

## Preface

### The Brown Beauties of NSW: Indian Women in Australia Series

*Issue No.1*



Recently, at a community forum, while sharing our research findings about the experiences of Indian community in Australia, **I was asked by an eminent Australian as to how to ensure and encourage more migrant Indian women to participate in activities, get involved in decision making at various levels and contribute to their adopted country's economic and social development.** It made me ponder as to how much is known about the potential of this latent force of over 130, 000 women of Indian origin living in Australia, majority in their prime working age and the number which is growing at a rapid pace (DIBP, 2013) .

***The Brown Beauties of NSW*** thus came into being- the first publication in the *Indian Women in Australia series*. It is a major compilation of key socio-economic statistics related to Indian women residing in the state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia. Gleaned from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, it covers data from Local Government areas (LGAs) of the Sydney region and Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (CEDs). This publication is unique in itself as it provides a ready source of detailed information about Indian migrant women living in the state of New South Wales (NSW). It portrays a picture based on facts and highlights the potential of this somewhat latent force who are **not only a ready pool of talent but also possible creators of opportunities**. It is a handy source of information for policy makers, business strategist, product marketers, academicians, scholars or anyone interested in the subject.

It is a well-known fact that economic integration is a key indicator of successful migration and also a measure of equity and opportunity (UN 2005:64). Given the fact that majority of Indian women in NSW are qualified, English speaking and socially stable (Mukherjee, 2013) yet one in

four women of Indian origin residing here has 'nil or negative' income and a large number of them are economically dependent on their male counterparts (ABS, 2011), can this ready pool of talent be further harnessed and utilised? How could the long-term economic well-being of one of the fastest growing women migrants in the state be secured? What can be done to convert what some said fiscal fantasy to feasible opportunity?

**How about setting cottage industry**, for instance, to unleash their potential while facilitating economic independence? Cottage industries are small scale businesses usually carried on at home involving very less number of people in production or manufacturing of goods or indigenous products that include art/crafts, knitwear, edible items, many precious items like jewellery, ornaments, dress designs etc. Back in India such cottage industry products have attracted foreign traders and merchants from time immemorial and helped establish trade relations with foreign counterparts (Swami, n.d). Even many Indian women residing in NSW practice such cottage industry skills mostly as their hobby or as part of their household chores. Such activities if given an entrepreneurial shape will definitely be beneficial for the broader Australian economy and while facilitating exchange of culture and ideas.

***The Brown Beauties of NSW*** is one of our efforts to highlight possibilities of utilizing such untapped skills of Indian migrant women living in the state. There is more to the courage and latent potential of this pool of people yet to be unleashed- worth a try!

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