INTRODUCTION

After independence in 1947, there has been a considerable increase in the number of MSMEs and the range and total value of their production. MSMEs offer some distinct advantages like immediate large scale employment, equitable distribution of income and effective utilization of unused capital and skills.

MSMEs provide livelihood, check rural-urban migration, generate export earnings and touch upon the lives of most marginalized people.

The role of MSMEs in the economic and social development of India is well established. This sector is a nursery of entrepreneurship, often driven by individual creativity and innovation.

MSMEs contribute significantly to the strengthening of the industrial structure. They serve as seed-beds of entrepreneurship. They serve the nation not only by their output of goods but also by functioning as a nursery of entrepreneurial and managerial talent.

Entrepreneurship is one of the leading promoters of economic development and creation of new working places through starting new companies, working places and opening of new markets.

Entrepreneurship in educative meaning represents a source of new skills, knowledge, experiences and possibilities. Entrepreneurship is especially emphasized in current conditions of global economic crisis which has caused great unemployment on the global level where entrepreneurship is observed as one of the ways of its reduction.

Women entrepreneurship was not foreseen much on the psychosocial angles especially in developing countries like India. In India, Women Entrepreneurship started in the late 1980s – initially at a slow pace and then gradually gaining momentum. However they are still stagnant with their percentage of contribution in enterprises. The number of successful women entrepreneurs is numerically less in comparison to the hefty population of the country. The question arises as to why the situation has remained the same for so long despite all government policies, financial schemes, facilitating organizations and training schemes. Indian Women who are equally talented and potentially capable have still not been perceived as the significant agent of entrepreneurship and contributors to the economic growth of the country.
Investigation about the flaws associated with perception became the main focus of the present study. This made the researcher inquisitive about the probable factors associated with this perception rather negative perception among women entrepreneurs. The research therefore was based on an in depth study of the perception of male and female entrepreneurs and its impact on success, technological advancement, innovation and export competitiveness of the entrepreneurs.

In the modern times when the external environment is conducive for promoting entrepreneurship, the success ratio of male and female entrepreneurs is significantly different. The question that arises is: Why does the success rate differ among male and female entrepreneurs despite the same external environment? Is it because of the difference in the entrepreneurial characteristics of male and female entrepreneurs?

Entrepreneurial Characteristics are formed through a combination of various social, economic and psychological factors to which the person becomes subjected right from childhood. These factors reinforce in him the urge to excel and seek satisfaction in creating his own enterprise. Something more than mere academic excellence is a pre – requisite for becoming a successful entrepreneur.

**THE PROBLEM**

In the modern times the small scale industries sector has become a big contributor in the Gross Domestic Product of the country. The Government has launched several schemes in order to promote entrepreneurship in the MSME sector. Still the development is not as high as one expects in terms of employment and growth. The pace of entrepreneurship is slow. The awareness regarding the schemes is not satisfactory. Therefore, the question arises about understanding the perception towards entrepreneurship in the male and female entrepreneurs.

**THE NEED**

The Micro, Small and Medium enterprises are the harbingers of growth and development. They promote entrepreneurship and help to bring out the entrepreneurial talent among the male and female entrepreneurs. Still there is a huge difference in the perception of male and female entrepreneurs towards entrepreneurship in India. Hence there is a need to study the factors that generate a difference in the perception towards entrepreneurship among males and females.
**SCOPE**

In order to select the sample units the prime task before the researcher was to select the areas which would be representative of entrepreneurship in MSMEs. With this objective the researcher selected the areas of Borivali, Kandivali and Malad in the western suburbs of Mumbai.

The study is limited to Mumbai. It will help us in understanding the factors that lead to the success of these entrepreneurs. It will also focus on whether there are perceptional differences amongst male and female entrepreneurs due to differences in social factors.