Women constitute half of the population of India. India needs to fully mobilise and utilise all its resources including human resources. The participation of women in the economic activities is necessary not only from a human resource point of view but is essential even from the objective of raising the status of women in the society.

The economic status of the women is now accepted as an indicator of society’s stage of development. Therefore it becomes imperative for Government to frame policies providing these rights, roles and opportunities to women for their betterment. Though the Government had formulated policies and set up institutions to render necessary assistance to the development of women entrepreneurs, it is necessary to evaluate the needs of women entrepreneurs and to ascertain how far these needs are being met by the existing institutions and identifying gaps.

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There are 10.52 million small scale industrial units functioning in India. The total employment contribution of the sector is 24.93 million with per unit contribution of 2.37.

The state of Uttar Pradesh tops the list with more than 17 lakh SSI units followed by Andhra Pradesh, Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Sikkim has the lowest number of small scale units.

Among the small scale industrial units owned by women entrepreneurs in India, Kerala state tops the list with 1.39 lakh units. Tamil Nadu ranks second in the number
of small scale units owned by women entrepreneurs. Lakshadweep has the lowest number of small scale units owned by women entrepreneurs (67 units).

More than four-fifths of small scale units functioning in India (86.93%) are unregistered units.

Among the 94.57 lakhs small scale units owned by men functioning in India, 86.92 per cent are unregistered and 13.08 per cent units are registered. In 10.63 lakh small scale units owned by women, 87.07 per cent units are unregistered and 12.93 per cent units are registered. More than four-fifths of the small scale units (87.07%) owned by women are unregistered.

The total number of registered small scale units in Tamil Nadu, which stood at 121648 in the year 1996-97, has steadily increased to 241223 in 2004-05. There was nearly 100 per cent increase in the total number of registered small scale units in Tamil Nadu during 2004-05 when compared to 1996-97.

The annual compound growth rate of small scale units in Tamil Nadu during the period under study is 8.84 per cent.

The annual compound growth rate of small scale units run by women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu during the period under study is 7.76 per cent.

In the year 2015, there would be 3.66 lakh small scale units in Tamil Nadu. In the year 2015, there would be 0.36 lakh small scale units run by women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.
The share of small scale units run by women entrepreneurs in the total small scale units functioning in Virudhunagar District is less than 10 per cent during the study period.

The annual compound growth rate of small scale units in Virudhunagar District during the period under study is 7.85 per cent.

The annual compound growth rate of small scale units run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District during the period under study is 6.96 per cent.

The total number of small scale units in Virudhunagar District in the year 2015 is expected to be 0.17 lakh units.

The number of small scale units run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District in the years 2015 is projected as 1423 units.

According to Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon Test there is no significant difference between the growth rates of total SSI units in Tamil Nadu and SSI units run by women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.

There is no significant difference between the growth rates of total number of SSI units in Virudhunagar District and SSI units run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District.

There is no significant difference between the growth rates of SSI units run by women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu and Virudhunagar District.
In order to study the profile of women entrepreneurs and their enterprises in Virudhunagar District, a survey was conducted among 200 women entrepreneurs. The survey was done at the rate of 20 per cent of the units from each of the nine major industries in Virudhunagar District.

More than two-thirds of the women entrepreneurs are below 40 years of age. This has been due to the fact that they are free from family commitments at this age.

Nearly three-fourths of the women entrepreneurs (72 %) in Virudhunagar District are from backward community. It indicates the eagerness of the women from backward community to come up in life by starting their own enterprises.

More than four-fifths of the women entrepreneurs (88%) belong to Hinduism. This has been due to the fact that the majority of population in Virudhunagar District are to Hindus.

Nearly two-thirds of the women entrepreneurs (64 %) are married. Since wants are unlimited, a single earning member in the family cannot fulfil the needs of a family. Hence, women have to supplement the income of the family to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

A majority of the women entrepreneurs (59%) have studied only up to school level.

Nearly two-thirds of women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District are from nuclear families. Entrepreneurship requires full devotion and dedication to their jobs, which are possible only by women from nuclear families.
A majority of women entrepreneurs (53.5%) in Virudhunagar District have annual income up to rupees one lakh only.

A majority of women entrepreneurs (61%) in Virudhunagar District belonged to the category of first generation entrepreneurs.

A majority of women entrepreneurs (54%) have previous experience in business such as employment, belonging to business families and the like.

More than four-fifths of the women entrepreneurs (88%) in Virudhunagar District have support from their family members in running their business.

With regard to actual control in the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs, enterprises under the control of women concerned top the list with 39 per cent, followed by the control of their husbands with 31 per cent.

Nearly two-thirds of women entrepreneurs (64%) contribute less than 50 per cent to their family income.

Nearly three-fourths of the women entrepreneurs (74.5%) in Virudhunagar District spend more than four hours per day in the business. This has been due to the fact that women have become entrepreneurs with a view to supplement their family income. Success in business depends more on the involvement and time spent in the business. Hence, they spend more than four hours per day in the business.

With regard to the mode of entry into the business, a majority of women entrepreneurs (60%) have started new business.
Nearly a majority of the women entrepreneurs (49.17%) have employment experience before starting a new business.

More than two-thirds of women entrepreneurs (67.5%) in Virudhunagar District have income from other sources such as rent, investment and the like.

A majority of women entrepreneurs (60.5%) in Virudhunagar District have surplus income from their business. This is due to the fact that the unit is small with the less number of employees and the units are functioning in their own buildings without rent.

Nearly a majority of the women entrepreneurs (49.59%) have reinvested their surplus income in the same unit.

In Virudhunagar District a majority of women entrepreneurs take business decisions after consulting their family members. This shows their confidence in the advice of their family members.

According to a majority of the women entrepreneurs (50.5%), their entrepreneurial role does not affect the family role.

Nearly three-fourths of the women entrepreneurs (71%) are not members in trade associations. This has been due to the fact that nearly two-thirds of women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District have studied only up to school level. Hence, the awareness about the various trade associations and their role in helping entrepreneurs is limited.
Nearly two-thirds of the enterprises (61.5%) are located in rural areas. This has been due to the availability of cheap land and labour.

Nearly half of the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar are located nearer to their residences.

More than three-fourths of the small scale units (82%) run by women entrepreneurs are manufacturing units.

Nearly three-fourths of the enterprises (74%) run by women entrepreneurs belong to sole trader type. This has been due to the fact that starting of sole trader organizations is easy unlike stating joint-stock companies where lot of legal formalities are to be observed.

A majority of the enterprises (61%) have been functioning for less than ten years. This has been due to the fact that more number of small scale industries had been started during the post-liberalisation era, that is, after 1990s.

More than three-fourths of the enterprises (58%) run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District are newly started.

More than three-fourth of the enterprises (67.5%) run by women entrepreneurs are functioning in their own buildings. This has been due to the fact that units such as hosiery, pickle manufacturing units, beauty parlours, Xerox units and the like are in need of small buildings which they can afford to provide.

More than three-fourths of the enterprises (77%) use Indian made machinery.
More than four-fifths of the enterprises (89.5%) are functioning throughout the year.

More than three-fourths of the enterprises (76.5%) have less than 20 employees.

A majority of the women entrepreneurs (52.5%) want to expand their business.

The managerial performance of women entrepreneurs in the major fields of entrepreneurial activity like production, marketing and finance, is presented in the following paragraphs:

Manufacturing units, which are fully utilising their installed capacity and those, which are not fully utilising the capacity were equally divided.

According to Garrett’s ranking, the main cause for the under-utilisation of the installed capacity has been the low profit margin, followed by accumulation of unsold stock.

More than four-fifths of the manufacturing units (92.68%) have purchased their raw material from the open market. This shows the easy availability of raw material in the market for small scale industries.

Small scale units run by women entrepreneurs have purchased their raw material only for cash. Those who purchase raw material both for cash and credit are equal and amounted to 41.46 per cent each. Enterprises run by women prefer cash purchases because of the advantages of cash purchase such as cash discount and other incentives offered.
The average annual production value of all the manufacturing units amounted to Rs.16.62 lakhs. Cotton textiles, paper and printing and chemical and food industry have their average annual production above the average annual production of all the manufacturing units.

A majority of the small scale industrial units (56.71%) produce only one product. This indicates the difficulties of women entrepreneurs in giving their undivided attention to producing more products.

More than two-thirds of the small scale industrial units (67.07%) run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District have storage facilities in the factory itself. This has the advantage of no rent and transport costs.

According to a majority of the women entrepreneurs (51.5%), it is easy to sell their products. This has been due to the fact that the quantity produced is less and can be sold locally.

The average monthly sales turnover of all the nine industries studied amounted to Rs.1.74 lakhs.

In terms of the highest monthly sales turnover, cotton textile industry tops the list having an average monthly turnover of Rs.3.82 lakhs, followed by paper and printing and chemical industries.

Regarding the area of sale of the products, local sales tops the list, followed by all India, Tamil Nadu state and export sales.
Nearly 50 per cent of the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District sold their products for cash. This has the advantage of no bad debts or writing collection letters.

A majority of the enterprises (57.5%) have a profit margin up to 25 per cent in their selling price. Enterprises run by women entrepreneurs fix a reasonable profit margin because of competition and difficulties in keeping unsold stock.

Initial average fixed capital in cotton textile, paper and printing and rubber and plastic industries has been more than the overall average fixed capital of Rs.6.84 lakhs.

Cotton textile, chemical and printing industries alone had initial average working capital exceeding the overall average working capital of the nine industries of Rs.2.51 lakhs.

The present average fixed capital investments in the year 2005 in the nine industries amounted to Rs.12.23 lakhs.

Industries which have above the overall average fixed capital, are in this order namely, cotton textile, paper and printing and chemical industries.

The average working capital in the year 2005 in the nine industries amounted to Rs.4.79 lakhs.

Industries which have above the overall present average working capital, were in this order namely, cotton textile, paper and printing and chemical industry.

More than two-thirds of women entrepreneurs (66.5%) have invested both owned and borrowed funds.
The main sources of borrowing for the small scale industries run by women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District are banks and financial institutions. This has been due to the fact that banks and financial institutions are liberal in lending to small scale industrial units since they are bound to lend 40 per cent of their total lending to the priority sector.

Nearly two-thirds of the women entrepreneurs (63%) have availed themselves of the Government assistance

Regarding the opinion on Government assistance provided to women entrepreneurs, those who feel that it is inadequate tops the list (42.86%) followed by those feel that it is adequate.

Among the various forms of Government assistance availed by women, subsidy tops the list, followed by power concessions.

The factors influencing women entrepreneurs have been analysed on the basis of reasons for becoming entrepreneurs, persons influencing women entrepreneurs, motivational factors and the like.

The main reason for selecting the present business by women entrepreneurs is previous experience, followed by the demand for a particular product or service.

Among the various persons motivating women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District, motivation by their husbands tops the list, followed by self-motivation and motivation by their parents.
Among the various factors influencing women entrepreneurs to start business ‘to earn money’ tops the list, followed by ‘economic independence’.

The motivating factor ‘to earn money’ is more with the women entrepreneurs who are above 40 years of age, who belong to communities other than backward class, who belong to religion other than Hinduism, who are unmarried, widow and divorcee, who have studied up to school level, who come from joint families and who belong to first generation entrepreneur category.

The influence of the motivating factor ‘economic independence’ is more with women entrepreneurs who belong to the age group upto 40 years, who belong to backward class and to religions other than Hinduism, who are married and those from nuclear families and whose parents and in laws are entrepreneurs.

The influence of unemployment in motivating the women entrepreneurs is found more with the women who are up to 40 years of age, who belong to communities other than backward class, who belong to religions other than Hinduism, who are unmarried, widows and divorcees, who have studied upto school level, who come from joint families and who belong to first generation entrepreneur category.

The influence of motivating factor ‘market potential’ is found more with the women entrepreneurs who belong to the age group of above 40 years, who belong to backward class, who have religion other than Hinduism, who are unmarried, widow and divorcee, who have technical, collegiate education and those from nuclear families and whose parents are entrepreneurs.
The influence of the motivating factor ‘to be innovative and different’ is more with the women entrepreneur who are up to 40 year of age, who belong to backward class, who belong to Hinduism, who are married, who have technical and collegiate education, who come from nuclear family and whose in-laws are entrepreneurs.

The influence of the motivating factor ‘social status or prestige’ is more with the women entrepreneurs who belong to the age of above 40 years, who belong to backward class, who are Hindus, who are married, who have technical and collegiate education, who come from nuclear family and whose parents and in-laws are entrepreneurs.

The influence of the motivating factor ‘to use idle funds’ is more with women entrepreneurs who are above 40 years of age, who belong to backward class, who are married, who have studied up to school level, who come from joint families and whose in-laws are entrepreneurs.

The dissatisfaction with the existing job has influenced women to start business is found more with the women who are above 40 years of age, who belong to communities other than backward class, to religion other than Hinduism, who are unmarried, widow and divorcee, who have studied up to school level, who come from joint family and who belong to first generation entrepreneur category.

Women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District have ranked the various problems faced by them under each category such as, personal problems, production problems, labour problems, marketing problems and financial problems. There
ranking of problems under each category was made by using Garrett’s Ranking Technique.

More than two-thirds of the women entrepreneurs (68%) are facing personal problems.

Among the various personal problems, dual duties (household and business) tops the list followed by resistance from family members.

More than two-thirds of the women entrepreneurs (70%) in Virudhunagar District are facing production problems.

Among the various production problems faced by women entrepreneurs, technical problem got the first rank, followed by power problems.

A majority of the small scale industries run by women entrepreneurs are facing labour problems.

Among the various labour problems, labour turnover got the first rank followed by negative attitude of labour, union activities, absenteeism and hesitation of male labourers to work under women.

Nearly three-fourths of the women entrepreneurs (74%) have marketing problems.

Among the five major marketing problems faced by women entrepreneurs, lack of information about changing market conditions got the first rank, followed by bad debts, competition, credit sales and availability of duplicate products in the market.
More than two-thirds of women entrepreneurs (70%) have financial problems,

Regarding the six financial problems faced by women entrepreneurs, inadequate working capital got the first rank followed by reluctance of financial institutions to extend credit to women.

The opinions on women entrepreneurship were analysed on the basis of scores obtained on a five-point scale for ten statements. Chi-square test was used to analyse the opinion of women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District.

There is no significant difference between the age of the respondents and their opinion on women entrepreneurship.

There is no significant difference between the community of the respondents and their opinions on women entrepreneurship.

There is no significant difference between the religion of the respondents and their opinions on women entrepreneurship.

There is no significant difference between the marital status of the respondents and their opinions on women entrepreneurship.

There is significant difference between the educational qualifications of the respondents and their opinions on women entrepreneurship.

There is no significant difference between the different categories of the respondents and their opinions on women entrepreneurship.
There is no significant difference between the opinion levels of respondents who received family support and who did not.

There is no significant difference between the opinions of the respondents having hereditary business and those with new business.

There is no significant difference between the opinion levels of the respondents who are members and those who are not members in trade associations.

There is no significant difference between the opinion levels of the respondents who have business in rural and those in urban areas.

There is no significant difference between the opinion levels of the respondents who have manufacturing units and those having service units.

There is no significant difference between the opinion levels of the respondents of different types of organizations.

**8.3 SUGGESTIONS**

For further development of women entrepreneurs in small scale industries in Virudhunagar District, the following suggestions are given:

1. Since most of the small scale units in India are unregistered, steps should be taken by the Government of India to make it compulsory to register all small scale industries with respective District Industries Centre.

2. The share of small scale units run by women entrepreneurs in the total small scale units functioning in Virudhunagar District is very poor. Hence, the
following steps may be taken to involve more number of potential women in the field of entrepreneurship.

i) More attention should be focused on unemployed graduates

ii) There should be a reorientation of educational system for women.

iii) There should be a curriculum change along with proper carrier guidance in women’s educational institutions, which will shape the girl students to become capable entrepreneurs in future.

3 Since the number of entrepreneurs from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities is very low, awareness is to be created among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women, by providing special incentives to start business.

4 Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to start their enterprises as joint stock companies rather than as sole trade and partnership concerns to avail the advantages of large scale operation.

5 A majority of the women entrepreneurs are not members in trade associations. Awareness should be created through advertisements to become members of trade associations to enjoy the benefits of membership.

6 Women entrepreneurs must keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in their respective fields by regularly attending the training programmes and reading relevant literature.
Parents of unmarried potential women entrepreneurs should prefer spending money on setting up business rather than giving preference to her marriage.

Society needs to change its negative attitude towards women entrepreneurs. Women should be judged based on merits instead of sex.

The Government and other promotional agencies should take greater interest in marketing the products produced by women.

The Government departments and public sector undertakings should be made to consider purchasing their requirements from enterprises owned by women.

At present, only a negligible portion of the products of women-owned units are exported. Export possibilities are to be created by the Government.

The Reserve Bank of India should consider designing a special scheme for granting financial assistance to women entrepreneurs without insisting on collateral security and guarantee.

A National Bank for Women Entrepreneurs should be formed as a 100 per cent subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India to take care of financial assistance to women entrepreneurs.

Improper location and inadequate infrastructure facilities are the hurdles in the way of development of women entrepreneurship. Hence, separate industrial estates may be set up exclusively for women entrepreneurs to reduce the initial investment and to create a special environment.
15 The entry of proxy or dummy women entrepreneurs needs to be checked so that the benefits trickle down only to the genuine women entrepreneurs.

16 Separate cells could be created in support agencies exclusively for women entrepreneurs like NRI or foreign investors’ cells.

**8.4 CONCLUSION**

Ultimately women entrepreneurship must be recognised for what it is. Nationally, it has great importance for country’s future economic prosperity. Individually, business ownership provides women with independence they crave for and with economic and social satisfaction.

**8.5 TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Further research can be done in the following areas on women entrepreneurship:

- The role of financial institutions in the development of women entrepreneurship
- The role of District Industries Centres in the development of women entrepreneurs.
- The impact of globalisation on entrepreneurial pursuits of women.
 Orientation and motivational patterns of women graduates leading to entrepreneurship.

 Social status of women entrepreneurs in India.

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