CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Woman is the magnificent creation of God, a multifaceted personality with the power of integrity, benevolence, adjustability and tolerance. She is companion of man, a protector and provider, gifted with equal mental faculty, the embodiment of love and affection. The role given to women in a society is a measuring rod and true index of its civilization and cultural attainment (Romila, 2009).

Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction. But the sector is underperforming in many countries in part because women, who are often a crucial human resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity. Since ancient times women have been playing a crucial role in family as well as in farming but their contribution has not been identified fully and acknowledged.

The word empowerment means giving or providing power. According to the International Encyclopedia (1999), it means having the capacity and the means to direct one's life towards desired social, political and economic goals or status. Therefore, women empowerment means giving the capacity and means to direct women's life towards desired goals. Empowerment is a process by which women gain greater control over resources (income, knowledge, information, technology, skill and training), challenge the ideology of patriarchy and participate in leadership, decision making process; enhance the self-image of women, to become active participants in the process of change and to develop the skills to assert them.

Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be
difficult to start and to implement effectively. Women Empowerment is the ability of women to exercise full control over their actions. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and even over their ideologies. It involves, at the psychological level, women's ability to assert themselves which has, so far, been constricted by the 'gender roles' assigned to them especially in a culture like India which resists changes.

Empowerment process is strengthened through educational interventions, transfer of technologies, feasibility trials and knowledge sharing. The Directorate of Rural Women in Agriculture (DRWA), other ICAR institutes and KVKs have concentrated their researches, inter alia, to relieve women of the drudgery by providing time and labour saving tools. Besides, vocational trainings are being conducted to impart skills necessary to undertake different avocations. KVKs have trained more than two lakh farm women, girls and women extension workers. The strategies used by AICRP on Home Science have encouraged women to play key role in micro level planning, designing community infrastructure for information dissemination and mobilization of community resources (human and material) to gain benefits from the projects. Empirical evidence suggests that women have moved from beneficiaries to active partners in shaping empowerment. In the present scenario of globalization, liberalization and privatization of agricultural sector, the sustainable development and empowerment of farm women is considered as a key factor for development of any country (Sharma, 2012).

Recognizing the role of women in agriculture, Swaminathan has proposed to move the Women Farmers’ Entitlement Bill, 2011 in the Rajya Sabha that seeks, inter alia, access to water, credit and inputs, pattas for women farmers as a policy reform to create enabling environment (Patel, 2012).

Women farmers account for more than quarter of the world’s population. Women comprise, on an average 43 per cent of the agricultural work force in developing countries, ranging from 20 per cent in Latin America to 50 per cent in Eastern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa. Yet women have less access than men to agricultural related assets, inputs and services. If they have easy, timely and reliable access to productive resources
as men, women can increase yield by 20 per cent to 30 per cent, raising the overall agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent. This gain in production can reduce the number of hungry people in the world by about 12 per cent to 17 per cent, besides increasing women’s income (FAO, 2011).

Female share of non-agricultural wage employment is only 17.0 per cent. Participation of women in the workforce is only 13.9 per cent in the urban sector and 29.9 per cent in the rural sector. Women’s wage rates are, on an average, only 75.0 per cent of men’s wage rates and constitute only 25.0 per cent of the family income. In no Indian State do women and men earn equal wages in agriculture. Women receive 1.0 per cent of agricultural credit and produce more than half of the world’s food (80.0 % in Africa; 60.0 per cent in Asia; 35.0 per cent in Latin America). The value of unremunerated work was estimated at about $16 billion, from which $11 billion represents the invisible contribution of women. Women are paid 30-40 per cent less than men for comparable work on an average. India has a predominantly agrarian economy. Seventy per cent of Indian population living in rural area, 60 per cent is engaged in agriculture as their main source of income. It has always been India's most important economic sector. In this important agricultural sector woman plays a vital role, because it is largely a household enterprise. Women in India are major producers of food in terms of value, volume and number of hours worked. Nearly 63 per cent of all economically active men are engaged in agriculture as compared to 78 per cent of women. Almost 50 per cent of rural female workers are classified as agricultural labourers and 37 per cent as cultivators. About 70 per cent of farm work was performed by women (DFID, 2012).

About 60 per cent of agricultural operations like sowing of seeds, transportation of sapling, winnowing, storage of grain, making seedbeds, plugging and transplanting saplings, lifting weeds, harvesting, threshing husking rice etc. They do the 68.5% of total agricultural work where as men do 31.5 % of total agricultural work. Women contribution to farm work is as high as between 60 and 90 % of the total farm task performed. More than 50 percent of the labor force, and they are responsible for three-

In Uttar Pradesh, which is primarily an agrarian economy in terms of share of rural workforce in total workforce, female participation rate is very low as compared to male worker and majority of female workers (85.4 %) in rural areas are engaged in agriculture. Rural economy of Uttar Pradesh has witnessed major change in last two decades. Agriculture is growing very slowly and in many areas is almost stagnant and is becoming highly capital intensive with almost all processes being handled by machines, the latest being combined harvesters. Therefore, labour absorptive capacity of agriculture is very limited now. However the silver lining for rural economy of Uttar Pradesh is the growth of Rural Non-Farm Sector (RNFS). RNFS has witnessed phenomenal growth in last two decades. This rural non-farm sector in Uttar Pradesh was distinctly augmented in the late 1990s. It is often debated whether it is a positive economic response or a coping strategy. Nonetheless, RNFS has provided opportunities to rural workers in Uttar Pradesh. But has this come with a gender bias. How and to what extent women have benefitted from this development. In Uttar Pradesh, 52 million workers out of the total numbers of 67 million worked in rural areas have been distributed between farm and non-farm sectors. During 1993-94 to 2004-05 employment growth in agriculture was lower (1.2%) compared to non-farm employment growth (4.76%). But women did not benefit as much as men from this growth of employment in RNFS. While male activities rose considerably from 18.1 percent to 33.7 percent over the period 1972-73 to 2004-05, female participation in non-farm employment accounted for only a marginal change from 15 percent to 16.8 percent during the same period. However, it needs to be emphasized that this type of an aggregate picture for a state like Uttar Pradesh could be quite misleading, as this is the most heterogeneous state of India. Uttar Pradesh needs to be understood at a more disaggregated level. Therefore the basic aim of this study is to understand the variations in participation of women in gainful activity at state level in general and at regional level in particular (Ranjan, 2009).
It is observed that women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including main crop production, live-stock production, horticulture, post-harvesting operations, agro/social forestry, fishing etc.; it is a fact long taken for granted but ignored since ages. Women have played, and continue to play, a key role in conservation of basic life support system, such as, land, water, flora and fauna. Without total intellectual and physical participation of women, it is not possible to achieve the goals of rural uplift (Khan et al., 2012).

A general pattern in India and throughout Asia is that the poorer the area, the higher the contribution of women, largely as subsistence farmers who work in small pieces of land of less than 0.2 hectares. While the rate of feminization of agricultural labour differs across regions, it reflects common circumstances- increased employment of women on a casual basis in small unregulated workplaces - and common causes for distress migration of men for better paid work in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. These factors are often combined with the relegation of less profitable crop production to women (World Bank, 2008, Guha & Hazarika, 2006 and Gulati, 1978).

Women are generally less able than men to participate in economic opportunities because they face a work burden that men do not. In most societies, women are responsible for most of the household and child-rearing activities as well rearing of small livestock, although norms differ by culture and over time. This additional work burden is unpaid and limits women’s capacity to engage in income-earning activities, which often require a minimum fixed time before being profitable. Furthermore, the nature of tasks, such as caring for children and elderly household members, requires women to stay near the home, thus limiting options to work for a wage. Time scarcity forces many women to start-up cottage industries, such as handicrafts, which are often characterized by low returns and limited potential for expansion (Lanjouw and Lanjouw, 2001).

In addition to their role in agricultural production, women are gainfully employed in agribased allied activities like dairying, animal husbandry, poultry, goatery, rabbit
rearing, beekeeping, floriculture, horticulture, fruit preservation, post-harvest technology, value added food products etc. (NAAS, 2001).

Dairying as a profession fits very well in the framework of rural economic activity. It is compatible with inherent routine chores performed by women. Women’s involvement in dairying will not only provide them employment but will also bring in social change. A large number of low cost nutritional products grouped under infant food, health beverages, nutritious snacks, convenience foods (even for people on fast), specialty foods (for patients under stress condition) and home preserves have been developed which require simple processing methods and have the ability to fulfill the nutritional requirement of our population, especially the vulnerable segment of our society. Baby-corn, quality protein maize, nutritional grains, etc., are the gift for people under stress conditions and can be used to develop a number of products. These products are a great source of rural entrepreneurship, particularly suited to women, due to low capital requirements.

Agriculture as a source of cheap raw material cannot survive alone. There has to be some kind of processing to add value to farm produce, which will lead to better income and employment of women. Many simple farm-produce-processing technologies have been developed using minimum equipment and small investments. Women should be trained for handling these equipments / gadgets.

Mainly rural women are engaged in agricultural activities in three different ways depending on the socio-economic status of their family and regional factors. They work as paid labourers, cultivators doing labour on their own land and managers of certain aspects of agricultural production by way of labour supervision and the participation in postharvest operations. (Sharma et al, 2012)

The contribution of women to agriculture and food production is clearly significant. However, it is impossible to verify empirically the share produced by women because agriculture is usually a venture among household members and involves a range
of resources and inputs that cannot be readily assigned by gender. Women’s participation in rural labour markets show much heterogeneity at the regional level, but women are over represented in unpaid, seasonal and part-time work, and the available evidence suggests that women are often paid less than men, for the same work (FAO Report, 2011).

Women agricultural casual workers form a distinct category: they are disadvantaged in many ways; there is significant gender segmentation of operations in agriculture. While men predominate in activities such as ploughing and harvesting, women predominate in weeding, transplanting and inter-culture. The wages are uniformly lower in all female dominant operations. Overall women’s wages are estimated at 69 per cent of male wages. Moreover, women also get fewer days of work. Further, women workers rarely get the minimum wages stipulated by the government: more than 95 per cent of female agricultural wage workers received wages lower than the minimum wage (NCEUS, 2007). The deprivation of casual workers is aggravated by the fact that not only their wages are lower than wages in non-agriculture (about two-third of that level); they have also grown at a lower rate in the recent period, thereby increasing the gap. Women have been taking increasing interest in recent years in income generating activities, self-employment and entrepreneurship. This is seen in respect of all kinds of women both in urban and rural areas. Women are taking up both traditional activities (Pickle making, jam and jelly) and also non-traditional activities. It is clear that more and more women are coming forward to set up enterprises.

Generally, women who initiate micro-enterprises do it because of the factors which limit their capacity to start large ventures-low levels of self-confidence, little access to technical information, poor local market conditions, regulatory barriers and no access to capital. On the other hand, for some micro enterprises offers a meaningful source of income and satisfaction towards women.

Women who try to enter an industry, either in managerial or in entrepreneurial role are general exposed to various environmental constraints. Starting and operating
business involves considerable risk and effort on the part of the entrepreneur, particularly in the light of highest failure rate. Perhaps, this rate is even higher in the case of women entrepreneurs who have to face not only the usual business problems but also their family problems. This not only limits the scope of their contribution to the industrialization process, but also undermines the productive utilization of an available human resource, that is most needed in our country. Development as entrepreneurs is a recently discovered phenomenon for women for which they need motivation, training and family support (Yashoda and Sunitha, 2014).

Economic empowerment of women by micro-entrepreneurship led to the empowerment of women in many things such as socio-economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal right, family development, market development, community development and at last the nation development (Bravo and Baumann, 2000).

Due to gender discrimination girls are socialized differently controlled by social norms, morals, beliefs, practices without any rights and decision making powers. Because of these reasons women entrepreneurs are facing many constraints like lack of confidence, dual roles, rigid and male dominated market conditions etc.

Keeping in view the contribution of small business to employment generation, balanced regional development of the country, and promotion of exports, the Government of India’s policy thrust has been establishing, promoting and developing the small business sector, particularly the rural industries and the cottage and village industries in backward areas. Governments both at the central and state level have been actively participating in promoting self-employment opportunities in rural areas by providing assistance in respect of infrastructure, finance, technology, training, raw materials, and marketing. It addresses the dual issues of the farm technology used by women and diversification of women’s income through the promotion of entrepreneurial activities among them (Wasinik, 2005; Punia, 1991; Mathur, 2000).
The publicly-funded Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and sometimes other organizations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide training either for initiation or the refreshment of entrepreneurship, wherever the need arises. These activities include various forms of food processing and in particular, the preservation of fruits and vegetables, making of pickles, badi and papad (both made from pulses), and some variations of kitchen gardening for horticultural products. Since times immemorial, dairy is one of the activity in which women are engaged. Even within these traditional activities, the extension agencies have sometimes added new technological inputs and promoted improved practices. Some activities like bee-keeping and fishery were traditional but not necessarily in the domain of the beneficiary group under consideration whether as social groups or as gender, but are introduced as innovative measures with upgraded technology. Innovations in food products like the making of dalia (a wheat product), masalas (spice products) and khoya (a milk product) have entered the increasing list of women’s activities in tandem with the people’s dietary diversifications taking place in current times. Newer products have emerged which offers ecological and productivity benefits such as vermi-compost. Certain traditional items like potatoes, brinjals and animal feeds are now being produced by using eco-friendly methods. While the NATP list of enterprises promoted among women includes activities mainly focusing on the agro-based enterprises, that is, enterprises that either draw on inputs derived cheaply from nature or from the surrounding agricultural activities or those that find an easy market as inputs in agriculture. These enterprises enjoy intrinsic advantage by virtue of their geographical location and can, hence be identified as agglomerations within the rural economy. Many of the inputs used by the enterprises are accessible virtually free of cost and nearly all enterprises draw on some inputs that are easily accessible. They are obtained commercially at a low cost from local markets, procured from the neighbouring farms or raised on people’s own farms. In some cases, the raw materials are found freely in the village commons. For instance, dairy activities can obtain feed from agro-by-products, food processing activities use inputs from people’s own farms or even from forests, and bee-keeping enjoys a synergy with the neighbouring farms and the natural environment. Vermis and dung used for vermi-composting and materials like leaves and
reed for craft are usually easily accessible from common lands and forests, and the production of jute and coir items is based on locally raised agro-products (Ghosh, 2010).

Development of the society is directly related with the income generation capacity of its members with agriculture, as the key income generation activity on farm and home can directly affect the income of a major chunk of our population. The growth of modernization processes such as industrialization, technical change; urbanization and migration further encourage it. Income generation on small scale is the only solution to the problems of unemployment and proper utilization of both human and non-human resources and improving the living condition of the poor masses (Singh, 2009).

Rural women’s participation in agro-based activities is much more than what statistics reveals. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the work done by the women at farm and home is disguised as daily chores. Mechanization and easy availability of labour provide more time to energetic women to engage themselves in self-employment or entrepreneurial ventures. Rural women are having human and non-human resources to take up an enterprise need one an innovative mind and motivation. Income generation is the only solution to the growing employment among rural youth. It helps to generate employment for a number of people within their own social system. This is more beneficial for women in rural areas as it enables them to add to the family income while taking care of their own home and livestock centered task. Rural women possess abundant resources to take up enterprises. She has the benefit of easy availability of arm and livestock based raw materials and other resources. Hence, she can effectively undertake both the production and processing oriented enterprises. Entrepreneurship development among rural women helps to enhance their personal capabilities and increase decision-making status in the family and society as a whole. Many of the activities that have been recognized as being suitable for women are traditional in nature and have been existing before the implementation of public programmes in the form of women’s indigenous practices (Deshpande and Sethi, 2009).
JUSTIFICATION

Rural livelihood in Uttar Pradesh is mainly based on agriculture and allied fields. According to Census 2011, about eighty per cent of the population living in rural sectors earns their living from agricultural enterprises covering field crops, horticultural crops, animal husbandry, fishery, forestry and cottage industry etc. The rural population essentially implies the presence of a significant proportion of women. The women equally contribute towards livelihood like men in all the land based enterprises but unfortunately like research and extension component of rural development have passed women in matter of evolving gender based technologies and extension strategy. The present scenario at state as well as national level has emphasized to cover women section, to bring them to the mainstream of development.

During the last decade, research, extension, policy strategy and budgetary provision have been sensitive to the expansion of agribusiness for women sector. This calls for a scientific method of investigation so as to know the extent of empowerment being created among women owing to their participation in land based agri-enterprises.

There have been few attempts made in Uttar Pradesh to map the potential of rural women to make use of incentives created by state and central government. Hence, the present study is a step forward in this direction to measure the empowerment of rural women and their participation in the emerging agri-enterprises.

The findings of this study will be beneficial to formulate guideline for working in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, involving rural women, industries and farm sections, non-government organizations, agricultural departments of government and women welfare board as well as those who are concerned with the livelihood of rural women. The findings of the study also will be helpful to the Niti Ayog, NGOs, INGOs, future research scholars and those who are working in agri-based enterprises. Further, it will serve as a milestone for the study of women working in different sectors at large and rural women in particular. In this context, a research study has been designed to know the level of
empowerment of rural women through participation in agri-based enterprises with following specific objectives.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the research on “Empowerment of rural women by participation in agri-based enterprises” were as follows:

1. To find out the personal and socio-economic characteristics of rural women involved in agri-based enterprises.
2. To determine the extent of participation of rural women in different agri-based enterprises.
3. To ascertain the extent of knowledge of women about different agri-based enterprises.
4. To find out the training needs of rural women in different enterprises.
5. To measure the socio-economic empowerment of sample farm women and its association with extent of knowledge and participation.

HYPOTHESES:

1. There was no significant relationship between knowledge and participation of the respondents.
2. There was no significant association between socio-economic empowerment and knowledge as well as participation of the respondents.

LAY OUT OF THE STUDY

The study is presented in the five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction along with specific objectives and hypotheses. The second chapter is concerned with reviewing the available literature, methodological procedures have been described in the third chapter covering description of the tract, research design, sampling, variables and their empirical measurements, operationalizing various variables, tools and
techniques of data collection and analysis of data and statistical interpretation. The fourth chapter deals with results and discussion of the investigation. The results are summarized in the fifth chapter along with the recommendations made for the future research.