PREFACE

Women represent half the resources and half the potential in all the societies. There are 68.7 millions schedule tribe people in India, constituting 8.2% of the India’s population. In Mândla District, tribal population constitutes 57.20% of the total District Population. The District is not a homogeneous due to mountainous terrains and combined action of major river and it’s tributaries. It is surrounded by Maikal and Satpura ranges. Concentration of tribal is mostly found in the forest tracts of the District. Tribal Women of the district suffers from various forms of exploitations, social discrimination, political and cultural isolations. The major problems among them are low level of literacy, abject poverty, indebtedness, poor health, exploitation, domestic violence, son-preference and low involvement including decisions in domestic and village problems. Empowerment of Women is essential for development and democracy as women development is directly related to national development. The development of any society is directly proportional to health and education of the people.

Government introduced several measures including legal protection to uplift the tribal in general and tribal women in specific with an objective to bring the tribal community including women, in the main stream of the society but majority of them continued to be in backwardness and still surviving below poverty line. In the year 1999 the Government of Madhya Pradesh launched Swarn Jyanti Gramin Rojgar Yojna in the district, in which concept of “Self Help Group” was started in rural areas. In Mândla district, the concept of SHG was started in the name of “SWAYAM PRABHA ABHIYAN” meaning with slogan “APUN KE TAKAT APAN”. The programme had inbuilt three strategies- education, employment and health, to empower the tribal women for sustainable involvement in all walks of life. An attempt to study the impact of SHG on the empowerment of the tribal women in micro level (district level) would not only be interesting but also be useful for evolving factors including positive and negative aspects (tribal women) encountering in daily life, initiating more empowerment process in social, economic and political field for equal opportunity. The objectives of the study has been to provide strong field
level results to Planners, Sociologist and Politicians in the State and Country, who are engaged in bringing tribal women in the development process.

The study is based on primary and secondary data, the collection of which have not been an easy task. The study is restricted to socio-economic and political problems of the tribal women in the rural areas and factors which have come in the way of their development.

Chapter I of the thesis contains the introduction part of the status of tribal women in global perspective and Mandla District in particular with current scenario of process of empowerment of women. The second chapter of the thesis deals with physical and demographic features of the district. Chapter III describes the concept of Self Help group (SWAYAM PRABHA ABHIYAN) in the district. The five years progress of the SWAYAM PRABHA ABHIYAN has been presented.

Chapter IV contains a critical review of literature of various past research studies made on empowerment of women and self help groups. The chapter has been presented under two heads viz., empowerment and need for self help group and studied made on impact of self help groups. Chapter V has been devoted to presentation of the data collected for the study and findings of the study along with detailed description, observation and conclusion. Wherever necessary, correlation of findings of analyzed data with the trends of secondary data and field observation have also been made. In chapter VI conclusion has been given the scholars feels that empowerment of tribal women can be achieved only by strong will of the government to implement the various legislature related to them along with education. Tribal women may be empowered with knowledge, skill, self confidence, to participate fully in the development process.