

Feminist Anthropology: From Remedial to Radical*

Pushpesh Kumar

School of Social sciences, S.R.T.M. University, Nanded 431 606, Maharashtra, India
Fax: 26119, E-mail: garud@bom5.vsnl.net.in

KEYWORDS Feminism. Culture. Empowerment. Post modern

ABSTRACT Androcentrism of academic anthropology has been scrutinized by women ethnographers since 1930s; women were made visible, their role in subsistence was emphasized and the special status accorded to them in culture was highlighted through the efforts of the latter. This endeavour, however, was not only limited in scope but was riddled with serious theoretical flaws. While correcting male-bias, it dangerously came closer to the popular world view which entails that women also possess power in their "own" sphere and gender relations present a balanced way of life where roles and tasks are neither antagonistic nor concurrent. As a corollary, the question of change and "empowerment" was completely blurred in the process. Realizing this limitation of their "sisterhood", the feminist anthropologists around 1980 turned radical, stretching beyond the narrow fore-walls of merely correcting androcentrism. What differentiates this later genre from the previous one is a complete shift in "focus". The radicalism is reflected in both epistemological as well as practical issues of "empowerment" and "change".