



A Brief Survey of Prehistoric Women Role and Importance

Dr. Mudasir Ahmad Dar

Ph.D. Scholar, Jiwaji University Gwalior

ABSTRACT

Women's History is absolutely necessary to the emancipation of women. Neither world history nor women's history was widely taught a generation ago. And yet, most of the theoretical work of modern feminism, beginning with Simone de Beauvoir and continuing to the present, has been a historical and negligent of feminist historical scholarship. This volume of readings is prepared to meet dual needs- to gender world history and to globalize women's history. The more focus is given to highlight the role and importance of prehistoric women and special care to provide her roles as Mother and an economic supporter.

KEYWORD: Anthropology; Pleistocene; Figurines; Strontium

INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists, literary critics, sociologists, political scientists, and poets have offered theoretical work based on "history," but the work of Women's History specialists has not become part of the common discourse. For 150 years researchers offered no archaeological insights into the daily lives of prehistoric women and underestimated their role in society. In fact, these women became imprisoned that betrays a lack of original thought. It has also well furnished by historians or archaeologists that prehistoric man hunted, went on adventures, invented, created and drew, whereas the role of prehistoric women was limited to educating children and carrying out domestic routine. Over the past fifteen years a new generation of researchers, many of whom are women, have shaken up this model. By establishing ground-breaking analysis protocols and defining new excavation methods, these scientists are finally able to make the visibility of invisible. It is thanks to their quality that the essential and even prestigious role of prehistoric women is emerging. In human society, the prehistory witnessed that both men and women served different functions within their tribes. Men were generally responsible for hunting, whereas women were generally responsible for gathering as well as caring for children and preserving tribal harmony, that highlights her role. On the other hand, archaeologists interpreted them as figures representing the fertility goddesses, and that presented her as a divine image. During this time, everyone was assigned their particular place. Hence, the prehistoric woman played a proper role in society. Even though she is maximum portrayed as inferior rank and subordinate to man. But the roles she played and position she achieved, and importance she succeed with, are well presented in this piece of writing. That will surely take the researchers and readers to a proper historical vision at large extent.

A SHORT STUDY OF PREHISTORIC FINDINGS

"For a long time, prehistory was written from the male point of view, and when women were mentioned, they were portrayed as helpless, frightened creatures, protected by overly powerful male hunters,". Sophie de Beaune, a professor in pre-history, writes "Since women have begun to enter the ranks of prehistorians, a different picture has gradually emerged". Focusing on the Upper Palaeolithic period, a stone was found at one of the Palaeolithicsites in Germany, of a woman with a baby carrier on her back, allowing her hands to be free for hunting and foraging, that clearly present an image of her strong characteristics. Archaeological digs at one of the sites in Peru revealed, a woman buried with hunting tools. That has expressions of her warrior character and adds credit to her position and role. Five burial sites were excavated and six individuals were exhumed. Two of them were found with hunting tools, a man in his 30s, and a young woman under the age of 20. Twenty-four stone artefacts had been placed in the young woman's tomb, comprising a toolkit of everything needed to hunt and butcher big game- six projectile points, four scrapers, a knife and several chipped flakes of stone. Ten sites in the US from the Late Pleistocene or Early Holocene, between 12,000 and 8,000 BCE yielded 11 burial sites where women have been interred alongside weapons, suggesting that the discovery in Peru has wider significance.

IMPORTANCE OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN

Prehistoric women achieved high status within their communities as the site of the Lady of Cavillon, the remains of a woman buried wearing a skullcap of seashells in the Balzi Rossi caves complex in Italy, is said to be able a valuable clue "that reveals the respect the tribe had for this woman", and that preserved her importance. Spanning thousands of years and nurturing many a fantasy, hence, the prehistoric women are compared with those of prehistoric Venus figurines. And today some feminists posed that there was a prehistoric-Neolithic time when the widespread worship of goddesses heralded women's temporal power. Links can be made among female figurines, fertility, the importance of motherhood, and belief in goddesses. Such a female dominated

society was made possible by the presumed universal recognition and worship of an all-power divinity, the Mother Goddess, to whom all creatures of the animal and vegetative world were subjected. Equally subjected to her were all the spiritual and divine beings that might be conjured up by the human mind. Historians reached up to the results suggest that, in contrast to men, rigorous manual labour was a more important component of prehistoric women's behaviour than was terrestrial mobility through thousands of years of European agriculture, at levels far exceeding those of modern women.

ROLE OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN

Thomas Cirotteau, one of documentary makers, said the purpose was not to portray the pre-historic woman – black-skinned and largely blue-eyed – as a “superwoman” but to “widen the possibilities as to her role”. He stated, “she could hunt. She had a very important economic role. She could do art, and the link between men and women could be very respectful and full of tenderness”. Such discoveries points to a “hidden history” of gruelling manual labour performed by women over millennia, also said by University of Cambridge researchers. While men strode out to spear woolly mammoths, women, as mothers or exploited objects of male desire, sheltered in caves from the violent world, according to an understanding said to be increasingly removed from the latest research. De Beaune notes in the book that the importance of small-game hunting has also been underplayed by researchers, along with fishing, gathering shellfish or hunting small marine animals, all activities women were likely to have been involved in.

Being a mother was just one facet of the lives of women of that period. They were not continually pregnant, the latest understanding of the diet and lifestyle of the age suggests. Studies of the carbon, strontium and calcium in bones suggest that children remained breastfed until the age of four, a practice that reduces fertility. Vincent Balter, director of France's Centre for National Research, writes “Paleolithic women were able to bear children until they were about 30, if we say breastfeeding went on for two or three years, and they gave birth to their first child at around fourteen, that gives us a maximum of five or six births per woman.”

Jay Stock added “Our findings suggest that, for thousands of years, the rigorous manual labour of women was a crucial driver of early farming economies. The physical demands on prehistoric women may have been underestimated in the past, the study shows. In fact, women's work was a crucial driver of early farming economies. In the days before the invention of the plough, farming would have involved planting, tilling and harvesting all crops by hand, and women likely carried out many of these tasks. “Women were also likely to have been fetching food and water for domestic livestock, processing milk and meat, and converting hides and wool into textiles,” said Dr Macintosh. The study suggests women's labour was key to the rise of agriculture.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the prehistoric scenes of women in different societies need to recreate, and that meant for one of the main aim to set this research paper. The reader will perhaps be astonished to find that men's and women's roles were not so clear-cut, and that it was cooperation between all members of the group, regardless of their gender or age, which ensured their survival. The focus that remained stressed in this paper, is a brief history and role of women in her prehistoric age. For the first time ever these ancient women are being resurrected before our very eyes, shedding light on a new theory of our origins.

REFERENCES

1. Cirotteau, Thomas & Kerner, Jennifer & Pincas, Eric (2022), “*Lady Sapiens, Investigating the Lives of Prehistoric Women*”, Hero, ISBN 9781915054791, Topic History, Subtopic Women in History.
2. Briggs, Helen (2017), “*Hidden history of Prehistoric Women's Work Revealed*”, BBC News, 29 November 2017.
3. Cirotteau, Thomas & Kerner, Jennifer & Pincas, Eric (2022), “*Lady Sapiens: Breaking Stereotypes about Prehistoric Women*”, London: Hero, 978-1-915054-791
4. Lerner, Gerda, (1986), “*Women and History: The Creation of Patriarchy*”, First published in 1986 by Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-503996-3.
5. Adovasio, J. M.; Soffer, O; Hyland D. C. (2000), “*The Venus Figurines: Current Anthropology*”, Volume 41, Number 4, August-October 2000, Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.
6. Gimbutas, M. (1986), “*The Goddesses and Gods of the Old Europe*”, Ed. A. Bonnano, Amsterdam, 1986.