



History of Feminism from an Anthropological Perspective

Puja Mukherjee

M.Sc in Anthropology

West Bengal State University.

Date of Submission: 06-07-2023

Date of Acceptance: 17-07-2023

Abstract: The research article aims to critically evaluate the history of feminism in anthropological perspectives where a detailed description about the feminist anthropological field has been critically evaluated. In which manner the feminist perspective has been arisen and how it evolved throughout the field of anthropology has been demonstrated with proper examples and works of feminist anthropologists. It has stated that it is required to value female voices along with marginalised groups as what they think and their needs. Feminist anthropologists have raised their voices about discrimination by male anthropologists and represented how to treat people equally.

Keywords: Feminism, Anthropology field, Standpoint theory, Gender equality, Social constructs

I. INTRODUCTION

Feminist anthropology is defined as one of the most potential and significant subfields of anthropology which is potentially focused on the role of gender in human societies. This stream of anthropology has described in which way gender has intersected with other social categories such as sexuality, class, race and more [4]. This anthropological subfield emerged in the 1970s and has been seen as one of the main and broader parts of the feminist movement which sought how to challenge the perspectives of traditional anthropology and its methodologies [10]. These are historically marginalized or ignored experiences of women along with their perspectives, what they feel, what they need or what they think.

In feminist anthropology, the core belief is that women have been marginalized in the field of anthropology where their experiences need to be taken into a potential account. The main reason behind this emergence is to create an effective holistic approach or understanding of humanity regardless of the gender stereotype which relies on all over human society [3].

Today, the rise of feminism in the anthropological field has continued to develop on the foundation through conducting research which is focused on the lives of not only women but also other marginalized groups such as people from diverse cultural contexts, LGBTQIA+ people and more [7]. One important fact is that feminist anthropology has grown as well as evolved where one key development element is focused on increasing understanding what women and other ignored people need or how to value them as they are also part of the human society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminist anthropology has rooted in the early 20th century when women have first begun in order to be admitted into graduate programs in the field where in the 1960s to 1970s a second wave of feminism spurred a new wave of feminist scholarship in several disciplines including anthropology [8]. This has been criticized the way that women as well as the feminine norms have been largely absent from the writing and research of the anthropological field. Feminists have challenged the assumptions about what has been considered as the natural or normal behaviour for all men, women and children across different cultures where it is also seen that in Western culture the role of gender has been imposed on the cultural perspectives through missionary or colonialist practices [5]. Therefore, feminist anthropologists have worked for making sure that the voices of women have heard their experiences and thoughts in the research studies. These women have argued the way anthropology has been conducted up until this point which is biased against women as well as other marginalized groups.

They have argued that women's experiences need to be seen as the core concept of research and theory in order to create a more holistic approach towards humanity. One of the key anthropologists is Sheila Rowbotham who was instrumental and shaped



the early feminist thoughts which is seen as an important voice in the field of today's world [4]. The book by Ruth Behar named "The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart" has demonstrated that women anthropologists are faced exclusion and discrimination within academia and in this field. This book has helped to deliver a voice to the experiences of women within the inspired subsequent and discipline generations of feminist anthropologists in order to pursue the entire research [1]. This was critical of patriarchal systems along with a focus on the lives, thoughts and experiences of women as well as other marginalised groups efficiently. Along with the integration of several disciplines in humanity, feminist anthropologists have tried to analyse the theories and methods in order to study the problems of women which not only broadens the study of criticism in feminism which is also made reflect the female as having 'no voice' in anthropology [9]. The representative of female anthropologists has included Ruth Benedict, Margaret Meade and so on who have regarded the experiences of women as a unique direction of anthropological research which has made a significant contribution to this emerging theoretical systems as well as methods efficiently.

III. METHODOLOGY

It is seen that feminist anthropologists are utilized qualitative research methods such as observing target participants for obtaining an intimate understanding of women's lived experiences from different cultures and perspectives [6]. The current article has been developed by adopting the qualitative approach in the data collection process where the data has been collected from different secondary resources such as PubMed, Springer Link, Research Gate, Emerald and more along with academic resources.

This data collection approach seems standard for describing the thoughts, experiences and concepts about the core concept of feminism in order to deliver in-depth insights about how the history of feminism has evolved from the anthropological perspectives. Using qualitative methods has helped to understand the context, subjectivity and complexity of the core research content where reviewing previous literature seems major potential way to critically explain each keyword of the core research content efficiently.

In this article, interpretivism research philosophy has been utilized which has investigated the thoughts, history and concept of feminism and understand how it is evolved in terms of anthropological research. Reliability of data has been also maintained where all data has been collected after 2018 by following the Data Protection Act 2018 which helps to ensure the quality and validity of the collected

data efficiently. In order to maintain ethical considerations, any kind of absence of the author, date of publication, clear demonstration of the concept and more have been excluded.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the survey by the Statista Research Department more than half of the global population has identified themselves as feminists who all believe that feminism is not only about establishing the superiority of women [12]. They have demonstrated that it is the core concept to spread awareness about treating all people in an equal manner, no matter their orientation, gender, sex or any other demographic features. Achieving this equality has made championing women with more verve and force easily which is not seen before since nowadays societies seem patriarchal in a deep manner for example, men are hugely prioritized over women [11]. But it is also seen that critics are misinterpreted the concept of feminism often as they believe feminism means the attempt of attacking and suppressing men when in reality feminism means to spread equality for all people regardless of their demographic features i.e. sex, gender and more efficiently.

Feminist anthropologists have recognized that the production of knowledge has been also shaped by the researchers' social position, own experiences and background which means within a particular social context interpretation and perceptions of data have been influenced. The Standpoint theory has argued that people from different social constructs have different opinions and expressions of privilege or oppression that have shaped their understanding of the world [2].

In feminist anthropology, the major belief is that gender and sex are social constructs and the patriarchy is considered as the global phenomenon where the experiences of women should be at the core of the research and theoretical approach. Gender is considered the key to organized principles in human societies as well as gender has shaped the lives of people in a fundamental way [2]. Along with that, the most fundamental tenet in feminist anthropology is about the understanding that gender is a social construct which is created and reinforced by cultural expectations and norms which means the manner individuals have understood their own gender identity [11]. This identity has shaped by the cultural and social context in which people live. This core belief has run counter towards the traditional biological determinism which has argued that our sex and gender have been determined by our biology alone [5]. For instance, some people who are identified themselves as both male and female, neither male nor female which means gender roles are



culturally constructed and it can be differed from one society to another significantly. Through ethnographic research methods, the feminist anthropologist has tried to understand how gender roles have been maintained and constructed within a specific cultural context where recognizing gender as a potential social construct has allowed feminist anthropologists to challenge the traditional assumptions about which factors have constituted natural differences about men and women.

V. CONCLUSION

Feminist anthropologists managed to let the female voice which has been ignored by gender groups into the vision of people by deriving a large number of painted pictures about the lives and experiences of women. It has brought the personal experiences of women where the new theoretical approaches have been considered as different from the male's experiences into the process of ethnography writing and field. The subjectivity norms and gender perspective in feminist anthropology in recent years have actively represented how to safeguard the rights of women in order to enhance the female status subjectivity as well as maintain the balance between males and females efficiently. Though the feminist perspectives in anthropology, this emerging discipline has considered as still deficient in its theories and methods but the fact is undeniable about making anthropology full of unique identity tension of women. It is also seen to help the criticism of feminists for identifying a new breakthrough in its own manner for achieving gender balance through fusing beneficial methods and theorists of male anthropologists.

Some of the advantages of the above result

a. With the rise of new feminist thought in the anthropological field, the new method, the scheme has emerged which describes the distortion and neglect of male anthropologists towards the experiences of female

b. Introduce new objectives and rationale by feminist anthropologists for breaking gender stereotypes where choices, needs and experiences of women have been added.

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