IGA. What this finding means is that there are several other reasons for which women might access credit apart from engaging in an IGA some of which includes smoothing consumption, paying of school fees, hospital fees and many others Rutherford (2000) as cited in the work of Dzisi and Obeng (2013).

Khan (2008) in his study based on a survey on all the four provinces in Pakistan also found that women's empowerment is linked to their access to microcredit organizations. He further indicated that the impact of microcredit on communities in the provision of credit benefits was significant with 75 percent women indicating that they owned their businesses and 70 percent confirming that their earnings are greater than before. This also had a positive relationship with their monthly income as well as an increase in their assets, long-lasting house set up, nutrition, health and education.

In their study, Dzisi and Obeng (2013) upon asking clients if their access to microcredit had any direct impact on their businesses, 69% said their businesses had seen increased income levels, 6.4% said they have been able to buy more goods to stock their shops while 3.0% had experienced an increased number of customers probably due to improvements they had made on their business premises. Findings from their study indicated that respondents acknowledged their access to loans

to have helped them undertake projects which they were unable to do prior to the credit. Those who said access to loans had not helped their businesses (8.5%) complained about poor sales.

Ahmed (2004) in his study, “Microcredit in Bangladesh: Achievements and Challenges” also found that, amongst the various economic activities, self-employment, small-scale business or trade was the most important, accounting for more than 40% of fund disbursed by the Microfinance Institutions (MFIs). On the other hand, agriculture, food processing, transport, housing and livestock sectors were getting relatively small portions of fund. His findings confirmed that a transformation was taking place in the economic activities of the poor households in the rural areas since during the initial years of microcredit operation, thus in the eighties, funds were largely accounted for by the traditional sector including fisheries and poultry.

Hudu (2009) in his study, “Socio-Economic Analysis of Rural Women Beneficiaries of Microcredit in The Tolon/Kumbungu District of The Northern Region of Ghana” also found the main livelihood activities of microcredit beneficiaries as either agriculture, commerce or petty trading, agro-processing or services which were found to be significantly related to their prospects of reducing vulnerability facing their livelihood. He found that beneficiaries who engaged in services such as teaching, hair dressing, tailoring and food vending were more likely to have the prospects of reducing vulnerabilities facing their livelihood ventures as they enhance their livelihood assets as compared to the beneficiaries who engaged in agriculture as their livelihood activity.

Even though MFIs often encourage borrowers to invest their microcredits in business activities so as to enable them reap some benefits and also enhance repayment of their loans, however, some of these clients often have several other needs some of which even exceeds the capital required to invest in their businesses. Rutherford (2000) as cited in the work of Dzisi and Obeng (2013) listed several kinds of needs for which women access loans which includes Lifecycle needs (Wedding, funerals, education, childbirth etc.), Personal emergencies (sicknesses, injury, unemployment etc.), Disasters (fires, floods, cyclones and man-made events like war or bulldozing of dwellings) and Investment opportunities (expanding a businesses, buying land or equipment, improving housing, securing a job etc.).

### **2.3 Challenges Faced by Women in Managing Microcredit Facilities**

While Microfinance has been identified as a major tool for alleviating poverty among poor women and men, it is not without its own challenges, limitations and ineffectiveness. Although microfinance has the ability to empower women, simply handing money does not automatically enhance their status. A Significant body of research suggests that this link is certainly not automatic (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001, 2002; Kabeer 1998; Mayoux 1998) cited in Kulkarni (2011).

In their study, Hunt and Kasynathan (2002) found that most women have been used as postboxes for their husbands. This situation according to them is because, upon accessing credit, women pass on the full amount of their credits to their husbands with little or even no access to the income and the profits generated from these credits. In patriarchal societies, men always exercise their powers as the heads of household and also make all the decisions without women's opinion or contribution.

Hence, Kabeer (2005) argued that the process of women empowerment should begin with cultural change.

Most poor women engage themselves in various income generating activities because of their immediate need to provide a livelihood for themselves, their children and the household as a whole. Most of them are found in the market engaging themselves in already vibrant informal sector businesses although with little or no preparation and inadequate knowledge on these businesses. The performance of these businesses are mostly however unsuccessful.

Parker (1996) cited in Mutalima (2007) argued that entrepreneurs with adequate training on their businesses most often are successful and are able to grow their businesses. On the other hand, some women-run businesses have a short life cycle which is attributed largely to education and the experience levels of these entrepreneurs. Women's access to micro-credit may not necessarily lead to growth, most especially, women who lack the necessary knowledge and skills to grow their businesses often encounter some challenges in paying back the last instalment of their loans (Musonda 2006, cited in Mutalima, 2007).

In the microcredit summit campaign report (2007), it is found that women encounter some challenges upon accessing microcredit which impedes the expected outcomes of empowerment through these microcredit programs. In the report, it was said that several studies have proven most women to have little or even no control over their loans, their partners or the male family member makes all the decisions with regards to these loans. Women may also encounter a heavier workload in their responsibility to repay their loans. There is evidence that to some point, microcredit

programs increases the workload of women and girls. This may be attributed to the more equal rights in household decision making (Microcredit Summit Campaign, 2007).

Women beneficiaries of microcredit have also been found to encounter five major challenges which is said to impede on their petty trading activities. These challenges are said to include inadequate capital, high competition, insecurity, poor infrastructure and loan diversion (Ijaza et al, 2014). Ijaza et al (2014) also found in their study that, the biggest challenge beneficiaries encountered is inadequate capital accounting for by 35.2% of respondents and this often diverted their initial desire of the sector for their investment, this however, impedes on the effectiveness and usage of the credit for of its maximum impact or benefit.

In their study, Mokhtar, Nartea and Gan (2012) found loan repayment as a challenge faced by borrowers in TEKUN and YUM institutions in Malaysia. Their results showed that, the borrowers' characteristics including their age, gender and type of businesses involved, as well as the microcredit loans characteristics which included mode of repayment and repayment amount are among the factors contributing to loan repayment problems among these borrowers. Even though women were found to have faced challenges with regards to loan repayment, it was found that male borrowers were less responsible and disciplined in repaying their loans as compared to female borrowers. It was also found that, borrowers engaging in agriculture such as animal husbandry, farming and fisheries were reported to be more prone to the challenge of loan repayment than borrowers of small business activities.

Another challenge that women often encounter in managing their microcredit is the lack of support from their partners, children or even household members especially in decision making with regards to the management of their microcredits.

Tundui and Tundui (2013) reports that, women borrowers were more likely to report repayment problems when they are the sole decision makers on the uses of their loan than otherwise, thus, they were unlikely to report less problems with loan repayments when decision making is jointly taken by the female borrower, her husband as well as household members than when it is the sole decision of the business owner. They also identified another challenge faced by women borrowers as the size of the family. Large family sizes has a negative impact on loan repayments since large size means increased responsibilities including increased expenditure for health services and consumption smoothing among others, this situation could lead to the unintended usage of the loans (Tundui & Tundui, 2013).

Shanthi and Ganapathi (2012) in their study also identified several problems women encounter in running their enterprises some of which are lack of training, more stress, tight repayment schedule, resistance from husband or family at the time of starting the business, more competitors, high transport cost, no co-operation from family members, lack of infrastructure and many others.

## **2.4 Effects of Microcredit on Women's Empowerment**

Significant research shows that there is a positive correlation between microcredit programs and women's empowerment (Holvoet 2005, Kabeer 2001). Putting capital in the hands of women

allows them to earn an independent capital and their ability to contribute financially to their families and communities. This is meant to increase women's self-esteem and respect however, this is usually not always the case. The ability of the status of women to change as a result of their access to financial services has a link to their individual situations and abilities as well as their environment (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002).

Women have been found to have gained greater respect from their husbands. Husbands and their children have also been found to offer support to women in their IGAs since these activities contributes to the wellbeing of their households (Kay, 2002). This finding further confirms the findings of Cheston & Kuhn (2002) who reported an increase in women's respect from their husbands with some men indicating that they sometimes borrow money from their wives which makes them proud of them since they can rely on them when they are in need.

Graflund (2013) in his work found that microcredit strengthens women's family standing which is indicated in their greater role in the household decision-making process. His findings that microcredit affects women decision making positively is in line with the findings from Holvoet (2005) and Kabeer (2001).

Adu-Okoree (2012), in his study "Peri-urban poverty: Can micro-finance be a panacea"? Maintained that, microcredit have a positive impact on women beneficiaries in the Ashaiman Municipality. The study asserts that there have been increases in beneficiaries' income as well as their savings capacity. Majority of the beneficiaries were also found to be able to contribute to their children's education. Their health status was also enhanced since they accessed the loans,

they were able to purchase household food as well as improve household diet. The beneficiaries also reported that they felt empowered because their self-confidence was promoted, and they could contribute to decision at the household level, and other social groups' as well.

In contrast to the findings of Adu-Okoree (2012), Mayoux (2006) questioned how the expenditures of the household benefits women. She maintained that an increase in the incomes of women do not automatically benefit women neither do they result in women's ability to challenge the existing gender inequalities, but rather it has only replicated and worsened the expenditure pattern of women (Mayoux, 2006).

Swain and Wallentin (2009) in their article argued that women are said to be empowered when they are able to challenge the existing gender norms and culture of their societies in order to enhance their status and wellbeing. Their findings indicated that, Self-Help Group members are empowered by the microfinance program which is evident in their propensity to resist the existing gender norms in their societies however, according to them, this does not mean that all the members of the SHG who joined the microfinance program were all empowered at the same level. The reasons for this may be attributed to several factors including household and village characteristics, cultural and religious norms within the society, behavioral differences between members as well as their family members, and finally, the kind of awareness and training programs women have been exposed to. To them, all these factors together are responsible for the processes of empowerment.

Studies show that, children of women microfinance beneficiaries often have full-time enrollments in school and a low drop-out since most of these women often make priority the education of their children particularly girls where they invest their new incomes. Also, households of microcredit clients appear to have better nutrition and health practices as compared to other households (ILO, 2007).

However, Kabeer (1999) as cited in (Bali Swain 2006, p.68) argued that, improvement in the care of a child is not a measure of women's empowerment since child care is within a woman's assigned sphere of jurisdiction. A mother taking care of her child is common and does not bring about empowerment.

A study in India by Nithyanandhan (2014) reported that even though Indian society is a male dominated one, when respondents were asked whether they attained greater respect after joining the Self-Help Group (SHG) program, nearly 70.6% of them reported an increase in respect in their families, 28% had no change whereas just 1.4 percent reported a decrease in respect. According to Nithyanandhan a few families refused to accept social changes in their women and for this reason, a few of these women (SHG members) suffered disrespect in their families however, some of the members got some encouragement from their families considering their improvement in terms of social and economic areas. Nithyanandhan (2014) further found that, respondents decision making on visiting friends and relatives had increased after joining the SHG program.

Alhassan and Akudugu (2012) also revealed varying degrees of microcredits impact on women beneficiaries in the Northern region of Ghana. Their measure of empowerment was based on the perceptual, material, relational and cognitive circumstances of women in Tamale. Their study

revealed that, in relation to women's perception, 90% of the beneficiaries reported microcredit to have had a positive impact on them, most of them reported that, prior to the acquisition of microcredit they were not engaged in any IGA and even for those who engaged themselves in income generating activities, they only did so to produce products specifically for subsistence and sale of surpluses if any. However, this study has proven that, women beneficiaries now engage in IGAs for income generation. Materially, for the mere fact that beneficiaries engaged in business activities and generate income which they called theirs, most of them report microcredit to have had a positive impact on them, they have also been reported that, their asset position has improved upon their acquisition of microcredit. Women beneficiaries were also reported to have a better relationship and an improved status in their households as well as their communities especially in northern region where women always have a subordinate position with men taking all the decisions. They have also attributed microcredit to their ability to command respect and articulate their views in their communities and household because of their contribution to household income. Beneficiaries' husbands and children were reported to now offering help to women in their IGAs which was not so prior to their acquisition of microcredit thereby giving strong evidence of microcredits empowering women in Tamale.

The personal characteristics of women such as level of education, age, size of household, marital status as well as the resources available to them is said to have a role in their empowerment thus, the impact of microcredit on women empowerment depends on their socio economic characteristics and their environments (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002).

A study by Noreen (2011) asserts that the socio-economic characteristics of women have an influence on women empowerment. The author attempted to explore the socio-economic determinants of women empowerment. The study used regression analysis based on primary data of Bahawalpur City to check the relationship of different socio economic determinants on women empowerment. The findings of the study showed that divorced and widowed females has the power to take decisions on their own as compared to married females whereas the unmarried females has no power to take decisions on their own. According to the author, the age of respondents has an influence on women's autonomy in taking decisions. The study depicted a positive relationship between the age of respondents and female decision making, where an increase in the age of the respondents lead to an increase in their decision making in the household (Noreen, 2011).

A study conducted in Burkina Faso by Pambe, Gnoumou and Kabore (2014) found that there exist some differences in women's socioeconomic characteristics and their participation in decision making. Their study revealed that women with more education are more likely to participate in decision making regarding their own health, large purchases as well as decisions regarding family visits as compared to women with little or no education. Pambe et al (2014) further found that there exist an association between the age of women and their participation in decision making. They found that older women were likely to participate more in household decision making than younger women however, their decisions in terms of visiting their families was found to be small based on the women's differences by age. Pambe et al. (2014) revealed that women's decision making is also associated with their ethnicity as well as their religion thus, a woman's ability to participate in decision making is related to their religious backgrounds and their ethnic groups.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

There are different frameworks proposed for studying microcredit and women empowerment. Chen (1997) proposed a framework for measuring the impact of microenterprise services, Mayoux (2000) proposed the feminist empowerment paradigm, financial sustainability paradigm and the poverty alleviation paradigm. Asamoah (2006) also proposed a framework for studying the relationship between micro-credit and rural woman's empowerment. This study focused on ideas of Chen (1997) and Asamoah (2006).

Chen (1997) identified four dimensions of empowerment namely; material change, cognitive change, perceptual change as well as relational change. According to Chen, material change involves an increase in a person's income, assets, resources and the ability of persons to meet their basic needs. Cognitive change includes an increase in knowledge, skills and awareness. Perceptual change includes change in self-esteem, self-confidence, vision for future, and visibility and respects. Finally, relational change includes an increase in the role of decision making, bargaining power, participation in non-family activities as well as self-reliance

According to Asamoah (2006), a woman's status is determined by her personal characteristics hence if the personal characteristics of the woman are favorable, she will be directly empowered socially and economically.

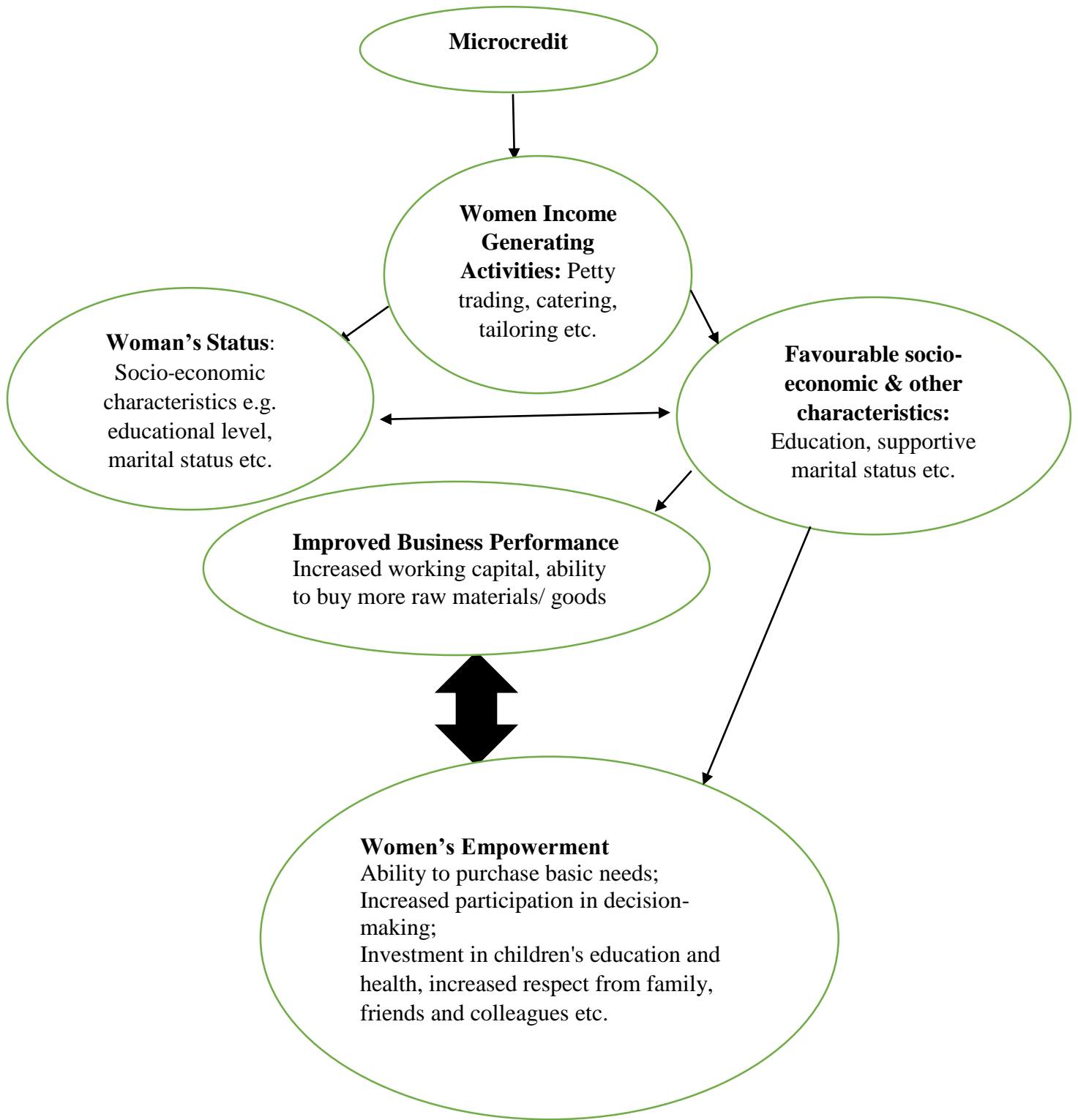
The study therefore conceptualized the relationship between micro-credit and women's empowerment as shown in figure 2.1 below. The framework purports that, women upon accessing credit will invest into some income generating activities such as petty trading, catering services,

tailoring and many others; this will allow women to earn some incomes for themselves of which they can call their own hence leading to an increase in their status. The framework also purports that an increase in women's status is determined by their personal characteristics. It is assumed that all other things being equal, if the socio-economic characteristics of a woman are favorable then the woman would be empowered. For instance if a woman has a supportive marital status and family, she will be able to focus more on her IGAs hence improving upon them. It is also conceptualized that when businesses improve, profits would also increase hence women will be able to buy more goods to stock their businesses. It is assumed that all this will lead to the empowerment of women in terms of decision making regarding their children's education, decision on making purchases, decision on childbirth and decisions regarding their participation in social activities. They will also gain increased respect from their families, friends and colleagues. This is based on the fact that women now contribute to the household as a result of their income acquisition.

It is evident that there has been and continues to be a dependency relationship between women and their male counterparts where women tends to be dependent on men for everything because men have more control than women hence making women less assertive with regards to decision making. It has however been theorized that women's access to microcredit will to a large extent empower women and eventually end or lessen this subordination.

Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework for Understanding Microcredit and Women Empowerment:

Source: Author's construct Using the Ideas of Asamoah (2006), and Chen (1997)



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### 3.0 Introduction

The study area, methods of data collection, sampling techniques, and data analysis are major components of this chapter. It also includes the ethical consideration in gathering information and the pretesting of questionnaire as well as statistical instrument used in the analysis of data gathered.

#### 3.1 Study Area

Considering the relevance of microfinance and the extent of its contribution to women empowerment, the researcher would have wished to cover the whole nation with the study however constrained by time. The level of impoverishment observed among women of La Dade- Kotopon, a Municipal Assembly located in the Greater Accra region amidst microcredit interventions and lots of opportunities offered by the capital city- Accra, which is very proximal to the Municipality makes the Assembly worthy as an area to study.

#### 3.2 Profile of the Municipality

The La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly was carved out from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. It forms a part of the six (6) newly created Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in the Greater Accra Region in the year 2012 and was inaugurated on 28th June, 2012.

The Municipal Assembly is bounded by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly to the West, the Ayawaso Sub-Metropolitan Assembly -Accra Metropolitan Assembly- to the North, the

Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly to the East and the Gulf of Guinea to the South. By virtue of its location, the Municipal Assembly has become one of the prominent 49 Municipalities in Ghana. It holds in possession several stakes in nationalism and key functional organizations and services which are very unique and delicate to the country.

La (township) is the District capital of the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly and is located at the southern part of the Municipality, and lies close to the coast. Other major settlements are Cantonments, Labone, Burma Camp, Kaajaano, Ako Adjei, Abufum, Kowe, New Lakpanaa, Tse-Addo, Adiembra and Adobetor. These areas also make-up the electoral areas of the Municipality which are being represented by ten elected Assembly Members. The location of the Municipality in the regional context makes it economically viable particularly for local folks to engage in fishing, fish processing and subsistence farming for sustainable livelihood.

The Municipality has gained enviable prominence as one of the key primary business zones in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) which is attributed to its economics of scale in production, large markets for labour and goods and also to the ease of information flows which enhances productivity and innovation. The 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) has determined that, there are over 80,000 economically active persons in the Municipality. Majority (marginally over 20%) of these economically active persons are however into wholesale and retail businesses. The headcount showed that the economically active persons were closely shared among the categories in the economic sector except for the agricultural sector which has shrunk

due to growing urbanization in major cities of the country leading to the takeover of arable lands reserved for agricultural purposes.

La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly can be described as one of the richest Municipal Assemblies in Ghana. This is because, it has been potentially endowed with several economic opportunities and attractive investment-driven functions which has turned her into a prime business zone.

The private informal sector is the main source of employment (60.7 percent) in the Municipality. Next to the private informal sector is the private formal sector (19 percent), meaning that the private informal and private formal sectors, representing 79.7 percent are the two major employers in the Municipality. A larger proportion of the females (73.8 percent) are employed in the private informal sector as compared to their male counterparts (46.8 percent). The informal sector, having the higher proportion of the working population could be explained by the inadequate employment opportunities in the formal sector couple with most people having low educational and professional training who do not have the required qualifications to be employed in the formal sector, most especially females (LADMA, 2014).

The map of the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly showing the electoral areas is presented in Appendix C

### 3.3 Sample Size

The study was limited to 100 women, comprising of 25 members each of the four groups in the study. The 100 women constitute the total number of all the participants of the municipals' microcredit program.

### 3.4 Target Population

The population targeted for the study comprised all the women groups currently benefiting from the "Women in Development" Programme in the Lade-Kotopon Municipality. This comprised four different groups with each group having a membership of twenty-five members. Based on the target and objectives of this study, the focus is on these four groups since they are the beneficiaries of the Municipal's microcredit so as to achieve the research objectives.

### 3.5 Sources of Data

Information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources involved all the hundred participants of the "Women in Development" Program whose views were tapped quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data was gathered from all the 100 beneficiaries using structured questionnaires (See appendix A) whereas the qualitative data involved in-depth interviews which comprised of eight women using a structured interview guide (See appendix B). Secondary sources of information were collected from articles, the internet, relevant documents as well as relevant publications and researches on the subject matter.

### 3.6 Methods of Data Collection and Research Instruments

The study used quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Both methods of data collection were used to ensure that the weakness of one is addressed by the other hence the reason for the triangulation. In the case of the quantitative data collection method, the researcher used a face-to-face interview technique to solicit the information from all the 100 participants using structured questionnaires (See appendix A). This was done with the help of field assistants who were well trained and were conversant with the languages of these women. The researcher chose the face-to-face technique since it is more accurate in ensuring more valid responses.

Also, in-depth interviews were conducted comprising of two members each from the four groups. An open-ended thematic topic guide (see appendix B) was used to solicit qualitative data from the in-depth interviews. This was to enable the researcher obtain an in-depth information on the subject matter. For the convenience of the respondents, data was collected on the days of their meetings at their respective venues.

### 3.7 Pretesting of Questionnaire

After designing the questionnaire, a pretest of this instrument was carried out with a group of women with characteristics similar to those of the sample. They included ten women who have benefitted from microfinance in Madina. This was done to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments used in the field. As a result, some questions were removed whereas others were added.

### 3.8 Sampling Procedures

The population of interest for this study is the women who are benefitting from the “Women in Development” Program in LADMA. These women participants were therefore selected using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling techniques according to Teddlie and Fen Yu (2007) has also been referred to as nonprobability sampling or purposive sampling or “qualitative sampling”. It involves the selection of certain units or cases on the basis of a specific purpose rather than randomly. One of several categories of purposive sampling identified by Teddlie and Fen Yu (2007) is “Sampling special or unique cases-it is employed when the individual case itself, or a specific group of cases, is a major focus of the investigation (rather than an issue)” (Teddlie & Fen Yu, 2007). Therefore, this study purposively selected these women for the study since they are the main target for the study.

Also, convenience sampling technique was used to select the eight women for the in-depth interviews. According to Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim (2016) “Convenience sampling (also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling) is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study”. The criteria which was used to select these eight women was based on the willingness to participate in the interviews. On their meeting days, after the face-to-face interviews, the group was informed about the need for volunteers to partake in in-depth interviews and those who were interested were selected accordingly.

### 3.9 Questionnaire Administration

Face-to-face survey technique was used to collect the data. Despite the time consuming nature of this method and the fact that it is expensive however, the method is more convenient since most of the respondents were unable to read and write. More so, the method allowed for a high rate of response, and completion. To ensure a successful questionnaire administration and observation of ethical values, field assistants were recruited and trained on the correct interpretation of the questions in Twi, Ga and Ewe which were the most spoken languages among them.

### 3.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration was given priority in ensuring that the rights of the participants were protected in the course of the data collection. Participants were given detailed explanations about the research and its relevance and were encouraged to participate. They were assured of privacy and confidentiality of all the information given since this was used for purely academic purposes. They were further assured of their withdrawal at any stage of the study if they so wish.

### 3.11 Data Analysis

Data collected from the field was compiled and analyzed by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data from the quantitative survey was edited, coded and fed into the computer for it to be processed. The data was analyzed using Stata and Ms-Excel. The data collected from the survey was presented using descriptive statistics thus, the findings were summarized and presented in tables, graphs and frequencies. Chi-square tests were also performed to test for the significance of relationships between variables.

The qualitative data on the other hand was analyzed through content analysis. “Content analysis is a technique for examining the content or information and symbols contained in written documents or other communication media” (Neuman, 2014). This assisted in making meanings of the in-depth interviews conducted to support the quantitative findings in order to better understand the effect microcredit has on women empowerment.

### 3.12 Choice of Indicators and Explanations

Several indicators have been identified in the extant literature as measures of women empowerment. For instance Chen (1997) identified four dimensions of empowerment namely; material change, cognitive change, perceptual change as well as relational change.

Nader (2008) identified income, assets, schooling of boys and girls, health perception and perception of the harmony in the family as indicators of women empowerment and also Kato & Kratzer (2013) identified Control over savings and income, ownership, decision making, self-efficacy, self-esteem, mobility and participation in activities outside the home.

However, to determine the effect of microcredit on women empowerment, this study focused on the decision making aspect of women as well as the changes that occur in the family and social relationships as indicators of empowerment

**Decision Making:** There is often a change in perceptions towards women due to their positive contributions towards the household and their communities as a result of their access to credits (Kato & Kratzer, 2013). Thus, the self-perceptions of the women as well as the change of perception of others about women. An increase in women’s self-esteem and women’s confidence will contribute to their ability to take decisions in the household and the community. The focus

was on the influence of credit on beneficiaries in relation to decision making in the household on issues such as children's education, acquisition of assets, child bearing as well as their participation in public activities.

**Social and Family Relationships:** This indicator has to do with the changes in the family and social relationships or behavior towards women as a result of their access to credit. It focuses on the respect women receive from their partners, their children, parents, friends and colleagues.

### 3.13 Data

The "Women in Development" Programme was introduced by La Dade-Kotopon Municipality in December 2015 as a strategy of reducing poverty among women and empowering them by giving small credits (Ghc600) to expand on IGAs. Four women groups with each having twenty-five members was formed to carry out this developmental strategy. These four groups included; Peace and Love, Virtuous Ladies, United Ladies and Anointed Ladies.

These were already existing groups with many members. For instance, Peace and Love is a 100 member group even though 25 women were selected to be part of the program. These 25 women of each group were selected with the help of their group leaders who selected women believed to be doing well in their IGAs and hence their ability of repaying their credits.

These groups were formed on the basis of their electoral areas. Peace and Love for instance is a combination of two areas thus, the Burma Camp electoral area and 37.

The Anointed, Virtuous and United Ladies are from Mantiase, Tse Addo and New Lakpanaa electoral areas respectively. These three groups are strictly women's groups except for Peace and Love which is a combination of both sexes.

The Municipal Assembly initially gave the women six months duration to repay their loans in order to access new ones however, as a result of failure of some members to repay it was further extended to a year. Each of these four groups have their own specific days and venues where they meet to have their meetings. Payments are often done on weekly or monthly basis through their group leaders. Also, prior to receiving the credit, business management training was given to these selected women.

### 3.14 Limitations

The major limitation of the study was the period of time available to the researcher to conduct the study. This seriously influenced the researchers' choice of a cross sectional study instead of a comparative or experimental study which would have been most preferable since the intent is to find out how women benefiting from microcredit are empowered by such an intervention.

Another challenge the researcher encountered had to do with language barrier. The researcher had to spend some time and money to train research assistants in order to collect the data for the study. The study was also conducted alongside the researcher's course work thereby making it stressful and challenging as a result of the heavy workload. Despite the above anticipated limitations, adequate steps and strategies were put in place to ensure that their impact on the study was drastically minimized if not eliminated.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the field. The data collected allowed the researcher to make comparisons of variables through the use of frequencies, percentages and charts to describe the effect of the “Women in Development” Program on beneficiaries in the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly in the Greater Accra Region.

The first part of the analysis is limited to the demographic characteristics of the women as well as their credit history. This was considered relevant because of the influence it has on the empowerment of women. The socio-demographic variables analyzed in this study includes the age of the respondents, educational attainment, number of children, household size etc. The subsequent part of the analysis is based on the research objectives.

#### 4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Beneficiaries of the “Women in Development” Program

##### *4.1.1 Age of Respondents*

As indicated in Table 4.1 below, 88 percent of the respondents were within the age category of 31-50 years and above whereas 12 percent were below 30 years. What this finding means is that most of these beneficiaries are within the active age group. This support the findings of Kasali, Amad and Lim (2015) that most of these women are still active and young enough to engage in their income generating activities.

**Table 4. 1 Summary of Socio- Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age in Years</b>		
Below 30	12	12.00
31-40	44	44.00
41-50	38	38.00
Above 50	6	6.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	93	93.00
Islamic	7	7.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Ethnic Group</b>		
Ga	39	39.00
Ewe	26	26.00
Akan	17	17.00
Northern	16	16.00
Others	2	2.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	9	9.00
Married	64	64.00
Divorced	11	11.00
Widowed	16	16.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of Children</b>		
1	17	17.00

2-4	59	59.00
5-7	24	24.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
No Formal Education	36	36.00
Basic	46	46.00
SHS and Above	18	18.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Name of Group</b>		
Virtuous Ladies	25	25.00
Peace and Love	25	25.00
United Ladies	25	25.00
Anointed Ladies	25	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Size of Household</b>		
1-3	9	9.00
4-7	76	77.00
8 and Above	15	14.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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Source: Author's field survey, 2017

#### *4.1.2 Religious Background of Respondents*

Table 4.1 above also shows that as many as 93 percent of the respondents are Christians whereas 7 percent are Muslims. In the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly, Christians form the

majority of its population accounting for 90 percent of their total population. This probably explains why Christians forms the majority for this study.

#### *4.1.3 The Ethnic Origin of Respondents*

This study was conducted in the La Dade-Kotopon Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and so it is expected that the Ga ethnic group will be the dominant group of the sample. As indicated in the Table 4.1 above, the Ga's constituted 39 percent of the sample, followed by the Ewe's who constituted 26 percent. Next to them are the Akan's and ethnic groups from the Northern part of Ghana constituting 17 percent and 16 percent respectively. Finally, 2 respondents in the others category were respondents from the Krobo ethnic group.

#### *4.1.4 Marital Status of Respondents*

In relation to respondents' marital status, 64 percent were married, 9 percent were single whereas 27 percent were either divorced or widowed. According to Appiah (2011), the Ghanaian culture is such that husbands control the activities of their wives and hence in the event of loan default, husbands must pay. What this means is that the married women would not hesitate to take up loans since their husbands would pay in the event of defaults.

#### *4.1.5 Number of Children*

According to Appiah (2011), childbirth is cherished in the Ghanaian culture and those with children are considered to be responsible adults and so women with children tend to access credit

so as to cater for their children. Findings of this study revealed that all the respondents were mothers with at least one child.

#### *4.1.6 Educational Background*

Education tends to maximize the opportunities for people to improve upon their livelihoods. However, in Ghana, many of the young population have low educational attainment with majority being unemployed, and for those employed, most are in the informal sector. According to Osei-Boateng and Ampratwum (2011), 80 percent of the Ghanaian workforce is employed in the informal sector. Table 4.1 above showed that 36 percent of the respondents had no formal education, 46 percent had attained basic education whereas only 18 percent had attained at least SHS education.

#### *4.1.7 Groups of Respondents*

The study consisted of 4 women groups namely; Virtuous Ladies, Peace and Love, United Ladies and Anointed Ladies. Each group had a membership of 25 women.

#### *4.1.8 Size of Household*

The Table 4.1 above also revealed that, as many as 76 percent of the respondents had a household size of 4-7, 15 percent had about 8 and above members in their households whereas 9 percent had from 1-3 members in their households.

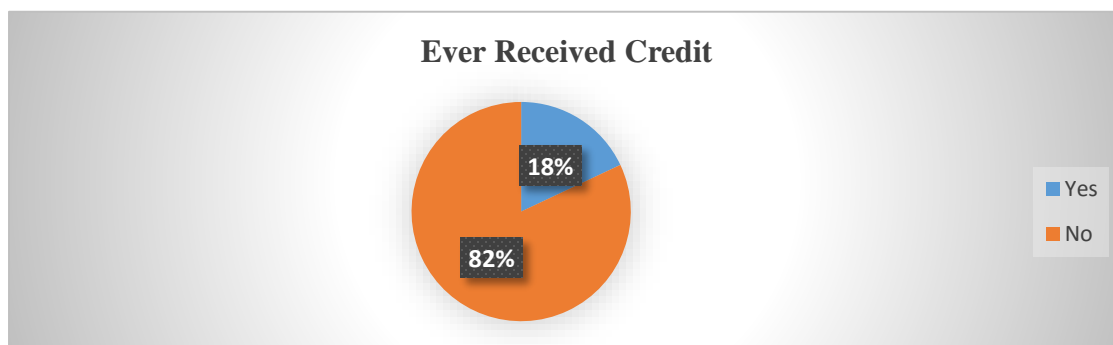
## 4.2 Credit History of Respondents

### 4.2.1 Ever Received Credit

Khatun et al (2013) in their study found that the failure of women to repay loans in instalments, the general unwillingness to take loans and husband's opposition are the reasons for which some women in Bangladesh do not opt for loans. Figure 4.1 below showed that as many as 82 percent of the respondents had never taken credit from any financial institution apart from the one from LaDMA whereas 18 percent reported to have taken credits from other financial institutions. It was noted from in-depth interviews that fear of failure to default in repayments due to poor sales as well as high interest rates charged by these institutions were some of the reasons for not accessing credit. One of the respondents who took part in the in-depth interview said:

*I have been selling cassava and plantain for a long time. Sales have not been good for some time now and so I have reduced the quantity of the cassava and plantain I go to pick for sale hence making it difficult to go for a loan. I did not even know that I was supposed to pay back the money acquired from the municipality, I would not have taken it in the first place. As it stands now I have not finished paying back the credit yet (a respondent from United Ladies).*

**Figure 4. 1: Ever Received Credit from any Financial Institution apart from LaDMA**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017.

**Table 4. 2 Summary of Respondents Credit History**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Ever Received Credit From Any Financial Institution Apart From LadMa</b>		
Yes	18	18
No	82	82
<b>when did you receive credit</b>		
before the municipals credit	18	100
<b>Purpose Of The Credit</b>		
To Expand IGAs	100	100
<b>How Much Was Your Most Recent Credit</b>		
GHC600	100	100

Source: Author's field survey, 2017

The credit history of the respondents as presented in Table 4.2 above are discussed in the sections below.

#### *4.2.2 When Credit was received*

From the Table 4.2 above, all the 18 respondents who were reported to have accessed credit from other financial institutions apart from LaDMA said they did so before the municipals' credit. During in-depth interviews with those who volunteered, most of them mentioned the fact that these credits were accessed long before the municipals' credit. One of such respondent said:

*I took a loan about three years ago from Eco Bank to start a provision store, however, during the June 3<sup>rd</sup> disaster, I lost my store (A respondent from Virtuous Ladies).*

#### *4.2.3 Amount of Recent Credit*

When respondents were asked of their most recent credit, all the 100 respondents mentioned Ghc 600 which is the amount offered by LaDMA. This is because majority had never received credit from any financial institution apart from LaDMA and those who had, did so before LaDMA's credit.

#### *4.2.4 Purpose of Credit*

Table 4.2 above showed that, all the 100 respondents accessed the municipals' credit purposely to expand their IGAs. This finding is line with the study of Asamoah (2006) who found that majority of the respondents used their first loans to expand or improve upon their existing businesses. During an in-depth interview, one respondent for instance said:

*I used the credit to buy lining and thread which I sell to my customers when they come to sew their clothes, I also sell them out to those who need them for their personal use (A respondent from Anointed Ladies).*

### **4.3 Income Generating Activities of Respondents**

This section attempted a discussion on the income generating activities (IGAs) of the respondents before and after accessing the municipals' credit. It was expected from this discussion to lead to the discovery of the various IGAs beneficiaries engaged in prior to and after accessing the municipals' credit as well as the effect of this credit on their IGAs.

**Table 4. 3 IGAs of Respondents Prior to and After Accessing Municipals’ Credit**

<b>Prior Income Generating Activities</b>	Frequency	Percent
Trading	53	53
Tailoring	25	25
Catering Services	22	22
Total	100	100
<b>Current Income Generating Activities</b>		
Trading	53	53
Tailoring	12	12
Catering Services	22	22
Tailoring and Trading	13	13
Total	100	100

Source: Authors Field Survey

#### *4.3.1 Income Generating Activities Prior to the Municipals Credit*

As mentioned earlier in chapter one, a requirement to be part of the “Women in Development” Program was to be engaged in an IGA. Findings from Table 4.3 above indicates that all the respondents were engaged in IGAs which included trading, tailoring and catering services prior to the municipals’ credit. The researcher classified women who operates provision stores, sells fabrics, curtains, fresh meat and many others under trading. Food vendors, caterers, “chop bar” operators, kebab sellers, pito brewing (local beer) and others were also classified under catering services.

As depicted in Table 4.3 above, as many as 53 percent of the respondents were engaged in trading, 25 percent were into tailoring whereas 22 percent were into catering services. It can therefore be

concluded that majority of the women were engaged in trading prior to the municipalities' credit. This finding agrees with that of Ahmed (2004) who found trading to be the most important IGA accounting for a greater portion of the funds disbursed by MFIs.

#### *4.3.2 Respondents' Income Generating Activities after Accessing Credit from the Municipality*

Findings from Table 4.3 above further shows that some of the respondents were still engaged in their initial IGAs whereas others extended them. 53 percent were still engaged in trading, 22 percent were also into catering services whereas out of the 25 respondents who were initially engaged in tailoring, 13 of them added trading to it. What this means is that most of the respondents invested their credit into their initial IGAs whereas a few invested in a new IGAs in addition to what they originally engaged in. This finding was confirmed by the study of Alhassan and Akudugu (2012) who found that beneficiaries of microcredit expand their IGAs with their credit. During in-depth interviews, two of the respondents for instance said:

*Before I accessed the credit from the municipality, I used to buy corn dough from the market for my banku business however, after getting the credit, I used it to get bags of corn from the north through my family which is much cheaper (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

*After accessing credit from the municipality, I invested some in soap making which I learnt from a friend. I also invested the rest in to groundnut paste business which is being sent to me from the North (A respondent from Peace and Love).*

### 4.3.2 Respondents' Prior Income Generating Activities According to Their Groups

The Table 4.4 below presents data on respondents' income generating activities on the basis of their groups.

**Table 4. 4 Name of Groups and their Income Generating Activities Prior to Credit**

Name of Groups	Income Generating Activities Prior to Accessing Credit			Total
	Trading	Tailoring	Catering	
Virtuous Ladies	11 (44.00)	6 (24.00)	8 (32.00)	25 (100.00)
Peace and Love	11 (44.00)	7 (28.00)	7 (28.00)	25 (100.00)
United Ladies	16 (64.00)	6 (24.00)	3 (12.00)	25 (100.00)
Anointed Ladies	15 (60.00)	5 (20.00)	5 (20.00)	25 (100.00)
Total	53 (53.00)	24 (24.00)	23 (100.00)	100 (100.00)

Source: Author's field survey, 2017

Hudu (2009); Dzisi and Obeng (2013) found that, microcredit beneficiaries often engaged themselves in IGAs including petty trading, food vending, tailoring and many others to help them meet their immediate needs. As indicated in Table 4.4 above, across the four groups, majority of the women were engaged in trading with United Ladies (64%) having the highest respondents, followed by Anointed ladies (60%), Virtuous Ladies (44%) and Peace and Love (44%). The rest were engaged in tailoring and catering services.

Respondents were asked during in-depth interviews the reasons for starting these IGAs. Reasons such as absence of such IGAs in the areas they resided, the fact that they had learned them from

their families as well as their acquisition of skills for such IGAs from previous education were mentioned. Two respondents for instance said:

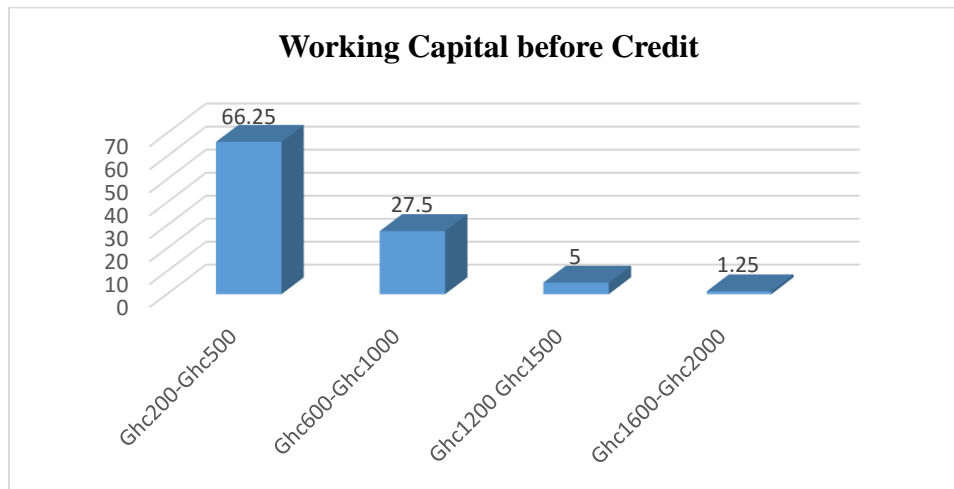
*I started this business because when I came to live in this area, no one prepared indomie for sale and so I felt that it was a good idea to start this particular business (Respondent from Virtuous Ladies).*

*When I came to Accra initially I was not working even though my husband was schooling. Things became difficult for us and so I decided to start brewing pito (local beer) which I learnt from my mum back at the north in order to support my family (respondent from Virtuous Ladies).*

#### *4.3.3 Respondents' Working Capital before the Municipals' Credit*

Figure 4.2 below indicates that prior to the municipals' credit, about 66 percent of the respondents had their working capital between Ghc 200-Ghc 500 whereas about 44 percent had their working capital to be at least Ghc 600. Those who did not know their startup capital were treated as missing. As found earlier in Table 4.3, most of the respondents were engaged in trading which usually do not require a large startup capital hence, the reason for their small capital size. Another possible reason for their small capital could be the fact that when starting a new business, one should invest small initially to identify the profitability of the business and to avoid losses before any further investments.

**Figure 4. 2: Respondents working Capital before Accessing Credit from LaDMA**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017

During in-depth interviews, respondents were also asked how they financed their IGAs prior to accessing the municipals' credit. Majority mentioned their families as their sources of funding, others also mentioned their suppliers as their source of assistance to starting their IGAs whereas the few mentioned credit institutions and banks as their sources of funding. One respondent said:

*My husband gave me some money to start a business so that I could also support the family since I was just idle at home doing nothing aside taking care of the children (Respondent from Anointed Ladies).*

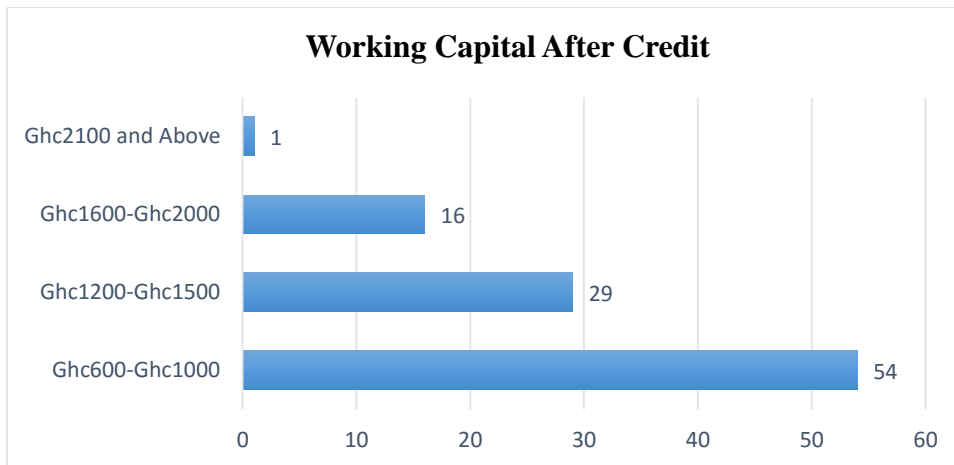
This finding agrees with a study conducted in the Central Region by Otoo (2012) who also mentioned the sources of finance available for women petty traders especially in Cape Coast and Mankesim to be mainly credit from their suppliers in the form of delayed payments. Other sources

of funding in Central region mentioned in his study included respondents' personal savings which is assisted by their spouses, relatives and other institutions.

#### 4.3.4 Respondents Working Capital after Accessing the Municipals' Credit

The Figure 4.3 below depicts that after accessing credit from the municipality, there has been an increment in respondents' working capital. As many as 54 percent of the respondents now have their working capital from GHc 600-GHc 1000 whereas 46 percent had their working capital to be at least GHc 1200.

**Figure 4. 3: Respondents Working Capital after Accessing Microcredit**



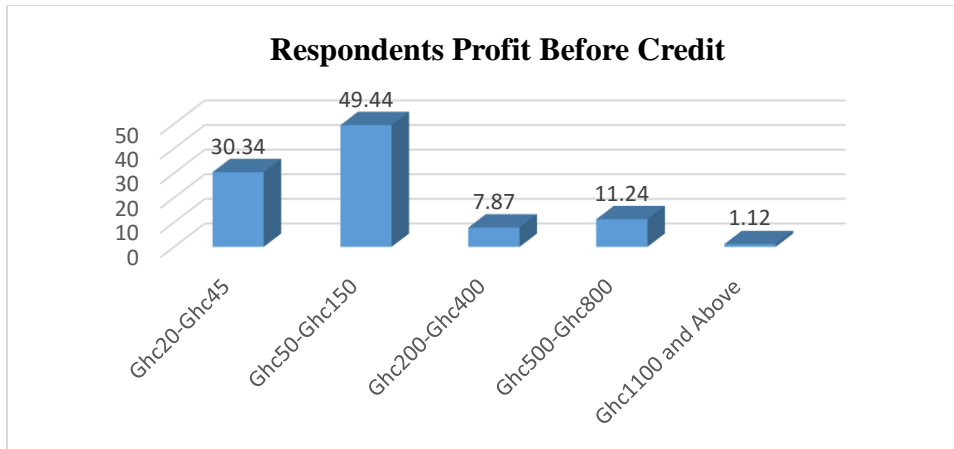
Source: Author's field survey, 2017

#### 4.3.1 Respondents Profits Before Accessing Credit

As depicted in Figure 4.4 below, about 80 percent of the respondents had their profits within Ghc 20-Ghc 150 prior to accessing credit from the municipality whereas about 20 percent had their

profits from Ghc 200 and above. Those who did not know their profits before were treated as missing.

**Figure 4. 4: Respondents’ Profits before Accessing Credit from the Municipality**



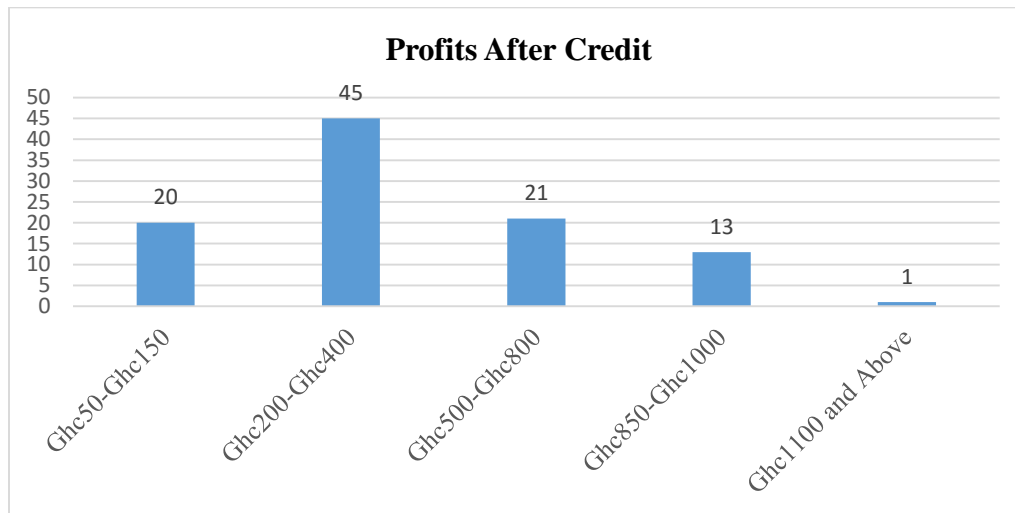
Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

#### 4.3.5 Respondents Profits after Accessing Credit from the Municipality

The findings of the study shows that respondents’ have experienced an increase in their profits after accessing credit from the municipality. As indicated in Figure 4.5 below, 65 percent of the respondents now have their profits from GHc 50 – GHc 400 whereas 35 percent have profits from GHc 500 to GHc 1100 and beyond. This increment is due to the expansion of their IGAs as a result of the additional capital acquired from the municipality. One respondent during an in-depth interview said:

*Before the municipals’ credit, I could not account for my profits. This is because my working capital was small and so whenever I get some income, I immediately add it to my capital to buy more goods however, after accessing the credit, I am now able to save my profit thus, GHc5 a day, so in a month I make GHc150 profit (Respondent from Virtuous Ladies).*

**Figure 4. 5: Respondents’ Profits after Accessing the Municipals’ Credit**



Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

**4.3.6 Chi-Square Test for Respondents Capital and Profits Before and After the Municipals’ Credit.**

A chi-square test was further performed to find out the significance of the increments in respondents capital and profits before and after accessing credit from the municipality. From the Table 4.5 below, it can be concluded that these increments are significant since the P-values are less than 0.01. It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant difference between respondents’ working capital and profits before and after accessing the municipals’ credit.

**Table 4. 5: Chi-Square Test for Capital and Profits before and After Credit**

<b>Respondents Capital and Profits Before and After Credit</b>	<b>Chi Results (P-Value)</b>
Working Capital Before and After Credit	0.000***
Profits Before and After Credit	0.000***

Sources: Author’s field survey, 2017

Note: \*\*\* denotes significance at 1% leve

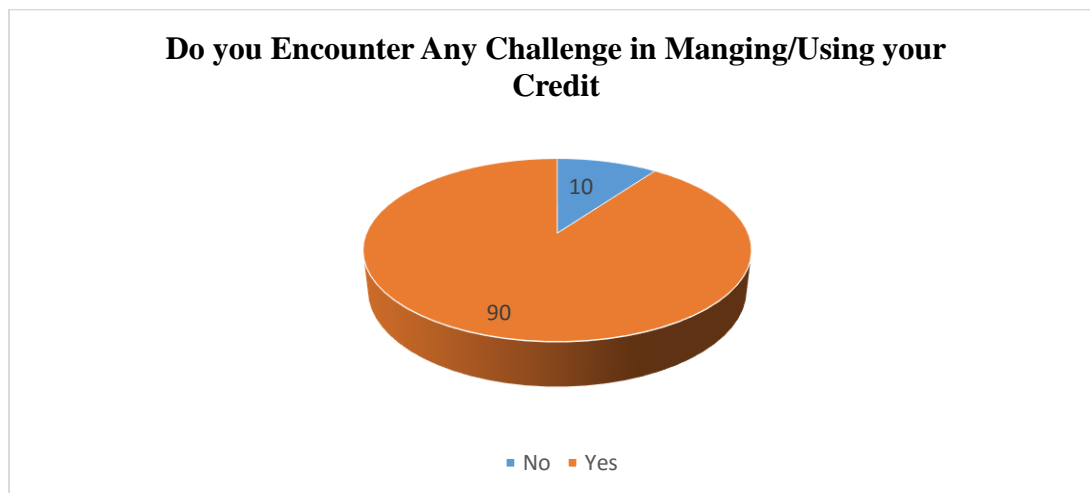
#### **4.4 Challenges Faced by Respondents' in Managing and Using their Credit**

One of the objectives the research sought to achieve was to identify the challenges respondents faced in managing or using the credit accessed from the municipality. This is discussed in two sections. The first section is a discussion on whether the encountered any challenges and the second section discusses the various challenges they encountered.

##### *4.4.1 Encounter Challenges in Managing/Using Microcredit*

Respondents were asked if they encountered any challenge in managing/using their credit. As illustrated in Figure 4.6 below, as many as 90 percent were reported to encounter challenges whereas 10 percent did not encounter any challenge in managing/using their credits.

**Figure 4. 6: Encounter Challenges in Managing/Using Microcredit**



Sources: Author's field survey, 2017

#### 4.4.2 Challenges Encountered

Table 4.6 below presents a summary of the various challenges encountered by respondents in managing or using their credits. It is found from the Table that skills and experience with regards to managing IGAs were not much of a challenge to the respondents. As many as 88 (97.78%) of the respondents said inadequate skills and experiences was not of any challenge to them whereas 2 (2.22%) said it was challenging. This result is obvious since all the beneficiaries received education and training from the municipality on business management and skills training before receiving the credit.

In terms of credit size, it is depicted from Table 4.6 that as many as 88 (97.78%) of the respondents reported it to be challenging. Most of them complained that despite the small size of the credit, they were able to expand their IGA's however, not up to their expectation. Two respondents for instance said:

*The size of the credit is very challenging. Most of the things I buy for sale is very expensive. For instance a bag of rice is about GHC300 meaning I can only buy two bags of rice with the GHC 600 given which is not enough to improve upon my business (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

*Considering my type of business, six hundred Ghana cedis (GHC 600) is very small, it is not enough to do anything sufficient for my business. I only took it because it does not attract any interest (respondent from Virtuous Ladies).*

This result is confirmed by Adjei-Debrah (2012); Ijaza et al (2014) who discovered the size of the credit as a major challenge affecting the success of businesses in their study. According to Ijaza et al (2014), this situation often lead to many beneficiaries diverting their credits away from what they had originally purposed for it. This challenge was further confirmed by the officers in charge

of these groups as well as officers of the municipality. In the words of the Social Welfare Director (LaDMA):

*We lack funds and so we are unable to reach out to many of these women, even though we give each woman a credit of GHC 600 to help in their IGAs, we are hoping to increase it and also increase the number of women we support in the future.*

Lack of family support was found not to be challenging to the respondents. The Table 4.6 above further shows that majority of them thus 89 (98.89%) said they did not lack support from their families. Family support is very important in ensuring the success of women's IGAs. Considering the role of women as mothers and as wives, it is often difficult combining these roles with their IGAs (Microcredit Summit, 2007). During in-depth interviews with the respondents, it was revealed that most of them received support from their families in terms of their IGAs.

This finding agrees with the findings of Alhassan and Akudugu (2012) whose study in the Northern region revealed husbands and children providing support to women's IGAs upon their access to credits which was said not to be so prior to their access. The finding however contradicts the findings of Tundui and Tundui (2013) who found lack of support from husbands, children and household as a challenge to the success of women's IGAs.

Finally, it is realized from Table 4.6 that the respondents do not encounter any interferences from their husbands with regards to managing or using their credits. All the 64 married respondents were reported not encountering any interference from their husbands in managing and using their credits. Majority of them mentioned their husbands' to be supportive in their IGAs. Some

mentioned that their husbands were the source of funding to their IGAs prior to accessing the municipal's credit whereas others mentioned having received encouragements from their husbands to go in for the municipal's credit to support their IGAs. One respondent during an in-depth interview said:

*My husband consented to me accessing the municipals' credit. He even added some money to support my business especially when he realized my business was doing well (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

This finding also agrees with Alhassan and Akudugu (2012) who found husbands being supportive in their wives IGAs but do not agree with the findings of Hunt and Kasynathan (2002); Shanthi and Ganapathi (2012) who found husband interference as a challenge to beneficiaries in managing and using their credits. They found that most of the beneficiaries have their credits taken away from them by their husbands upon accessing them whereas others do not have control over their usage.

**Table 4. 6 Challenges Encountered By Respondents in Managing/Using Microcredit**

Challenges	Challenging	Not Challenging	Total
Inadequate Skills and Experience	2 (2.22%)	88 (97.78%)	90 (100%)
Credit Size	88 (97.78%)	2 (2.22%)	90 (100%)
Lack of Family Support	1 (1.11%)	89 (98.89%)	90 (100%)
Interference from Husband	0 (0.00)	64 (100%)	64 (100%)

Source: Field survey 2017

#### **4.5 Effects of Microcredit on Women Empowerment**

In order to improve the status of women by empowering them, the La Dade-Kotopon Municipality in their “Women in Development” Program offered microcredit to women in the municipality to expand their IGAs. This section therefore sought to find out the effect of this program on the beneficiaries. Respondents were asked to confirm if access to the municipals’ credit had an effect on them on the two indices of empowerment mentioned in the study namely; Changes in family and social relationships as well as Decision making.

With regards to the changes in family and social relationships upon accessing credit from the municipality, respondents were to answer whether respect from husbands, parents, children as well as respect from friends and colleagues had either increased, decreased or not changed.

Also, in terms of decision making, respondents were to indicate if there has been an increase, decrease or no change in their decision making regarding their mobility and social interactions, decisions in their households as well as decisions regarding their acquisition of assets.

##### **4.4.1 Changes in Family and Social Relationships**

Table 4.7 below presents a summary of the changes that occur in the family and social relationships after accessing credit from the municipality. These are discussed in the subsequent sections below.

**Table 4. 7: Frequency Distribution for Changes in Family and Social Relationships**

<b>Respect from Husband</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No Change	9	14.06
Increased	55	85.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Respect from Parents</b>		
No Change	5	8.47
Increased	54	91.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Respect from Children</b>		
No Change	7	7.00
Increased	93	93.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Respect from Friends and Colleagues</b>		
No Change	19	19.00
Increased	81	81.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field survey 2017.

#### *4.5.1 Respect from Husband*

The data presented in Table 4.7 above shows that there has been an increase in respect from husbands upon receiving credit from the municipality with 55 (85.94%) of the respondents attesting to this fact. However, 9 (14.06%) of them said respect from their husbands had not changed. What this finding means is that access to microcredit from the municipality have affected respondents' relationships with their husbands positively. To support this finding with a more

detailed information, respondents were asked in an in-depth interview to explain why they said respect from their husbands had increased. One respondent for instance said:

*Respect from my husband has increased a lot. My husband is a soldier and for them they usually receive their salaries in the middle of the month and so by month ending the money is usually finished however, since I also work, I am able to support the family until his next salary. Sometimes I even lend him some money which he pays later. I also pay for the children's fees if he is out of cash which he pays back. Now, I barely ask for money from him (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

This finding validate the findings of other studies such as Cheston and Kuhn (2002); Kay (2002) who found women's respect from their husbands to have increased since they now contribute to the households' income upon accessing credit.

#### *4.5.2 Respect from Parents*

The data in Table 4.7 above further depicts that majority of the respondents who had their parents still living reported to have gained increase respect from them. 54 (91.53%) out of the total respondents of 59 said respect from their parents had increased whereas only 5 (8.47%) of them had seen no change in terms of respect from their parents upon accessing credit from the municipality. Many of them are now able to remit some monies to their parents. Those who lived with their parents were reported to be the ones paying for some bills in their homes and also contributing to household income. One respondent during an in-depth interview said:

*My parents respect me a lot because upon expanding my business with the credit from the municipality I now send money to my parents at the North almost every month (Respondent from Peace and Love 1).*

This finding agrees with Alhassan and Akudugu (2012); Nithyanandhan (2014) who also reported an increase in beneficiaries respect from their families since they now generate some incomes.

#### *4.5.3 Respect from Children*

Regarding respect from children, as many as 93 (93%) of the respondents have gained an increase in respect from their children whereas only 7 (7%) had experienced no change upon accessing credit from the municipality. This finding agrees with Alhassan and Akudugu (2012) who found in their study in Tamale, an increase in children's respect to their mothers as well as an increase in their assistance to their IGAs. A respondent for instance said:

*Respect from my children have increased a lot. You know how children tend to be free and open to their mothers than their fathers, they feel more at ease asking me for their needs than their father and I am able to provide for them since I now make enough income from my IGA (respondent from Virtuous ladies).*

#### *4.5.4 Respect from Friends and Colleagues*

Respects from friends and colleagues were also reported to have increased as a result of their increased status upon accessing credit from the municipality. The findings from Table 4.7 above shows that 81 percent reported an increase in respect from their friends and colleagues' whereas 19 percent reported no change. To further support this assertion, respondents were asked to state why they said respect from their friends and colleagues had increased. One respondent said:

*Respect from my friends and colleagues have increased a lot. I am the leader for my group and my group members and friends give me that respect as a leader. They listen to me and give me respect (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

#### **4.6 Women Decision Making**

One important indicator of women empowerment is their ability to make decisions within the household as well as decisions regarding their mobility. Being able to take independent decisions give some satisfaction to the individual. It is therefore important to assess how access to microcredit can bring about this satisfaction to beneficiaries.

##### **4.6.1 Changes in Women's Mobility and Social Interaction**

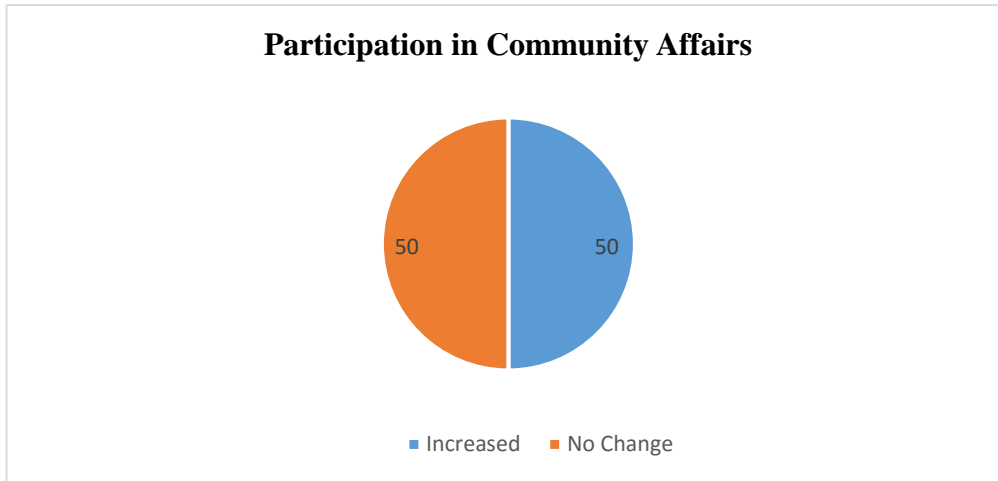
The study found that the “Women in Development” microcredit beneficiaries have become more mobile and had begun to have more interactions with other people. They learned new skills through training as well as business management skills within their groups.

###### *4.6.1.0 Greater Participation in Community Affairs*

Respondents were asked whether they had gained more participation in community affairs after joining the “Women in Development” Program in LaDMA. The Figure 4.7 below shows that 50 percent of them reported to have gained more participation in community affairs whereas 50 percent also said their participation in community affairs had not changed. The respondents can

now take decisions on their own to attend meetings and other community affairs without necessarily seeking for their husbands' permission.

**Figure 4. 7: Respondents Decision Making Regarding Participation in Community Affairs**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017

*4.6.1.1 Respondents Participation in Community Affairs with respect to their Marital Status*

Table 4.8 below presents a chi-square test for respondents' marital status and their ability to take decisions regarding participation in community affairs.

**Table 4.8: Chi-Square Test for Marital Status and Participation in Community Affairs**

Marital Status	Greater Participation in Community Affairs		Total
	No Change	Increased	
Single	8(88.89)	1(11.11)	9(100.00)
Married	42(65.63)	22(34.38)	64(100.00)
Divorced	0(0.00)	11(100.00)	11(100.00)
Widowed	0(0.00)	16(100.00)	16(100.00)
Total	50(50.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)

Source: Field survey 2017

Pearson chi2 = 38.6944 Pr = 0.000\*\*\*

Note: Value in parenthesis refers to row percentage

\*\*\* denotes significance at 1% level

As depicted in Table 4.8 above, all the divorced respondents (11) and the widowed (16) were reported to have gained greater participation in community affairs. However, majority of the singles 8 (88.89%) said their participation in community affairs had not changed. It is also found that as many as 42 (65.63%) of the married have had no change in their participation in community affairs whereas only 22 (34.38%) of them experienced an increase in their participation in community affairs after accessing credit from the municipality. Interviews with the respondents revealed that the widowed and the divorced are the sole decision makers in their homes hence their greater participation in community affairs. However, majority of the singles who lived with their parents have to be permitted by their parents before they can participate in community affairs. This applies to the married women as well who also needed permission from their husbands. For instance one respondent said:

*It is important to seek permission from your husband before participating in any community affairs. My husband is the family head and I respect him. If he does not consent to my decisions I have to obey (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

This finding is attested by the results of the chi-square test which shows that the relationship between respondents' marital status and their decision making regarding their participation in community affairs is significant at 1 percent since the P value is less than 0.01. This finding agrees with that of Noreen (2012) who concluded in her study that divorced and widowed females have the power to take decisions on their own as compared to married females whereas the unmarried females has no power to take decisions on their own.

#### 4.6.1.2 Age of Respondents and Their Participation in Community Affairs

A chi-square test was also performed to find out if there is a significant relationship between respondents' age and their ability to take decisions regarding their participation in community affairs upon accessing credit from the municipality. The result of the test is presented in Table 4.9 below.

**Table 4. 9: Chi-Square test for Respondents Age and Their Participation in Community Affairs**

<b>Greater Participation In Community Affairs</b>	<b>Age of Respondents</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Below 30</b>	<b>30-40</b>	<b>41-50</b>	<b>Above 50</b>	
<b>No Change</b>	12 (100%)	23 (52.27%)	15 (39.47%)	0 (0.00)	50 (50%)
<b>Increased</b>	0 (0.0)	21 (47.73%)	23 (60.53%)	6 (100%)	50 (50%)
<b>Total</b>	12 (100%)	44 (100%)	38 (100%)	6 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Field survey 2017

Pearson chi2 = 19.7751 Pr = 0.000\*\*\*

*Note: The value within parenthesis refers to column percentages.*

*\*\*\* denotes significance at 1% level*

As indicated in Table 4.9 above, no respondent below age 30 had experienced an increase in their participation in community affairs. Also, for those within the ages of 30 and 40, 23 (52.27%) of them had experienced no change in their community participation whereas 21 (47.73%) of them said they had experienced a greater participation in community affairs. For respondents within the

age of 41-50, as many as 23 (60.53%) said there has been an increase in their community participation as compared to 15 (39.47%) of them saying there have not been a change. Also, all the respondents within age 50 and above reported an increase in their community participation upon accessing the municipals' credit. This finding clearly shows that respondents within the older age group have an increased decision making power in terms of participation in community affairs than those within the younger age category.

Results from the chi-square test further prove that the relationship between the age of respondents and their ability to participate in community affairs is significant at 1 percent. This finding is confirmed by Noreen (2011); Pambe et al. (2014) who concluded in their study that age of respondents has an influence on women's autonomy in taking decisions.

#### *4.6.1.3 Visiting the Market*

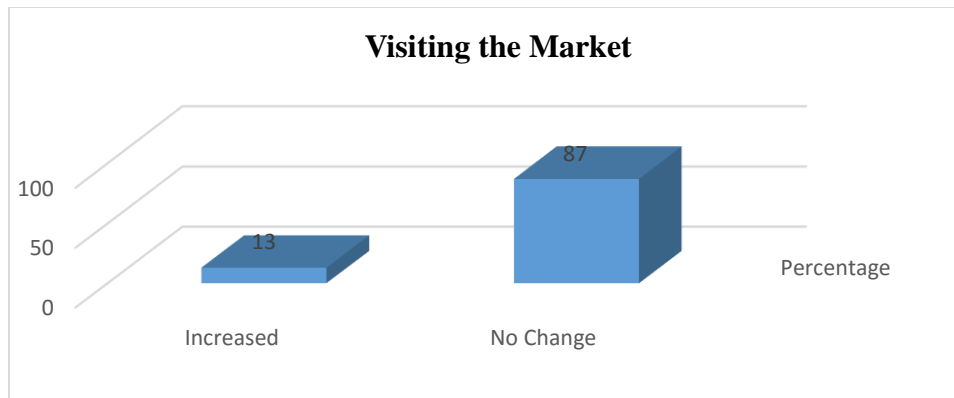
The confidence of women increases as they travel by themselves, choose what to buy on their own in the market and even crosses busy roads all by themselves hence, visiting the market as well as conversing with people while in the market helps to increase their social relations and knowledge.

Figure 4.8 below shows that as many as 87 out of the total respondents of 100 said their decision making on visiting the market had increased upon accessing the municipals' credit whereas just 13 of them said there had not been a change. One respondent during an in-depth interview said:

*Prior to accessing credit from LaDMA, my husband was the one funding my business and so any time I needed to go and buy some items from the market for my business, I had to seek permission from him since I needed some money to top up. However, after accessing credit from LaDMA, it*

was sufficient to enable me buy my goods and so even though I inform him before visiting the market, I do not necessarily need his permission (Respondent from Anointed Ladies).

**Figure 4. 8: Respondents Ability to Decide on Visiting the Market**



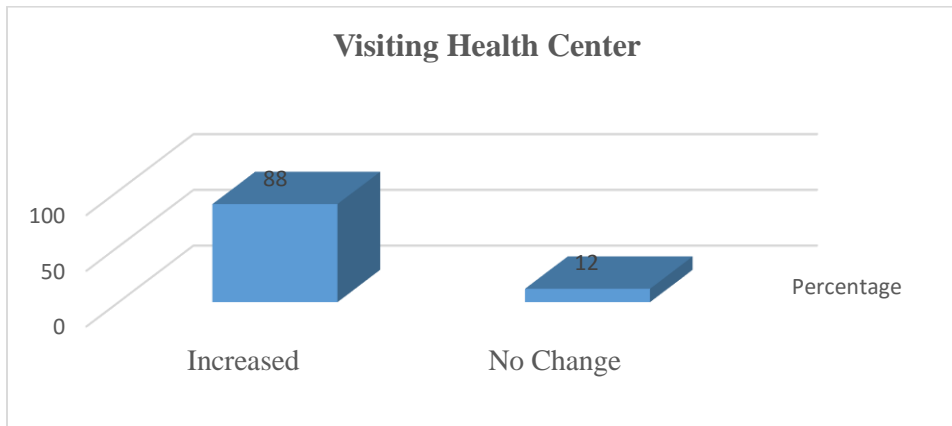
Author's field survey, 2017

#### 4.6.1.4 Visiting Health Center

Respondents were also asked of their ability to visit the health center without having to seek for permission from their husbands after accessing credit from LaDMA. It appeared that majority of these women were able to visit the health center should there be the need since they now have some income to cater for themselves without necessarily depending on their husbands. As shown in the Figure 4.9 below, majority of the women (88%) said their decision to visit the health center had increased since they received credit from the municipality whereas 12% of them said their decision to visit the health center had not changed. During an in-depth interview, one respondent said:

*My husband travels a lot and so most of the time he is not home. Whenever there is the need for me to visit the hospital, I do not wait for him to return or send some money because I can now pay for my own medical bills (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

**Figure 4. 9: Respondents Ability to Decide on Visiting Health**



Author's field survey, 2017

#### *4.6.1.5 Respondents' Decision Making on Visiting Health Center with Respect to Educational Attainment*

A chi-square test was also performed to find out if there exist a significant relationship between respondents' educational attainments and their ability to take decisions regarding their health. The Table 4.10 below shows that, all the respondents (36) with no formal education had an increase in decision making regarding their visit to the health center upon accessing microcredit from the municipality. For respondents with basic education, 9 (19.57%) of them said their decision making regarding visiting the health center had not changed whereas 37 (80.43%) said their decision making regarding visiting the health center had increased. It is further noted that majority of those with educational attainment up to SHS and above had an increase in their decision with 15 (83.33%) attesting to this as compared to 3 (16.67%) of them who had seen no change.

This results is probably because the more educated ones see the need for visiting the health center for medical attention than the less educated who probably will resort to self-medication. However, there is an increase among those with no formal education because most of them are widowed and divorced hence, they are the sole decision makers in their homes.

The chi-square test shows a chi value of 7.7734 and a P value of 0.02 which is less than 0.05, hence it can be concluded that there exist a significant relationship between the educational attainment of respondents and their ability to make decisions regarding their health. It can therefore be concluded that respondents decision making regarding their visit to health centers increased with a higher educational attainment. This finding agrees with a study in Burkina Faso by Pambe et al (2014) whose study revealed that women with more education are more likely to participate in decision making regarding their own health, large purchases as well as decisions regarding family visits as compared to women with little or no education.

**Table 4. 10: Chi-square test for Respondents ability to Visit the Health Center base on Educational Attainment.**

Visiting Health Center	Educational Attainment			Total
	No Formal Education	Basic	SHS and Above	
No Change	0 (0.00)	9 (19.57%)	3 (16.67%)	12 (12%)
Increased	36 (100%)	37 (80.43%)	15 (83.33%)	88 (88%)
Total	36 (100%)	46 (100%)	18 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Author's field survey, 2017

Pearson chi2 = 7.7734 Pr = 0.021\*\*

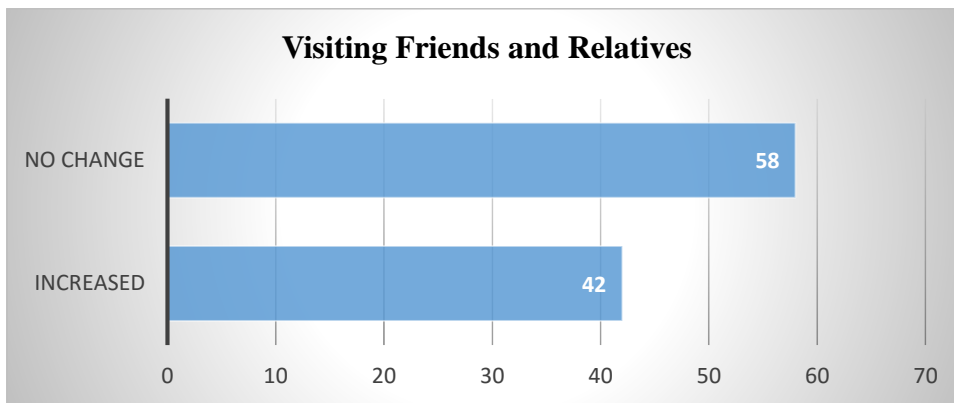
Note: The value within parenthesis refers to column

\*\*denotes significance at 5% level

#### 4.6.1.6 Visiting Friends and Relatives

Respondents were asked about their ability to take independent decisions on visiting friends and relatives. The result of this finding is illustrated in Figure 4.10 below.

**Figure 4. 10: Respondents Ability to Visit Friends and Relatives**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017

As presented in Figure 4.10 above, 42 out of the total of 100 respondents said their decision making regarding visiting their friends and relatives had increased whereas as many as 58 said their decision had not changed. With regards to those who had seen no change, most of them mentioned during an interview that they barely visit their relatives because they stay far from them whereas others mentioned the fact that they had no friends. This finding however, contradicts with the findings of Nithyanandhan (2014) who in his study in India found women to be more mobile with regards to visiting their friends and relatives.

#### 4.7 Changes in Intra-Household Decision Making

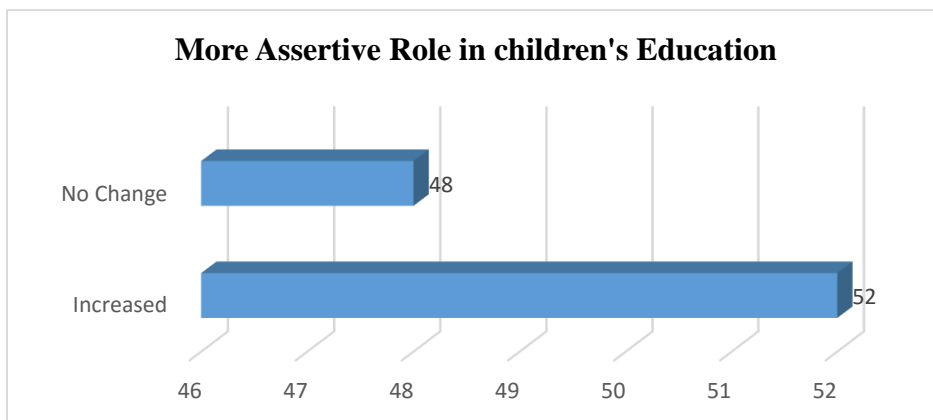
The various ways in which women participate in decision making regarding household matters reflects how important they are in the family. Partaking more in decisions in the household raises

their self-respect. During the field survey, women were asked whether their decision making relating to household matters had increased, decreased or not changed, i.e., decisions relating to children’s education and health as well as decisions on child birth.

#### 4.7.1 Assertive Role in Children’s Education

The Figure 4.11 below shows that 52 percent of the respondents were reported to be more assertive in their children’s education and health whereas 48 percent reported no change. In-depth interviews revealed that women now partake in paying their children’s school fees as well as hospital bills and health insurance. Some even mentioned that they sometimes pay for their children’s fees in full for their husbands to payback their part later. This finding agrees with Adu-Okoree (2012) who found that women were now able to contribute to their children’s education. For those who experienced no change, most of them mentioned that their husbands are the ones who still take responsibility for their children’s health and education.

**Figure 4. 11: Respondents Assertive Role in Children’s Education**



Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

#### *4.7.2 Respondents IGAs after Credit Against their Assertive Role in Children's Health and Education*

A chi-square test was performed to study if there is a significant relationship between respondents IGAs after accessing credit from LaDMA and their ability to take decisions regarding children's health and education. The Table 4.11 below shows that 28 (52.83%) of the respondents engaged in trading reported a more assertive role in their children's health and education whereas 25 (47.17%) reported no change. Also, 6 (50%) respondents engaged in tailoring reported both an increase and no change. The Table further depicts that 16 (72.73%) of those in catering services reported an increase in their role in children's education and health whereas 6 (27.27%) of them reported no change. With respect to those engaged in both tailoring and trading, only two (15.28%) of them reported an increase whereas as 11 (84.62%) of them reported no change. It can be deduced from the Table that those engaged in catering services performs a more assertive role in their children's health and education to the others. This might probably be because they make more profits and has more income to cater for their children as compared to the others.

The chi-square results shows that there is a significant relationship between the IGAs of respondents after assessing the municipal's credit and their assertive role in their children's health and education.

**Table 4. 11: Respondents IGAs after Credit and Their Assertive Role in Children’s Education and Health**

<b>More Assertive Role in Children’s Education and Health</b>	<b>Respondent’s Current IGAs</b>				
	Trading	Tailoring	Catering	Tailoring and Trading	Total
No Change	25 (47.17%)	6 (50%)	6 (27.27%)	11 (84.62%)	48 (48%)
Increased	28 (52.83%)	6 (50%)	16 (72.73)	2 (15.28%)	52 (52%)
Total	53 (100%)	12 (100%)	22 (100%)	13 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

Pearson chi2 = 10.8033 Pr = 0.013\*\*

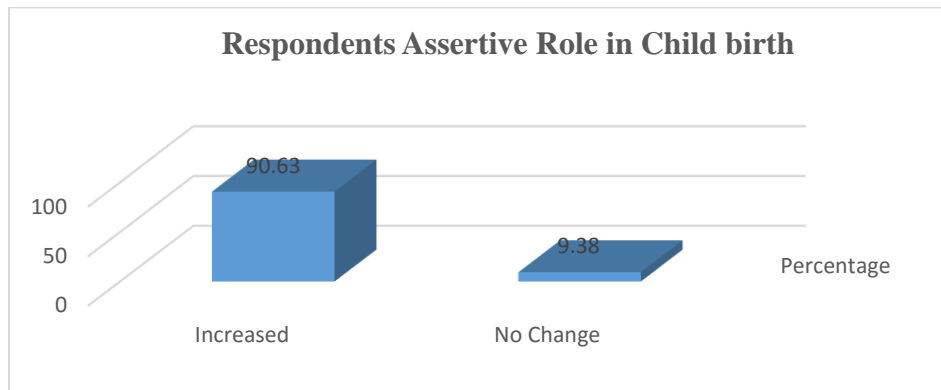
Note: The value within ( ) refers to column percentages

\*\*denotes significance at 5% level

#### 4.7.3 Assertive Role in deciding when to have Children

The Figure below shows that as many as 90.63 percent of the respondents reported an increase in their decision making regarding when to have children after accessing the municipal’s credit whereas 10.94 percent of them reported no change. Most of the women had the freedom to decide when to have a child since they now play a major role in their households and the lives of their children.

**Figure 4. 12: Respondents Assertive Role in Deciding on when to have a Child**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017

#### *4.7.4 Respondents' Ability to Decide on When to have Children with Respect to Their Ethnicity*

The table 4.12 below shows that majority of the Ga respondents 15 (71.43%) reported an increase whereas 6 (26.57%) reported no change. Also, all the 10 respondents from the Akan ethnic group reported an increase in their decision making regarding childbirth. It is further noted that all the 14 respondents from the northern ethnic groups also reported an increase and the others belonging to the Krobo ethnic group also reported an increase. It can be deduced from the Table that respondents from Ewe, Akan, Northern and Krobo ethnic groups are more empowered than the Ga ethnic group. This finding agrees with Pambe et al (2014) who revealed in their study that women's ability to participate in decision making is related to their ethnic groups.

**Table 4. 12: Respondents Role in Deciding Childbirth According to Their Ethnic Groups**

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**More Assertive Role in Deciding When to have a child**

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<b>Ethnic Group</b>	No change	Increased	Total
Ga	6 (28.57%)	15 (71.43)	21 (100%)
Akan	0 (0.00)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)
EWE	0 (0.00)	18 (100%)	18 (100%)
Northern	0 (0.0)	14 (100%)	14 (100%)
others	0 (0.00)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
<b>total</b>	6 (9.38%)	58 (90.63%)	64 (100%)

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Source: Author's field survey, 2017

#### **4.8 Changes in Assets and Control over Resources**

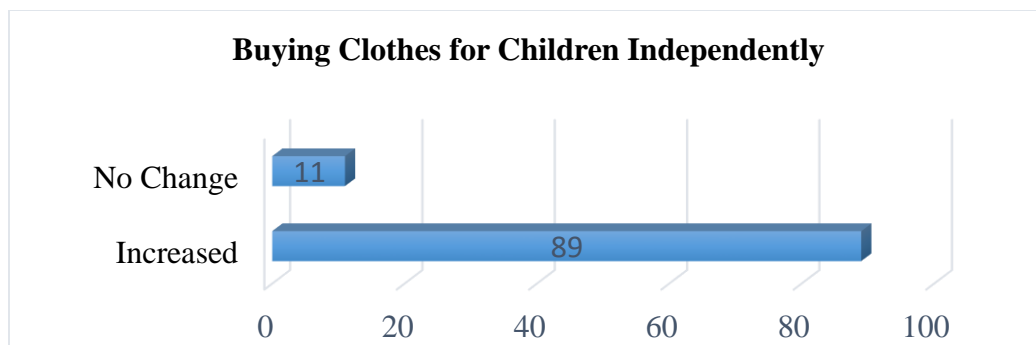
Women's decisions regarding making purchases for themselves, their children and their households independently is considered important in determining their empowerment status. Two aspects were considered including; their decision making in buying clothes for their children and themselves independently as well as their ability to have a say in purchasing major goods for the family.

#### 4.8.1 Decision Making Regarding Buying Clothes for Children Independently

Respondents were asked of their ability to take decisions independently to buy clothes for their children. As illustrated in Figure 4.13 below, as many as 89 (89%) of them reported an increase whereas 11 (11%) reported no change. Interviews with the women further revealed that they were now able to buy clothes for their children since they now make additional income. One woman for instance said:

*Even though my husband is the one who buy clothes for the children, however, whenever I come across nice clothing I also buy for them with my own money (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

**Figure 4. 13: Respondents Decision to Buy Clothes for Children Independently**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017

#### 4.8.2 Religious Status of Respondents and Their Ability to take Decisions on Buying Clothes for Children Independently

Table 4.13 below shows that 82 (88.17%) of the Christian respondents reported an increase in their ability to purchase clothes for their children independently whereas 11 (11.83%) reported no change. The Table further depicted that the rest of the 7 respondents belonging to the Islamic religion reported an increase in their decision making regarding buying clothing for their children.

**Table 4. 13: Respondents’ Religion and their Ability to Purchase Clothes for their Children.**

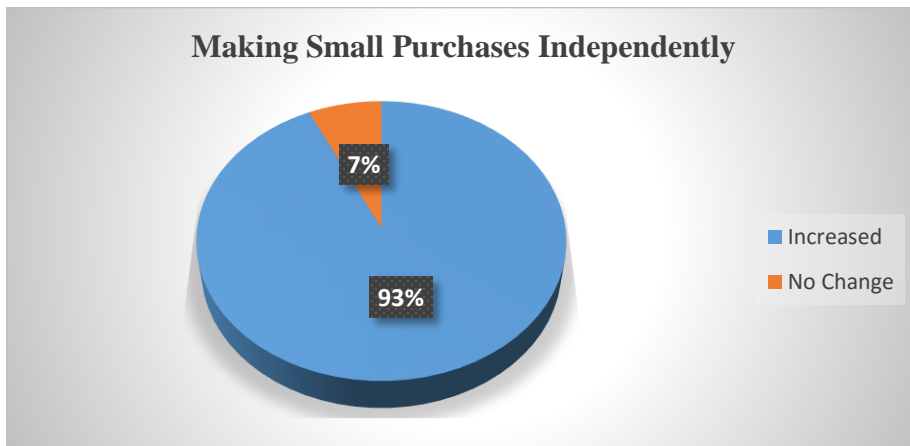
<b>Buy Clothes for Your Children Independently</b>			
Religion	No Change	Increased	Total
Christian	11 (11.83%)	82 (88.17%)	93 (100%)
Islamic	0 (0.00)	7 (100%)	7 (100%)
Total	11 (100%)	89 (89%)	100 (100%)

Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

#### 4.8.3 Making Small Purchases Independently

Figure 4.14 below shows that as many as 93 percent of the respondents said their decision regarding making small purchases like dresses, jewelry etc. for themselves had increased after accessing credit from the municipality whereas 7 percent reported no change. Interviews with the women revealed that since they now make additional income, they are able to buy for themselves things they needed independently.

**Figure 4. 14: Respondents' Decision to Make Small Purchases Independently**



Source: Author's field survey, 2017

#### *4.8.4 Decision on Making Small Purchases Independently According to Groups*

The Table 4.14 below shows that all the respondents belonging to Anointed and United Ladies reported an increase in their ability to make small purchases for themselves independently. Also, 24 out of the 25 respondents belonging to Virtuous Ladies reported an increase whereas one person reported no change. Finally, 19 respondents' from Peace and Love reported an increase whereas 6 reported no change.

It can therefore be concluded that United Ladies and Anointed Ladies are more empowered than Virtuous Ladies and Peace and Love respectively with regards to decisions concerning making small purchases.

**Table 4. 14: Women’s Groups and their Ability to Make Small Purchases**

Make Small Purchases			
<i>Name of Group</i>	No Change	Increased	Total
<i>Virtuous Ladies</i>	1 (4%)	24 (96%)	25 (100%)
<i>Peace and Love</i>	6 (24%)	19 (76%)	25 (100%)
<i>United Ladies</i>	0 (0.00)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)
<i>Anointed Ladies</i>	0 (0.00)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)
<i>Total</i>	7 (7%)	93 (93%)	100 (100%)

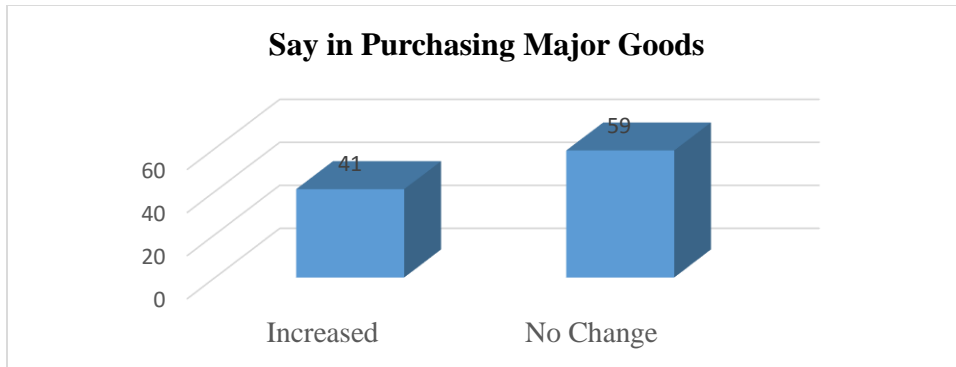
Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

#### *4.8.5 Respondents Say in Purchasing Major Goods for the Family*

Respondents were asked if they had a say in decision making regarding the purchases of major goods or assets for the family. Figure 4.15 below shows that majority of the respondents’ (59%) reported no change regarding having a say in the purchase of major goods for the family whereas 41 percent reported an increase. Most of the respondents during in-depth interviews mentioned that their husbands do not consult them before making major purchases such as Television for the family. One respondent for instance said:

*Whenever my husband travels, he sometimes buy goods for the family on his return without necessarily asking for my opinion (Respondent from Peace and Love).*

**Figure 4. 15: Respondents’ Say in Making Major Purchases**



Source: Author’s field survey, 2017

#### *4.8.6 Respondents Say in Making Major Purchases against their Household Size*

Table 4.15 below indicates that out of the 9 respondents who had a household size between 1- 3, 4 (44.4%) reported no change with regards to they having a say in purchasing major goods for the household whereas the rest 5 (55.56%) reported an increase. Also, for those who had a household size of 4-7, 50 (65.79%) reported no change whereas 26 (34.21%) reported an increase. It is further noted from the Table that for those who had a household size of 8 and above, 5 (33.33%) reported no change whereas 10 (66.67%) reported an increase.

From these findings, it can be said that those with smaller household sizes are more empowered to participate in decision making regarding the purchase of major goods than those with larger household sizes. This is probably because those with smaller household sizes have enough income to contribute to the purchase of major goods since they do not have many people to cater for however, for those with larger household sizes, most of their income might be spent on the

immediate needs of their household hence, unable to contribute to major purchases. This however do not apply to those within the household size of 8 and above because most of the respondents in this category are widowed and divorced so they take independent decisions with regards to major purchases hence the reason for the increase.

The results of the chi-square test shows a chi value of 6.3215 and a p value of 0.042 which is less than the 0.05 significant level, meaning that there is a significant relationship between the household size of respondents and their say in making major purchases.

**Table 4. 15: Chi-Square Test of Respondents Household Size and their say in the Purchases of Major Goods**

Have a say in the purchase of major goods	Size of Household			Total
	1-3	4-7	8 and above	
No Change	4 (44.4%)	50 (65.79%)	5 (33.33%)	59 (59%)
Increased	5 (55.56%)	26 (34.21%)	10 (66.67%)	41 (41%)
Total	9 (100%)	76 (100%)	15 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Author's field survey, 2017.

Pearson chi2 = 6.3215 Pr = 0.042\*\*

Note: Value within parenthesis refer to column percentage

\*\*denotes significance at 5% level

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study findings, draws conclusions and make recommendations base on the study findings.

The “Women in Development” Program introduced by the La Dade-Kotopon Municipality aimed at providing credit to business women in the municipality to expand their IGAs so as to eventually improve their status. This research therefore sought to find out the effect of this program on the IGAs and the empowerment of these women. It also sought to examine the challenges they encountered in managing and using their credit. To achieve these objectives, the researcher focused on all the 100 women who benefited from the municipals’ microcredit.

Also, Face-to-face interviews as well as in-depth interviews were employed in order to solicit information from the respondents. After a careful analysis of data collected for the study, the following are the summary of the major findings.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

From the analysis and discussions, some key findings of the study were established. These are discussed below:

The study findings showed that as many as 82 percent of the respondents had never accessed credit from any financial institution apart from the municipals’ credit. The women thought they might default in repayment should they go in for loans considering the bad sales as well as the high

interest rates of these institutions. The study further showed that the women accessed the municipals' credit purposely to expand their IGAs since a condition for given out the credit was to invest in their IGAs. The amount of credit given by the municipality to these women was found to be GHc 600.

The results from the analysis showed that the women were engaged in various IGAs including trading, tailoring and catering services. Majority 53 (53%) of them were engaged in trading before accessing the municipals credit. It was also found that after accessing the municipals credit, those who engaged in trading and catering services expanded their businesses by purchasing more of the goods and materials needed whereas 13 out of the 25 women engaged in tailoring added trading to the tailoring and the remaining 12 used their credit to expand upon their tailoring activity.

The study further found that prior to accessing the municipals credit, majority (66.25%) of the respondents had their working capital between Ghc200 and Ghc500. The study revealed that access to credit from the municipality had increased their working capital with the majority (54%) now having their working capital between Ghc600 and Ghc1000. Also, the study found that this increment in working capital before and after the municipals microcredit was significant thus, there was a significant relationship between respondents' working capital before and after accessing microcredit.

The study also revealed a significant increment in respondents profits after accessing credit from the municipality which was attributed to the expansion of their IGAs with the additional capital

acquired from the municipality. The study showed that 99% of the respondents had seen an expansion in IGAs after accessing credit from LaDMA.

The study revealed that 90% of the respondents encountered challenges in managing and using their credit obtained from LaDMA. From the findings, among all the challenges identified in the study, the size of the credit was the most challenging with 88(97.78%) of the respondents attesting to this fact.

The study found that access to microcredit from the municipality has affected the women positively. Majority (85.94%) of the respondents gained an increase in respect from their husbands, 91.53% gained increased respect from parents, 93% experienced increased respect from their children and respect from friends and colleagues had also increased with 81% of respondents gaining this respect. The study revealed also that 50% of the respondents' had gained increase ability in taking decisions regarding their participation in community affairs whereas 50% also reported no change. It was also revealed that the widowed and divorced participants had greater power in decision making regarding participation in community affairs to the single and married women.

The study also found that all the respondents within the age, 50 years and above reported greater power in decision making regarding their participation in community affairs than the other age groups. The study discovered that 87 out of the 100 respondents had an increased decision making power regarding their visit to the market upon accessing credit from LaDMA. Also 88 respondents had an increase in their decision making regarding their visit to health centers should there be the need.

The study also discovered a significant relationship between respondents' educational attainment and their ability to take decisions regarding their health. Thus, those with higher educational attainments were found to be more empowered in taking decisions regarding their health to those with low or no education.

The study found that majority (58%) of the respondents' decision making regarding visiting friends and relatives had not changed as a result of distance barriers.

The study found a significant relationship between the marital status of respondents and their ability to take decisions on visiting friends and relatives. Widowed and divorced women were found to be more empowered to decide on visiting friends and relatives than the single and married women.

The study found that at the household level, majority (52%) of the respondents took up responsibilities in children's education and health. The study found a significant relationship between respondents' IGAs and their assertive role in children's education and health. Those engaged in catering services tend to be more assertive in their role towards their children's education and health.

The study also found that 89.06% of the respondents were more assertive in their decision making regarding childbirth after accessing microcredit from LaDMA.

Regarding changes in assets and control over resources, the study found that majority (89%) of the respondents were able to buy clothes for their children independently upon accessing microcredit from LaDMA.

The findings showed that majority (59%) of the respondents had an increased ability to make small purchases for themselves independently.

United and anointed ladies were found to be more empowered to make small purchases independently to the other groups.

The study also discovered that 59% of the respondents were empowered to participate in decision making regarding purchasing major goods for the family.

The study found a significant relationship between the respondents' household size and their say in making major purchases.

## 5.2 Conclusions

From the results of the study, some definite conclusions have been drawn. The socio-demographic characteristics of the women beneficiaries were found to include a low level of educational attainment. Also, all the women were mothers with majority having about two to four children.

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that microcredit has positive implications on beneficiaries' economic empowerment. It helps them to increase and sustain their working capital. It also enables them to purchase more goods for their income generating activities as well as extend their income generating activities by starting new ones.

It is also concluded from the study that trading is the major activity among the beneficiaries.

It could also be concluded that the size of the credit given to women from the municipality is a major challenge constraining them from expanding their income generating activities.

This notwithstanding, access to microcredit from the municipality had benefited the women and their dependents and households in a number of ways including increased capital, profits, improved health status, better upkeep of children, and acquisition of knowledge and skills.

It can also be concluded that there is a significant relationship between respondents' age and their ability to take decisions regarding their participation in community affairs. Thus older women are more able to take decisions as compared to the younger women.

It can also be concluded that level of education has a significant relationship with women's ability to take decisions regarding their own health. High educated women are more empowered to take decisions regarding their own health to those with less or no education. It is also concluded that widowed and divorced women are more empowered to take decisions independently as compared to single and married women.

Access to the "Women in Development" microcredit from LaDMA has affected the beneficiaries positively. It has improved on women's relationships with their families and society. They have been empowered in terms of decision making in the household, their mobility as well as decisions regarding making purchases independently for themselves, their children and families.

In conclusion, access to microcredit from the municipality has been found to have the potential of changing the lives of the women for the better by enhancing their capital, IGAs and their profits.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

- The La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly should expand and strengthen their microcredit program to cover many more women and even men since some men are also vulnerable.
- The business management training organized by the municipality for the beneficiaries are laudable and it is recommended that they must continue and if possible such training programmes must improve. They should include vocational skills training so that women can diversify their IGAs or even extend them by adding new ones.
- There should be an increase in government funding to District Assemblies to enable them increase the amount of loans on a much larger scale so that the members with better repayment capacity can enjoy larger amounts. This will also allow the opportunity for more women to be reached.
- Also, the municipality should liaise with other microfinance institutions to provide credit for women in the municipality at low interest rates in order to expand their income generating activities.

#### 5.4 Challenges Encountered

The researcher encountered some challenges in conducting the study. Some of the groups did not gather for meetings as scheduled hence the researcher moved from house to house to interview the respondents. Also, some of these women had moved from the areas where they initially resided and so for such people, the researcher interviewed them via phone.

Also, two of the groups had collapsed due to some reasons not known to the researcher, for such people, the researcher with the assistance of one group member moved from house to house

making it very difficult and time consuming. Those who were not available were interviewed via the phone hence creating further financial stress to the researcher.

### 5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study was based on a small sample size taken from the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly and therefore the results cannot be generalized to other municipalities in Ghana especially in analytical terms. Further research done on a bigger scale with large sample size could shed light on how access to microcredit can affect the lives and businesses of women in Ghana.

The current study did not investigate the motivations for joining the “Women in Development” Program in LaDMA. Another area not investigated is the difficulties the women encounter in repaying the credit. These areas therefore deserve to be researched.

Also, the study did not evaluate the impact of the training provided on business management on the beneficiaries. This is an area that should be investigated in future research.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Ghana, Legon

Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research

### Introduction

These questions are designed to solicit your views on the effect of LADMA's "Women in Development" Program on women empowerment. The field work is part of a preparatory work for the award of a Master of Arts Degree at the University of Ghana. This study is purely academic and as a matter of fact the information you will provide here would be kept confidential. Thank you for your support.

### SECTION A

Please tick or fill in where appropriate.

#### Demographics

1. Name of respondent-----
2. Respondent's phone number-----
3. Age.....
4. Location-----
5. Religion (1) Christian [ ] (2) Islamic [ ] (3) Traditional [ ]
6. Ethnic group (1) Ga [ ] (2) Akan [ ] (3) Ewe [ ] (4) Northern [ ]

7. Marital status (1) Single [ ] (2) Married [ ] (3) Divorced [ ] (4) Widowed [ ]
8. Number of Children-----
9. Educational Attainment (0) No formal education [ ] (1) Basic [ ] (2) SHS and above [ ]
10. Name of group-----
11. Size of household .....

**Women Credit History**

12. Have you ever received credit from any financial institution apart from the municipal’s credit? (1) Yes [ ] (0) No [ ]
13. If yes, when did you receive it? (1) Before the municipal’s credit [ ] (2) After the Municipal’s credit [ ]
14. What was the purpose of the credit from the municipality? (1) To start a business [ ] (2) To pay ward fees [ ] (3) To pay Health Insurance [ ] (4) To expand business (5) To serve as housekeeping money (6) Others, please specify-----
15. How much was your most recent credit? (1) Ghc100-Ghc500 [ ] (2) Ghc600 [ ] (3) Ghc700-Ghc1000 [ ] (4) Other, please specify-----

**SECTION B: Income Generating Activities of Beneficiaries**

16. Prior to accessing the credit what IGAs were you engaged in? *[Choose all applicable options]*
- (1) Trading [ ] (2) Tailoring [ ] (3) Catering services [ ] (4) Others, please specify-----
17. What income generating activity are you currently engaged in after accessing the municipals’ credit? *[Choose all applicable options]*

(1) Trading [ ] (2) Tailoring [ ] (3) Catering services [ ] (4) others specify-----

18. Would you say there has been an expansion in your business after accessing credit from the municipality? (1) Yes [ ] (0) No [ ]

19. How much was your working capital before joining the municipal's microcredit programme? (1) GHC200-GHC500 [ ] (2) GHC600-GHC1000 [ ] (3)GHC1200-GHC1500 [ ] (4) GHC1600-GHC2000 (5) GHC2100 and Above [ ] (6) Don't know [ ]

20. How much is your working capital after joining the municipal's microcredit programme? (1) GHC200-GHC500 [ ] (2) GHC600-GHC1000 [ ] (3)GHC1200-GHC1500 [ ] (4) GHC1600-GHC2000[ ] (5) GHC2100 and Above [ ] (6) Don't know [ ]

21. How much sales were you making per month before accessing the municipal's credit?

(1) 50GHC to GHC 300 [ ] (2) GHC 400-GHC 1000 [ ] (3) GHC1100-GHC1500 [ ]

(4) GHC1600 and above [ ] 5 don't know [ ]

22. How much sales are you making per month after accessing the municipal's credit? (1)

50GHC to GHC 300 [ ] (2) GHC 400-GHC 1000 [ ] (3) GHC1100-GHC1500 [ ]

(4) GHC1600 and above [ ] (5) don't know [ ]

23. What was your profit per month before accessing the municipal's credit? (1) GHC20-

GHC45 [ ] (2) GHC50-GHC150 [ ] (3) GHC200-GHC400 [ ] (4) GHC500-GHC800 [ ]

(5) GHC850-GHC1000 [ ] (6)GHC1100 and Above [ ] (7) Don't know [ ]

24. What is your profit per week after joining the municipal's microcredit programme? (1)

GHC50-GHC150 [ ] (2) GHC200-GHC400 [ ] (3) GHC500-GHC800 [ ] (4) GHC850-

GHC1000 [ ] (5) GHC1100 and Above (6) Don't know [ ]

### SECTION C: Challenges in Managing Microcredit

25. Do you encounter any challenges in managing/using your microcredit?

(1) Yes [ ] (0) NO

26. If yes please rate the following according to how challenging they are to you

No	Challenges	(1)Very Challenging	(2)Challenging	(0)Not Challenging
1	Inadequate skills and experience			
2	Credit Size			
3	Lack of family support			
4	Interference from husband			

### SECTION D: Effect of Microcredit on Women Empowerment

27. Changes in family and social relationships after accessing loan (Please tick the appropriate column)

No.	Particulars	(1)Increased	(2)Decreased	(0)No change
1	Respect from Husband			
2	Respect from Parents			
3	Respect from Children			
4	Respect from friends and colleagues			

## 28 Indices of empowerment and women decision-making

No.	Skills and Value	(1)Increased	(2)Decreased	(0)No Change
	<b>Women's Mobility and Social Interaction</b>			
1	Greater participation in community affairs			
2	Visiting the market			
3	Visiting health center			
4	Visiting relatives/friends			
	<b>Changes in intra household decision making</b>			
1	More assertive role in children's education and health			
2	More assertive role in deciding on when to have a child			
	<b>Changes in assets and control over resources</b>			
1	Buy clothes for your children independently			
2	Make small purchases like dresses, jewelry			
3	Have a say in whether to purchase major goods for the family (eg: TV)			

Thank You.

## APPENDIX B: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BENEFICIARIES

### INTRODUCTION

These questions are designed to solicit your views on the effect of LADMA's "Women in Development" programme on women empowerment. The field work is part of a preparatory work for the award of a Master of Arts Degree at the University of Ghana. This study is purely academic and as a matter of fact the information you will provide here would be kept confidential. Thank you for your support

### **SECTION A: Income Generating Activities**

#### **(A) Purpose of Credit**

- 1) Why did you access the credit?
- 2) Did you use the credit for the intended purpose?
- 3) How did you use the credit?

#### **(B) Beneficiaries Income Generating Activities**

- 1) Why did you choose this income generating activity?
- 2) How were you funding your IGA prior to accessing the credit?
- 3) How has access to microcredit expanded or impacted on your IGA?
- 4) What accounted for the increase/change?
  - i. Do you now have paid employees, and have their number increased after accessing the loan?
  - ii. Are you able to acquire assets for your IGA or has your assets increased after accessing the credit from the municipality?
  - iii. Has your working capital increased after accessing credit from the municipality?

- iv. Would you say there has been an increase in sales after accessing the municipal's credit? Why
- v. Has your profits increased after accessing the municipal's credit? How

**SECTION C: Challenges in Managing Microcredit Facilities**

- 1) How do you manage challenges you encounter in managing your credit?
- 2) How has these challenges affected your IGA?

**SECTION C: Effects of Microcredit on Women Empowerment**

**(A) Women's Mobility and Interaction**

- 1) Would you say you can now take your own decisions regarding where you want to go and at what time? If yes, why

**(B) Changes in Intra-Household Decision Making**

- 1) Tell me if there has been some changes with regards to your involvement in decision making in your household? What do you think caused these changes

**(C) Changes in Assets and Control over Resources**

- 1) Tell me if you can now take decisions on making some purchases without consulting your husband? What are some of the instances you made purchases for yourself or the house without consulting your husband or household member.

**(D) Changes in family and social relationships**

- 1) Has there been changes in your relationships with your family? How
- 2) Do you now take part in public activities? Why

APPENDIX C: Map of La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly

MAP OF LA DADE-KOTOPON, 2015

