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# Assessing the Role of Government Support in Promoting Cultural Entrepreneurship in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract: The present study examines the role of government interventions in Self Help Groups (SHGs) for cultural entrepreneurship In Himachal Pradesh. The study specifically investigates how government support, including financial aid, training programs, and marketing assistance, contributes to growth and development of these SHGs. Self-structed questionnaire was formed for data collection process. Data was collected from highest number of culturally based self-help groups from three districts of Himachal Pradesh. After collection of data from 300 self-help groups, descripted method is employed for analysis purpose. The findings from the analysis reveal that government have made significant contributions to Self-Help Groups in Himachal Pradesh. However, the study suggests that a more all-inclusive approach would be essential to fully unlock the of SHGs as key of cultural entrepreneurship. This integrated strategy is vital for enhancing the sustainability and success of Self-Help Groups in Promotion of Cultural Entrepreneurship in Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Cultural Entrepreneurship, Self-Help Groups, Government Intervention, Himachal Pradesh.

# I. Introduction

The cultural products of the state comprise diverse items such as handloom textiles alongside wood carvings traditional pottery handcrafted arts and various types of traditional food products. These products mainly manufactured at rural level. Every nation's economy mainly based on rural empowerment (Sharma and Sharma, 2022). Culturally rooted products maintain both traditional regional representations while providing income opportunities to rural groups (Ray 1998). In Himachal Pradesh the traditional craft sector encounters multiple obstacles because of both restricted markets and constrained budget funding and decreasing expert traditional abilities (Kaur, 2014).

The community-based SHGs function as practical solutions which address the mentioned obstacles. The grassroots organizations maintain local artisans and rural entrepreneurs as members showing effectiveness in collaborative ventures and resource pooling while enhancing social and economic development. Through groups such as SHGs women and marginalized communities find empowerment while simultaneously gaining opportunities for economic growth and community development (Sumithaa, 2023). The transformation from cultivation-dependent working to sustainable business demands extensive support mechanisms from government institutions and non-profit organizations (Chetry, 2014).

The government of Himachal Pradesh recognizes SHG potential and works to utilize this strength to promote entrepreneurship according to (Sharma and Singh, 2019). The diverse membership consisting mainly of women, rural artisans, and small-scale entrepreneurs' functions as the primary force for maintaining and developing both the cultural heritage and economic stability of their region. Various government initiatives and program support efforts target SHGs for success along their entrepreneurial path. SHGs receive financial support along with skilled development classes and enhanced market access solutions that expand their reach to consumers locally and worldwide.

SHG members benefit from better production standards alongside product variety expansion and steadier cash flow because of these intervention strategies. Through financial support They have purchased raw materials and modern manufacturing tools and built infrastructure together with receiving skill advancement training that adapts traditional crafts for today's market needs. The combination of exhibitions with online marketplaces and retail outlet partnerships has significantly expanded visibility to boost revenue streams.

The continued success of cultural entrepreneurship in Himachal Pradesh depends on resolving the challenges which Small and Hobby Craft Groups currently encounter. The ever-changing market conditions together with technological progress and intensified competition require responsive adaptions as well as ongoing solutions. The success of such cultural entrepreneurship depends on customized programs to enhance reading abilities combined with active e-Commerce integration and effective supply chain development. Large-scale operational success of SHGs depends on establishing special financial programs combined with simplified administrative protocols that maximize efficiency and inclusion. Introduction of transformative government strategies serves as a requirement for maintaining and expanding these programs.

# II. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN EMPOWERING SHGS

The government plays an important role in empowering SHGs through various forms of support. Government mainly provides loans, subsidies, and grants to various organization as well as SHGs for various purposes like invest in raw materials, infrastructure, and marketing efforts. Also conducted training programmes for enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of SHG members, equipping them with the knowledge to better navigate to improve the quality of the products. In Himachal Pradesh, SHGs play a vital role in promoting cultural entrepreneurship, particularly through the preservation and promotion of local crafts, traditional arts, and other cultural products (Kumar and Shoshta, 2024). The government of Himachal Pradesh has been instrumental in supporting these SHGs by providing financial assistance, skill development programs, and market access.

The government needs to organize workshops and training programs that cover essential elements of product innovation together with packaging strategies and digital marketing campaigns and branding principles. SHGs develop modern business techniques through capacity-building programs which enable them to maintain their cultural product heritage. Government initiatives that build sales platforms through mainstream exhibitions and e-commerce systems and official fairs create essential market access for SHGs.

The support provided by the government to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) faces continuing hurdles which block them from achieving complete benefits from government assistance. Government schemes fail to produce their intended benefits because SHGs experience issues with complex application requirements and inadequate guidelines. Additionally, a lack of awareness about available schemes and benefits exacerbates the problem. Government financial aid together with skill development programs and market access initiatives continues to evade awareness among numerous SHGs in remote rural locations. The restricted scope of outreach activities makes it difficult for these programs to achieve maximum results. Government assistance programs frequently do not successfully connect with marginalized SHGs who conduct their operations in specific regions while producing rare cultural products. These distinctive groups maintain issues from marketplace demand problems alongside market accessibility barriers. Potentially transformative crafts with distinctive cultural offerings from these SHGs escape recognition because generalized policy making strategies do not address their unique needs. Specialized interventions must

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address obstacles facing this situation. Greater accessibility for government support depends on simplified processes, more effective awareness initiatives and specialized supportive policies. Specialized support for SHGs creating unique products will help both their market success and local cultural preservation endeavors.

#### III. THE ROLE OF SELF-HELP GROUPS IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are an extremely effective transformative force for women's empowerment in rural and urban India. This paper synthesizes findings from research on the SHGs on multifaceted impact on women's social, economic and political empowerment, bearing in mind challenges and opportunities that SHGs may provide.

The research has revealed that SHGs are an effective tool for economic empowerment and financial inclusion. Studies conducted in different regions of India suggest that involvement in SHG activities maximizes income, enhances saving ability, and provides better access to the formal banking systems (Kaur & Bajwa, 2016; Sahu & Venkatachalapathy, 2018). In the rural areas of Haryana, a good level of economic independence has been achieved in women's lives through entrepreneurship activities such as dairy farming and beadwork (Sharma et al., 2008). There is evidence of substantially increased economic independence in the poor women members of SHGs in Andhra Pradesh's Gajwel Mandal (Kondal, 2014). The economic impact is quite beyond simple income generation. Some research studies on Punjab suggest that SHGs' impact on improving financial sustainability is through effective networking and collaboration with other groups although challenges remain in sourcing quality materials and legal recognition (Kaur, 2014). The overall quality of life, such as better education facilities for their children, has been improved through SHG participation in the medical district of Telangana state, though some of the factors were transport costs and market competition (Devi, 2015). Social dimensions of SHG participation are also important. In Goalpara District of Assam, 83% reported that their participation in SHG had increased their empowerment and that there were improvements in the influence over family and community decisions (Chetry, 2014). Studies in Tamil Nadu aptly demonstrate how SHGs enhance entrepreneurial behaviour- where, among the members, innovativeness and information search are integral characteristics (R. Inbam and N. Mohamed Mohideen, 2015). Political empowerment, which has been mainly seen in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, as an improvement through involvement in SHGs of decision-making powers and access to resources for women (Gupta & Rathore, 2021). This even extends to tribal communities in Jharkhand's Khunti district where micro-credit through SHGs has gradually improved tribal women's social-political status. (Sahu & Venkatachalapathy, 2018). The impact of SHGs varies region-wise across India. In Dindigul district, according to the research done in this article, there is a positive interaction between SHG participation and the economic empowerment of participants, which calls for government support to such programs. (Sihag &Vermani, 2017). Further studies report higher socio-economic status and paraprofessional skills amongst the participants from different districts of the Andhra Pradesh state (Siddeswari et al., 2020). However, challenges persist. Research in Chandragiri Mandal identifies conservative family cultures and educational barriers as significant obstacles (Ganjoo, 2021). Though the SHG formation in Baksa district of Assam has been useful in attaining financial independence and social empowerment, there remains a need for capacity building amongst the disadvantaged strata mainly through continuing programs (Keshava, 2023). Several studies show some limitations in the SHG model. Among those, several studies suggest that, there are lots of areas for improvement in integration with education and access to technology for comprehensive empowerment (Sharma et al., 2008). What is consistently emphasized in studies, however, is the need for continuous training and capacity building (R. Inbam and Mohamed Mohideen, 2015; Kumari et al., 2019). The changing dynamics of rural households, especially in areas like Bihar with high male out-migration, would both present opportunities and challenges for SHGs. Studies indicate a growing need for policies that focus on female-headed households and strengthen women's decision-making power in economic activities (Ganguly et al., n.d.).

The literature would uniformly show that SHGs are very effective instruments for promoting the empowerment of women in several dimensions. Although it is certainly the economic benefits that are most apparent, the social and political empowerment that seems to be accrued through participation in SHGs is equally momentous. Any future research and policy

initiatives should build upon the existing successes of the SHG model as a tool for women's empowerment while continually working on all the persistent challenges.

# IV. CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Cultural entrepreneurship is a multidisciplinary concept integrates culture economic activities to foster innovation, cultural identity, and build social connections. It emphasizes leveraging cultural resources, such as traditional crafts, arts, and heritage, to generate economic value while maintaining cultural. According to Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2015), cultural entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in merging creativity with to establish enterprises rooted in cultural heritage. Research involving government backing through funds together with policy structures with market opportunities serves to develop sustainable cultural entrepreneurship (Throsby, 2001). Government support remedies two typical problems which cultural entrepreneurs encounter during their business development stage namely resource accessibility and market entry. Entrepreneurship enables communities especially those located in marginal areas to create heritage-based businesses which help establish economic independence and spur local growth Ratten (2020).

However, there are significant challenges. New market requirements combined with restricted resource availability along with insufficient skillsets makes it hard for cultural entrepreneurs to find sustainable success. De Beukelaer (2014 emphasizes that tremendous institutional backing serves as the key to solve encountered problems. The success of cultural entrepreneurs depends on comprehensive training programs alongside built infrastructure that provides essential market tools to navigate against today's competition.

#### V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1. To examine the role of Government in empowering SHGs for cultural entrepreneurship in Himachal Pradesh.
- 2. To assess the impact of Govt. initiatives on the Socio-Economic development of SHG focusing on financial aid, capacity-building, and events.

#### VI. METHODOLOGY

# 6.1. Sampling and Data collection:

The study involved the participant who are associated with any Self-help group in Himachal Pradesh, India. Multistage sampling and quantitative research technique were employed. Data were collected from January 2024 to September 2024 from three district of Himachal Pradesh i.e., Kullu, Shimla and kangra based on highest numbers of culturally based self-help groups. Respondent provided informed consent and were briefed on data privacy and confidentiality before data collection. 315 responses were received, 15 were excluded due to the incomplete data. So, the final data were 300. Table 1. Present demographic details of respondent.

Table 1

Demographic			
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	
Male	300	100.0 %	
Female	00	00 %	
Age			
18-25	2	.7 %	
26-35	89	29.7 %	
36-45	166	55.3 %	
46-55	38	12.7 %	
56 >	5	1.7 %	
Education			
Below High School	59	19.7 %	

High School	121	40.3 %
Intermediate/Diploma	78	26.0 %
Bachelor Degree	29	9.7 %
PG Degree and above	13	4.3 %

Source: Output Generated from SPSS

Table 1 confirms all the 300 self-help groups self-analysed in this research study are run by female members without the male members of the society featuring in any of the self-help groups. This has brought out a very vibrant development that women are playing very sensitive roles within those community organizations as they empowered to lead social and economic transformation.

The age distribution of representatives in the self-help groups (SHGs) is categorized into five groups: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56 and above. Analysis of the data reveals that most representatives fall within the age range of 26-45, indicating a strong presence of middle-aged women who are likely to be more actively engaged in economic and community activities. In contrast, there are only two representatives in the 18-25 age category, suggesting limited involvement of younger women, which may affect the infusion of new ideas and technological skills. Additionally, only five representatives are aged 56 and above, reflecting a smaller representation of older women in these groups. The plan requires initiatives which drive young female participation jointly with older women to establish better balanced representation for raising SHG effectiveness in the region.

Statistical trends exist between the educational levels attained by those who serve in the representative roles of self-help groups (SHGs). The 121 SHG representatives among them completed their education at high school level. Intermediate or diploma education level completion counts 78 representatives among the total population. The 300 SHGs are led by 59 representatives with a high school diploma education and 29 holders of a bachelor's degree. Out of all representatives only 13 people possess postgraduate-level or advanced educational qualifications. Almost all representatives of self-help groups hold basic through intermediate-level education demonstrating untapped potential for additional training and innovation skills.

The systematic examination revealed that every one of the 300 self-help groups functions with exclusively female leadership demonstrating women's central position in economic transformation and community development. Most representatives are middle-aged but few younger women and women of advanced age participate in SHGs indicating widespread age restrictions which require expansion. Most of these women have basic to intermediate educational backgrounds so they can benefit from professional training opportunities to make their self-help groups more effective.

# 6.2. Support of local Communities and Authorities

Table 2:

Support of Local Community and Authorities			
Particular	Frequency	Percent	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Disagree	1	.3	.3
Neutral	42	14.0	14.3
Agree	241	80.3	94.7
Strongly Agree	16	5.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Source: Output generated from SPSS

Figure 1: Support of Local Communities and Authorities

Frequency Percent Cumulative Percent

Frequency Fr

Source: Output generated from SPSS

Table No. 2 demonstrates how local communities along with Self-Help Groups use cultural product promotion through significant majority popular recognition of local community support as market entry pillar. SHGs collaborate with local communities and authorities to showcase unique products by using local resources and financial support and institutional connections for education and market development. Through this collaborative culture we see evidence that SHGs need long-term partnerships. The promotion of cultural products enables regional socio-economic growth through local tradition preservation alongside celebratory activities which research confirms as important to support self-help groups for expanded marketplace reach and higher cultural preservation results.

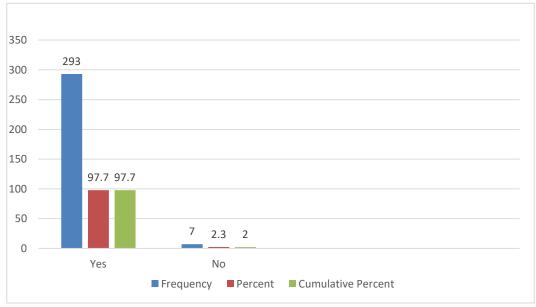
# 6.3. Financial Support or Grant from Government

Table 3

Financial Support or Grant from Government				
Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Yes	293	97.7	97.7	
No	7	2.3	100.0	
Total	300	100.0		

Source: Output generated from SPSS

Figure No. 2: Financial Support or Grant from Government



Source: Output generated from SPSS

The analysis of 300 self-help groups (SHGs) reveals that 293 have obtained financial help from both government agencies and non-profits together with other funding organizations. The major dependence of SHGs on outside financial support builds their operational capabilities alongside product promotion and market entry capabilities. External funding enables SHGs to build capacity through acquisitions of necessary resources and development programs that are beyond their financial reach otherwise. Sustainable growth happens because these monetary resources enable SHG members to organize workshops and buy raw materials and technological equipment as well as expand their market territory.

Financial assistance programs are absent in the operations of seven Self-Help Groups (SH) among the 57 SHs surveyed. Seven SHGs chose independent funding despite their limited financial autonomy potentially because they prefer individual self-reliance or they failed to discover external resource opportunities. There are two possible reasons why these SHGs choose independence from outside sources: to protect their autonomy and grassroots values or possibly because they lack accurate information about grants and regulations and fear incompliance with grant requirements.

The large number of groups who gain access to financial aid through SHGs reveals the critical instrument governmental programs offer for rural and marginalized communities. Financial aid transforms self-help groups both economically and enables them to enter competitive markets which leads to improved livelihoods and community growth. More groups should access these opportunities through enhanced awareness initiatives combined with simplified grant authorizing mechanisms resulting in growth outcomes.

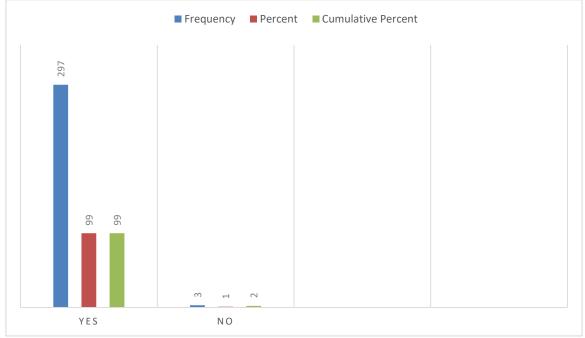
# 6.4. Training and Workshop Programme

Table No. 4:

Conducted Training and Workshop			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	297	99.0	99.0
No	3	1.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Source: Output generated from SPSS

Figure No. 3 Training and Workshop Programme



Source: Output generated from SPSS

The data show 297 self-help groups out of 300 agree that government agencies and other stakeholders organized training and workshop programs to boost group business capacity and improve sales abilities. A strong majority shows broad agreement about training programs because they provide crucial marketing skills to members. Three self-help groups do not back the idea of agencies offering training or workshops. Few advisory members indicate potential knowledge or program delivery challenges

which suggest such initiatives may not reach every group fully. The strong consensus among most self-help groups shows that government-led training through agencies creates a crucial framework which leads to their market success.

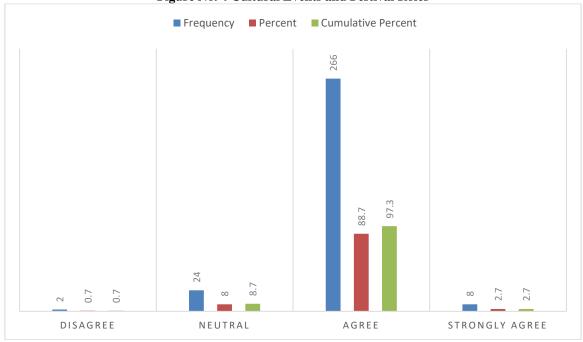
# 6.5. Cultural Events and Festival Eoles

**Table N0. 5:** 

Cultural events and festivals boosting sales of SHGs Products				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Disagree	2	.7	.7	.7
Neutral	24	8.0	8.0	8.7
Agree	266	88.7	88.7	97.3
Strongly Agree	8	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Source: Output generated from SPSS

Figure No. 4 Cultural Events and Festival Roles



Source: Output generated from SPSS

Data reveals that cultural events along with festivals powerfully increase the sales of products produced by Self-Help Groups. The analysis reveals that 88.7% of respondents affirm that cultural occasions lead to significant sales increases for SHG products along with another 2.7% who firmly agree. Through cultural events and festivals SHGs can effectively present their products to expand their customer base which generates higher revenue while achieving a 91.4% positive outcome. These events create positive economic growth opportunities by fostering brand visibility along with networking and client engagement opportunities for members of the Self-Help Group (SHG).

8.0% of respondents showed no specific opinion about the subject. Their responses suggest either lack of previous interaction with such events or minimal knowledge about their economic effects. The response points to a possible opportunity for increased SHG member engagement together with the promotion of activity advantages. Close to 99.3 percent of respondents agreed that cultural events serve as important influencers for sales growth.

According to the study cultural events need to become fundamental elements for SHG marketing strategies as a core aspect in maximizing sales potential. SHG events deliver economic benefits simultaneously with cultural exchange and community engagement which strengthens their position as essential local contributors to economic success and community unity.

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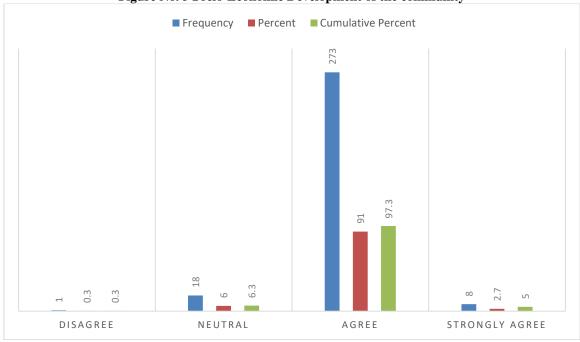
# 6.6. Contribution in Socio-economic Development

Table 6:

Promotion and Sales of Products Contributes Socioeconomic Development			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	.3	.3
Neutral	18	6.0	6.3
Agree	273	91.0	97.3
Strongly Agree	8	2.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Source: Output generated from SPSS

Figure No. 5 Socio-Economic Development of the community



Source: Output generated from SPSS

From the data, it is observed that out of 300 self-help groups, 273 agree that the promotion and selling of cultural products contribute to the socio-economic development of the community. Additionally, 18 groups hold a neutral opinion on this matter, while 8 groups strongly believe that such promotion and sales significantly enhance socio-economic development. Only 1 self-help group disagrees with this perspective. Social groups overwhelmingly recognize cultural product promotion as a force that enhances community development which signifies its vital role in supporting economic growth and cultural solidarity.

The survey results show that respondents recognize product promotion and sales have major consequences on socioeconomic advancement. Special interest groups show exceptional unanimity in affirming the beneficial impact of these activities on socioeconomic progress since 91.0% of respondents agree with this assessment and 2.7% strongly concur with it. The 93.7% enthusiastic reaction demonstrates how product promotion together with sales creates financial stability and enables employment and community empowerment for members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The activities function actively to enhance community prosperity and stimulate regional economic progress.

Respondents whose responses were neutral total 6.0% of the sample group suggesting that though they did not disagree about the impact these factors had on socioeconomic progress they did not witness its direct results. This segment requires awareness initiatives to show concrete value through evidence-based approaches in these activities. Survey data indicated widespread acceptance of the positive effect promotion and sales have on socioeconomic development since 0.3% of respondents expressed disagreement.

Research outcomes demonstrate that product promotion combined with sales activities plays a critical role in advancing socioeconomic development. The expansion and support of these programs create substantial advantages which lead to both economic development and enhanced community strength alongside sustainable and inclusive development patterns.

#### VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the significant contributions of Self-Help Groups SHGs) to socioeconomic development supported by local communities, authorities, and strategic interventions A strong consensus emerges among respondents regarding the pivotal role of institutional, cultural events, and product promotion in empowering SHGs and fostering community resilience.

The data reveals that most SHGs acknowledge the essential received from communities and government agencies in their products. Financial assistance and capacity initiatives have been instrumental preparing SHGs with the skills resources needed. Notably, 293 SHGs from aid, emphasizing its role in enhancing product promotion and capacity-building efforts. The few groups that opted out of financial support might reflect a for self-reliance a lack of awareness of available., 297 SHGs recognized the government and agency-led training programs, which played a vital role in skills and product visibility. the minority of dissenter's potential gaps in accessibility or awareness, underscoring the need for broader outreach.

Cultural events and festivals emerged as key platforms for SHG products, 91. % of respondents affirming their positive impact on market visibility. These events not only foster benefits but also enhance cultural exchange and solidarity. Despite limited neutral and dissenting, the overwhelming reinforces need to integrate such events into SH marketing strategies. The study also the role of product and sales driving socioeconomic development. With 93.7% of respondents acknowledging their transformative, it is evident that these activities foster financial stability employment generation, and overall community development.

#### VIII. LIMITATIONS AND FEATURE SCOPE

#### 8.1. Limitations

This study, while providing valuable insights into the impact of support systems on the performance of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), has certain limitations. First, the research focuses exclusively on the perspectives of SHG members, potentially overlooking the of other such as, community leaders, or participants. Second, study is to the analysis of a single geographical region, which may fully diversity and outcomes SHGs across different cultural or socio-economic settings. Third, while the data the importance of financial aid and training, it does not delve deeply into the, frequency, or long-term impact of these interventions., the study primarily uses data, which may adequately capture nuanced experiences or contextual challenges faced by SHGs.

### 8.2. Future Scope

Future research could address these by adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to explore broader perspectives on SHG operations and socioeconomic impact. Comparative studies across regions and cultures could provide a more comprehensive understanding of SHG dynamics. Additionally, longitudinal studies can evaluate the sustainability of training programs, financial aid, and cultural events over time. Incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or case studies, would enrich the findings by capturing the lived experiences of members. Lastly, exploring the role digital technologies in enhancing SHG marketing and operational efficiency could offer valuable insights for modernizing their practices.

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