PREFACE

The advent of the new millennium has witnessed transformation in the economies across the developing nations. Microfinance has emerged as a profitable proposition. In India it was adopted officially in 1992 by NABARD on an experimental basis. The encouraging results led to the spread of Microfinance largely through Self Help Groups. It was accepted as a vehicle for poverty alleviation as well as empowerment.

Women in general and poor women in particular are the deprived class of the society. By extending the support of microfinance, poverty alleviation could be sought primarily. In addition it could also result in empowerment of the women. Consequently many SHGs were constituted throughout India. Millions of poor and illiterate women in India are today using small loans to shape their present as well as future. An attempt is being made to utilise entrepreneurial spirits to undertake income generating activities.

However, the pattern of working of these SHGs in rural areas could be different from that in urban areas. It was therefore felt appropriate to study the ability of SHGs to empower women from both urban and rural areas. The present research work explores a new flavour of women empowerment.

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