CHAPTER I

Introduction:

“A Woman entrepreneur is a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving self-economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life”.¹

Social and economic development of women is necessary for overall economic development of any society or a country. Entrepreneurship is the conditions of cleverness which every woman has in her but has not been taking advantage of it in which it might be. Obliged to transformation in our traditions, individuals are usually becoming more accommodating of women in head roles, even if there is some exclusion.

A woman entrepreneur has to perform multiple functions such as establishing the enterprise, which includes: idea generation, screening, identifying objectives and their purpose, preparing the venture, product analysis, development of suitable paper work and forms, concluding official deeds, mobilizing funds, employing labour, obtaining materials and machines and setting up business operations. Over the decades, literate women have grown more
ambitious, gained experience and become more proficient in basic skills as well as self-assurance. A strong urge to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women because they are competent in contributing values in both family and social life.

Recent researches indicate that several women are becoming entrepreneurs, especially middle-class women, due to the influence of changing values in society which can have a pull-push effect. Under the pull-factors, women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a brave act because they believe an advice to do rather novel and to have an self-governing profession. Beneath the push - feature women catch up trade venture to get over financial difficulties when responsibility is thrust on them due to family circumstances. As such, women both in rural and urban sectors, and specially belonging to the middle classes, are turning towards entrepreneurship to fulfil their aspirations both economically and socially.

Traditionally, while women from the upper and middle classes tended to confine themselves to the role of keeping house and rearing children, those from the economically lower classes have worked on farms and also taken to other occupations involving physical work. As a result of the increase in women’s education, social and occupational mobility, industrialization and urbanization,
there have been changes in value systems and women have taken up a number of vocations that might previously have been held only by men.

The Austrian-American economist Joseph A. Schumpeter stressed “the role of the entrepreneur as an innovator, the person who develops a new product, a new market, or a new means of production”.

Women Entrepreneurship is a performance of trade possession and production establishment that authorizes women economically raise their financial strength as well as place in society. Women-entrepreneurs have been building a substantial blow for the most part of the segments in the economy.

**Importance of Entrepreneurship in Development:**

The centrally planned economies all over the world are becoming increasingly liberalised economies. The economic liberalisation implies the progressive transfer of economic and social activities to private hands. The government will play the role of the enabler and facilitator providing infrastructural facilities appropriate to the section, region and production line. The advantages of these facilities are taken by those who have the entrepreneurial potentiality and achievement propensity.
Profile of Women Entrepreneur:

The modern Indian women especially in the cities are exposed to education and training. In fact, most city-bred parents give the girl child education on par with their sons. This has helped the urban Indian woman to do all work which was once regarded as the prerogative of men. Over the time the learned women have turned out to be determined, gained knowledge and basic skills, capability and self-assertion.

Women are goal-oriented, supple, broad-minded, imaginative, practically keen, and active, because of that, the organization approach varies from their male counterpart. They are through and great natural directors as they administer their house. They can at the same time do more than one job at a occasion and have excellent management proficiency. They commonly consider of venturing a business once their children are grown-up and family duties gets lessen.

Entrepreneurship among women:

The choice to start or prefer an enterprise is in most cases taken by the family. Women have given to many entrepreneurial decisions, as they are no less well awarded than men with those qualities that make a good entrepreneur. Prospective women entrepreneurs hail from the rural, urban or tribal areas. The entrepreneurial opportunities available to them will depend on the region. In promoting entrepreneurship amongst women, their men folk are also to be influenced in order to provide support to the venture.
Role of women in social and economic development

In traditional society, the role of the woman was obviously partial to the family. Since she was the possessor of children, she was completely engaged with her responsibilities as a mother and home maker. This was no small achievement, since the traditional household may be described as both a production and consumption unit. The man’s responsibility was to provide the household with the raw materials which were then converted by the woman into consumable products or objects, often under precarious housing conditions and using rudimentary methods and tools.

Several features such as urbanization, scientific development, or the edification of women, etc. have strongly transformed these regular conditions even in a developing nation comparable to India. Slowly breaching with the metropolitan state and leaving overturn, the woman’s role at home has turn into lighter due to systematic progress. The making side of women’s career at house is progressively lessening leading to a cutback of the woman’s role at home⁶.

Mechanization and automation of many production processes have reduced the importance of man’s physical ability over women for performing physically demanding work. Further, it has not been scientifically proven that a woman cannot be compared with a man either in skill or psychological capabilities. This has facilitated women to obtain benefit of the industrialization
development. Women recognize more and more obviously that if they actually want to donate to the welfare of their family and society, the most successful way is to go outside the home and make money. Entrepreneurship is an economic activity and can influence the economic scenario in a substantial measure.

Women are key drivers of economic growth; Hilary Clinton says that “Investing on women is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do”.

**Employment in unorganized sector**

Ninety four per cent of women workers are engaged in the unorganized sector of the economy, 81.4% in agriculture and the rest in non-agricultural occupations.

The non-agricultural sectors that employ women are construction, mining, quarrying, livestock forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, transport, storage, communication, manufacturing industry (beedies, matches, tailoring and readymade garments) and some services (domestic servants, sweepers, and scavengers).

The problems encountered by those women are innumerable, the predominant ones being-wage discrimination, of employment, meager wages, etc. In this sector, the wages of women are uniformly lower than those of men.
Women entrepreneurs represent a cluster of women who have wrecked away from the compressed path and are searching new panoramas of economic contribution. They have lengthy stories of tryouts and misfortunes. Their task has been filled of tackle issues. They have had to come across community discrimination and condemnation, family conflict and social limitations before finding themselves as independent entrepreneurs. Women are gifted with large strength, imagination, novelty and those who are enthusiastic on achieving on their own are taking on the challenging role of entrepreneurship.

Enterprises started by women are no longer confined to conventional fields like embroidery, knitting and tailoring. They are venturing into new fields like electronics, pharmaceuticals, engineering and services. These women are mostly urban, appropriately educated, sometimes having specialized skills and are also equipping themselves with some training and financial support.

Human resources, both men and women, of working age comprise the main power of economic development of a nation. Women form a vital segment if the labour force and the economic role played by them cannot be broken up from the framework of development, as the role and degree of assimilation of women in economic development is always a sign of women's economic independence and social status. The government is therefore making planned efforts to hammer the spirit of enterprise among women through many motivation and
developmental programmes. These efforts are predictable to achieve good results with many more women taking to entrepreneurship.\(^8\)

While reviewing identifying and recommending enterprises, the location, qualification, skill and market for the products and services to be provided by the women entrepreneurs need to be kept in view. For instance, enterprise like dairy, poultry, processing food products, vegetable-vending, weaving, making of perfume sticks, may suit the rural entrepreneur. Similarly, radio-repair, dry-washing, watch repair, running commercial libraries, making ready-made garments, toys, hand-printing etc., could be taken up by the women in the urban area. Some activities involving manufacture, processing and servicing could be taken up either in the rural or urban areas.
### Table 1.1

Details of Women Entrepreneurs Against Women Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>% of women population</th>
<th>% of literate women population</th>
<th>% of women Entrepreneurs</th>
<th>% of Enterprises managed by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ariyalur</td>
<td>50.38</td>
<td>43.86</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
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<td>47.94</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>50.02</td>
<td>47.05</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cuddalore</td>
<td>49.57</td>
<td>46.44</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>5.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dharmapuri</td>
<td>48.60</td>
<td>45.18</td>
<td>15.15</td>
<td>15.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>49.94</td>
<td>44.85</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Erode</td>
<td>49.80</td>
<td>44.49</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kancheepuram</td>
<td>49.62</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kanyakumari</td>
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<td>49.45</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Karur</td>
<td>50.36</td>
<td>44.62</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>11.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Krishnagiri</td>
<td>48.86</td>
<td>43.86</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
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<td>4.41</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nagapattinam</td>
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<td>47.09</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Namakkal</td>
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<td>44.33</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>43.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nilgiris</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>47.42</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Perambalur</td>
<td>50.14</td>
<td>44.62</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>13.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>M:F Ratio</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pudukottai</td>
<td>50.37</td>
<td>45.17</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>17.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
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<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Salem</td>
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<td>43.72</td>
<td>11.22</td>
<td>9.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sivagiri</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>45.05</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Thanjaur</td>
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<td>47.18</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>14.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Theni</td>
<td>49.75</td>
<td>44.81</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>41.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Tirunelveli</td>
<td>50.58</td>
<td>46.74</td>
<td>10.91</td>
<td>9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Thiruvallur</td>
<td>49.62</td>
<td>46.44</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>24.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Thiruvanur</td>
<td>50.50</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>14.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Thoothukudi</td>
<td>50.05</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td>10.94</td>
<td>12.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tirupur</td>
<td>49.70</td>
<td>45.37</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>15.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Tiruchirapalli</td>
<td>50.33</td>
<td>46.67</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>6.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Vellore</td>
<td>50.11</td>
<td>45.72</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>8.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Vilupuram</td>
<td>49.61</td>
<td>43.84</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Virudhunagar</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>45.59</td>
<td>10.93</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>49.87</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>16.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2011 census report and 2001 census report compiled from secondary data*

Entrepreneurship development and income generating activities are a feasible solution for empowering women. It generates income and also provides flexible working hours according to the needs of home makers. Economic
independence is the need of the hour. Participation in income generating activities helps in overall empowerment of women. Empowering women through education, ideas, consciousness, mobilization and participatory approach can enable them to take their own decisions, make them self-reliant and self-confident.

**Women entrepreneurs in the world scenario:**

In advanced countries such as the U.S.A, there has not only been a substantial increase in employment of women but the last decade has seen the number of self employed women increase by 69% as compared to a 13% increase in the number of self-employed men. According to the U.S. Department of Labour figures, there was a 24.9% increase in manufacturing companies owned by women, while the amount of American made goods has been declining. In India the trend has been similar, but at a slower pace.9

Over the past few decades, women have made great in very many different and varied fields of work. They have held the highest offices in several countries and are serving with dignity and great success. They persevere in the roughest and most demanding professions and have achieved immense results which have amazed the whole world. Women entrepreneurs are seen as a vital untapped source of economic growth as many of them have been fortunate enough to have the right opportunities to launch their own enterprise.
Table 1.2

The gender GEDI of Women Entrepreneurship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5</th>
<th>Bottom 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} - US</td>
<td>26\textsuperscript{th} India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} – Australia</td>
<td>27\textsuperscript{th} &amp; 28\textsuperscript{th} Uganda &amp; Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} – Sweden</td>
<td>29\textsuperscript{th} Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} &amp; 5\textsuperscript{th} - France and Germany</td>
<td>30\textsuperscript{th} Pakistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GEDI index

Table 1.2 shows that the Global Entrepreneurship Development Index ranks 30 countries on the basis of how they foster women entrepreneurship, in this it is obvious that India lies on the bottom 5, whereas US ranks in the first of top 5

Table 1.3

Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs in India on the basis of Nature of Enterprise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of activity</th>
<th>Number of Enterprises owned by women (in Thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>55.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>46.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairing and Maintenance</td>
<td>6.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: All India Census of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, 2006-07 Registered Sector.
Women entrepreneurs in India:

The Government of India defined an enterprise run by women as “an SSI or a SSSBE managed by one or more women entrepreneurs in a proprietary concerns, or in which she/they individually or jointly have capital of not less than 51 percent as partners/shareholders/Directors of private Limited company/members of cooperative society and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women.”

Modern Indian women, especially in the cities, are much more likely to improved access to education and training. In fact, most city based parents give their daughters an education on a par with their sons. This has enabled urban Indian woman to carry out work which was once regarded as the prerogative of men. Experience has shown that in jobs which were hitherto the monopoly of men, women have excelled if not outshone the men. Over the years educated women have become ambitious, and have acquired experience and basic skills, as well as increased their competency and self confidence\textsuperscript{10}. 

Table No. 1.4

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of registered units</th>
<th>No. of Women Entrepreneurs</th>
<th>% of Women Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>9618</td>
<td>2930</td>
<td>30.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>7980</td>
<td>3180</td>
<td>39.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>5487</td>
<td>2135</td>
<td>39.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>4791</td>
<td>1618</td>
<td>33.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>4339</td>
<td>1394</td>
<td>32.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>3872</td>
<td>1538</td>
<td>39.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>3822</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>26.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>2967</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>28.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other states and Union Territories</td>
<td>14576</td>
<td>4185</td>
<td>28.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Economic Survey 2008-09*

Women rub shoulders with men in boardrooms and continue to prove that they can be as successful as men. Women, who constitute half the population, will be a strong resource for sustained socio-economic development.

The major qualities of successful entrepreneurs are: hard work, tolerance, joint effort, and good public relationships. A component of risk-taking and an innovative approach are also necessary to meet the requirements of clients. The support given from the family, friends including financial support are also factors that contribute towards successful outcomes.
Recent research indicates that many women are becoming entrepreneurs, especially middle class women, due to the influence of changing values in society which can have a pull-push effect. Under the pull-factors, women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge because they feel an urge to do something new and to have an independent occupation. Under the push-factors women take up business enterprises to get over financial difficulties when responsibility is thrust on them due to family circumstances. As such, women both in rural and urban sectors, and specially belonging to the middle classes, are turning towards entrepreneurship to fulfil their aspirations both economically and socially.\textsuperscript{11}

**Women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu**

The female entrepreneur tends to come from middle class parents where at least one parent is self employed. She has a close relationship with her father and, after obtaining a graduate degree in some area of liberal arts, gets married and has children. It is when the children are somewhat self-sufficient that she starts her first entrepreneurial venture in her late thirties or early forties. Her biggest problem is the lack of sufficient business training, and this deficiency is most obvious in terms of her knowledge and skills in managing the financial side of the business.
Factors for successful women entrepreneurship:

The success of an entrepreneur depends on various factors. These include: the co-operation she gets from her family members, the availability of skilled and trained workers, the demand for the product they produce, competition faced and many more. Thus the success of the business can also depend on the educational level of the woman which will influence the type of work she is engaged in. Better educated women tend to handle their work more scientifically and systematically. Education helps in the management of resources, planning, dealing with employees, searching for an appropriate market for their product, budgeting and so on. Another factor is the level of training obtained by the entrepreneur and her employees which influences the quality of the product they produce and the time taken to produce it. Trained workers are more skilled and possess the detailed knowledge of the work they do, and they tend to work faster. Another factor is age. Younger entrepreneurs may be more energetic and active. They may be able to handle more stressful conditions. On the other hand older entrepreneurs possess more experience of work as well as life. Thus, they can make better decisions after analysis. Older entrepreneurs may be more resourceful than younger ones. The type of family of the women entrepreneurs also has a significant effect on their work. Those living in joint families are more liable and accountable to work. On the other hand, women from nuclear families have more
freedom to set their own schedules and priorities. Another important factor that influences the business of women is their marital status. Unmarried women may have more freedom; but married women have more resources, while divorced women may be emotionally weak. The marital status influences the attitude and style of work they adopt.\(^{12}\)

**Financial Institutions Assisting Women Entrepreneurship in India**

For the past several years, financial institutions have been playing a pivotal role in giving financial assistance and consultancy services to women entrepreneurs. These institutions include: i) National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), ii) All-India Development Banks (AIDBs), viz. IDBI, IFCI, ICICI, IIBI, IDFC and SIDBI, iii) Specialised Financial Institutions (SFIs), viz. Exim Bank and NABARD, iv) Investment Institutions, viz. LIC, GIC, NIC, NIA, OIC, UII and UTI, v) Regional/ State-Level Institutions, viz. NEDFI, SIDCs and SFCs, vi) Commercial Banks, vii) Co-operative Banks, etc.\(^{13}\)

**Importance of women entrepreneurs:**

Women who comprise half of human resources have been identified as key agents of sustainable development, and women’s equality is central to a more holistic approach towards stabilizing new patterns and processes of developments.

Women perform an important role in building the real backbone of the Indian Economy. Women’s domestic talents, for instance people and time
management and household budgeting, are directly transferable into a business situation. Women have the ability to balance different tasks and priorities and learn to obtain satisfaction and achieve success in and from building relationships with customers and employees, in having control of their own destiny and in doing something that they deem to be worthwhile. A successful woman is likely to grasp small opportunities that are often the beginning of great enterprises.

Entrepreneurship will become a core skill for women when they find a way to exploit opportunities emerging from science and technology, culture and communications. Until these opportunities are exploited, women may feel that their task is impossible. When they have the courage and belief to make use of these opportunities, their chance of success is much greater, and this is what entrepreneurship is all about – taking risks and doing what they have previously believed to be impossible.\(^\text{14}\).

Innovation, everyday entrepreneurship, and creativity are the aims of collaboration. Pushing a new enterprise past all the barriers to success takes skills that can be learnt, but it also takes an obstinate inner passion bordering on monomania. These combinations are also referred to as leadership.

Women not only need access to productive resources, they need to be able to use those resources efficiently. This requires well-focused training tailored to women's needs, education, access to markets and market information, and
production support services such as extension. Rural financial services should be part of a package that includes capacity building, and must be based on an understanding of women's needs and demands.

King Solomon in the Holy Bible says that a woman is like the merchants' ships; she brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is yet night, and gives meat to her household and a portion to her maidens. She considers a field, and buys it: with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good: her candle goes not out by night. She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple^{15}.

It is said that women entrepreneur is a person who is an enterprising individual with an eye for opportunities and an uncanny vision, Commercial acumen, with tremendous perseverance and above all a person who is willing to take risk with the unknown because of the adventures spirit she possesses.

In the words of Former President APJ Abdul Kalam "Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their
thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation."

Women Entrepreneurs denies the role of their personal needs to participate and be accepted economically independent. Strong desire to do something positive is a high-quality women entrepreneur who contributes to the position values of family and social life

**Significant contributions:**

There is a wide range of significant contributions that women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship can make to the development process.

These include the following:

1. Entrepreneurship raises productivity through technical and other forms of innovation
2. Entrepreneurship is a powerful tool of job creation
3. Entrepreneurship facilitates the transfer of technology
4. Women Entrepreneurs play a strategic role in commercializing new inventions and products.
5. Women Entrepreneurs play a critical role in the restructuring and transformation of the economy
6. Women Entrepreneurs help reduce the ossification of established social institutions and the concentration of economic power.

7. Women Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial behaviour can breathe vitality into the life of large corporations and governmental enterprises.

8. Women Entrepreneurs make markets more competitive and thereby reduce both static and dynamic market inefficiencies.

9. Micro-entrepreneurs operating in the informal sector circumvent established government authority when governments and their programs inhibit economic development.

10. Women Entrepreneurs stimulate a redistribution of wealth, income and political power within societies in ways that are economically positive and without being politically disruptive.

11. Women Entrepreneurs improve the social welfare of a country by harnessing dormant previously overlooked talent.

12. Women Entrepreneurs create new markets and facilitate expansion into international markets.

Women Entrepreneurs should have the spirit of ‘enterprise’ **Virtues:** human skills, business skills, professional skills, legal skills, fund mobilizing skills, technical skills, behavior or liaison skills and the art of handling the existing government and financial institutions.
Successful women entrepreneurs have revealed that women possess a futuristic outlook and the capacity to nurture new enterprises. Certain studies, relate to women who are not just self-employed, but have created job for others, the principle elements that highlight are the struggle involved in the planning and execution of projects, the frustrations to which they are subjected to, the attitudinal and procedural problems they had to encounter and so on.

**Functions of women entrepreneurs:**

According to Fredrick Harbison, women entrepreneurs have five functions

1. Exploring the prospects of starting new enterprises.

2. Taking risks and handling uncertainties, both economic and non-economic.

3. Introducing innovations or imitating on successful ones that is already in existence.

4. Co-ordination, administration and control

5. Supervision and providing leadership in all aspects of the business.

Risk taking and innovations are paramount for establishing or diversifying an enterprise. Co-ordination and supervision become increasingly important in improving the efficiency in the operation of the undertaking. 17.
Problems of women entrepreneurs:

The greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. Male chauvinism is the order of the day. Therefore, women have a tendency to keep away from high flying economic activities which are regarded as the preserve of men. Even the financial institutions are sceptical of their entrepreneurial abilities to risk their funds on them. They scare the women applicants with their greater and unwarranted inquisitiveness and put questions, sometimes embarrassing and sometimes incomprehensible, often insisting on stiffer if not more unreasonable security considerations. The social setting is still conducive as the men folk are less understanding and less co-operative, if not antagonistic, to such enterprise by women.

Women in non-urban areas have to suffer still further. They have to face not only resistance from men but also of elderly women who have a belief that they are somehow inferior to men. In rural India, joint families are still the order of the day. The overbearing presence of elders restrains even young men from being innovative, so one can imagine how much opposition a young girl may have if she wishes to become economically independent.18

Need for the study:

Women are increasingly seeking entrepreneurship as an avenue for economic growth. With the government and the semi government organisations
playing an important role in mobilising women to become entrepreneurs through different programmes, the number of women entrepreneurs is increasing and is expected to increase much more.

Entrepreneurship itself is only recently being recognised as a fully-fledged profession, and the entrepreneurship of women is an even newer phenomenon. Many research studies had been done on entrepreneurship, but very little has been done on women as entrepreneurs.

**Scope of the study:**

Women managing any type of business activity, be it manufacturing, trading or service were targeted for the study. As the study was proposed on women entrepreneurs, only women enterprises, that require managerial and entrepreneurial abilities on the part of the women were considered. It studies the reason which induces the women entrepreneurs to take up entrepreneurship and the constraints of women entrepreneurship. The present study has been made to analyse the performance of the women entrepreneurs in Tirunelveli. The study was proposed on operating women entrepreneurs to be able to assess their performance; it is assumed that a modest attempt in a systematic way for studying the different aspects of women entrepreneurship in Tirunelveli District will be useful. The researcher being woman has also evinced special interest for this study.
Limitations of the study:

There were constraints of time which resulted in limiting the extent of the study. The women entrepreneurs were personally and individually contacted by the researcher. It was a herculean task to make them enthusiastic to answer the questions in the questionnaire. The women entrepreneurs expressed reluctance for several questions. However, with great difficulty the responses could be acquired. The researcher feels that the study is an exhaustive one covering various facets of women entrepreneurship in Tirunelveli District. Above and beyond, there is possibility for further research in the area with more emphasis on each aspect of women entrepreneurship in Tirunelveli District.

Statement of the problem:

The role of women entrepreneurs in the economic and social development of the country is well established, it is often driven by individual creativity and innovation. The enterprises are highly heterogeneous in term of size, variety of products and the level of technology used. Besides the growth potential of the sector and its crucial role in the manufacturing and value chains, the heterogeneity and the unorganized nature are important aspects that need to be factored into policy making and programme implementation.
Though women have played a key role in the Indian society, their entrepreneurial ability has not been properly tapped due to the lower status of women in the society. At present, women involvement in economic activities is marked by a low work participation rate, excessive concentration in the unorganized sector and employment in less skilled jobs. This is mainly because of the problems associated with their gender roles.

Today’s most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs are women, a women entrepreneur is expected to perform different roles such as wife, mother, daughter-in-law and business woman. Women’s socio-economic empowerment is a key in achieving overall development of society, women entrepreneurs in India have to cope with various socio-economic problems. Society’s attitude and support are the major determinants of women’s entrepreneurial success.

Promotion of women entrepreneurship ensures economic independence. Social emancipation of women gains social status. It makes women conscious of their rights and gains equal status. It creates more respect in the family and gives self prestige, avoids gender bias and it eliminates dowry deaths it promotes leadership qualities among women and swells the family income.

Despite all social hurdles; many women have been successful in their work, and the present study undertaken by the researcher is to access how better
are the socio-economic conditions of women entrepreneurs have been improved in Tirunelveli District.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The specific objectives of the study are

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of the sample self-employed women entrepreneurs in the study area.
2. To study the factors influencing them to start enterprise.
3. To assess the impact of enterprise on income, expenditure, savings, employment, assets and indebtedness of the sample self-employed women entrepreneurs.
4. To measure the income inequality among the respondents before and after starting enterprises.
5. To evaluate the impact of enterprises on social and economic empowerment of women.
6. To study the problems faced by the self-employed women entrepreneurs.
7. To offer suitable suggestions for the improvement of enterprises.
The scheme of work

The study entitled with “Development of Self-Employed Women Entrepreneurs as Socio-Economic Change Agents in Tirunelveli District” has been divided into seven chapters.

Chapter I briefs the introduction of the thesis with the nature, importance of women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship among women, role of women entrepreneurs in socio-economic development, problems of women entrepreneurs, their capacities, and statement of the problem, objectives, limitations and scheme of work.

Chapter II covers the various concepts used and the review of related literature.

Chapter III explains the methodology adopted and explains the profile of study area.

Chapter IV analyses the socio-economic features and motivational factors of women entrepreneurs as a change agents using statistical tools

Chapter V examines the impact of enterprise on income, expenditure, savings, employment, assets and indebtedness and measures the income inequality of the sample self employed women entrepreneurs.

Chapter VI presents the impact of self employed women entrepreneurs on individuality development, the problems faced by women entrepreneurs and the summary of findings with suggestions and conclusion
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