Indian feminism should reclaim parts of the country’s history that celebrated women, said academic Madhu Purnima Kishwar, who was speaking at ‘New Ideas for a New India’, jointly organised by the SASTRA University and The Hindu at the Music Academy here on Saturday. Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister Bibek Debroy and Editor of Thuglak Magazine S. Gurumurthy were the other speakers on the panel. The discussion was moderated by N. Ravi, Director, Kasturi and Sons Ltd.

Ms. Kishwar criticised contemporary laws for not factoring in the responsibilities of the community and modern laws for placing the onus on the government to protect women. “Women are safe only when the society takes responsibility. Children, old people and women are safe only when neighbours will intervene, relatives will intervene,” she said.

‘Rediscover old ideas’

Mr. Debroy called for a return to the times when the community was involved in governance and asked whether the Constitution stood in the way of decentralisation. “India will change if we remember and rediscover the old ideas that go back many, many decades and thousands of years,” he said.

Mr. Gurumurthy said there was an India undiscovered by intellectuals and called for the pursuit of the discovery of a new India. “There is a huge gap between people who speak about India and the real India,” he said.