

Introduction

The Centre for Micro Finance (CMF) in India is a young, fast growing organization focusing on improving access to financial services for the poor through cutting-edge research, knowledge dissemination and outreach to policy makers and practitioners. CMF's strategy is to use rigorous, empirical research to:

- **Inform practice:** The microfinance sector is evolving rapidly, and practitioners experiment with new products and new programmes. Through research, CMF provides evidence on what works and what does not.
- **Inform policy:** The policy environment for microfinance has important implications for its expansion and its impact. CMF documents and informs policy debates with empirical data and analysis, and provides further insight to policy-makers from its field experience.

Towards this goal, CMF aims to facilitate a process where research questions emerge from the local policy context and policy and programmatic decisions are guided by research outcomes.

Research Associates

CMF's Research Associates are at the heart of our work. They independently supervise various research projects on behalf of our partners—India's microfinance institutions such as SKS, Spandana and Bandhan and world-class universities such as MIT, Harvard, and Yale. Research Associates report to a Programme Head, who supervises a number of research projects.

The Study: Impact Evaluation of Kshetriya Grameen Financial Services (KGFS)

Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services (hereinafter KGFS), a new financial service aimed at underserved rural areas has been launched by IFMR Holdings Private Limited. IFMR Holdings Private Limited's first KGFS company, Pudhuaaru KGFS, was launched in June 2008, in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

CMF, Harvard and Pudhuaaru KGFS are partnering to understand the impact of banking services (credit, savings, insurance and remittances) on the lives of rural poor in Thanjavur and Thiruvarur. The principal research questions are –

Macroeconomy/Village Level Effects

- Labor Markets** – How does the availability of banking services affect wage rates, self employment, expansion of existing jobs, job diversification and migration.
- Investment Markets** – Are households willing to make riskier and more profitable investments? Does risk and capital sharing change with the availability of insurance and substitutes?
- Credit Markets** – How do informal credit sources (eg money lenders and pawn brokers) respond?
- Income and Wealth Distribution** – What are the effects of exposure to financial services on different subgroups of people?

Microeconomy/Household Level Effects

- Household Welfare**
 - Consumption smoothing – Are households subscribing to insurance (and substitutes), credit and savings better able to sustain optimal consumption levels throughout their lifecycles and across shocks?
 - Allocation of Household resources – How does the resource allocation change across household members? Does it become more equitable between members of different genders and ages?
 - Income Growth – Through what channels do households improve their income generation capacity. Are productive outlets for surplus income fully exploited?

d. Risk Management and Income Stability – Do households better plan for risk (eg health, job loss) mitigation and financial stability?

Key responsibilities of the Research Associate:

- In association with our partner organization, oversee implementation of the impact evaluation
- Maintain relationship with partner financial institution at both headquarters and field levels
- Maintain relationship with partner academic institutions located overseas
- Supervise a field team of a Project Assistant, Quality Monitors and other staff
- Oversee relationship with data-collection and data-entry contractors
- Ensure quality of data during data collecting and assist with data cleaning
- Identify and collect useful administrative data
- Disseminate preliminary and final research results through publications, conferences, and/or innovative methods such as Podcasts or blog articles

Qualifications and Skills

- Bachelors or Masters degree in development-related field preferred
- Fluency in English required; fluency in Tamil preferred
- Previous experience in development research preferred
- Familiarity with statistical analysis packages (eg SPSS, Stata, R) preferred
- Flexibility and ability to deal with uncertainty. Adaptability to project needs and schedules.
- Experience and maturity in relationship management
- Ability to work independently
- Willingness to travel required

Compensation

CMF provides a highly competitive salary in the industry.

To Apply Please send your resume, cover letter, and a writing sample to cmfhr@ifmr.ac.in. Please indicate in the subject line that you are applying for the **Research Associate position for PKGFS-IE**. We will contact you shortly after submission if we are interested in interviewing you.