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Title : Haryana's Harappa saluted women 5,000 yrs ago

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Earthenware more than double in female graves

Given its skewed sex ratio and long list of repressive khap diktats, it is difficult to imagine Haryana as a place which put women on a higher pedestal than men. But when the Archaeology Survey of India (ASI) dug up the Harappan Rakhigarhi site in Hisar, they found in the 5,500-year-old ruins a lifestyle that today's women activists would have been proud of.

The ASI report based on excavations between 1997 and 2003 has pointed out that “female deceased were offered more than double number of earthen wares as compared to opposite sex at the burials found at the Rakhigarhi site“.

“Apart from this, to show reverence, the female deceased were invariably offered wares like dish-on-stand, bowl-onstand, beaker and medium sized vases, denoting their status over and above male counterpart“ the 396-page report says. The report was submitted by retired DG (archaeology) Dr Amarendra Nath in December last year after 12 years of extensive research. At least 12 skeletons were found during that period and five more have been found last week during an ongoing separate research by Deccan College, Pune.

The report also cites size of bangles, found inside burials, to support the fact that women faced no discrimination at that time while doing heavy work at home or outside. “Also, some wide heavy bangles found at different sites show battering marks on them. That means that heavy manual work was also part of the work of these particular women,“ the report added.

It said that these type of wide shell bangles were never found in any other burials at any Harappan site so far in Asia. A part of the report also dwells upon the “robust build of a female“. It, however, found that widows were denied these burial rites.

The report has also mentioned that the people of this civilization strictly followed the Vedic tenets to cremate the dead. A majority of cemetery sites have been found located adjacent to watercourse or river front according to Vedas, it said.

“Satapatha Brahmana prescribes that the cemetery be located out of sight of the village and burial be made on salt-free soil, over a level ground, closed to woods

where the waters flowing from a southerly direction come to the AR east and stand still without dashing forward. This literary account was compatible geo morphological residue particu larly around mounds of area marked as RGR 7 at the site,“ the report said.

The report said that process of excavations further spotted sporadic remains of bones of cattle and sheep next to de ceased in consonance with animal offering references in Rigveda and Atharvaveda.

The ASI report on Rakhi garhi has also declared it as the biggest Harappan site so far with 350 hectares, leaving behind Pa kistan's Mohenjo-Daro.



