

Strong player in sustained growing MFI sector...

About the Company: Fusion Micro Finance Ltd (FMFL) provides financial services to unserved and underserved women in rural and semi-rural areas across India.

- As of June 30, 2022, total AUM was at ₹ 7389.0 crore, with strong growth at 53.8% CAGR in FY17-21
- As of June 30, 2022, gross NPA ratio was at 3.6% while net NPA was at 1.3%

Key triggers/Highlights:

- The industry's gross loan portfolio increased at 21.0% CAGR since FY18 to reach ~₹ 3.1 lakh crore in Q1FY23. As per Crisil Research, the MFI industry is set to grow at 18-20% CAGR in FY22-25
- The new regulatory regime for microfinance loans levels the playing field and benefits NBFC-MFIs. NBFC-MFIs are expected to grow at a much faster rate of 20-22% compared to the MFI industry
- FMFL's active borrowers grew at a CAGR of 33.6% to 29 lakh (June 2022) served by 966 branches and 9,262 employees spread across 377 districts in 19 states and union territories in India
- History of serving rural markets with high growth potential in the microfinance segment, and have maintained a track record of high rates of customer acquisition & retention with retention rates at 71.7% for Q1FY23
- According to Crisil, FMFL had the sixth lowest gross NPA ratio among the top 10 NBFC-MFIs in India during FY22. Robust risk management policies & underwriting processes have resulted in healthy portfolio quality indicators. As of June 2022, gross NPA was at 3.6% while net NPA was at 1.3%

What should investors do? FMFL is a strong player in a sustainably and well growing MFI sector with healthy growth and operational performance. At the upper end of the price band, the company is valued at ~1.8x Q1FY23 BV (post issue).

- We assign **UNRATED** rating to the IPO

Key risk & concerns

- Competition from other MFIs, banks and financial institutions
- Increase in NPAs may adversely affect business & earnings
- Substantial collections & disbursements in cash exposes to operational risks



Particulars

Issue details

Issue opens	2nd November 2022
Issue Closes	4th November 2022
Issue Size	₹1079-1104 crore
Fresh Issue	₹600 crore
Price Band	₹350 - 368
No. of Shares on offer (in cr)	1.36
QIB (%)	50
NIB (%)	15
Retail (%)	35
Min Lot Size	40

Shareholding Pattern (%)

Shareholding pattern	Pre-issue	Post issue
Promoter group	85.21	67.97
Public	14.79	32.03

Objects of issue

Object of the issue

To augment capital base and achieve the benefits of listing the equity shares on the stock exchanges.

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Key Financial Summary

₹ crore	FY20	FY21	FY22	CAGR FY20-22
NII	382.6	480.7	655.3	30.9%
PAT	69.6	43.9	21.8	-44.1%
EPS	10.5	5.6	2.7	-49.5%
BVPS	151.9	157.7	161.7	3.2%
ROA %	2.2	1.1	0.4	
ROE %	7.6	3.6	1.2	
P/E	35.1	66.2	137.8	
P/BV	2.4	2.3	2.3	

Company Background

Fusion Micro Finance (FMFL) was founded with the core idea of creating opportunities at the bottom of the pyramid. The company does so by providing financial services to unserved and underserved women in rural and semi-rural areas across India. The company believe its network and services have improved accessibility to formal credit at affordable prices thereby positively impacting the lives of its customers in rural India. FMFL is one of the youngest companies (in terms of getting an NBFC-MFI licence) among top NBFC-MFIs in India in terms of AUM as of June 30, 2022, according to Crisil. In addition, it had the fourth fastest growing gross loan portfolio CAGR of 53.8% between FY17 and FY21 among the 10 largest NBFC-MFIs in India, according to Crisil. As of June 30, 2022 and March 31, 2022, 2021 and 2020, total AUM stood at ₹7389.0 crore, ₹ 6785.9 crore, ₹ 4637.8 crore and ₹ 3606.5 crore respectively.

According to Crisil, FMFL had the fourth lowest gross loan portfolio per district and second lowest gross loan portfolio per customer among top 10 NBFC-MFIs in India, for FY22, demonstrating better diversification and lower risk per customer. As a result, of such active management of state concentration, FMFL has been able to maintain low levels of AUM concentration per state despite robust growth over the years. As of June 30, 2022, no single state contributed to more than 20.0% of total AUM and proportion of AUM in five largest states in terms of AUM concentration has further declined from ₹ 612.4 crore or 94.6% of total AUM as of March 31, 2016 to ₹ 4885.4 crore or 66.1% of total AUM as of June 30, 2022.

As of June 30, 2022, share of AUM from customers in rural areas represented 91.3% of total AUM. FMFL's focus customer segment is women in rural areas with an annual household income of up to ₹ 300,000. Their business runs on a joint liability group-lending model wherein a small number of women form a group (typically comprising five to seven members) and guarantee one another's loans. FMFL also believes that its robust underwriting processes and risk management policies, such as extensive customer assessment methodologies and monitoring systems, have resulted in healthy portfolio quality indicators such as low rates of gross NPAs and net NPAs. As of June 30, 2022 and March 31, 2022, 2021 and 2020, gross NPA ratio was at 3.6%, 5.7%, 5.5% and 1.1%, respectively, and net NPA ratio was 1.3%, 1.6%, 2.2% and 0.4%, respectively.

Exhibit 1: Key financial and operating metrics

Particulars (₹ crore)	Q1FY23	Q1FY22	FY22	FY21	FY20
Gross AUM	7389.0	4631.1	6786.0	4637.8	3606.5
Period-on-period / year-on-year growth in AUM	59.6%	36.3%	46.3%	28.6%	36.5%
Disbursements	1983.0	761.5	6179.8	3710.3	3574.0
Period-on-period / year-on-year growth in disbursements	160.4%	4093.5%	66.6%	3.8%	26.7%
Active borrowers	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
Total income	360.4	265.0	1201.3	873.1	730.3
Pre-provision operating profit before tax	120.2	74.6	393.1	277.6	192.7
Profit for the period/year	75.1	4.4	21.8	43.9	69.6
Net interest income	184.7	124.6	560.7	430.9	312.3
Net interest margin	–	8.7%	8.4%	9.2%	8.9%
Average yield on loan portfolio	19.5%	19.5%	18.8%	20.5%	21.2%
Average effective cost of borrowings	10.1%	10.8%	10.4%	11.2%	12.3%
Cost to income ratio	44.7%	47.3%	44.3%	44.3%	50.9%
Gross NPA ratio	3.7%	6.2%	5.7%	5.5%	1.1%
Net NPA ratio	1.4%	2.8%	1.6%	2.2%	0.4%
Impairment allowance coverage ratio	96.6%	119.6%	100.5%	111.5%	255.5%
CRAR	21.1%	27.2%	21.9%	27.3%	35.8%
CRAR – Tier I	19.5%	25.2%	19.9%	25.5%	33.1%
Debt to equity ratio	4.2	3.5	4.3	3.6	2.5
Net worth	1416.5	1251.7	1338.0	1246.4	1198.9
Return on average net worth	21.8%	1.4%	1.7%	3.6%	7.6%
Return on average gross AUM	4.2%	0.4%	0.4%	1.1%	2.2%

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 2: Product mix (as of June 2022)

Loan type	No. of loans o/s	AUM (₹ crore)	% of total AUM
Income-generating loans:			
Agriculture-allied and agriculture	22,62,482	5,694	77%
Manufacturing and production	3,04,795	739	10%
Trade and retail	1,52,720	358	5%
Services	1,43,508	322	4%
Others	24,352	62	1%
Top-up loans	56,353	29	0%
Cross-sell loans	27,805	19	0%
Subtotal for income-generating	29,72,015	7,225	98%
MSME loans	6,028	164	2%
Total	29,78,043	7,389	100%

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 3: Collection efficiency and disbursement breakdown

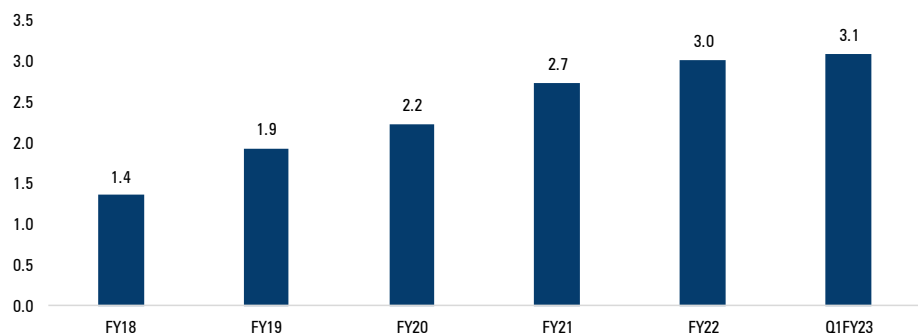
Months	Collection efficiency	Disbursements (₹ crore)
Apr-21	92%	304.4
May-21	84%	102.2
Jun-21	89%	354.8
Jul-21	94%	514.6
Aug-21	93%	515.2
Sep-21	94%	580.6
Oct-21	94%	595.4
Nov-21	92%	561.2
Dec-21	93%	634.7
Jan-22	93%	643.5
Feb-22	94%	668.8
Mar-22	94%	704.3
Apr-22	95%	658.4
May-22	95%	683.0
Jun-22	95%	641.6

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Industry Overview

The microfinance industry (JLG portfolio) has recorded healthy growth in the past few years. The industry's gross loan portfolio (GLP) increased at a CAGR of 21.0% since FY18 to reach ~₹ 3.1 lakh crore in Q1FY23. The growth rate for NBFC-MFIs is the fastest compared to other player groups.

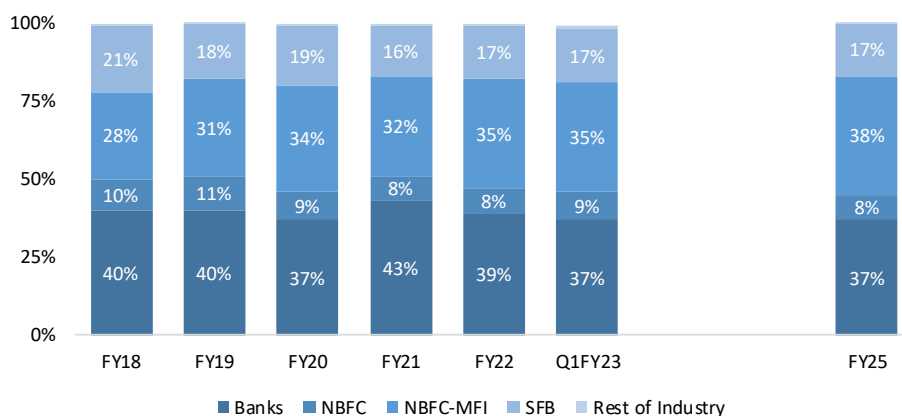
Exhibit 4: Industry level gross loan portfolio (GLP in | lakh crore)



Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

As per Crisil Research, the MFI industry is set to grow at 18-20% CAGR in FY22-25. During the same period, NBFC-MFIs are expected to grow at a much faster rate of 20-22% compared to the MFI industry. Key drivers behind superior growth outlook of the MFI industry include increasing penetration into the hinterland and expansion into newer states, faster growth in rural segment, expansion in average ticket size and support systems like credit bureaus. The RBI's new regulatory regime for micro finance loans effective April 2022 has done away with interest rate cap applicable on loans given by NBFC-MFIs and also supports growth by enabling players to calibrate pricing in line with customer risk.

Exhibit 5: NBFC – MFI to gain market share

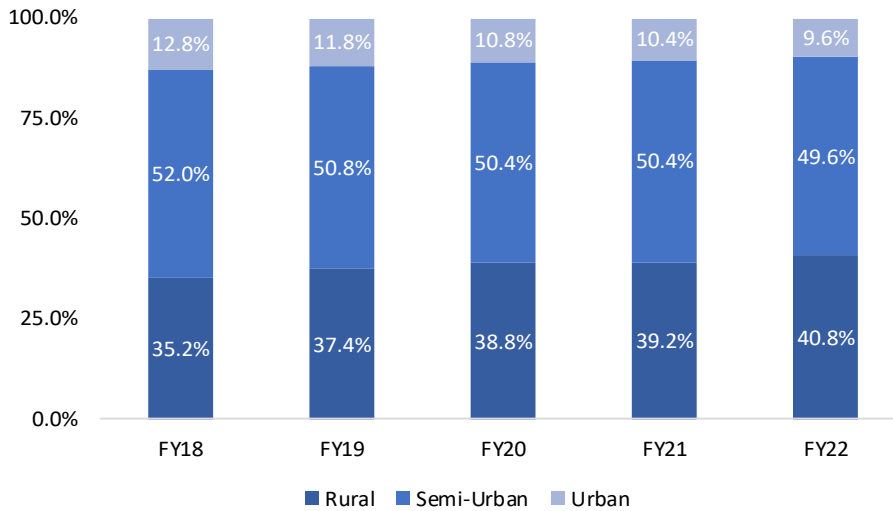


Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Compared to banks, NBFC-MFIs have higher focus on rural areas. Going forward as well, for NBFC-MFIs, the rural clientele is expected to remain high in the range of 55-60% compared to the urban clientele. Crisil Research believes that establishing a good relationship with rural customers and engaging with them regularly leads to longer and more loyal customer relationship, which can be further leveraged to cross-sell other products.

The significant under-penetration of credit in rural areas offers strong potential for improvement. Also, given the relatively deeper reach, existing client relationships and employee base, microfinance institutions are well placed to address this demand, which is currently being met by informal sources such as local money lenders. As of March 31, 2022, the rural region accounts for ~39.5% market share in microfinance lending.

Exhibit 6: Rural region accounts for ~41% share in overall MFI portfolio



Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Potential harmonisation of regulations for MFI lending

The RBI, in February 2021, outlined that there is a need to harmonise regulations governing the MFI lending industry. Therefore, it is taking a relook at the current regulatory framework. A potential harmonisation of regulations for MFI lending can have a positive impact on NBFC-MFIs as banks and SFBs will also be governed by same regulations, hence eliminating the competitive edge they have currently.

New regulatory regime for microfinance loans levels playing field, benefits NBFC-MFIs

The RBI, in its master directions on microfinance loans released in March 2022, has removed the interest rate cap applicable on loans extended by NBFC-MFIs. Entities providing microfinance loans will have to put in place a board-approved policy for the pricing of loans. The policy should include the interest rate model, range of spread of each component for categories of borrowers and a ceiling on the interest rate and all other charges on microfinance loans.

The RBI's move levels the playing field, with both NBFC-MFIs and banks or SFBs providing microfinance loans now being subject to the same rules, which was not the case under the previous regime. This move is expected to positively impact NBFC-MFIs. The increase in the annual household income cap for microfinance borrowers (to ₹ 300,000 in both urban and rural areas), removal of the two-lender norm for lending by NBFC-MFIs and allowing NBFC-MFIs greater flexibility to offer non-MFI loans (MFI loans are required to account for at least 75% of total assets of NBFC-MFIs under the new regulations) would increase the market opportunity available to MFIs and enable them to create a more balanced portfolio.

Peer comparison

Exhibit 7: Comparison of key players in microfinance industry

Parameters	Market Share (%)	Clients lakhs	Client per employee	YoA	CoF	NIM	CI	Credit Cost
CreditAccess Grameen Ltd.	12.7%	28.0	237.0	19.2%	8.2%	9.7%	29.7%	3.3%
Fusion Microfinance Pvt. Ltd.	7.1%	29.0	309.0	20.6%	9.7%	8.7%	44.3%	5.6%
Asirvad Microfinance Ltd.	6.8%	26.0	211.0	23.1%	11.2%	9.6%	49.7%	6.3%
Muthoot Microfin Ltd.	6.7%	22.0	257.0	18.0%	9.7%	7.5%	61.5%	2.3%
Annapurna Finance Pvt. Ltd.	6.6%	24.0	258.0	21.3%	10.2%	6.6%	63.1%	3.0%
Samasta Microfinance Ltd.	6.5%	23.0	193.0	20.5%	9.0%	10.9%	52.6%	1.8%
Satin Creditcare Network Ltd.	6.2%	24.0	251.0	21.3%	10.5%	7.5%	64.4%	2.3%
Svatantra Microfin Pvt. Ltd.	5.8%	18.0	307.0	17.7%	9.6%	6.4%	54.3%	3.0%
Spandana Sphoorty Financial Ltd.	5.4%	20.0	253.0	20.6%	11.6%	9.7%	32.8%	6.1%
Belstar Microfinance Ltd.	4.6%	18.0	279.0	20.8%	9.2%	9.6%	48.4%	3.7%

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Investment Rationale

Well Diversified and extensive pan-India presence

As of June 30, 2022, FMFL had 29 lakh active borrowers, who were served by 966 branches and 9,262 employees across 377 districts in 19 states and union territories in India. FMFL believe its extensive geographic presence puts it in a vantage position to lend across the country in a scalable manner while maintaining low operating costs, helping to mitigate any risks arising from economic, political, cultural or environmental factors particular to a specific region, and allows it to offer “last-mile” connectivity to customers in even the most remote areas.

Between March 31, 2016 and June 30, 2022, number of active borrowers grew at a CAGR of 33.6% and number of branches grew at a CAGR of 31.9%. As a result of this expansion efforts, as of June 30, 2022, no single state contributed to more than 20% of total AUM, and proportion of AUM in five largest states in terms of AUM concentration further decreased from 94.6% as of March 31, 2016 to 66.1% of as of June 30, 2022 (five states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu together account for 66.1% of total AUM).

Exhibit 8: Gross AUM across geographies

States / UTs	Q1FY23	Q1FY22	FY22	FY21	FY20
	% of gross AUM	% of gross AUM	% of gross AUM	% of gross AUM	% of gross AUM
Bihar	19.2%	18.1%	18.7%	18.3%	18.9%
Uttar Pradesh	19.2%	17.0%	18.1%	16.9%	16.7%
Odisha	11.4%	13.3%	11.6%	13.5%	13.7%
Madhya Pradesh	9.1%	9.1%	9.3%	9.5%	10.2%
Tamil Nadu	7.2%	6.8%	7.7%	6.4%	5.1%
Punjab	6.5%	8.1%	6.8%	7.8%	8.5%
Rajasthan	6.7%	5.6%	6.8%	5.6%	4.3%
Haryana	5.3%	6.8%	5.7%	6.7%	7.6%
Jharkhand	4.8%	4.7%	4.7%	4.6%	4.5%
Uttarakhand	2.6%	2.8%	2.7%	2.9%	3.0%
Gujarat	2.3%	2.0%	2.3%	1.8%	1.5%
Chhattisgarh	2.0%	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%
West Bengal	1.5%	1.8%	1.6%	1.8%	2.0%
Delhi	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%
Maharashtra	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Himachal Pradesh	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Puducherry	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Assam	0.1%	0.8%	0.2%	0.8%	1.1%
Jammu & Kashmir	0.0%	–	–	–	–
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Proven execution capabilities with strong rural focus

The company has been able to achieve significant success with its growth strategy of targeting underserved and underpenetrated rural areas in both existing markets and new geographies. FMFL has a long history of serving rural markets with high growth potential in the microfinance segment and has maintained a track record of financial performance and operational efficiency through consistently high rates of customer acquisition and retention and low-cost expansion into underpenetrated areas. The company has also achieved improving customer retention rates of 71.7%, 70.0%, 68.9% and 47.4% for Q1FY23, FY22, FY21 and FY20, respectively, which can be attributed to superior customer services and commitment to proactively address the specific needs of each individual across large customer base.

Access to diversified sources of capital, effective ALM

Over the years, the company has adopted a calibrated approach towards diversifying fund raising sources and minimising costs of borrowings with prudent asset liability management and effective liquidity management. The average effective cost of borrowings has declined at a steady rate and was at 10.1%, 10.4%, 11.2% and 12.3% for Q1FY23, FY22, FY21 and FY20, respectively.

FMFL benefits from a large and diversified mix of lenders, which has increased over the years and includes 56 lenders as of June 30, 2022, comprising a range of public banks, private banks, foreign banks and financial institutions to meet their capital requirements. Through the continued support of lenders and investors, it has been able to raise ₹ 10853.0 crore in debt as well as ₹ 572.7 crore in equity since FY20 despite volatility across the financial services industry during this period.

Robust underwriting process, risk management policies

FMFL's robust risk management policies and underwriting processes, such as extensive customer assessment methodologies and monitoring systems, have resulted in healthy portfolio quality indicators. As of Q1FY23, FY22, FY21 and FY20 gross NPA ratio was 3.6%, 5.7%, 5.5% and 1.1%, respectively, and net NPA ratio was 1.3%, 1.6%, 2.2% and 0.3%, respectively. According to Crisil, the company had the sixth lowest gross NPA ratio among the top 10 NBFC-MFIs in India during FY22, and average asset quality of 2.4% between FY15 and FY22 was the lowest among all NBFC-MFIs operating in North India.

The company utilises credit bureau data to verify customer details and obtain information on past credit behaviour. Further, FMFL employs proactive practices that involve frequent evaluations of portfolio risk levels on a periodic basis and rigorous monitoring and analysis of cash disbursements and collection, roll rates and customer retention at both branch and head office levels, which minimise the incidence of bad debts.

Stable & experienced management team supported by marquee investors

The company was founded by Devesh Sachdev, a first-generation entrepreneur who has 26 years of experience in the banking and financial services and logistics industry. FMFL also benefited from support of marquee investors, including Warburg Pincus LLC, a leading private equity firm focused on growth investing across several sectors, and Creation Investments Fusion, LLC, a leading alternative investment management company with a focus on private equity and private credit investments in emerging market financial services companies serving underserved and underbanked clients, both of whom are now its promoters.

Key risks and concerns

Competition from other MFIs, banks, financial institutions

FMFL faces most significant organised competition from other MFIs, banks and state-sponsored social programs in India. Traditional commercial banks as well as regional and cooperative banks may continue to increase their participation in microfinance. Further, some commercial banks are also beginning to directly compete with for-profit MFIs, including through the business correspondent operating model, for lower income segment customers in certain geographies.

Increase in NPAs may adversely affect business & earnings

The management of credit risk involves having appropriate credit policies, underwriting standards, approval processes, loan portfolio monitoring, collection and remedial management, provisioning policies and an overall architecture for managing credit risk. However, even if credit monitoring and risk management policies and procedures are adequate and appropriately implemented, the company may not be able to anticipate future economic or financial developments or downturns, which could lead to an increase in NPAs. If NPAs increases or the credit quality of borrowers deteriorates, it could have an adverse effect on business, financial condition, results of operations and cash flows.

Substantial collections, disbursements in cash exposes to operational risks

For Q1FY23, FY22, FY21 and FY20, 3.7%, 5.6%, 10.1% and 44.6%, respectively, of loans were disbursed through cash. For the same periods, ₹ 1526.9 crore, ₹ 4648.2 crore, ₹ 3254.0 crore and ₹ 3187.4 crore, respectively, of collections were in cash. Large cash collections and disbursements expose to the risk of theft, fraud, misappropriation or unauthorised transactions by employees responsible for dealing with such cash collections.

Disruption in sources of funding or increase in CoF may adversely affect liquidity and financial condition

The liquidity and profitability of business depends, in large part, on timely access to, and the costs associated with, raising funds. The funding requirements have historically been met from various sources, including bank loans, NCDs, equity and subordinated debt as well as cash flows from operations to fund operations, capital expenditure and expansion. As such, business depends and will continue to depend on ability to access a variety of funding sources. Listed NCDs aggregating to ₹ 380 crore and unlisted NCDs aggregating to ₹ 229 crore will mature in the remainder of the FY23 and FY24.

May have difficulties in managing opex structure if volumes of disbursement and size of AUM decline

In cases of significant reduction in new disbursements and any significant reduction in business, FMFL may not be able to adjust employee numbers commensurately and reduce employee benefits expenses in a relatively shorter period. Employee benefits expenses amounted to ₹ 72.2 crore, ₹ 51.3 crore, ₹ 233.0 crore, ₹ 168.6 crore and ₹ 148.3 crore accounting for 74.4%, 76.7%, 74.6%, 76.5% and 74.1% of operating expenses for Q1FY23, Q1FY22, FY22, FY21 and FY20, respectively. Other large components of operating expenses include rent, office maintenance and travelling and conveyance expenses, which may be difficult to reduce quickly.

Financial Summary

Exhibit 9: Profit & Loss Statement (₹ crore)

₹ crore	FY20	FY21	FY22	Q1FY23
Interest Earned	720.3	855.8	1151.3	342.7
Interest Expense	337.7	375.1	496.0	143.2
Nil	382.6	480.7	655.3	199.5
Other Income	10.0	17.3	50.1	17.7
Total Income	392.6	498.0	705.4	217.3
Operating expense	199.9	220.4	312.3	97.1
Operating Profit	192.7	277.6	393.1	120.2
Provisions	92.7	220.8	368.7	20.1
Tax	30.4	12.8	2.7	25.0
Net Profit	69.6	43.9	21.8	75.1

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 10: Balance Sheet (₹ crore)

₹ crore	FY20	FY21	FY22	Q1FY23
Assets				
Cash balances	817.7	1335.3	1153.6	769.7
Investments	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Advances	3343.0	4360.7	5918.2	6650.9
Fixed Assets	5.9	10.3	12.2	12.1
Other Assets	72.9	131.7	206.5	182.6
Total	4240.0	5837.9	7290.5	7615.2
Equity & Liabilities				
Capital	79.0	79.0	82.8	82.8
Reserves & Surplus	1119.9	1167.3	1255.2	1333.7
Networth	1198.9	1246.4	1338.0	1416.5
Deposits	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Borrowings	2973.7	4432.3	5775.8	6010.0
Other Liabilities and Provisions	67.4	159.3	176.7	188.8
Total	4240.0	5837.9	7290.5	7615.2

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 11: Key ratios (₹ crore)

	FY20	FY21	FY22
No. of shares (crore)	7.9	7.9	8.3
BV (₹)	151.9	157.7	161.7
EPS (₹)	10.5	5.6	2.7
P/E (x)	35.1	66.2	137.8
P/BV	2.4	2.3	2.3
RoA (%)	2.2	1.1	0.4
RoE (%)	7.6	3.6	1.2

Source: RHP, ICICI Direct Research

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Avoid: Do not apply for the IPO

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