Feminist Methodology

It argues for a sound methodology in the pillars of the science. Throughout the world since ages it has been a male dominant environment. The field of knowledge is no exception. Here also terms, concepts, theories including day to day references have been male dominated, hence it is called a male stream. The researches across disciplines have been termed as malestream research. Hence the techniques are also bias having a gender bias like these are masculine and feminine models of interviewing. Today efforts are on to create a feminist methodology with a feminist sociology of knowledge.
which will consist of words, letters, in a repository of knowledge, concepts.

In this connection, feminist epistemology comes into the scene.

Various practitioners of feminist epistemology say that the dominant knowledge practices disadvantage women by the following factors:

1. Excluding them from inquiry (research).
2. Denying them epistemic authority.
3. Denying them femininity or cognitive style.

4. Producing theories of women that represent them as inferior, deviant or significant only in the ways they serve male interest.

5. Producing theories of social phenomenon that render women activities and interests or gendered power relations invisible.

6. Producing knowledge (science and technology) that is not useful for people in subordinate positions or that reinforces gender and other social hierarchies.
The feminist epistemologists trace this failure to flawed conception of knowledge and scientific methodology. To overcome these failures they aim to

1. Explain why the entry of women & feminist scholars into diff academic discipline esp. in biology and social sciences has generated new questions theories and methods.

2. Show how gender has played a causal role in these transformations.

3. Different defend these changes as cognitive advances and not just social advancement.

The central concept of feminist epistemology is that of a situated knower and hence that of situated knowledge.
That knowledge which reflects particular perspectives of the subject.

Feminist philosophers are interested in how gender situates knowing subjects.

There are 3 major approaches:

1. Feminist Stand point theory
2. Feminist Post modernism
3. Feminist Empiricism

Knowers are situated in particular relation to what is known and to other knowers. Situated knowledge, in general means — consider how people may understand the same object in different ways.
Feminist Stand Point Theory

These theories claim to represent the world from a particular socially situated perspective that can lay a claim to epistemic privilege and authority.

A complete stand point theory must specify 7 things.

i) The social location of the privilege perspective

ii) The scope of its privilege - what goes or subject matters it can claim a privilege

iii) The aspect of the social generation that generalizes superior knowledge

iv) Social role or subjective identity
iv) The ground of its privilege -
what it is about, that aspect
that justifies a claim to privilege.

v) The type of epistemic superiority.
It claims greater accuracy or
greater ability to represent
fundamental truths.

vi) The other perspectives are relative
to which it claims epistemic
superiority.

vii) Modes of access to that perspective
in occupying the social location
sufficient for getting access to
the perspective.
FEMINIST POST MODERNISM

It draws ideas from Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Lyotard and Irigaray.

It became sceptical to ideas like universality, objectivity, rationality, essence, unity, totality, foundations and ultimate truth and reality. It stressed the locality, partiality, contingency, instability, uncertainty, ambiguity, essential contestibility of any particular account of the world, the self and the good.

Legitimising has been questioned and it opens up space for imagining alternative possibilities.

It emphasised ideas about languages which have been established with a small bias. Language is closely linked
with social practices hence it wishes to change the ideas.

Feminist empiricists are working towards how feminist values can legitimately inform empirical enquiry and how scientific methods can be improved in light of feminist demonstrations of sex bias in currently accepted methods.
Sociology of Knowledge

1. Philosophy of being women
2. Women as a person

Post modern - departure from modernity.

Tradition - value oriented rationality.

Modern - goal oriented rationality.

- Stop legitimising (stop giving explanation)
- Structured authority
- Authorism
- Goal oriented
- Knowledge is power

Eg - Housewives rather than housewives,
- Husbands younger in age than wife
- Pub culture ... women in Bangalore going to pubs.
- Single parent household. Husband died,
  wife being parenting.