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Small and Medium Enterprise in Bangladesh-Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

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- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the national economy in
- 9 Bangladesh. This sector is playing an important role to develop the economy of our country.
- 10 The role SMEs sector is immense to alleviate the poverty from the country as well. Small and
- 11 Medium enterprises are particularly suitable for the densely populated countries like
- 12 Bangladesh where SME sector can provide huge employment opportunity with much lower
- investment. They are expected to create jobs, reduce poverty, and drive a resilient national
- 4 economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Country Report (2012)1indicated that
- 15 SMEs in Bangladesh accounted for more than 99

Index terms—SME, financing, industrial sector.

n almost every part of the world, limited access to finance is considered a key constraint to private sector growth. This is especially true for SMEs of our country as they are facing different types of problems for availing institutional finance though SMEs play dominantly important role in the national economy of Bangladesh by making up over 90 per cent of industrial enterprises, providing employment to 4 out of 5 industrial workers and contributing to over one-third of industrial value-added to gross domestic product (GDP). The relative SME share in manufacturing valueadded is much higher and estimated to vary between 45 to 50 per cent of totaling valueadded generated by the manufacturing industries sector. Further as important sources of new business creation and developing new entrepreneurial talents, these industries provide the much needed dynamism and vitality to the national economy. Implementation of poverty alleviation action programs and strategies is a systematic and continuous effort in Bangladesh. For that purpose, the Poverty I Reduction Strategy of the government has clearly identified some core principles and parameters both at macro and micro levels for reducing the existing poverty level at least half within 2015 as targeted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rapid and sustainable growth of SMEs is undoubtedly one vehicle for accelerating national economic growth to the point of having a measurable impact in the way of reduction of poverty and unemployment, generation of more employment. More than 90% of the industrial enterprises in Bangladesh are in the SME size-class. Generally, SMEs are labor intensive with relatively low capital intensity. The SME also poses a character of privilege as cost effective and comparative cost advantages in nature. The SME policy strategies have been formulated to assist in the achievement of the goals and targets the MDGs set by the Government.

1 II.

2 Rationale of the Study

From the sequence of our analysis it seems that for the economic development of Bangladesh SMEs can play a vital role. Small and medium Enterprises act as the most cost-effective and worthwhile means of providing employment and injecting dynamism into industrial growth, both for poverty alleviation and for contribution to the GDP. At present SME sector is facing a lot of problems. Bangladesh government is trying to develop the SME sector through different policy measures even though the rate of development is not up to expectations.

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5 4 Literature Review

Raihan ??2001) observes that the 50.53 percent of SMEs have no access to formal source of finance. Only 35.79 percent of SMEs enjoy unrestricted access to the formal credit. The rest (13.68 percent) of them have restricted access to the formal credit. Bank credit is used by small percentage of entrepreneurs and provides financing of generally less than 20 percent of their total outlay. Majority of the SMEs (59.6 percent) seek finance for their working capital needs from banks, although only a half-of them get loan from banks.

Ahmed, (1999) pointed out that due to the lack of national quality policy and adequate support system, and also due to the lack of credibility of the quality certification authority, SMEs of Bangladesh have failed to ensure the quality of products and services both in Abstract-Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the national economy in Bangladesh. This sector is playing an important role to develop the economy of our country. The role of SMEs sector is immense to alleviate the poverty from the country as well. Small and Medium enterprises are particularly suitable for the densely populated countries like Bangladesh where SME sector can provide huge employment opportunity with much lower investment. They are expected to create jobs, reduce poverty, and drive a resilient national economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Country Report (2012) lindicated that SMEs in Bangladesh accounted for more than 99% of private sector industrial establishments and created job opportunities for 70%-80% of the nonagricultural labor force. In the paper a questionnaire has been constructed and used SPSS 20 version software to analyze the data This paper is, therefore, an attempt to analyze various issues, prospects and challenges of financing this particular sector and find out the ways to overcome these challenges. It will also survey various literatures and reports on the concerned field and recommend supporting actions to help this highly prospective industrial sector to operate in a fully yielding manner. domestic and international markets. He also argues that access to finance possess as one of the most important problems for the SMEs in Bangladesh. Lack of investment or operating funds remains as one of the most prominent complains of the SMEs in Bangladesh. points out that due to the lack of national quality policy and adequate support system, and also the lack of credibility of the quality certification authority, SMEs of Bangladesh have failed to ensure the quality of products and services both in domestic and international markets. He also argues that access to finance prevails as one of the most important problems for the SMEs in Bangladesh. Lack of investing or operating funds remains as one of the most prominent complains of almost all the SME in Bangladesh.

Sulaiman, ??2005) observed that the 50.53 percent of SMEs had no access to formal source of finance. Only 35.79 percent of SMEs enjoy unrestricted access to the formal credit. Of the rest 13.68 percent have restricted access to formal credit. Bank credit is used by small percentage of entrepreneurs and provides financing of generally less than 20 percent of their total outlay. Majority of the SMEs (59.6 percent) seek finance for their working capital needs from banks, although only a half-of them get loan from banks.

Rahman and Mahmood (2007) mentions that Small and Medium Enterprises are the backbone of the economy in countries like Bangladesh. SMEs suffer from common constraints such as lack of capital, difficulties in procuring raw materials, lack of access to relevant business information, low technological capabilities, problems caused by cumbersome and costly bureaucratic procedures, and policies and regulations that generate market distortions. However, with proper domestic policy support from the government, and an eye towards global market trends, SMEs can build capacity and reap the rewards of globalization. Hasan and Islam (2008) identifies that banks usually do not express interest towards SME financing. The reason behind this conservativeness is higher operational cost, less return and high risk associated with the SME financing. Due to small loan size the operational cost is higher and they require intensive monitoring and supervision. The main reason for higher risk is that the small and medium entrepreneurs are highly unlikely to comply with the collateral requirements as typically they do not have immovable properties. With the excuse of collateral sometimes banks and non-bank financial institutions are reluctant to finance SMEs. Bangladesh Bank Report (2008) says, the key reasons behind the SMEs are not entering into manufacturing but are financial constrains, dismal state of utilities, technology and policy discriminations. On the other hand, Bank and others financial institutions generally prefer large enterprise clients because of lower transition costs, and greater availability of collateral. The SMEs also fall outside the reach of micro finance schemes, and thus are compelled to depend on formal sources of funds at much higher interest rates, the Bangladesh Bank report said. The BB report, however, said that other interrelated problems like shortage of short and long term finance, lack of modern technology and lack of promotional support services are major obstacles in the way of development of the SMEs sector. Higher growth of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can help cut poverty to a satisfactory level by eliminating various prejudices against labour intensive and creating jobs for the skilled manpower in the SME sector.

Growth of SMEs in developing countries is certainly a desirable goal in view of their perceived contribution to decentralized job creation and generation of output (Chen, 2011). In developing economy like Bangladesh, SMEs play a significant role in the development of the economy by creating employment opportunities and producing useful machine substitutes and machinery parts saving huge amount of foreign currency for our country ??Chowdhury, 2008). About 6.0 million SMEs are actively performing in Bangladesh which were contributing 25 per cent of the total GDP, employing about 31 million people and providing 75 per cent of household income.

Various categories of SMEs together contribute between 80 to 85 per cent of industrial employment and 23 105 percent of total employment in Bangladesh ?? Chowdhury, 2008). 106

IV. 5

Objective of the Study 6

To identify the present scenario of SME sector in Bangladesh. 109

To highlight the prospects of SME sector in Bangladesh. 110

To identify the problems of SME sector in Bangladesh and Recommend some suggestions to overcome those problems. 112

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Methodology of the Study 7

Data mainly gathered from 50 respondents by conducting some interviews with SME Bankers and selected SME 115 Entrepreneurs. In-depth interview technique has been used because through this approach, the deep rooted issues 116 regarding the problems have come out plus many factors that could stimulate growth of SME were also figured 117 out.5 points likert scale has been used in this paper. Data has also been collected from secondary sources. The 118 study analyses published books, newspapers, magazines, different published research works, reports of various 119 government authorities and websites.

a) Definition of SME

Small Enterprise refers to the firm/business which is not a public limited company and complies the following 122 criteria:

c) Present Scenario of SMEs in Bangladesh 9

The Industry sector plays an important role in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. According to BBS estimates (base year: 2005-06), the contribution of the broad industry sector to real GDP stood at 29 percent in FY 2012-13, which increased to 29.61 percent in FY 2013-14. Among the fifteen sectors of GDP, the broad industry sector includes four sectors namely mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity and gas and water supply; and construction. The contribution of the manufacturing sector is the highest in GDP. In FY 2012-13, 129 the contribution of manufacturing sector in GDP was 19 130

National Industrial Policy 10

In order to accelerate the pace of industrialization in the country, the Government announced the National Industrial Policy 2010. The important and underlying objectives of the policy include generation of productive employment, mainstreaming women in the industrialization process and poverty alleviation. Proper strategies have been set out in the industrial policy to implement all these aims and objectives. Combined efforts are being put in to implement the policy and necessary steps are being taken to preserve consumer's interest in consultation with concerned ministries and other stakeholders.

In the 'Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP): 2011-2015' and 'Outline Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010-2021): Making Vision 2021 A Reality' pledges have been made to build a modern and vibrant industrial sector with the aim of reducing unemployment, hunger and poverty. Indications have been made in these documents to undertake short, medium and long term programmes to accelerate economic growth.

a) Quantum Index of Production of Manufacturing Indus-11 tries

The Quantum Index of Production (QIP) is an important tool for measuring the production performance of manufacturing industries. Data available

Prospects of sme's Financing

147 For LDCs like Bangladesh, SMEs may be a highly cost-effective source of employment too. The current new 148 job seekers together with millions of inactive people are still looking for employment. SMEs may surely be a very good solution to this problem. To compare what it might cost to provide employment with new jobs in the large industries in relation to SMEs, one needs only to look at some of Bangladeshi large fertilizer factories. 150 Chittagong Urea Factory Limited (CUFL) costs BDT 14 billion (\$237 million) to build, and it employs 982 151 people. The Jumuna Fertilizer Factory (JFF) costs BDT 12.60 billion (\$213 million) and employs 1,082 people. 152 Thus CUFL and JFF required BDT 14.26 and 11.63 million (\$241,000 and \$198,000) respectively for every 153 person to be employed. But, in case of microenterprises, set or encouraged by the NGOs for selfemployment of 154 the very poor, the investment required per employment is BDT 5,000 (\$85) or less (SDC & BUP, 1998). The 155

comparative scenario puts a very clear idea about the operation and potential contribution of SMEs in eradicating unemployment and reducing poverty together with yielding national economic development.

Numerous surveys have been conducted in Bangladesh on the impacts and prospects of SMEs. These surveys found that there were almost 6 million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which included enterprises with "up to 100 workers" employing a total of 31 million people, equivalent to 40 per cent of the population of the country of age 15 years and above ??ICG & MIDAS, 2003).

The survey also found that the industrial structure of SMEs consisted of primarily wholesale and retail trade and repairs (40 per cent), production and sale of agricultural goods (22 percent), services (15 percent), and manufacturing only (14 per cent). It reflects on the very fact that the large unused potential for expansion in manufacture and production could be exploited contributing significantly to the national economy. Another vital finding of the surveys under discussion was that SMEs contributed nearly to 25 The study and other relevant observation identifies some concrete and unique features of SMEs that ensures us about its success in employment generation and the sector's suitability to be focused for ensuring sustainable economic development in the backdrop of poor countries like Bangladesh with poor population. Starting SMEs business requires a small amount of fund. So it is easy for the people to start this business. Growth of SMEs may have a positive impact on the overall economic development of Bangladesh. This sector can be diversified in many ways and it is considered as low risk organizations.

Being an over-populated nation Bangladesh needs labor-intensive organizations like SMEs.. This is a suitable for countries like Bangladesh where skilled labors are not available at all. SMEs can also create more jobs than large enterprises at lower costs. SMEs are providing a diversified range of products at a lower price in local market. People are getting SME products at a lower price. Government has established an independent SME foundation to help and encourage the people to join in this sector for the development of SMEs. Recently Asian Development Bank (ADB) has provided some fund for SME sector development in Bangladesh.

It has been observed that recently many commercial banks have opened separate specialized SME branches. It has created a new arena to expand this business. Some commercial banks have special SME loan schemes for women entrepreneurs and it will help them to be self dependent.

13 VIII.

14 Findings and Analysis

Distribution of entrepreneurs whether or not they take bank loan to operate their SME 60% that means a large number of SME entrepreneurs take bank loan to operate their SME business which is very remarkable. However about 4 out of 10 do not take bank loan to run their business. From the above table it is found that most of the respondents are not satisfied about the infrastructure It is found that 18% of the respondents are strongly disagreed and 36% of the respondents are disagreed and 30% of the respondents are agreed about the statement.

15 a) Challenges for SME Financing

The main driving force in SME promotion in Bangladesh is in the growth of agro-based processing and essential consumer goods products. Many institutions at the national level are providing assistance to entrepreneurs through SMEs in the country. Industrial credit in Bangladesh is financed through governmentsponsored industrial banks; commercial banks and specialized financial institutions ??ESCAP, 2003).

- i. Inability to Market SME Product: The present and future growth prospect of any product depends to a large extent upon marketing activity. This requires having a well-planned marketing strategy including advertisement campaign as well as resources for implementing that strategy. Unfortunately, SME entrepreneurs are at the bitter end in this respect as they cannot make adequate investments in marketing and also lack necessary marketing skills.
- ii. Inability to Maintain Product Quality: A major constraint to the sustainability of SME growth in Bangladesh is the inability to maintain the quality of SME products. At present Bangladesh produces mostly common consumer goods which are laborintensive and require relatively simple technology. But due to poor quality these products cannot stand competition from imported products. The challenge for Bangladesh today is not in competing with hightech products of developed countries but to make its SME sector survive competition from its rivals.
- iii. Lack of Skilled Technicians and Workers: Lack of skilled manpower is a perennial problem in Bangladesh. This problem is particularly acute for small and medium scale export oriented enterprises. Bangladesh has made large inroads in the world's apparel market through commendable performance of RMG sector. However, the value addition of the products is low. Despite high demand, Bangladesh cannot make much entry into high value fashion wear exports due to dearth of trained workers. Supply capacity is thus constrained by non-availability of skilled workers. iv. Poor Management Skills of Entrepreneurs: In the modern day economy, managerial skills for undertaking planning, marketing, and cash-flow management are vital for survival of an industry, small or large. SME entrepreneurs in Bangladesh are very much lacking in managerial skills and are not used to strategic planning. It is natural that they are unable to survive market failures. The concept of managerial training for SME entrepreneurs is yet to take root in Bangladesh. v. Lack of Quality Assurance: Govt. has failed to frame a national quality policy, provide adequate support systems and establish a national quality certification authority.

As a consequence SME of Bangladesh has failed to ensure the quality of their products and services both in local 216 and international market. 217

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vi. Resource Scarcity: In Bangladesh scarcity of raw materials hinder the ability of SME to be export oriented and limits its ability to reach more advanced stages of international business. vii. High Employee Turnover: Due to limited growth of SME most of the skilled employees leave SMEs. ??evy (2003)

17 Suggestions and Recommendations

SMEs will continue to be the major driving force for income and employment generation in Bangladesh. 224 The future for entrepreneurship appears to be very bright. We are living in the age of the entrepreneur, 225 with entrepreneurship endorsed by government, business community, educational institutions, society, and 226 corporations. Development of SMEs in Bangladesh is the need of the hour to raise the standard of living of 227 the people of our country. The modest suggestions and recommendations are given below: 228

a) Enhancing Access to SME Finance 18

Access to institutional finance for SMEs is still greatly limited. Less than 30% SMEs have access to institutional 230 loans. Enhancing access to institutional finance by 50% of SME entrepreneurs may be a target within next five 231 years through strengthening SME foundation, motivating institutional sources of financing to provide access to 232 the deserving loan applicants. 233

b) Development of SME Infrastructure 19

Infrastructure development is a prerequisite to efficient development and financing of SMEs Currently, the most 235 severe constraint that hinder the development of SMEs is the lack of infrastructure (e.g., roads, gas and electricity), 236 limited access to market opportunities, technology, expertise and business information and communication. 237 Providing appropriate infrastructure for SME growth should be given priority. 238

c) Quality of SME Products 20

Poor quality of products is a big setback for expansion of SME business and SME sector as a whole. Measures 240 for quality improvement and standardization of SME products have to be one of the targets. The BSTI may be made more effective in monitoring quality of product both for domestic market and for exports.

d) Training Facilities for SME workers and Entrepreneur

Bangladeshi workers are very good at learning production skills and copying them. 244

e) Organizing Trade Fairs, Symposiums, Workshops on SMEs on Regular Basis

At present workshops and symposiums on SMEs are held by different organizations and think tanks, but these are held infrequently and not in any systematic manner. A plan for holding seminars, workshops, trade fairs, etc. on a regular basis should be formulated.

f) Setting Help Desks in Banks and Business Promotion 23 Bodies with Internet Facilities

To extend the outreach of SME development particularly in respect of women entrepreneurs, a Help Desk with computer and internet facilities should be set up in bank branches dealing with SME finance as well as in all chambers of commerce and industry and other trade promotional bodies.

g) Use of modern technology

Product design and technology is a very important aspect of SME development. Most SMEs are characterized 256 by indigenous technology and they are involved in improving their existing production techniques and processes. 257 If there is no use of modern technology and innovation does not take place in an indigenous sector, enterprises 258 become uncompetitive. 259

h) Proper implementation of SME policy

Government has formulated SME policy to accept SMEs as an indispensable player in growth acceleration and 261 poverty reduction. To this end government has introduced various strategies and provides facilities and incentives 262 for development and growth of SMEs. So this policy must be implemented properly. 263

26 i) Role of NGO

Government, financial institutions and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) may take necessary steps to ensure uninterrupted financial support to the prospective SMEs in Bangladesh. In order to encourage women entrepreneurship govt. may; involve women entrepreneurs in policy formulation and implementation. Arrange funds for women entrepreneurs. Provide necessary training to women entrepreneurs in rural and urban area of Bangladesh.

In this era of intense competition continuous planning and quality improvement act as a prerequisite for the survival of SMEs. In order to improve the quality SMEs can follow the Just in Time (JIT) philosophy and use Total Quality Management (TQM) and can ensure the improvement of quality and productivity at a time. Restriction may be imposed on import of SMEs' products, which are available in Bangladesh.

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28 Conclusion

Modern time is the golden time of business. Now a day the idea of SME business is also developed. So definitely it's a matter of thing that, how to established an idea-with different technique. The SME business in Bangladesh have a strong position in the to days competitive market. SME entrepreneurs are continuously upgrading themselves with a view to be competitive and to remain the best. As the experiences of SME finance in Bangladesh suggest, there is critical need for putting in place a credit delivery system that evaluates the credit worthiness of borrowers, on a basis other than fixed asset ownership. The evaluation may require examining transaction records of the borrowers, assessing the value of movable assets etc. There will also be the need for enhanced post disbursement monitoring. An effective SME finance policy will have to cover such enhanced cost of credit administration. In addition to credit guarantee or refinancing facility there will have to be adequate rediscount facility for the primary lender to accommodate these costs. Such credit line also needs to be made available to non-bank institutions such as the NGOs. The financing scheme should also include special provisions for women entrepreneurs. Indeed, the implementation of appropriate policies and strategies is a prerequisite to harness sustainable competitiveness of SMEs around the country. Suggestive remarks have been stipulated in this write up. With that paradigm, proactive policy is essential to enact them. The first step this regard is to make firm's filly aware of the competitive challenges they have to face. The next step is to help SMEs prepare to meet the challenge by understanding their strengths and weaknesses and providing the inputs they need to help them upgrade. The main inputs are finance, market information, training, infrastructure development, R&D, management tools, technology, skills and links with institutions for support services.

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Figure 1: Introduction © 2015 1 Global

Serial	Sector	Fixed Asset other than	Employed
		Land and	Man-
			power
			(not
No.		Building (Tk.)	above)
01.	Service	50,000-50,00,000	25
02.	Business	50,000-50,00,000	25
03.	Industria	150,000-1,50,00,000	50

b) Definition of Medium Enterprise

Medium Enterprise refers to the establishment/firm which is not a public limited company and complies the following criteria:

Figure 2: Table 1:

$\mathbf{2}$

Serial	Sector	Fixed Asset other than Land and	Employed
No.			Manpower
		Building (Tk.)	(not above)
01.	Service	50,00,000-10,00,00,000	50
02.	Business	50,00,000-10,00,00,000	50
03.	Industrial	1,50,00,000-20,00,00,000	150

Figure 3: Table 2:

(At constant prices of 2005-06)(In Crore Tk.)

[Note: Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. * Provisional. Note: Figures in parentheses indicate rate of growth. VI.]

Figure 4: Table 1:

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[Note: C]

Figure 5: Table 2:

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Whether or not take		Percentage
loan by	Number	(%)
entrepreneurs from		
banks		
yes	30	60
No	20	40
Total	50	100

[Note: Source: Survey of SME entrepreneurs]

Figure 6: Table 1

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	Strongly disagree	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Disagree	17	34.0	34.0	58.0
Valid	Neutral Agree	4 16	$8.0\ 32.0$	$8.0\ 32.0$	66.0 98.0
	Strongly agree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Figure 7: Table 2:

Frequency Percent Valid Percent 17 34.0 34.0 16 32.0 32.0 16 32.0 32.0 1 2.0 2.0 50 100.0 100.0 It is found that 34% of the respondents opine that they are disagreed about the statement and 32% of the Cumulative Percent Valid Disagree 34.0 Neutral 66.0 Agree 98.0 Strongly agree 100.0 Total Source: Field Survey respondents are agreed and neutral.

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[Note: Source: Field Survey C]

Figure 8: Table 3:

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		Frequency Percent Valid Percent			Cumulative
					Percent
	Strongly disagree	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Disagree	18	36.0	36.0	54.0
Valid	Neutral Agree	4 15	$8.0\ 30.0$	$8.0\ 30.0$	$62.0\ 92.0$
	Strongly agree	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	
Source: Fi	eld Survey				

Figure 9: Table 5:

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facility of SME and 32% of the respondents are agreed.

v	•	Frequency	Cumulative Percent		
	Strongly disagree	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Disagree	19	38.0	38.0	62.0
	Neutral	4	8.0	8.0	70.0
Valid	Agree	14	28.0	28.0	98.0
	Strongly agree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Figure 10: Table 4:

		Frequency Percent Valid Percent			Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	29	58.0	58.0	58.0
	Neutral	4	8.0	8.0	66.0
Valid	Agree	16	32.0	32.0	98.0
	Strongly	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	agree Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Majority of the respondents opine that modern technologies are not ensured properly for the development of SME sector.

Figure 11: Table 6:

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Special programs are to be undertaken for the Volume XV Issue VII Version I establishment entrepreneurship development. of training

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[Note: C]

Figure 12:

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