

## **PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Development is a continuously changing concept. It is neither static nor uniform. Its nature constantly changes with the change of time. The nature of development as seen in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century greatly differs from that seen in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, history of development in modern time means national development and nation building.

It has been generally observed that irrespective of rich or poor, women in urban or rural areas were and are exploited in many aspects in their everyday lives from ancient to this day. The socio-economic condition of the poor women particularly in village is very bad. Therefore, it is very relevant and significant for an all-round development of women to upgrade their socio-economic conditions, particularly poor rural women by way of imparting proper education and sensitizing them to know of their hidden power within themselves, through the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and empowering them.

The idea of women empowerment gained ground in the Third International Women's Conference held at Nairobi in 1985 that defined "Women empowerment as a redistribution of social power and control resources in favour of women". The government of India declared 2001, the year of Women's Empowerment and the National Policy for the Empowerment of women came into force in the same year. Women empowerment is also defined as a change in the context of women's life that will enable them to have increased capacity for leading a satisfied human life.

The Government of India since independence had experimented with numerous self-employment programme. After modification of those programme, they were consolidated and integrated into Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY) in April – 1999. Again, after removing certain limitations of the SGSY, the government of India approved restructuring of SGSY as the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and launched the same during the period of Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) in the month of June – 2011 for the socio-economic development and empowerment of poor rural women through SHGs under the National Rural Livelihood Mission.

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