CONCLUSION

Feminism is the result of the socio-economic revolution in the world. Though the term has many meanings, generally it is a set of ideas or a series of political movement. Its analysis is based on some adopted theories such as gender, place, power, sex, language and literature. Kālidāsa’s works flourished in an entirely different context of ancient India. Therefore, the modern feminist theories as such do not correspond to his works. Apart from the difference in land, this difference in age, concepts, values, rituals, believes etc also influence the experience. So reading Kālidāsa’s works, based on the feminist theories may be strange to a conventional reader. While doing so, there were many constraints, which made the study not an easy one. These include vastness of the topic, limitation in applying a cross cultural theory to an Indian context, date of the author and difficulties faced due to lack of similar studies.

Feminism is not a single theory, but theories as it differ, according to land, experience, and the term ‘feminism’ has many different uses and its meanings are often contested. The feminst movement emerged to resist the injustices against women. As there is no consensus on the exact list of these injustices, many thories developed according to the situation, which has more or less same relevance and as such the topic has no uniformity in approach. As the
topic is vast, any study based on that becomes a difficult task. Similarly, the works of Kālidāsa are also vast in volume and number. Vastness reminds the words of Kālidāsa:

\[
Kva sūryaprabhavo van śaḥ kva cālpaviśayā matiḥ,
tītṛṣurduṣtaram mohādūṣdupenaśmi sāgaram.
Mandaḥ kaviyāśahprārthī gamisyāmyupahāsyatām,
prāṁśulabhye phale lobhādudbāhuriva vāmanah.
\]

Each work of Kālidāsa or even a character in his works contains scope for a study separately. Then the study of his works as a whole within the ambit of a thesis is bound to be considered. There are many characters remaining unnoticed by readers or critics and not coming to the light still. However, earnest effort has been made to incorporate as many characters as possible, which seems to be relevant in the study.

The age of the author has also become problematic in this study. No concrete evidence is available as to the time and history of the poet. But collateral and internal evidences reveal that Kālidāsa is a writer who lived centuries ago. As such, the context of Kālidāsa’s writings, values and conditions of the society, the human relationship etc. are not imaginable to a present reader. The study without loosing the spirit of the work is also not an easy one.

The application of a modern foreign theory to ancient Indian works also causes much difficulty. When, the application of such

\[^1\text{RV. I. 2-3}\]
modern theories, even to the current situation is difficult, the limitations caused while reading ancient texts is imaginable. Feminist theories of place, power, subject, sex, language etc. are not applicable as such in the works of Kālidāsa as the topics dealt within the theory do not correspond correctly to them. Kālidāsa’s works belonged to an ancient India in an entirely different context. Therefore, the application may not be acceptable to the conventional readers familiar with Indian society and aesthetics. However, attempt is made to analyse his works in the feminist perspective suitable to Indian context.

It seems that no serious study of any Sanskrit work has been conducted previously applying feminist or similar modern theories, except a few individual papers. This is an attempt in this regard to read Kālidāsa’s works from feminist viewpoint. In the absence of a similar study, the methodology that can be followed to such study is another difficulty faced here. So also being a first attempt, for creation of the background to understand the cultural context of Kālidāsa’s writing, a brief study of the status of woman in Sanskrit literature has become necessary as a foundation for proper analysis.

Indian tradition upheld grhastāśrama or life as a house holder as the most important stage in the life of all human beings. It stresses mutual fidelity and co-operation in all spheres of life. Rules and codes were also framed for this. Considering the biological weakness of women and for the smooth running of life, they were given protection in the society, which was altered later. Kālidāsa who seems attracted by
this tradition, pictured this in KS. But in plays, which is to be enacted, he pictured the altered tradition.

Generally, Kālidāsa pictured women as an incarnation of agony, ignorance, insult and suffering, with virtue, chastity and virginity as womanly qualities. They believed that the physical beauty is their main attraction to command respect. All tried to appear beautiful and education was concentrated only on fine arts with the sole aim to entertain male. Dependence was accepted as natural and there is no sign of resistance. Those who tried to resist were punished and that punishment was also accepted in silence. Thus, characters like Dhārini, are pictured as deserving sympathy, as unable to respond to such insults while Īravati, though was punished for boldly revealing her feelings, knowingly or unknowingly, deserves a little respect. Mālavikā is a ridiculous character who could not understand even from the experiences of her predecessors. She might have thought her slavery better than the life under her brother or as a sacrifice for her parental land. Śakuntalā stands as the victim of power for ever. Bakulāvalikā and Nipuṇikā are characters who lived to fulfil kings passion. Kālidāsa has tried to depict an ideal conjugal life through Śiva and Pārvatī, in his given context. He brought Urvaśī to family life ending her promiscuity. MAL appears as a prahasana with impropriety in vibhāva and sentiment of rasabhāsa. The ever young, king and vidūṣaka remained as such while heroines changed and all women characters were only instruments to delineate the main sentiment of love. Kālidāsa compared Pārvatī to the form in the word. Other women characters are pictured as words or
syllables used to fill the gap in the line of a verse or correspond to worthless words used for padapūraṇa some appear as apasabdās.

Bhāsa a predecessor of Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti his successor pictured woman in a different way. In Mālatīmādhava Bhavabhūti described the role of woman in preventing the marriage of young Mālatī with aged minister as initiated by Kāmandakī. This text contains evidences for co-education. But Kālidāsa pictured Paṇḍitakauśikī as a pīṭhamarddikā. Varāhamihira questioned the partial treatment of society towards women pointing to their role as wife, daughter and mother, who help in whole life of men. Thus in India there was two lines of thinking prevailed simultaneously, but might and knowledge which was concentrated in male, did not recognise the impartial treatment of subjects in a state. Kālidāsa gives these two pictures in his plays and kāvyas. Plays as in the practical world, upheld inequality while KS remained lenient with some favourable rules to women. It upheld the view of female male equality in the śloka:²

\[
\text{Tāmāgauravaḥvedena muninścāpaśyadīśvaraḥ} \\
\text{Strīpumānītyanāsthāvaḥ vṛttam hi mahitam satām}
\]

The Lord Śiva looked upon Arundhatī and the sages without any distinction of honour for the wise, whether one is male or female is no consideration, character alone being the object of honour.

² KS. VI. 12
The study of Kālidāsa's works from feminist viewpoint widens the scope for further research on the poet using the tools supplied by modern literary criticism.