

## **Preface& Acknowledgement**

For a long time 'Feminism' had been a discussing issue among men and women. Feminism is a driving force behind women's movements and the aim of feminism is to promote the interests of women. Since long there had been an accepted tendency that all types of activities related to women belong to the private domain of individual within the family. Due to this belief women's issues were discussed only within the household domain but the gradual change in the attitude towards women's questions has started in different dimensions. A new kind of awareness is visible among women. This phenomenon has given rise to women's movements and Feminism is that kind of movement.

The inferior status of women in the society and their ongoing problems on different issues, kept me on constant thinking regarding women's unstable existence. Feminists' thinking, theories and their movements influenced me to go into the deep understanding of feminism and thereby I decided to work on this issue. Through this issue we can find a solution by which the existing power relations between women and men in our society can be changed so that women can come out from the back pages into the mainstream in our society. I believe that our contemporary thinkers with their valuable suggestions and insights can help us to solve women's existing problems.

I have divided the thesis into seven chapters apart from the **Introductory** and **Concluding remarks**. The whole thesis has been categorized as 'Feminism and women's movements', 'Feminism in philosophy and ethics', 'Women's status in past traditional India', 'Socio-political apprehension of women status', 'Gender discrimination and the crisis of morality', 'Feminism and Eco-feminism' and 'Empowerment of women', respectively. Throughout the chapters we propose to discuss about women's movements around the world, their past and present status, about the problem of gender discrimination in our society, women's relation with nature and also about the empowerment of women. To understand the issue and the need of feminism we have to go for a deep understanding of women's problems with a sympathetic view. Feminism is about liberation, liberation from our traditional social structure, which is in favour of patriarchy and also liberation from gender discrimination. Gender disparity is a burning issue of a country, more specifically the developing economies of the world. Perhaps, there is no region in the developing world where women are equal to men in social, political, legal and economic rights. The major areas where gender disparities are basically sustained from time immemorial are female-male ratio, literacy rate, food and nutrition, health care facilities, work, participation rate, opportunity to employment, access to economic resources, participation rate in political process and administrative jobs etc.

In such a situation the most important thing is to impart education to women and to make them economically independent. But from ancient times women in Indian

society were neglected. Though the world developed in the way of modern information technology, the Indian society is far away to divide the power equally among women till today. The reason behind this is that the participation of women is very deplorable in the field of education.

A patriarchal society considers women as inferior to men. As she is considered to be inferior, a woman has to face discrimination, disrespect, humiliation control, exploitation and torture. It is under such circumstance that there have been going on several sorts of efforts throughout the world to accord the women class, their due status and dignity by removing the sex-based discrimination. In a very simple language, one may hold that the basic ideal of Feminism is to liberate a woman from all kinds of bondage and control so that she can enjoy equality and dignity and thereby earn the right to control her life with a real sense of freedom and dignity. Very briefly, the main principle of feminism is that the society is based on sex-based discrimination and secondly, the system based only on the dominating power of men will have to be wiped out.

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