

Role Of Urban Self-Help Groups In Growth Of Women Entrepreneurs

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Chapter 7 Findings, Discussion And Conclusion

In the current research work, researcher has attempted to understand the role of urban SHGs in business growth of their women entrepreneurs in Pune region. Women entrepreneurs and SHGs can become drivers of economic growth especially at the micro level if the need and importance of entrepreneurial interventions is understood and effectively managed by the SHGs and federations. The concept of new growth theory in entrepreneurship which considers knowledge, human capital and innovations as intangible assets of economic growth which are indigenous, relates appropriately with SHGs and federations which can develop sustainable businesses by providing the required growth support to their women members (human capital) who have ideas and skills resulting into innovative market ready products. In the current research, the researcher has observed that the urban SHGs focus on development of their women members is primarily on savings\thrift and financial independence through employability. A shift in the mindset is required from employability to sustainable entrepreneurship. Taking forward the above thoughts in the discussion of the research findings stated later in this chapter, the flow of this chapter has been mentioned as below.

Flow of the chapter- The summary of the findings, discussion on the research findings, conclusions and suggestions of the research are being presented in the current chapter in the order as follows, the main findings of the study along with its statistical justification, then discussion on the research findings has then been stated. Further to this, the researcher has stated the general conclusions of the study followed by objective wise conclusions. This is then followed by suggestions given by the researcher, scope for future study and limitations of the study.

7.1 Major Objectives Of The Study

- To study the role of urban SHG's in growth of women entrepreneurs.
- To enlist the constraints of urban SHG's for promotion of entrepreneurship.
- To suggest appropriate policy measures based on the findings that emerge from the study and outline recommendations and suggestions for further research.

7.2 Brief Methodology

Research Methodology used in the current research by the researcher was initially quantitative research methodology followed by a qualitative research methodology. For the quantitative research methodology, primary data was collected from 220 women entrepreneurs who were members of SHG's in Pune region and were running micro, small or medium enterprises in Pune region. Data was collected using a close ended structured questionnaire. The responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from always, very often, sometimes, rarely, never. The scale was also classified as very important, important, neutral, not very important and not important at all and in some cases as Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Sampling technique used was simple random sampling under which stratified simple random sampling was used. The statistical tests used for analyzing the data and testing the hypothesis were Anova and Multiple linear regression analysis. Friedman's test and Wilcoxon signed ranks test were used to determine the significance of the growth variables used in the study. Correlation Analysis was done to understand the strength and relationship between variables used to study role of urban SHG's in growth of women entrepreneurs. Multiple linear regression was used to understand the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable, seven independent variables were used to study the role of urban SHG's in business growth of women entrepreneurs and five variables were used to study the dependent variable which was business growth of women entrepreneurs. While the major findings of the study have evolved from the quantitative research methodology, in order to understand the perspective of the SHG leaders/managers the researcher has also used qualitative research methodology in which a semi structured questionnaire was used to conduct indepth interviews of three SHG managers/leaders and collect information. The SHG leaders/managers belonged to the same sample pool of the current study. The information collected has been analysed and the findings have been reported in the form of short case studies in chapter 6. The findings of the case studies have helped the researcher in understanding the perspective from the SHG's viewpoint with respect to their objectives, functions, constraints and role in supporting business growth of their women members.

7.3 Major Findings From The Study

1. There is a major impact of market expansion on business growth of urban SHG women entrepreneurs, enhanced marketing support by urban SHG's will enhance business growth.

Findings- Sustainability and business growth of SHG women entrepreneurs is highly influenced by adding new products and services in order to cater to new markets beyond local boundaries for better profit margin and enhanced revenue with the help of cost-effective mode of distribution channels. The current study relates the evidences of major items such as distribution channels e.g. online channels as evidence in enhancing the interest of urban SHGs women entrepreneurs and demand of new products in the globalized market like handicrafts in European market. Most of the urban SHGs are engaged in petty businesses, dairy farming and trading activities etc. Due to lack of market exposure these groups face immense marketing problems. Therefore, better bank linkages and avenues for promotion and distribution of their products should be established in order to promote their products in the local and global market.

Suggestions- 1. SHGs due to their less exposure, awareness and experience require constant efforts to enhance their capacity for marketing and promoting their products, this can be done through networking with peer SHG's and federations and government organizations.

2. With respect to marketing, it is suggested that government should arrange training programmes on new methods of promoting products, provide exclusive marketing and promotion measures for urban SHG women entrepreneur's products. Also marketing platforms and display centers must be provided which are functional and consistent. NABARD has initiated a state level marketing support platform for SHG women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu along with Bharathi Foundation which is a local voluntary organization, more such center wise initiatives are required.

3. The best solution suggested to meet the demand constraints is the role of e-commerce providing consumers with a low-cost and easy to use way of accessing new products and services. This translates into gains for both the consumer and seller (including entrepreneurs) that benefit from access to new markets.

Statistical Analysis- 220 SHG women entrepreneurs when interviewed responded that market expansion is a very important growth parameter. It had 4 sub parameters- (1). adding a new

product or service the mean was 4.78. (2). selling to a new market the mean was 4.78, (3). expanding distribution channels the mean was 4.68. (4). Increase in advertising and promotion the mean was 4.72. Thus, it is seen that all market expansion parameters are very important for business growth. Anova was done to understand the impact of urban SHG's role on market expansion, a regression model was defined, analysis revealed that the model is significant ($R^2=0.389$). Then a Multiple linear regression analysis was done to understand the significance of each role parameter on market expansion, it was observed that changes in only two role parameters i.e. financial access and support and marketing support provided by urban SHG's to women entrepreneurs are significantly associated with market expansion (For marketing support-Beta value= 0.703, $P=0.000$, financial access and support Beta value=0.919, $P=0.000$) and changes in other role parameters are not significantly associated with market expansion and growth of women entrepreneurs as per the study. The regression coefficient associated with marketing support is 0.540 and financial access and support is 0.671 suggests that one unit increase in them will result in a similar increase in market expansion. Thus if marketing support by urban SHG's is increased, market expansion will increase.

2. There is a great impact of technology in providing growth avenues to urban SHG women entrepreneurs, increase in access to technical resources by urban SHG's will increase technological growth.

Findings- Women entrepreneur's business growth is highly influenced by technological growth and exposure to new technologies. This helps them sustain competition and retain and increase their market share thus making higher revenues for the business. Acquiring new equipment results in better quality of products giving higher value to consumers. In most cases for MSME enterprises due to shortage of resources upgrading current equipment serves as a better option to embrace new technologies and compete in the market. In today's scenario where all businesses are going digital, it is essential for urban SHG women entrepreneurs to upgrade technologies and computerize current equipment in order to absorb all opportunities that strike.

Suggestions- 1. The current study has revealed that SHG women entrepreneurs essentially lack awareness, training and education with respecting to technological changes, digitization. Thus it is recommended that government initiatives must provide regular updates, information, trainings to SHG women entrepreneurs pertaining to technology. E-Shakti the pilot project of NABARD

in 2018, is a great initiative for digitization of SHG's however its primary focus is only in rural areas, a similar program for SHG's in Pune region is required.

2. It is suggested to increase awareness and exposure of SHG women entrepreneurs through collaborations with organizations like WIMA, MAVIM, FIWE- Federation of Indian women entrepreneurs, National and International exhibitions like Dastkar, Haat Bazaars and Yellow ribbon fair in Pune etc. where new marketing avenues, online portals are available and technological advancements sector wise are discussed and displayed.

Statistical Analysis- The respondents stated that technological growth is an important business growth parameter as seen from the data analysis, where acquiring new equipment has a mean of 3.76, computerizing current operations has a mean of 4.71 whereas upgrading current equipment has a mean of 3.74. Anova was done to understand the impact of urban SHG's role on technological growth, a regression model was defined, analysis revealed that the model is significant ($R^2=0.377$). Further a Multiple linear regression analysis was done to understand the significance of each role parameter on technological growth, it was observed that changes in only two role parameters i.e. financial access and support and access to technical resources provided by urban SHG's to women entrepreneurs are significantly associated with technological growth (for access to technical resources-Beta value= 0.589, $P=0.000$, for financial access and support- Beta value=0.716, $P=0.000$), the other five role parameters are not significantly associated with growth of women entrepreneurs as per the study. The regression coefficient associated with technical resources is 0.430 and financial access and support is 0.523 suggesting that one unit increase in them will result in a similar increase in the technological growth. Thus increase in access to technical resources by urban SHG's will result in increase in technological growth of women entrepreneurs.

3. For business growth of women entrepreneurs in Pune region infrastructure growth is important, urban SHG's are unable to impact it significantly.

Findings- It has been observed from the study that infrastructure growth is an important parameter for business growth. However out of the seven role parameters provided by urban SHG's it is noted that urban SHG's role is not significant in impacting infrastructure growth. The study reveals that majority of the respondents mentioned lack of knowledge and awareness of the

many infrastructural support avenues like industrial estates, subsidized land rates, establishment grants concessional finance for machinery and tax exemptions and other benefits provided by the government as hinderances preventing them from accessing larger opportunities for expansion.

Suggestions- 1. One proposed solution for addressing this gap is the initiative of urban SHG's in providing digitization avenues and infrastructural support through well-conceived and focused planning and connect to active government and private organizations working towards entrepreneurial promotion in Pune region e.g. urban SHG's can enroll for membership with TIE (The Indus Entrepreneurs), MAVIM, WIMA-Pune, Bhimtadi etc. which are doing effective work towards promoting avenues for SHG women entrepreneurs. This will keep them updated of their activities and events and help in improving business decision making and entrepreneurial capabilities among SHG's women entrepreneurs.

2. It is suggested to SHG federations to acknowledge and understand the requirement of funds for women entrepreneurs at different growth stages of their business cycle. It is suggested that SHG federations must be connected through government initiatives with appropriate funds exclusively for infrastructural support, machinery, land and building and other infrastructural needs.

Statistical Analysis- Anova was conducted to understand the significance of role parameters provided by urban SHG's on growth of women entrepreneurs, a regression model was defined, analysis revealed that for Infrastructural growth ($R^2=0.399$). Further a Multiple linear regression analysis was done and it was seen that changes in financial access and support and business counseling are significantly associated with infrastructural growth (financial access and support Beta value=0.878, $P=0.000$, business counseling Beta value=0.589, $P=0.000$) while changes in Marketing support, Training, personal growth, Access to technical resources, and Education are not significantly associated with infrastructural growth. Thus urban SHG's are unable to impact infrastructural growth significantly.

4. Financial access and support provided by urban SHG's for growth of women entrepreneurs in scaling their enterprises is significant for all growth parameters.

Findings- Finance enables women entrepreneurs to expand and diversify their business activities thus meeting the concurrent demand of market and consumers. It has been observed that finance

for new investments and expansion enables SHG women entrepreneurs to allocate resources for new investments and use working capital appropriately and also allocate resources in fulfilling the fixed capital needs of the business ensuring growth and success. Finance for diversification enables introduction of new product line, new location, new markets etc., thus it has been seen that both the above variables are important for business growth. Lack of knowledge and awareness particularly amongst the SHG women entrepreneurs about available financial schemes and funding options and availability of timely finance is seen as a major drawback in growth of business. Further the corpus available with SHG's is merely in the form of internal lending and micro loans from banks which are meager and not enough to support women entrepreneurs business growth.

Suggestions-1. Financial access and support is an important growth parameter essential for scaling the business. Government of India, through NABARD and Ministry of Entrepreneurship and skill development has come up with many different schemes enabling women entrepreneurs to get financial support, however there is lack of awareness and exposure. It is suggested that timely training programmes and workshops on education on financial literacy must be arranged for SHG women entrepreneurs. Finance through a single window program with reduced rates of interest is required. Establishing connect with nationalized banks\schemes \organizations for credit facilities for business is very essential for SHG women entrepreneurs.

2. Furthermore, it is essential to digitize and link all SHG's to banks to ensure loanable funds for business. Digitizing SHG's is also suggested to ensure online operations and all time access to financial data for better decision making for women entrepreneurs. NABARD has initiated its project- E-Shakti in 2018 with a pilot program in 100 districts for digitizing SHG's for better and ease of access, a similar initiative for SHG women entrepreneurs in Pune region is needed.

Statistical Analysis- A Multiple linear regression done revealed that financial access and support provided by urban SHG's was significantly associated with all business growth parameters. Market expansion (Beta value=0.919, P Value=0.000), Technological growth (Beta value=0.716, P Value= 0.000), Employee growth (Beta Value=0.878 P Value=0.000), Infrastructure growth (Beta value=0.878, P Value=0.000). Thus it can be deduced that financial access and support provided by SHG's is impacting business growth and needs to be enhanced so as to enhance business growth and expansion of women entrepreneurs in Pune region.

5. SHG's support women entrepreneurs in enhancing their skills and knowledge through training however training support is not seen to be significantly impacting business growth.

Findings- It has been seen in most cases that SHG federations and SHG's organize regular training programs for their women members, these training programs are generalized and aimed at developing skills such as cooking, tailoring, housekeeping, pickle, papad making etc. and they intend to make the members employable through these trainings. However, it has been noticed that trainings which are aimed at specifically women entrepreneurs to fulfill their business requirements in terms of technology, marketing, infrastructure, computer literacy etc. are required. Government centers organize EDP- entrepreneurship development programs, through District Industries Center in Pune, WIMA organizes trainings for women entrepreneurs, NABARD and MAVIM too conduct trainings, however they too are generalized and lack specific agenda. According to the National Council of Applied and Economic Research (NCAER, 2008) more than eighty per cent of the SHGs face problems in developing skills of their members due to inadequate literacy and lack of training facilities. Hence the resulting output from these trainings is not effective and does not support business growth.

Suggestions-1. As it is evident from the findings, appropriate and timely need based specific trainings are required for business growth of women entrepreneurs. It is suggested that SHG federations must arrange these trainings in collaboration with government organizations and schemes, selectively only for those women members who are entrepreneurs and require these trainings.

2. The trainings must be conducted by professional experts\consultants and must generate impactful results. Proper monitoring and evaluation is required of these training programs and post training follow up is necessary to enhance its impact.

Statistical Analysis- When SHG women entrepreneurs were requested to give information on trainings given by their SHG's, 61.3% said that trainings are sometimes provided by their SHG, 26.2% said that trainings are rarely provided by their SHG's, 10.5% said that trainings are very often provided and 2.1% said that trainings are never provided by their SHG. However, all of them said that trainings are generalized and not very beneficial for business growth. A Multiple linear regression done revealed training provided (Beta value=0.745, P=0.000) and financial

access and support (Beta value=0.878, P=0.000) are significantly associated only with one business growth parameter and not significantly associated with any other business growth parameter. Thus, SHG's focus on training, needs to be enhanced to significantly enhance overall business growth.

6. Personal growth provided by urban SHG's to women entrepreneurs is seen to be significantly associated with financial growth.

Findings- As the study deals with SHG women entrepreneurs who have basic formal education but have less awareness it is important to provide them support in enhancing their personal growth and gaining formal business education like a certificate course or diploma and knowledge as required for establishing and running their business operations efficiently. Also it is seen that SHG's provide general training and counseling sessions in developing individual skills like communication, personality development, presentation skills, confidence building, decision making etc. These skills are crucial for business growth and help to enhance performance of women entrepreneurs who are novice in most cases.

Suggestions- 1. It is suggested that SHG federations must organize workshops for building personal skills required specific to business growth, financial literacy programs, trainings for basic Math's and writing etc. which is very crucial for business growth and sustenance of SHG women entrepreneurs

Statistical Analysis- Women entrepreneurs were requested to give information on support provided by their SHG's for personal growth, it was noted that 58.6% stated that personal growth is rarely provided by their SHGs. A Multiple linear regression analysis reveals that personal growth provided by urban SHG's to women entrepreneurs is significantly associated with financial growth (Beta value=0.450, P=0.001). Thus, it is deduced that if personal growth is increased, financial growth will proportionately increase.

7. SHG's role in providing access to technical resources to SHG women entrepreneurs is significant with technological growth and needs to be enhanced.

Findings- Access to technical resources is an essential business growth parameter more so in today's changing business environment where technology is playing a crucial role and

digitization and artificial intelligence is ruling the market. SHG women entrepreneurs are technologically challenged and need basic training, knowledge and support to understand the relevance of technology for their business. They require handholding through counseling, discussions, training, workshops, and demonstration sessions to understand new technology and its relevance in their business. SHG's are unable to provide technical knowhow, technological growth to women entrepreneurs due to resource constraints and lack of learned and efficient trainers.

Suggestions-1. It is suggested that SHG's must provide technological solutions in the form of technical consultancy through professionals, tech entrepreneurs can be connected through government databases and invited for giving workshops, demonstrations to SHG women entrepreneurs to motivate and educate them.

2. Further it is suggested that regular courses on computer literacy, digital skills, new technology etc. must be provided. Also through exhibitions and trade fairs SHG women entrepreneurs can be exposed to new and upcoming technology and its usage for their business. SHG's can apply for bank loans under different SHG schemes for technical support to meet their resource deficiency.

3. A mobile phone-based helpline that uses an interactive voice response (IVR) system to communicate information to SHG women entrepreneurs. The helpline can be used to 1) send information on government schemes 2) include a toll-free number to call into for questions and 3) connect buyers to SHG women entrepreneurs.

Statistical Analysis- As seen from the data collected from SHG women entrepreneurs, it is seen that 19.4% of the respondents felt that access to technical resources is never provided by their SHG, 56 % of the respondents felt that access to technical resources is rarely provided by their SHG, 13.1% of the respondents felt that access to technical resources is sometimes provided by their SHG, 11.5% of the respondents felt that access to technical resources is very often provided by their SHG. Thus, majority felt that technical support and access to technical resources is rarely provided by their SHG for business growth. A Multiple linear regression analysis done to understand the role of urban SHG's in growth of women entrepreneurs reveals that access to technical resources (Beta value=0.589, P=0.000) is significantly associated with technological growth. Thus, it is deduced that if access to technical resources by urban SHG's increases, technological growth will thereby increase.

8. The role of urban SHGs in providing women entrepreneurs business counseling services is only significant for infrastructural growth.

Findings- Most SHG Women entrepreneurs are first time i.e. novice entrepreneurs and they mostly belong to low income, socio economic background, this emphasizes on the fact that they need support in the form of business counseling, mentoring to enable them carry on their business operations efficiently. They lack business acumen, technical knowhow, marketing knowledge, financial literacy etc. Business counseling specifically case based and need based is required. Business counseling services offered by SHGs and federations have been general and not very impactful due to which business growth is affected.

Suggestions-1. SHG's and federations must build a strong connect and network with Government, non-government and finance agencies so as to motivate entrepreneurial development of SHG women.

1.SHG's and federation should collaborate as a resource organization in institutional competence building, training, policy making and enabling technology transfers for state, national and international agencies.

Statistical Analysis- SHG women entrepreneurs when asked about business counseling provided by their SHG's, majority of them, 51.8 % felt that business counseling is rarely provided by their SHG, Thus most of the respondents felt that business counseling is rarely provided by their SHG. A Multiple linear regression was done to understand the role of urban SHG's on growth of women entrepreneurs, it was seen that changes in business counseling (Beta value=0.589, P=0.000) and financial access and support (Beta value= 0.878, P=0.000) are significantly associated only with infrastructure growth and are not associated with any other business growth parameter. Thus, business counseling is not impacting overall business growth.

9. Education provided by urban SHG's has not been able to impact business growth of women entrepreneurs in Pune region.

Findings – One of the basic objectives of all SHG's is to provide education in the form of formal education support, adult education or basic writing, reading training etc. In the current study it is noted that most respondents have basic education and are high school pass outs and some are

even graduates, what is needed is business related knowledge in the form of certifications, short courses etc. Moreover, courses in English speaking and writing is needed to communicate effectively as business grows and moves beyond regional boundaries.

Suggestions-1. As the respondents in the current study have basic education and are mostly high school pass outs and many are also graduates, what they require is education in the form of certifications, knowledge through courses on marketing techniques, technological knowhow, relevant computer courses, export \import information through relevant short courses etc.

2. Education provided by urban SHG's need to focus beyond basic reading and writing classes and focus more on financial literacy through courses like financial management, technological knowhow, maintaining records, statements etc.

Statistical Analysis- A Multiple linear regression was done to understand the role of urban SHG's on growth of women entrepreneurs, it was seen that changes in education are not significantly associated with any business growth parameter. Market expansion (for education, Beta value=0.134, P=0.397), Technological growth (for education, Beta value=0.122, P=0.356), Employee growth (for education, Beta value= 0.090, P value=0.267), Infrastructure growth (for education, Beta value= 0.134, P Value= 0.397), Financial growth (for education, Beta value= 0.122, P Value =0.362). Thus, it can be seen that education is not significantly impacting any business growth parameter of women entrepreneurs.

10. Urban SHG's are unable to support business growth of women entrepreneurs running medium enterprises in Pune region-

Findings- It has been observed from the study that only 7 urban SHG women entrepreneurs from the respondents are running Medium enterprises in Pune region, most of the respondents are running micro or small enterprises. Thus, it has been deduced that urban SHG's are unable to support women entrepreneurs in their business growth as they scale beyond the micro and small size enterprises. Thus women entrepreneurs move beyond SHG's for business growth support.

Suggestions- 1. It has been suggested to government to provide a policy focusing on holistic growth of women entrepreneurs belonging to SHG's and to support SHG federations through timely and consistent information and resources through effective training and mentoring.

Statistical Analysis- Out of the 220 respondents interviewed , 159 women entrepreneurs were running micro enterprises, 51 were running small enterprises and only 7 women entrepreneurs were running medium enterprises.

7.4 Discussion on Research Findings

Majumdar & Reji (2020) in their research on ‘methodological issues in social entrepreneurship knowledge and practice’ have stated that research aims at “knowledge creation” which is about adding meaning and value to the existing body of knowledge. It also means adding new dimensions to the existing theories. The researcher through the current empirical study has intended to understand the existing theoretical concepts on urban SHG’s and their role in women entrepreneurs growth and has made a humble attempt to add value to the existing body of knowledge through findings and insights from the current empirical research work as follows.

One of the key finding of the current research states that market expansion is a very important business growth parameter for the success of business, however urban SHG’s as per this study are not providing relevant support to their women entrepreneurs in achieving it. Most studies in literature too have considered this parameter as important for business growth , study by Van De Ven (1984) has stated proper marketing avenues as one of the chief dimension of success for a business enterprise, where as study by McGee et al., (1995) ; Merz & Sauber (1995) and Ilavarasan & Levy (2010) have considered growth in sales revenue and monthly turnover as important dimensions for business growth. Similarly the study by Gundry & Welsch (2012) states that success parameters for a business include adding a new product or service, expanding operations, selling to a new market. In the current empirical study, maximum respondents of the study have considered market expansion as ‘very important’ when asked to state its importance for business growth thus confirming the existing theoretical studies, however when the respondents of the current study were asked to inform if their SHG’s were able to provide this business growth parameter to them, most of the respondents, 107 responded ‘rarely’ and 47 responded ‘never’, thus it was evident through this study that in Pune region, urban SHG’s are unable to provide market expansion support to their women entrepreneurs. Studies from existing literature also confirm that urban SHG’s are unable to provide adequate marketing growth support, studies by Sucharita & Bishnoi (2019) and Poornima and Ramanaiah (2019) have stated

that SHG's are unable to provide marketing support to their women entrepreneurs. Their studies are supported by the research done by V. Krishnaveni & Haridas (2014) in which they found out that SHG's are unable to provide marketing platforms and avenues to their women entrepreneurs. Baland et al., (2007) in their study too have stated that lack of marketing support from SHG's have led some women entrepreneurs to close down their enterprises. One point to be noted in the current research is that SHG women entrepreneurs (respondents) in the current research have stated all attributes of market expansion i.e. advertising and promotion, expanding distribution channels, selling to a new market and adding a new product\service as 'very important' thus indicating its extreme importance for business growth.

Another finding from the current research states that technological growth and infrastructure growth are important parameters for business growth of women entrepreneurs, however SHG's in Pune region are unable in providing support to achieve them. Studies by Gill et al., (2010) and Jensen & Oster (2009) have stated technological growth and access to technical resources as being crucial for business growth, similarly a report by UNCTAD (2010) has considered access to technology for women entrepreneurs as a relevant parameter for business success. Studies by Digal, Sabat, Bal & Ranjan (2010); Nagadevara (2009) and Basargekar (2007) have stated that adequate and appropriate infrastructure is necessary to produce market ready, competitive products which is essential for business growth. In the current research, when the respondents were asked to state the importance of technological growth and infrastructure growth for their business growth, maximum respondents (around 70% of the respondents) have stated both parameters as 'important' for business growth and around 20% have stated technological growth as 'very important' for business growth. However, it is interesting to note that around 15% of the respondents in the current study are neutral to the importance of infrastructure growth. When the respondents in the current study were asked to inform whether their SHG's were able to provide support in getting access to technical resources for their business, over 48% (107 respondents) replied 'rarely' and 11% (25 respondents) replied 'sometimes'. Thus it is evident from the current study that in Pune region, SHG's are not able to adequately support infrastructure and technological growth . It is also seen from the literature that SHG's are unable to support these parameters, study by V. Krishnaveni & Haridas (2014) has stated that access to technology is a major constraint for SHG's, similarly as per the (2015) Financial Inclusion Insight survey and study by IFMR LEAD (2014) across three states of India, it was seen that access to technical

resources was a major concern for women entrepreneurs and their SHG's were unable to provide support for it.

A finding from the current research based on training states that training provided by urban SHG's in Pune region has not been able to impact business growth of women entrepreneurs. In the current study when the respondents were asked to inform about the training support provided by their SHG's for their business growth, most of the respondents (117) replied 'sometimes' and 50 respondents replied 'rarely', thus it was evident that SHG's in Pune region are not able to provide relevant training support for business growth. Study by Jose, Chockalingam & Velmurugan (2019) has stated that access to relevant trainings is one of the major constraints for SHG women entrepreneurs, a study by Sandhu (2013) has reported that trainings provided by SHG's are focused only on strengthening bank linkages and setting up micro enterprises, there is no mention of specific trainings for business growth. Rajpal & Tamang (2014) from the study of Savaraiah (2009) have also reported that trainings provided by SHG's are basic and not focused on business growth. Similarly Mani & Menon (2012) in their study have stated that SHG women entrepreneurs success can be enhanced through timely and proper trainings. This finding from the current research thus supports the existing literature and we can state that training provided by SHG's to women entrepreneurs is not specific to business growth and hence is not able to positively impact business growth.

One of the unique findings of the current research states that education provided by urban SHG's to their women entrepreneurs in Pune region has not been able to impact business growth. Study by Haworth et al., (2016) states that education both formal and informal and in the form of trainings has been seen as an important parameter to enable effective use of funds by women thereby enabling business success. Dees (2007) in his research has considered lack of education as a cause of many problems in business thereby impacting business growth. Similarly research by Gupta (2000) has stated that SHG's role in providing education to women entrepreneurs is essential for their development and knowledge gain which in turn results in business growth. Moore & Buttner (1997) in their study have considered education as one of the key drivers of women entrepreneurship and its success. Thus it is seen that as stated in the Literature, education is considered important for business growth, however in the current study when the respondents were asked to inform about education being provided by their SHG's, maximum respondents

(106 respondents) felt that it is 'sometimes' provided and 24 respondents felt that it is 'rarely' provided however 51 respondents felt that it is 'very often' provided. Further the statistical analysis done (Multiple linear regression) revealed that education is not significantly associated with any business growth parameter as per the current study. Thus it is deduced that respondents felt that education is provided but it is not impacting their business growth, this also relates to the fact that in the current study it is important to note that most women entrepreneurs had formal education, as per the data 79 respondents were graduates, 11 were post graduates, 61 had passed HSC and 43 had passed SSC and the remaining were high school pass, thus most of the respondents had basic formal education. This is a unique finding as in the current study in Pune region it has been seen that the SHG women entrepreneurs (respondents) were mostly educated and their requirements for education for their business growth were beyond the basic formal education which SHG's provide in most cases, thus 'education' considered to be important for business growth as per the literature, has not been seen to impact business growth as per the current study. However this finding would be specific to the current study and to Pune region.

The above discussion on the research findings relates to the first and the third research questions of the current study and provides clarity in answering them. As per the first research question based on SHG's role, it is evident from the above discussion and findings that SHG's in Pune region are not playing a significant\adequate role in business growth of their women entrepreneurs, this is also supported by the statistical analysis done which states in brief, that the role provided by urban SHG's is not significantly associated with the growth parameters of women entrepreneurs (detailed analysis available in chapter 5 under data analysis and hypothesis testing). As for the third research question based on important business growth parameters and SHG's role in achieving them, it is clear from the above discussion and findings that the important growth parameters are market expansion, technological growth, infrastructure and financial growth which are also supporting the existing literature. As for SHG's role in achieving them it is clear from the above discussion and findings that SHG's in Pune region are unable to provide significant and adequate support to their women entrepreneurs in achieving these growth parameters.

It is seen from the current study, that the major constraints faced by SHG's in Pune region to support business growth, as per the respondents is lack of marketing and new technology support, maximum respondents (83) perceived this as a major constraint, while 47 respondents felt lack of financial resources as a constraint and 44 respondents felt lack of information and access to business growth avenues and 35 said it was lack of access to government schemes and support. In the current study when the SHG leaders\managers were asked to state their views on the major constraints faced by their SHG's in supporting business growth, leaders\ managers from all the three case studies felt that financial access was one of the primary constraints followed by lack of marketing avenues and support. One unique constraint cited by the leaders\managers was that the SHG's did not consider 'entrepreneurship promotion' as a core function of the organization, though all SHG's supported entrepreneurship, focus was more driven towards women empowerment, skill development, savings and employability. As seen from the literature, Sucharita & Bishnoi (2019) have stated finance and marketing as the major constraints faced by SHG's in supporting women entrepreneurs, while Poornima & Ramanaiah (2019) have considered lack of marketing and technology support as the major constraints, Jose, Chockalingam & Velmurugan (2019) in their study have reported education, awareness and lack of access to government support along with training for marketing skills as the constraints faced. Kumavat & Bansal (2018) and V, Krishnaveni & Haridas (2014) in their studies too have stressed upon inadequate marketing support, lack of proper trainings and access to financial resources as the major constraints faced. Thus it is noticed that the existing literature based on SHG studies in India, states that lack of marketing avenues, finance and access to financial resources and technology support are the major constraints faced by SHG's. The current research supports the existing literature as SHG women entrepreneurs from Pune region (respondents) and the leaders\managers of the SHGs have reported similarly as the existing literature, except for a unique observation wherein SHG leaders managers have stated that entrepreneurship promotion is not a primary objective of SHGs and this forms a constraint in supporting business growth, according to them. This finding also provides the reader with an answer to the second research question based on constraints of SHG's in supporting business growth of women entrepreneurs.

From the above discussion and findings section, a unique finding from the current study states that for the variable 'education' used to study the construct 'role' in the current research it has

been seen that education provided by SHG's in Pune region to their women entrepreneurs is not significantly associated with any of the growth variables, thus is not impacting business growth as per this study. This finding is specific to this study and cannot be generalized as the SHG women entrepreneurs in this study were mostly educated (most were graduates and all had passed high school, were able to read, write) and did not require the basic formal education which SHG's provided. SHG's in Pune region are required to provide 'education' beyond the basic formal literacy, focusing on specific needs and business growth requirements of the women entrepreneurs. This is a unique and specific finding pertaining to the current study and more research with different demographics across the country and different respondents is required to generalize it. In the next section, the reader can find the specific conclusions aligned to the objectives of the study and based on the findings and discussion.

7.5 Conclusions

A. As Aligned To The Objectives Of The Study

The major objectives of the research are as follows

- To study the role of urban SHG's in growth of women entrepreneurs.
- To enlist the constraints of urban SHG's for the promotion of entrepreneurship.
- To suggest appropriate policy measures based on the findings that emerge from the study and outline recommendations and suggestions for further research.

In Answer To The First Objective, it can be said that the role played by urban SHG's in growth of women entrepreneurs in Pune region is not holistically significant. It can be seen that out of the 5 business growth variables the role played by SHG's is not holistically significant for any growth variable. Most role variables are able to significantly impact only one growth variable as per the linear multiple regression analysis. Marketing support and access to technical resources provided by urban SHG's is significantly associated with market expansion and technological growth, thus SHG's are required to increase marketing support and access to technical resources to enhance market expansion and technological growth, which are very important business growth parameters. Education provided by urban SHG's is not seen to impact business growth of women entrepreneurs in this study. Business counseling provided by urban

SHG's needs to be enhanced as it is currently not able to significantly impact business growth. Thus in brief, it can be said that urban SHG's role in business growth of their women entrepreneurs in Pune region as per this study is insignificant\inadequate.

With Reference To The Second Objective, it was found that the main constraint faced by urban SHG's in Pune region as responded by women entrepreneurs is lack of marketing and technology support for business, 38% respondents cited this as a major drawback. Lack of financial resources was cited by 26%. Lack of focus on entrepreneurship and lack of entrepreneurial culture in SHG's is cited by 20% as a constraint and 16% cited access to government support and schemes. Researcher concluded that urban SHG's faced constraints in obtaining timely and relevant information and access to marketing, technology, financial resources related to business growth. Due to limited resources urban SHG's are unable to provide holistic business growth support to women entrepreneurs. Moreover, lack of time and resources is also a constraint in supporting entrepreneurship and business growth.

Regarding The Third Objective, the suggestions for policy measures that can be adopted are as follows- The research shows that the role played by urban SHG's in growth of women entrepreneurs is limited mainly to financial access and support. Role of urban SHG's in providing important growth parameters like marketing, technology and infrastructure is not significant for overall business growth of women entrepreneurs. It is necessary to create a policy which focuses on providing support to women entrepreneurs in achieving holistic growth. KPMG report, (June, 2017) reveals that government of India has planned to bring about new changes with technology and innovation in the current policies for MSME. A similar policy measure is required for SHG's. Furthermore, the NULM report (2017) states that poor people are entrepreneurial and have an innate desire to come out of poverty and that livelihood promotion programmes can be scaled up in time bound manner only if driven by the poor and their institutions.

Furthermore, researcher noted that organizations like NABARD, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development are putting efforts in recognizing and providing support to women entrepreneurs, however their schemes lack awareness, timely execution and access. As per the New Policy paper of NABARD 2019-20, the pilot project – EShakti envisages to connect SHG's digitally districts wise and state wise, the pilot project was operational in 100 districts and over

3.5 lakh SHG's were digitized across the country as on 31st March 2018. Another programme namely the livelihood and enterprise development programme (LEDP) has been initiated by NABARD in district Samba of Jammu in May 2016, under which SHG's are enabled to take up livelihood and income generating activities. It also includes training and handholding including market understanding, fine tuning skills and entrepreneurship to manage and operate the business, similar initiatives are need for Pune region SHG women entrepreneurs. The PMC through its initiative in the form of an Aadhar Kendra has provided a platform for SHG and BPL women to sell and display their products, however, the center is not completely functional. Women Entrepreneurship of Maharashtra (WIMA) provides training to its members, but the outreach and outcome of these programs have not been able to impact the growth of SHG women entrepreneurs in Pune region, awareness and access to these programs is also an issue. National Policy for Entrepreneurship and Skill development, 2015 has suggested many schemes and support systems for women entrepreneurs, however SHG's framework needs to be formalized and given an independent identity. SHG's still lack entrepreneurial identity and are merely considered agencies of savings and thrift. Employability is promoted and not entrepreneurship. Thus, a specific policy to encourage entrepreneurial capabilities among SHG women is needed, training and mentoring, incubation centers are required to enable women entrepreneurs to get equipped and strengthen their skills to face market uncertainties and changing business environment.

B. General Conclusions

During the course of the study, the researcher had an opportunity of understanding and interacting with SHG women entrepreneurs. The course of research gave an opportunity to the researcher to understand and obtain first hand inputs from women entrepreneurs regarding barriers to growth of their business and different business growth parameters. The researcher also got an opportunity to compare the theoretically obtained variables of the study with practical implementation. The researcher concluded that some business growth variables like employee growth and infrastructural growth are specific to specific types of businesses and also that their importance varies with the size of business and demography. Researcher also concluded that marketing growth and technological growth are very important business growth variables and SHG's lack in providing them to women entrepreneurs. Researcher would also like to conclude

that during the course of the study it was noted that the respondents are not motivated to become entrepreneurs and less than 5% respondents in every SHG federation are willing to take the risk and become entrepreneurs. Others are satisfied with petty jobs and earning basic livelihood. Thus, the entrepreneurial mindset is lacking. For policy makers, planners and practitioners the time has come to consider strategies to promote SHG federations in urban areas on a large scale. The experience of Kudumbashree in Kerala and Dhan Foundation in South India clearly indicate the great potential that exists in promoting sustainable SHG federations to promote livelihoods in urban areas.

From the SHG federations point of view, researcher concludes that trained professional particularly focusing on marketing growth, technology and financial literacy must be associated permanently with each federation as mentors to ensure smooth functioning of women entrepreneur's startups and to mentor and guide them. Incubators are required for SHG women entrepreneurs to handhold their ventures.

7.6 Scope For Further Study

1. The current study focuses on Pune region, similar study can be conducted Pan India to understand whether SHG's role in growth differs demography wise and how does it vary.
2. Research can be conducted to understand if the limitations faced by independent urban SHG's are different than those faced by urban SHG federations. Research can also be conducted across India in different cities and states to understand if the constraints faced by SHG's in Pune can be generalized across India.
3. Research can be conducted to understand if the individual characteristics and motivations of women entrepreneurs differ demography wise.

7.7 Suggestions By The Researcher

1. Suggestions For Women Entrepreneurs- It has been observed in the current study that most urban SHG women entrepreneurs lack entrepreneurial motivation and are risk averse. Impact of family, society and spouse impact substantially mostly negative with respect to entrepreneurial motivation. Thus, it is suggested that women entrepreneurs must develop individual capabilities through business education and training to overcome these constraints. Researcher noted that most urban SHG women entrepreneurs lack communication and presentation skills due to which

they are unable to establish business connect. It is recommended to develop these essential skills which are pertinent for business growth. It is also noted by the researcher that most women entrepreneurs are technology averse and get overwhelmed by new and advanced technologies. It is necessary for them to embrace new technologies, new infrastructural requirements, new marketing skills to succeed in their business. It is suggested that they overcome their inhibitions and embrace these business growth requirements for scaling their businesses and availing new opportunities.

2. Suggestions For Urban SHG Managers\Leaders- Urban SHG leaders are recommended to get connected with support system provided by government for specific requirements of women entrepreneurs, like the TREAD scheme established in 1998 by the government for fulfilling training needs, a number of subsidies are available under it. NABARD in its current 2019 policy paper has initiated specific training programs for up scaling women entrepreneurs. SHG's are further suggested to connect with other similar SHG's in Pune region and form a network of mentor- mentee system which can help promote entrepreneurship and can also help in overcoming limitations. It is suggested to SHG leaders and managers to connect and become members of organizations like WIMA and MAVIM working towards SHG women entrepreneurs in Pune region, MAVIM has initiated an online marketing support for SHG women entrepreneur's products in 2018 by a tie up with Amazon and 200 products have been put on its website for sale. Pune region being an IT hub, SHG's are further suggested to connect and network with corporate\IT companies in Pune region for incubation support for their SHG women entrepreneurs. Most of these companies under their CSR activities would provide support through professionals and resources. A number of regulatory, promotional and credit policies are available, however SHG women entrepreneurs having limited education and exposure, thus are unable to connect with most of these benefits. It is required for SHG federations and leaders to connect and provide these benefits to them. For enabling better financial growth, the recovery system at SHG levels should be improved through regular monitoring and follow up of the loan repayments with the help of computerized MIS and use of smart card technology. The grading system and the monitoring of SHGs needs to be regulated from time to time to enable good disbursement and effective recovery rate.

3. Suggestions For Policy Makers\Government- It is necessary for government to move beyond financial inclusion model for urban SHG's and focus on entrepreneurship creation. It has been observed that focus of government for developing\supporting SHG's has been primarily in rural areas and for financial inclusion. At the centre there are a number of schemes and organizations set up for supporting women entrepreneurs e.g. Regional Rural Banks, Swarnajayanti Gram SwarajgarYojana, Credit Guarantee Fund scheme, MUDRA (Micro units' development and refinance agency limited), MFI's (Micro finance institutions) etc. suggestions are stated as follows-

- a. NABARD is a nodal bank supporting development of women entrepreneurs in rural areas, it also provides a number of financial assistance schemes and trainings for women. It is necessary to move the focus towards urban SHG's and entrepreneurship, thus a holistic support system, mentors, incubators are required to motivate and support SHG women entrepreneurs.
- b. In Pune region government organizations like MAVIM, WIMA are working towards promoting entrepreneurship and supporting SHG women entrepreneurs for training and marketing their products. It is suggested that SHG federations in Pune region must be connected under a mentor-mentee system with these organizations for entrepreneurship development.
- c. As most of the SHG women entrepreneurs in Pune region are using mobile phones and are technologically connected through internet services on cell phones it is suggested that a mobile phone-based helpline that uses an interactive voice response (IVR) system to communicate information to SHG women entrepreneurs must be started by the government. The helpline can be used to 1) send information on government schemes 2) include a toll-free number to call into for questions and 3) connect buyers to SHG women entrepreneurs. It is suggested to provide a unique identity number to each SHG women entrepreneur to ease business processes like taxes, permissions and compliances of business and government licenses etc.
- d. Government schemes must focus upon developing incubation support exclusively for SHG women entrepreneurs. Government of India has launched a new scheme – Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY) in August 2017 for women SHG's in rural areas for purchase of commercial vehicles for transport. Interest free loan would be provided for such purchase. More such schemes but with a primary focus on entrepreneurship among SHG women are required to enhance the distribution channels and supply chain management system for SHG women

entrepreneurs. This further justifies the fact that government focus needs to move from mere employability to entrepreneurship and from rural to urban SHG's.

e. A number of schemes and support organizations are functioning in the country like ICECD (International centre for entrepreneurship and career development), Awake (Association of women entrepreneurs of Karnataka), WIT (Women India trust), FICCI- FLO (Federation of Indian chamber of commerce and Industry), WIMA (Women industries and entrepreneurs of Maharashtra), FIWE (Federation of Indian women entrepreneurs), and CWEI (Consortium of women entrepreneurs of India) and MAVIM (Maharashtra Arthik Vikas Mahamandal) provide support and assistance for empowering women entrepreneurs. They identify small scale and budding entrepreneurs, provide them professional expertise, providing incubators as well as entrepreneurship training and skill development. These schemes are not specifically for SHG women entrepreneurs and SHG's lack awareness to most of them. Thus, it is suggested to provide a one stop platform, connecting SHG federations with all women entrepreneurship promoting organizations in the country for availing these benefits.

7.8 Limitations Of The Study:

The following are the limitations to the study:

- a) The current study is restricted geographically to Pune region, hence most findings are specific to the current study, more research with different samples and demographic locations is required to give a nationwide picture.
- b) The study has been limited to women and hence would not be able to give inputs regarding the status of men in similar phase of their entrepreneurial journey.