

## **PREFACE**

Women represent half the resources and half the potential in all the society. Efforts to promote greater equality between women and men can also contribute to overall development of human society. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of sustainable development in all areas of life. Throughout the world, women's participation in economic activities is fast increasing. The role of women in entrepreneurship is also increasing. In India too, women are participating in large number of in almost all the spheres of economic activity. In the case of work force participation rate by sex, it had been much lower for females as compared to males, but due to increasing literacy rate of female; their work participation rate has been on the increase. In the case of work participation rate women have a lower participation rate than man. Compare to the urban areas, there had been a steady increase in the participation rate among women during 1971-2001 in rural areas. When they are engaged in gainful employment and contributing to the household and national economy, they should be given the due respect and status they deserve in the family and the society. In the changing socio-cultural environment of India, women are entering in a new era. But they are still over burdened with the household responsibilities. So some measures should be introduced to reduce their household burden. This requires a drastically change in the mindset of the men folk towards women in general and working women in particular.

Women constitute roughly one half of the population of our country. They form a very significant proportion of human resource. But, they were denied and continued to be denied basic human rights and marginalized to such an extent that most of them do not expect equality with men. In this backdrop, it is widely recognized that empowerment of women contributes significantly to the Social Development, which facilitates rapid economic development of a country. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985. The national policy on empowerment of women (2001) reiterates that the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties and directive principles; a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the constitution, legislations, policies, plans, programs and

related mechanism on one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India on the other still exists. Various studies deal with the wide range of issues relating to women empowerment from historical perspective to equity, human rights and social justice. The interdisciplinary focus for delineating the multi-faceted dimensions of women development and empowerment, gender issues and the subject on women empowerment are of great concern for the social scientists, women activists, policy-makers, legal professionals, students, scholars and researchers, human rights activists and particularly to social work educators and sociologists. Women entrepreneurship is an important area of interest having far reaching implications on the socio-economic development of the country. The current economic scene demands for an effective utilization of human and other resources. Employment opportunities in public sector are on decline. Entrepreneurship is the only effective way to deal with the growing problem of unemployment and empowerment of women. That is why the Government has initiated various schemes for entrepreneurship development. Women population which constitutes nearly half of the total population has relatively low participation in entrepreneurial activities, whereas in developed nations it is not so. The experience of developed nations have demonstrated that when an economy moves from command to a market driven situation, the gender inequalities are generally abridge over a period of time. Women entrepreneurship has a great role to play in the economic development. Women owned firms represented nearly 40% of all firms in the United States and employed approximately 27.5 million people. Further, women are starting businesses at faster rate than their male counterparts. It has been seen that women outnumber men by at least two times, particularly when it comes to starting business in China. There are over five million women entrepreneurs constituting one fourth of all entrepreneurs in China, in Japan also a similar trends has been noticed. The percentage of women entrepreneurs increased from 2.4% in 1980 to 5.0% in 1995. Entrepreneurship among human resources of the country in general and women in particular during post-liberalization regime, Government has set-up large numbers of institutions to provide financial and other supportive measures for the growth of entrepreneurship among human resources of the country. Entrepreneurship among women, Post-reform period has seen the increase in participation of even NGOs for the growth of entrepreneurship among human resources of the country. Under the new economic regime the women participation in business has shown considerable improvement. At

present in India 9.5% women entrepreneurs are engaged in small business. The major factors responsible for increase in participation of women in economic activities have been spread of general and technical education, growth of IT sector and entrepreneurship as a career. The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the State economy is quite visible in Uttar Pradesh. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time, especially after the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased efforts to stand on their own feet through entrepreneurship and finding a niche for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sector and unorganized sector. While women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their potential, the fact remains that they are capable of contributing much more than what they already are. In order to harness their potential and for their continued growth and development, it is necessary to formulate appropriate strategies for stimulating, supporting and sustaining their efforts in this direction. An attempt has been made to document available information regarding the status of women entrepreneurs, against the backdrop of the socio-economic context and the attendant challenges they face.

The whole study is divided into various parts which are overwhelmingly interwoven together with the main issue of empowerment of women through entrepreneurship. In the initial part, a theoretical analysis is done on demographic Profile of the women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship aspects, attitudes of family and society women entrepreneurs and characteristics of their enterprise, push-pull factors responsible for becoming entrepreneurs, obstacles confronted by women entrepreneurs and managerial capabilities and training needed by women entrepreneurs. Final part of the thesis emphasizes on the Empowerment aspects and compares the level of individual, family, economical and social aspects of empowerment among women entrepreneurs in pre and post entrepreneurship condition. Finally the thesis concludes with the findings, conclusions and suggestions to the policy makers of the country in order to empower women through entrepreneurship.

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