CHAPTER VII

INDIAN IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD-SOCIAL VALUES AND RELEVANCE

The unique feature of India is the diversity of its landscape, climatic conditions, language and religion. This diversity can also be noticed in its vast range of interpersonal and social relationships and it is the ‘Dharma’ or the Supreme Social Value which bound its people within the sphere of social relationships during ancient times. The unique genius of Hindu law givers was such that they were able to formulate rules and interpret customs in the light of dharma so that diverse groups with differing mores were able to exist harmoniously within larger social web. Each individual was urged to perform his duties in every sphere without hurting the common good. “It manages itself not by fighting for rights but by excelling in performing duties. i.e. dharma for a given individual in given situation.”

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL STATUS OF INDIAN WOMAN

Unlike the social system of the Western world, the social system in the ancient Indian society had demarcated the role of woman from that of man both in the family and social life. In the network of the social relationships in this land, woman has to play different roles in different stages of her social life and culminates in her role as mother. In each stage of her social life, she tries to identify herself with that of her family and is always bound
to her duties or dharma rather than her rights which in turn direct her towards self-realisation. “Dharma as enjoined duty or right conduct, is not something absolutely given, but something to be determined.”

Woman in ancient India was also treated as an integral part in the social life of man and she lived as a lifelong companion of her husband, inculcating spiritual strength in him. Here, Family and marriage were regarded as the two institutions around which the whole social life of the individual revolves and they were considered by the ancient seers as the ways to fulfill the debts of the individual in his social life. In married life, each one of the partners has equal importance in performing their household as well as social duties. “Marriage is the union of a man and a woman for two purposes, firstly for procreation, and secondly for comradeship and mutual assistance in life to fulfill life’s duties and its true function.” The family as a whole was built up by the joint effort of the couple. “Since woman’s place is integrally embedded in social life, any change or disruption means potentially changing or disrupting many things - personal identity and sexual mores, family patterns, religious ideology, political and economic structures.” And for this reason ancient Indian society had placed women in a position which was not at all inferior to that of men.
The status and position of women had changed as the country progressively marched towards modernity. Values and needs of women had also changed with the advance of time. The newly emerged social system had put more stress on their needs rather than in preserving the traditional social values based on dharma. Socially and economically independent women belonging to the upper and middle class sections of the Indian society tried to imbibe Western culture and values to suit their present needs, disregarding their rich cultural heritage. And those who belong to the lower strata of the society are still leading their life as victims of exploitation and harassment by the male authority. Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance had prevented them from a successful family life as well as social life and they were unaware of their social responsibilities and individual and social needs due to lack of knowledge about the tradition and cultural heritage of the society they belonged to.

The cry for physical and psychological equality of women with men by the modern Western feminists is practically impossible and can be regarded as an Utopian ideology. In India, the life of woman is so designed as to realise and not to express herself and hence any claim made by the Indian feminist thinkers for equality with men would only provide more opportunities for their materialistic development, standing as a barrier on their path of developing potential abilities in them. It will also arrest realization of their individual identity.
PRESENT NEED OF INDIAN SOCIETY

The present day condition forces the modern Indian feminist thinkers to think about the need to provide proper guidance and opportunities to the women folk for making them aware of their social responsibilities, needs and the injustice towards them within the limits of the cultural tradition of the country. Efforts should also be taken by the feminist thinkers in India to make them conscious about their moral and spiritual status in society for realizing their individual identity. They should also pave attention to the natural causes of the spiritual and moral downfall of the present day Indian women and to make remedial measures to prevent the future generation from undergoing further degradation. It is possible only by making an integrated effort to awaken Indian women spiritually, morally and intellectually. Steps should also be taken to make them fit enough to stand in their own feet and fight against the oppressions without losing their individuality. For this, Indian feminists have to frame an Indian theory of feminism, within the limits of the native culture and heritage and by eliminating the unnecessary elements of Western feminism to meet the needs of the modern Indian women.

Feminism as a philosophy of life is a matter of practical relevance which appears as a movement against the injustice towards women as a whole. Feministic ideology, with its dynamic nature, changes in accordance with culture, tradition, position and needs of women in connection with the
particular society in which they live. For this reason, it is found to be
difficult to apply the Western feministic ideology in the typical Indian
context. Any attempt to construct an Indian theory of feminism by ignoring
its cultural, socio-religious and spiritual tradition will arrest personal as
well as social progress of its women in particular and the society as a
whole in general because women are the custodians of India’s cultural
heritage.

It is true that no social theory can be put into practice if it concentrated
only on a particular sex because equal participation of both the sexes is
required for the proper functioning of any society in the world. Unlike in
various other parts of the world, women are regarded as custodians of the
tradition, culture and heritage and hence they were regarded as an essential
part of society. Hence the importance of treating women with proper
respect and providing them with appropriate position for the overall
development of the country. As the ancient law giver, Manu said, “Where
women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not
honoured, no sacred rites yields rewards.”5 Swami Vivekananda also had
highlighted the importance of women in the nation-building process. He
said, “The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of
its women.”6 These examples point to the fact that, no positive changes or
developments in the society can be brought in a land like India by ignoring
its women. This unique feature of the Indian society forces the nation to
start any kind of its developmental programmes from the unit of its weaker sex and to bring them to the mainstream of society by making efforts to upgrade the social, economic and intellectual status of women.

The feminist thinkers in modern India have to avoid the extreme conservative attitude of the ancient Indian thinkers and the extreme liberal attitude of the modern Western feminists, but should combine all the positive aspects of the two cultures in their way to construct an Indian theory of feminism. Indian feminists should critically analyse the ancient scriptures and literature to understand the ill effects of the highly orthodox and conservative status the women in India had in the past and evolve a progressive and constructive feministic ideology that can meet the needs of modern women. Such a theory of feminism will surely check the ill effects of consumerism promoted by the neocolonial and capitalist forces, thereby strengthening the social, moral, economic, intellectual and spiritual status of women in the upper middle and lower strata of the modern Indian society.

This proposed new theory of Indian feminism should be formulated in tune with the social environment of Indian society. It should imbibe the ideals of womanhood such as purity, chastity, divinity, self-dedication and ideal of motherhood, besides providing measures to inculcate spiritual knowledge to the Indian women, making them spiritually strong enough to
be the inspirers of the future generation. Swami Vivekananda had preached, “So shall we bring to the need of India great fearless women—women worthy to continue the traditions of Sangamittra, Lila, Ahalya Bai, and Mira Bai—women fit to be the mothers of heroes, because they are pure and fearless strong with the strength that comes of touching the feet of God.” But, while constructing such a theory of Indian feminism, the feminists today must have a proper understanding of the Indian scriptures and literature as well as the tradition and cultural background of Indian women. Dharmasastra, the law book of the ancient Indian society which deals with the social and moral codes in ancient India with reference to family and society, could also act as a helping hand in this regard. A historical analysis of the changing status of women and inequitable power distribution between the sexes in social as well as economic fields down to ages will also enable the Indian feminist to assess the needs of women in the present as well as the future society.

REALIZATION OF THE IDEAL OF MOTHERHOOD

The present situation demands Indian women to make effort to restore India’s spiritual culture and her innate quality of motherhood would be strong enough to guide the future generation through the path of spirituality along with material prosperity. “In general, the woman is the socialize of the new generation.” Indian cultural heritage regarded the Ideal of
womanhood as the ideal of motherhood. “Women are not different from another as man is from another man. They are bound to every woman in the world by the common divine quality of motherhood.”9 From the very beginning of its history, the rational and emotional urge of Indian women was to develop their physical and mental capacity to take the responsibility of a mother with enthusiasm and great joy. “In Hindu society, a woman as a mother has a unique place. Despite of her inferior position as a daughter and house wife, she has supreme position in the society as mother.”10 But in the modern world, becoming a mother and taking the responsibility of bearing and rearing of children becomes a great task and appears as a hindrance to their personal freedom and individual development. In this context, it is high time for the Indian feminist thinkers today to take the responsibility of making modern women realize the ideal of motherhood in them and also the importance of the role of mother in moulding the future of India through their great children.

“In India the woman was the visible manifestation of God and her whole life was given up to the thought that she was a mother.”11 Through these words, Swami Vivekananda’s intention was to make woman of his country as a role model by manifesting the ideal of mother Goddess in her. While addressing the Hindu ladies, he had also highlighted about the ideal of motherhood which is innate in the character of Indian women. Only spiritually and morally enlightened mothers could mould the future of our
nation through their virtuous children and so he urged women of India to strive to realize in themselves the ideal of motherhood. He had said, “if the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country- then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the land.”

Mother plays an important role in the socialization of her children. The ideas that were received during childhood had a great impact on moulding the character of the individual. This highlights the moral responsibility of the mother to make her child feel proud of his or her native land and to preserve its tradition, culture and heritage even while living in the most modern technologically advanced world. “The woman as the mother is the socializer of the new generation. Her interest and involvement in child rearing, her close identification and contribution in developing the basic personality structure of the child, have given a new status to the mother, that is, the preserver of the ‘cultural tradition’ and socialize of young generation with old values and continuity to the social structure.”

Indian feminist thinkers today should take the moral responsibility of imparting cultural, moral and spiritual training to the modern Indian women, with the knowledge of which they will be able to realise the ideal of womanhood and motherhood in them. This training will also help them to realize their qualities such as love, sacrifice, compassion, tireless service, patience, modesty, chastity and simplicity which are innate in
them, their role in the institutions of family and marriage and moreover their personal and social responsibility as a mother. And this realization will surely act as a strong tool to guide their children, the path of spirituality in their way to material prosperity.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Though the Constitution had provided economic independence, freedom and legal protection, the women in the modern society are still exposed to exploitation, oppression and suppression in her personal as well as social life. In the present age, equality exists only in the laws. In real life, they are under the control of the dominating male who exploits them for economic, emotional and sexual purposes. The external forces like consumerism and capitalism also entangle them and prevent them from realizing their own potential energy. The physical and biological limitation of women and the dominating desire in the male generation to control the other sex appear to be the main reasons behind this exploitation. It is high time to realize the fact that no legislation can do miracles to make radical changes in the existing social status of women unless the people are ready to change their mindset by themselves. Hence, while implementing more and more rights and laws to support and protect the female generation, necessary changes should also be brought about in the prevailing social structure, discriminatory value system implemented by the patriarchal
society and also in the general attitude towards women by imparting proper awareness among the people.

Indian women should be made to realize their skills and potentials so that they could contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation. This can be possible by empowering them firstly through the process of socialization. Socialisation has got an unimaginable effect on molding woman’s character and developing her individual personality. Such a process of socialization should begin from one’s own family which acts as a medium for interaction and cultivation of inter-personal relationship, broadening their outlook on life as well as society. Mingling with different people belonging to different regions and culture will enable women to understand the essentials of different cultures, their behavioural pattern, lifestyle, food habits, social and moral codes, their social as well as personal life and their religious practices. This will enable her to widen her inter-personal relationships.

Economic stability is yet another factor to empower women which positively affect the development of their personality. Economic freedom will generate a feeling of self-confidence, security, independence and social consciousness in her. Women should be put in a position to share the economic needs of her family along with the male members of the family. More opportunities in the agricultural, industrial and commercial spheres
will also help them to contribute their share to the development of the nation. “When economic institutions change, the emotional relationship will also change.”\(^\text{14}\)

Though the government has provided more opportunities for women owing to their social backwardness, rural women are still lacking sufficient opportunities according to their skills and capacities in the modern era. Apart from the role of mother and household duties, women today have to undertake many major roles in various fields of development. For this, urgent steps should be taken to empower women physically, mentally, spiritually and intellectually by awakening the hidden potentials in them. More attention is needed for developing their self-confidence by awakening them spiritually. Spiritual awakening will help them to make their inner self strong enough to guide and regulate their lives, empowering them automatically. “The women should aim at reality in her true nature as a spiritual being, where upon she will become fearless and able to stand every threat to her honour and dignity”\(^\text{15}\)

This will be possible only by giving them back the spiritual freedom enjoyed during ancient times which were taken away by the male dominating patriarchal society. The modern women in India can regain their lost spiritual freedom by attaining spiritual knowledge through the medium of education. As Swami Vivekananda had said, “Therefore I was
saying that if even one amongst the women became the knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her personality thousands of women would be inspired and awakened to truth, and great well-being of the country and society would ensure.”

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT –IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

The above discussion points to the fact that the present need of Indian society is to empower women intellectually, spiritually and culturally through the medium of education. But the current Western mode of education system seldom serves this purpose. Though it imparts intellectual ability, it fails to develop spiritual and moral values in them. It is unfortunate to see the country ignoring the ageold educational system followed by our ancestors, neglecting its practical relevance, by adopting the Western mode of education. Today, though the field of education is so developed in India as to equip the young generation with ample opportunities to upgrade their intellectual power, it fails to inculcate in them the ability to effectively apply their acquired knowledge in the changing situations in their daily life. This new system of education implemented by the Western educationalists is often found to have been unfit and practically irrelevant in the typical Indian context, especially when it comes to the overall development of the country’s modern youth in general and the women in particular.
No social or economic development can be effectively implemented without educating womenfolk, especially in a country like India where half of the population constitutes women. Welfare of a country depends on the wellbeing of its people and this can be brought about only by imparting intellectual, spiritual as well as value-oriented education to its women who are the influencing factor in the character building process of the future generation. “By educating a girl, we educate, the would-be mother and thereby we educate all her children. If the children are properly educated, the entire community and through community, the entire Nation is re-oriented and attains its proper stature and finds its rightful place in the comity of Nation.”  

This points towards the necessity to take appropriate steps to broaden the base of education of girls and proper training to their body and mind through the medium of education.

The Indian ideal of womanhood is quite different from that of the West and so India has to develop a system of education in accordance with its own ideology in order to meet the needs, requirements and aspirations of its women. “The aim of education of woman is to make herself sacrificing and fearless, humane and affectionate, peace loving yet revolutionary to do away with old social customs that are still persists and prevalent in this country.” It should enable her to lead a social life in accordance with the changing atmosphere in various stages of her life. It should also help her to know about her rights and responsibilities, the cause of her social, political
and economic exploitations by the dominating members of the society, her personal as well as social problems and make her capable of finding out a way to prevent the acts of oppression and suppression of women. Above all, it should have a vital role in making women fit for the bringing up of a noble, intellectual, morally and spiritually enlightened future generation to preserve the traditional culture and heritage of the country. As Vivekananda said, “By education I do not mean the present system, but something in the line of positive teaching. Mere book-learning won’t do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one’s own feet.”

Experts in the field of education, social thinkers, feminist thinkers and members of different social organizations have to make a joint effort to bring about reformation in the field of education in India, providing enough opportunities to the womenfolk for developing not only their intellectual abilities, but also their emotional, cultural and artistic talents. Such kind of a national scheme of education should be aimed at equipping women with modern, scientific, and technological knowledge with which they could serve the society, earn their livelihood and also empower themselves spiritually and morally with the help of which they could guide and direct the future generation. The purpose of educating girls is not only to promote their career development, but also to make them enlightened
mothers of brave children through which Nation’s prosperity can be maintained. The only way to regenerate the lost culture of India is to spread the light of spiritual knowledge among its female members through the medium of education. “Indian Nation can never be free in the true sense of the term till the Indian woman has ceased to be ignorant.”

Years ago, Swami Vivekananda had realized the country’s educational needs and presented his idea about the kind of education that India required today to empower its women physically, mentally and spiritually. He also wished to start many educational institutions all over India for the same purpose. His idea of empowerment of women through man-making and character-building education will act as a guideline for the modern reformers and feministic thinkers in developing an Indian system of education for empowering women and awakening them spiritually.

Unlike other societies, Indian society had always recognized the capabilities and potential in each sex and so men and women in the ancient Indian society led their social life as partners and strengthened the social bond between them. People here lived within a network of relationships and each and every member of this society has a definite social role and responsibility. There was a time in the history of India when each member of the society was given opportunity to perform duties as per his or her capacity and talents at various stages of their social life. This duty was
bestowed upon them by none other than the society, without hurting the freedom of any other member. The law-givers during that time knew about the needs and talents of each sex and they never used to make any comparison between them.

But, today, the situation has changed greatly a lot and there developed an egoistic and competitive mentality between men and women. This mentality of the youth of the present day society stood as a barrier in the way towards the general progress of society. “The quarrel will go on as long as men and women fall to recognize each other as equals, that is to say, as long as feminity is perpetuated as such.” The need of the day is that the youth have to shed all misconceptions against women and try to respect their individuality and dignity. The denial of opportunities to women by the patriarchal system should be abolished and men should cultivate a habit of accepting women’s qualities and their merits. It is the responsibility of the young male generation to implement social justice to women too by providing them with equal freedom and opportunity to express them, to develop their inborn talents and to contribute their energy for the building up of the nation. The concerns about her feelings, needs and aspirations by the family members surely provide her sufficient energy to contribute a lot to her community.
It is high time to make the modern generation aware of India’s traditional culture which had given each sex a distinct place in domestic as well as social life. The modern society regards them as the source of property or liability or the object of sexual satisfaction. Efforts should be made to change this attitude. A fair treatment of women should start from the family itself. Democracy should be practiced first from home itself and each member of the family should be given the freedom to express their feelings and to make suggestions in the decision making process within the family. The life-partner should accept her as a helpmate and should be ready to share all the responsibilities with her. The partners should live just as the two wheels of the same chariot.

Each sex has got their own areas of excellence in their social as well as domestic life. They act as the two halves of a single whole. Just as the two halves of an organism functions differently, the social function of each sex also differ. But just as the two halves are essential for the existence of the organism, equal participation of both the sexes are necessary for the existence and development of the society anywhere in the world. Unity in diversity is the law of nature. With various skills and capacities men and women can work together for the overall development of the society. Each sex has to play a complimentary role in the building up of a model society with mutual respect to their self, capability, individual freedom, etc. As
Swami Vivekananda had noted, “Man and women are like the two wings of a bird”.

Modern India is also witnessing an evolution of a new generation women who are losing their feminine identity by adopting masculine qualities in their appearance, attitudes and way of living. They are living with the false notion that economic equality can bring about gender equality too. But, it is a fact that economic rights can never bring about social equality. What we need today is a gender identity and not equality which is impossible to attain through Constitutional protection. Many women belonging to the new generation want to lead an independent life. Imitating the Western feministic ideology, Indian feminist activists are now making agitations and campaigns against men. This attitude of modern women will only help withering away of India’s rich cultural heritage that had held the ideal of womanhood in high esteem.

The present day situation also demands women to cultivate an ideal of spiritual identity with men rather than to fight for equality. The women also have to change their attitudes towards men. Today, influenced by the Western culture, Indian women also cultivate an attitude of rivalry towards the male members and they consider them as their strong enemy on their way to progress both in their personal and social life. The women in modern India are very much influenced by Western thoughts and culture
which is rooted in material prosperity. The Western feminism which stands for gender equality, economic independence and individual freedom and rapid modernization stood as a barrier in the way of the nation’s spiritual progress. These factors had also weakened the institutions of marriage and family in India.

Women have got their own individual identity. Indian constitution had provided equal right to all its citizens. But it doesn’t mean that she can enter into all fields of activities which are monopolised by men. Though women had got the right to freedom of choosing her work, she has to consider her own limitations, interests, aptitudes, aspirations, etc, before choosing a job. India’s traditional culture always recognized the capabilities in each sex and the potential energy in them. Women should also realize the fact that they are not merely made for marriage. Marriage is only an institution which gives her more opportunity to perform a complementary role in the development of the society. The anti-male attitude of women will change, once she realizes this truth.

**HARMONIOUS SPIRITUAL GROWTH WITH THEIR CULTURE**

Spirituality and morality are the two pillars on which India’s cultural heritage rests and they were considered as ideals in the social life of women in India. Most of the woman characters in the ancient Indian literatures reveal the ideal of womanhood through their innate qualities like
intellectual development, emotional stability and spiritual understanding. With their simplicity, kindness and consideration to other members, they had won the minds of the rest of the society. But, the women today, knowingly or unknowingly, forget about their past history and try to walk with artificial appendages in imitation of Western culture. The influence of the Western way of life had a great impact on the lifestyle of modern Indian women. Many of them are living with the false conception that what is Western is real and good and they are trying to imbibe Western feministic ideology in their personal as well as social life. By losing their spirit of inner strength and courage, morality, and independent reflective thinking, they forget about their role in the preservation, conservation and transmission of the culture and value system of the country for the future generation. This negative trend of modernization will certainly ruin the age old tradition and cultural heritage of the country.

Indian women can also develop themselves along with the scientific and technological advancement in the modern world. They have the freedom to change themselves in accordance with the material advancement of the world. They can also enjoy economic and social independence as that of male members. But this doesn’t mean that they should run away from their moral and spiritual responsibilities to the society. They have to cultivate an ideal of womanhood in them, imbibing attributes like sincerity, simplicity, self-confidence, dedication, and mental courage.
Swami Vivekananda had stressed the need of imbibing the country’s spiritual tradition and culture in the very character of the modern youths. While talking with the young men who came to see him at the palace of Raja of Ramnad in Madras during 1893, he urged the youth not to run after the Western culture and way of life without reflecting upon it and remind them to preserve the country’s rich spiritual heritage for strengthening the country’s foundation and national structure. This was expressed by his Eastern and Western disciples as, “Repeatedly he urged on them the need to analyse foreign ideals critically and to guard against assimilating the materialistic foreign culture. They should preserve and make the most of all that was great and glorious in their country’s past; otherwise the foundations of the national structure would be undermined.”

Vivekananda was not against the reformation that was taking place in the social, material as well as economic fields. But, he had reminded his countrymen that any kind of development should come from within and not guided by any external force and that it should be of constructive and not destructive in its true sense.

By providing modern women the awareness of Indian ideology of womanhood, helping them to safeguard the future generation from external influences, and preventing them from going after the Western culture is the need of the hour. For this, our country needs intellectually, morally and spiritually enlightened women citizens to enrich the minds of their fellow
beings with the great ideal of womanhood and to help them in strengthening their mental capacity through the medium of education. “First of all it should be observed that the task of improving woman’s position must be undertaken by woman herself.”

By awakening the inborn potentials in women, they can also help to make women conscious about their rights and social responsibilities while leading a social life. India has got plenty of such intelligent, talented and educated women who should come forward and take this as their life’s mission. “Educated women have to make full use of the social privileges and set new trends for the masses to follow. This will revitalize the social position of Indian women, and through them, the country.”

None other than a woman can understand the needs, requirements, aspirations and problems faced by another. Sister Nivedita had explained this concept of modern Indian woman as, “A modern Indian woman, on the other hand, in whom he saw the old-time intensity of trustful and devoted companionship to the husband, with the old-time loyalty to the wedded kindred, was still, to him, “the ideal Hindu wife”. True womanhood, like true manhood, was no matter of mere externals. And unless it held and developed the spirit of true womanhood, there could be no education of woman worthy of the name.”

Such dedicated women can reflect upon the present need of the society and should make an attempt to redefine feminism which should be based on Indian ideology.
MUTUAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

As we know, men and women have their independent role to play for the growth and development of the country and they are equally important for the balanced growth of the community as a whole. There exists a complementary relation between men and women and one sex cannot take a supplementary position. Each sex has its own energy level, capacity and also its own limitations.

Though society can impart economic, social, intellectual and spiritual equality between men and women, physically and mentally there is much difference between the two sexes. What a man can do, cannot be done by a woman and vice versa due to this basic difference between the two. As Swami Vivekananda had noted, “What man can bring up a child with such patience, endurance, and love as woman can? The one has developed the power of doing; the other, the power of suffering. If woman cannot act, neither can man suffer. The whole universe is one of perfect balance.” This idea of Vivekananda was supported by Swami Madhavanand in his work, The great women of India as: “A woman cannot do something which men can. Their physiology prevents this. That however does not prove any inferiority on their part. We must do the things for which we are made and do them well.”
Considering the above mentioned facts, it is clear that the progress of the nation is possible only when its men and women enjoy equal freedom and responsibility. This can be brought about through making a perfect harmony in society by creatively combining both male and female energy, infusing the idea of Spiritual Oneness among the members.

Man should grow beyond his physical body and cultivate spiritual aspiration within him in order to identify his spiritual nature. Our ancient scriptures had mentioned about spiritual transformation in the very character of oneself as the only way for salvation and they consider it as the mission in one’s own life. If men today visualize this ‘Spiritual Oneness’ preached by our ancient seers, there is no question of domination or subordination, equality or inequality between men and women, but only identity in their spiritual nature. The society should also emphasize on the concept of Ardhanareswara in the relation between man and woman which highlights the inherent relation between the two which in turn help them to lead their social life with mutual respect and love.

The modern Indian society should make a self-introspection and encourage the community to share the duties and responsibilities of both the men and women. It is the responsibility of society to help its women in their efforts to bring about social, economic, spiritual and cultural development of the society. “The focus should be utilize women’s capabilities and potentials
to facilitate a social and cultural renaissance than to throw them against
men to fight to indiscriminate economic battle.”

Instead of fighting against male hierarchy, organizing anti-men agitations
and cry for liberation from the dominating males, the Indian feministic
thinkers should work for cultivating mutual respect among the male and
female members of society and promote a favourable atmosphere in which
men and women would be able to work with mutual co-operation
protecting their individual identity. No sex can be considered as inferior to
the other sex. “The one who flies has strong wings and weak legs, the one
who runs has strong legs but no wings.” Man and woman are two entities
with unequal physical and mental capacities and within the limits of their
energy level and capacities, each of them can play their roles for the
general welfare of society. The feminist thinkers in India should analyse
the drawbacks of the modern and post-modern feministic ideology in the
West and try to redefine feminism to suite with India’s culture and
heritage. It is also advisable that the practically relevant reform measures
Swami Vivekananda had suggested will essentially serve as a watchword
and guideline for the Indian feminist thinkers to formulate an Indian theory
of Feminism which would help in the cultural, intellectual, moral and
spiritual development of Indian women. “The country in which the
capacity of women is recognized can reach its highest cultural level. They
can work shoulder to shoulder with men in shaping the future of India.”
REFERENCES


18. Ibid., p. 118.


