

### 3. INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

(2600 B.C. To 1900 B.C.)

In the previous chapter you have read how early man lived a nomadic life. They spent their lives under trees and caves. They ate wild fruits, roots, tubers meat and fish. Later on, farming, domestication of animals and use of metals brought a tremendous change in the living style and food habits of the early people.



The most significant change was the beginning of permanent settlements. People usually settled where land was fertile and water was sufficient. Usually such places were situated near the river banks. This is the reason why people started settling near the rivers. In this lesson we will read about a civilization which flourished about 4500 years ago in the Indus Valley.

**Look at the map 3.1 and locate the plain of river Indus ?**

**Which are the countries of today where the plains are spread?**



One day Sonu and Sandhya's class teacher was talking about the cities of the Indus Valley civilization. She said -About 80-85 years ago some people found things belonging to two big cities, buried in the earth. These cities were Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. It was discovered that people used to live here around 4,500 years ago.

Sandhya was surprised. She asked - What! Were these cities actually buried in the earth?

**Teacher** - Have you ever heard about any place where they have found old things buried in the ground?

**Sonu** - Yes, I have heard that in a nearby village a farmer found a few things like coins and statues buried in his field.



**Pic. 3.1 Excavations of Kalibangan**

**Has anyone in your village found any such thing buried in the ground ?**

**Teacher** - About 80-85 years ago some labourers were working for laying down the railway track in Mohenjo-daro near the Indus river. While they were digging a mound which came in the way, they found a wall under it. This made the people more curious. On digging further it was discovered that a whole city was buried under the ground. When scholars excavated the nearby areas, they found similar things at several places. Most of these places were near the Indus river. That is why it was known as the Indus Valley Civilization. Those days it was also called Harappa Culture.

**Sandhya asked** - why is it called Harappa Culture ?

**Teacher** - It was in 1921 when excavation was first done at a place called Harappa. Here they had found bricks and clay pots. Later on, from other places (like Mohenjo-daro etc.) similar things, houses etc. were found which helped in understanding the life styles, food



**Pic. 3.2 Remains on the excavation of Kalibanga**



habits, dressing sense, festivals etc. of that era. That is why it was called Harappa Culture.

**Shrikant asked** - Where are Harappa and Mohenjo-daro situated ? Who discovered them ?

**Teacher** - Both Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are in the Punjab and Sindh districts of Pakistan. The excavation at Mohenjodaro was started under the guidance of Shri Rakhal Das Banerjee in 1922.



**Picture 3.3 Engraved utensils, Harappa culture**

**Vikas asked** - Is there any place in India which belongs to this Civilization ?

**Teacher** - You have asked a right question. Till now in India excavation has been carried out in about 250 places. Chief among them are Dholavira and Lothal in Gujrat, Kalibangan in Rajasthan. Ropar in Punjab and Aalamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh. Thus the Indus Valley Civilization extended over Afganistan, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujrat and western Uttar Pradesh. This civilization has flourished from 2600 B.C. TO 1900 B.C.

**Calculate how many years ago would that be ?**

**Tushar asked** - Please elaborate a bit about the Indus valley civilization.

**Teacher** - We shall talk about it later. First, look at the map carefully and find out near which rivers are those places located ? Make a list.

**Look at map 3.1 and make a list of the places and the rivers.**

## THE SETTLEMENT OF CITIES

**Next day Ujjwala asked again** - Please tell us about the Indus Civilization in detail.

**Teacher** - First of all we shall talk about planning and construction in the cities of the Indus Valley Civilization.

From the excavations of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa we know that those cities were well planned like the present day colonies of cities. These two cities can be divided broadly into 2 parts- (i) The citadel and (ii) The lower town. The citadel that is the raised part had massive wall around it. The second part was the lower town which was thickly inhabited. The main part of the lower town was divided into rectangular blocks by wide roads cutting each other at right angles. There were houses and drainage system on both sides of the roads. The houses were made of baked bricks and were one or two storeys high. Every house had a courtyard, kitchen and bathroom. The kitchen and bathroom had drains connected to the covered main drain running alongside the main road. The drains were paved and covered. All these things show that



construction of homes and settlement of the cities was very systematic at that time and this is the most unique feature of the Indus Valley Civilization.

## MAIN BUILDINGS

**Ankita asked** - Is that a pond in picture 3.3

**Teacher**- That thing which is looking like a pond to you in the picture is a public bath which was found at the excavations at Mohenjo-daro. This is constructed in the citadel - that is the upper part of the town. There are rooms on all four sides and in the centre is a pool. This pool is 12 metres long, 7 metres wide and 2.5 metres deep. Near by there was a well. Perhaps the pool was filled from this well. There were proper drains for the outflow of dirty water. The walls and the floors were treated to prevent seepage. This public bath might have been used for some public functions, some religious work or some special occasion.



**Pic. 3.4 Mohen-Jodaro's bathhouse**

**Discuss-** how the people of Mohenjo-daro would have used this public bath.

**Vinay asked** - Was there any other building also found ?

**Teacher** - Vinay, you have asked a good question. A huge construction was found in the Harappa excavations. It is believed to be a granary. Such constructions have been found at several other places too. It is possible that grains were collected from nearby villages as taxes and stored in such granaries to be used at times of natural calamities like earthquakes, floods or droughts.

## FORM OF GOVERNMENT

**Sonu asked** - What sort of government did the people of Indus Valley Civilization have? Did they have kings ?



**Teacher** - Children, prominent buildings enclosed by high walls have been found in. These centres of the civilization are found in the upper part of the city. It is assumed that there must have been class of rulers that lived in these parts. There must have been centralised form of government with small districts under it. Whether there were kings or not, we have not been able to know for sure; but some statues do look as if they are of kings.

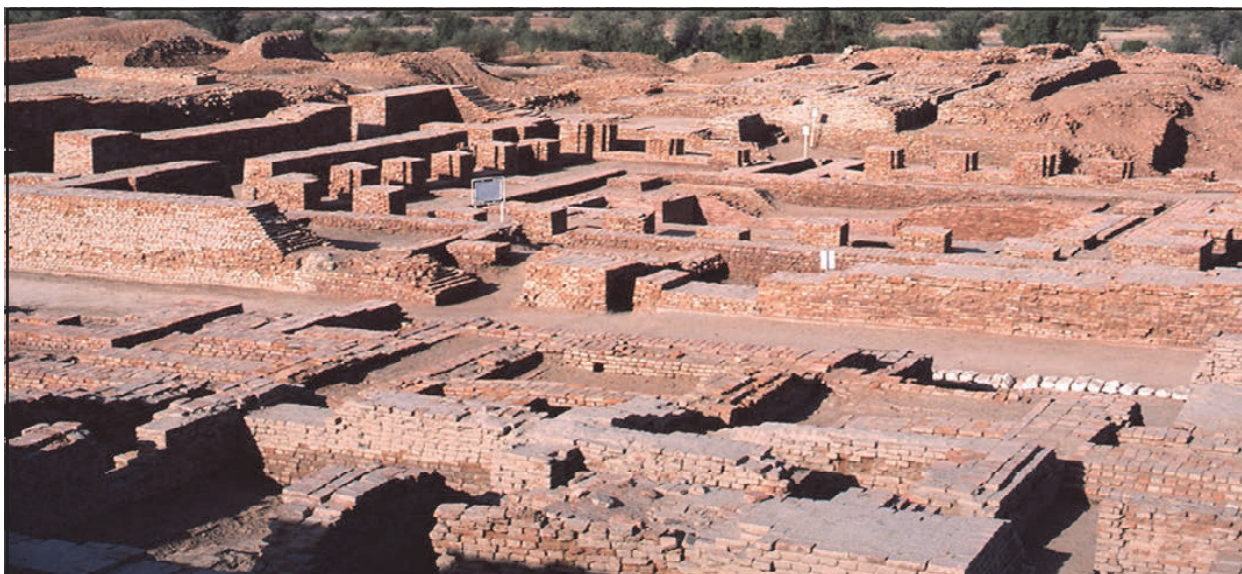
## OCCUPATIONS OF THE PEOPLE

**Monu asked** - What were the occupations of the people of the Indus Valley?

**Teacher** - Their main occupation was farming and animal husbandry. This must be the reason why they were living near the river banks. They grew wheat, barley, oilseeds, cotton etc.

There were good craftsmen too. They had knowledge about metals like copper, brass, bronze, tin etc. A large number of copper and brass utensils, tools and statues have been found in the excavations. Because of the use of bronze it is also called Bronze Age Civilization. However they had no knowledge of iron. As a result for their daily needs stone tools continued to be important. Besides this they made colourful beads out of precious stones to make garlands. They made bangles out of shells. The potters were highly skilled. They made beautiful glazed pots and decorated them with pictures and designs. The remains of kilns of bricks, copper furnaces, spinning and weaving equipments, potter's wheels, and factories of bead making show the existence of several industries in that period.

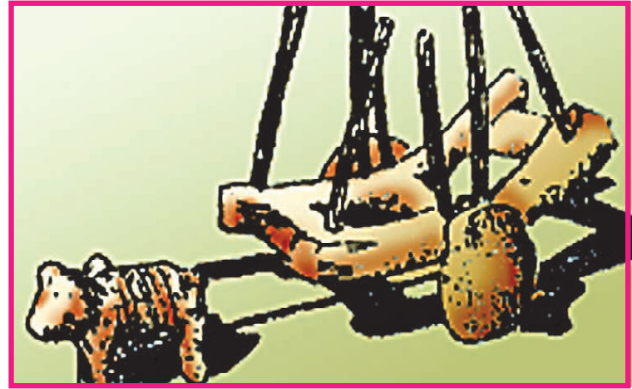
## TRADE



Pic. 3.5 Mohenjo-daro's : utensils and drains



Both internal and overseas trade flourished in the Indus Valley Civilization. The people exported cotton, construction timber, tools of copper, ornaments made out of ivory and stones. Gold and colourful precious stones were imported. Foreign trade was carried out mainly with the centres of Mesopotamia. Internal trade was done by land and water routes; but external trade was mainly carried out by water route. Remains of a dockyard and a model of a ship have been found at Lothal in Gujrat. We can say that trade was done from Lothal by the sea route.



Picture 3.6 Toy bullock cart

**Raju asked** - What is a dockyard?

**Teacher** - You have asked a right question. Dock yard is that place where a ship is anchored for loading and unloading of goods. It is a smaller form of a modern port. Lothal can be called a port city.

## LIFE STYLE

**Sandeep asked** - What did they eat? Did they wear animal skins like the early people?

**Teacher** - People ate wheat, barley, sesame, meat, fish etc. They used cotton and woolen clothes. Both men and women would use make ups. This can be said on the basis of the remains of cosmetics and jewellery boxes found in the excavations of Harappa. Women wore ornaments like necklace, bangles, armlets, anklets etc. which were made of gold, brass, ivory and precious stones.

For entertainment they sang, danced and played games of dice.

Children had clay toys to play with .Beautiful terracotta toys have been found in the remains of those cities. Sonu wanted to know which gods and goddess were worshipped by them.

**The teacher explained** - From the remains we also learn about their religion . Several statues of mother goddess have been found, so it can be said that they worshipped mother goddess. In Harappa a seal bearing a three headed figure has been found. It has a crown of horns on his head and has inscriptions of tiger, elephant, rhinoceros and deer. Shiva or Pashupati worshipped to day, is probably a later adaptation of this figure. Most of the seals and utensils found, had inscriptions of peepal tree and



different animals. In one seal there was a picture of a humped bull. All these things indicate that they worshipped trees and animals. Peepal was considered a sacred tree. They performed last rites for the deceased. They probably buried their dead.

## SCRIPT

**Shubhrakant asked** - Did people of the Indus Valley Civilization know how to read and write?

**Teacher** - The remains of seals, clay pots and other things have some sample of script. This is a picture based script.

## DECLINE OF THE INDUS CIVILIZATION

**Sonu asked** - How did such an advanced civilization end? How could the whole city be buried under the earth?

**Teacher** - How did such an advanced civilization end, is still a mystery. But it is believed that there must be reasons that city life became weak. People may have taken to occupations in which it was not necessary to live in the cities. In this way the population of cities must have declined and later they were ruined. People would have started living in small villages.

Some people are of the opinion that some natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, or a change in the course of the Indus might have made the people leave that place and go elsewhere.

The children were greatly surprised. They went home discussing the cities and the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization.

## EXERCISE

### I. Fill in the blanks-

1. Excavation of Mohenjo-daro started in the year\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Excavation of Harappa started in the year\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Lothal city can be called\_\_\_\_\_city.
4. Granary was found in\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Huge public bath is in\_\_\_\_\_.
6. The people of Indus Valley carried out foreign trade through\_\_\_\_\_route.



## II. Answer in the questions-

1. What was the main occupation of the people of the Indus Valley Civilization ?
2. With which metals were the people of the Indus Valley familiar ?
3. What things were traded by Indus Valley people ?
4. What is the reason that civilizations have developed near the rivers ?
5. Why is this civilization called the Indus Valley Civilization ?
6. Why are Harappa and Mohenjo-daro famous ?
7. Why is Lothal famous ?
8. Describe the life style of the people of the Indus Valley ?
9. Into which social groups were the people of the civilization divided ?

## III. Write short notes on:-

1. City planning
2. Architecture
3. Huge public bath
4. Granary
5. Dockyard.

## Project work

1. Sirkatti - Panduka

Like Lothal, remains of a harbour have been found in the river Pairi at a place called Sirkatti near Panduka village in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. Here there is a dockyard which was built by cutting the rocks. It is 5 to 6.5 metres wide. It is believed that beside being a port it was a commercial centre. The river was used for trading within and outside the country.

This harbour is like Lothal but it belongs to some other era.

2. Make a list of toys made from clay. Which toys would have liked by the children?
3. What are the difference between the beauty products of Indus valley and beauty products of these days? ( used now a days )

