

Revision Notes

Class- 6 Social Studies(History)

Chapter 3- In The Earliest Cities

The Story of Harappa

- Harappa was a modern city located in which is now Pakistan.
- In 1856, the famous East India Company accidentally discovered Harappa while building a railway.
- At first, the workers thought it was the ruins of an ordinary broken city and began to use bricks for construction projects.
- About eighty years ago, the archaeologists realized that it was not one of the ordinary ruins and started to explore the remains.

Harappa- The Architectural Wonder

Harappa was special because of its unique urban planning and style of construction at that age. It was futuristic, to say the least. It was divided into 2 parts:

1. Citadel: Citadel was placed in the west of the city, which was smaller in size but higher than the lower town.

2. Lower Town: Lower town was placed on the east and was larger in size than the citadel.

- Baked bricks were used to build houses. These bricks were strong and could last for more than a thousand years.
- They were placed in an interlocking pattern. This kind of strong building was constructed in the upper town known as the citadel.
- One of the famous baths named Great Bath was discovered by an archaeologist. This bath was located in the citadel.
- Few other cities of the Harappan civilization were Lothal and Mohenjodaro.

Houses, Streets, and Drains

- Most of the houses in the civilization had a separate bathroom, and the wells were used to produce water in these houses.
 - Many of the cities had a good design drainage system. The drains had a gentle slope which helped water to flow through them.
 - All the houses, streets, and drains were constructed at the same time.

Life in Harappa

Harappa was a busy human settlement. The following components comprised the societal structure of the city:

● **Rulers:**

Rulers were those who decided the construction of buildings. Rulers were the leaders of the place, and they sent people to faraway lands to get precious stones, metals, and other important things.

● **Scribes:**

Scribes were the ones who helped to prepare the seals. They knew writings, and they used to write on various materials that have survived till date.

● Some women and men made various kinds of crafts. A lot of terracotta toys have been discovered from the Harappan cities, which indicate that the kids in the Harappan cities used to play with these toys.

New Crafts in the City

● The objects that were found from the remains of the cities were shells, gold, silver, and stones.

● Bronze and copper were used in making weapons, tools, vessels, and ornaments.

● Silver and gold were used in making ornaments.

● The Harappan people made seals by using stones of rectangular shapes that had pictures of animals on them.

● Pretty pots were made with black designs.

● Pieces of cloth were attached to silver vases and copper objects.

● Archaeologists have found spindle whorls that were made of faience and terracotta that were used for spinning threads.

Raw materials

● Raw materials were produced and found naturally by the herders or farmers. Raw materials were used for producing finished goods. They were found locally. However, many items such as silver, gold, tin, and copper were precious metals and were brought from far distant places.

● They used to purchase copper from now called Rajasthan and also from Oman.

● Tin was mixed with other metals such as copper and then used for producing bronze. These metals were brought from present-day Iran and Afghanistan.

● The Harappans used to bring gold from present-day- Karnataka and other precious stones from present-day Iran, Gujarat, and Afghanistan.

Food Habit of the People

● People living in Harappa reared animals and grew crops. They grew crops like mustard, linseed, sesame, rice, peas, pulses, barley, and wheat.

● The plough were used to dig the soil and plant seeds.

- Water was stored and then supplied to fields.
- Harappans reared sheep, cattle, buffalo, and goats. In the dry season, animals walked long distances to get water and food.
- Harappan people also grew various fruits like berry and caught fish as well as hunted for wild animals like antelopes.

A Closer Look at the Harappan Sites

There were two main urban settlements in Harappa - Dholavira, and Lothal.

Dholavira

- The city of Dholavira was excavated in 1990 by RS Bisht and his team near the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. It has been one of the largest urban settlements of the Harappan Civilisation as well as the Indus Valley Civilization.
- The city was divided into three divisions, among which two were protected by rectangular shape fortification. Various unique stones were used for constructing the buildings of the city.
- Various pieces of evidence were found by the archaeologists that mentioned ten alphabets. Evidence of various agricultural activities such as irrigation, embankments, and dams was discovered. Dholavira also had warehouse settlements

Lothal

- Lothal was discovered in the year 1957 by S.R. Rao. Indus valley is situated on the bank of the River Bhagava. Lothal is named after an ancient mound located in the town's money jurisdiction.
- Lothal is the only site that has an old brick dockyard. The dockyard is surrounded by brick walls to protect them from heavy floods. Lothal was the city where the first tidal port was found.

The Mystery behind the End of the Harappan Civilization

- About 3900 years ago, a major change was discovered, which brought a change in civilization. People were afraid in many cities.

- Writings, weights, and seals were not used anymore. Raw materials in the place started to finish, and they were not brought anymore.
- Garbage was found piled up on the street, impressive buildings were no longer built, the drainage system began to collapse, and the people of Harapa began to lead boring lives

The End of the Civilization

- The cause for the breakdown of the Indus Valley Civilization is not yet known by anyone. Many scholars came up with different reasons for the breakdown.
 - The first reason that can be a cause of the breakdown is climate change that includes a shift in the pattern of the climate as well as an agricultural disaster that perhaps resulted in an excessive change in the environment which caused overexploitation and population decrease.
 - Secondly, some scholars came up with the fact that other environmental changes such as tectonic events could also result in the breakdown by causing floods in the city hence killing all the people living there.
 - The third can be human activities such as the invasion of Iran or tribal people from the hilly regions that could lead to its destruction.
 - The fourth reason could be theory posits that could occur from an epidemic that led to devastation. It can be said that a certain disease entered the area and eventually killed all the Harappans in a dangerous form.

Important Questions and Answers

1. How did the archaeologists find out that cloth was used by the people of the Harappan Civilization?

Ans: ● According to researchers and archaeologists, this cloth was used for the first time in Mehrgarh about 8,000 years ago.

- Real cloth pieces were seen on Lothal's silver bottle caps and copper products.
- Researchers have also found spindle whorls that were made of faience and terracotta. These materials were used in spinning threads.

- Garments dating back to the Indus Valley era are also decorated. For example, see a statue of a prominent leader of the Indus Valley civilization wearing clothing.

2. Why were things like the wheel, plough, metals, and writing important for the Harappans?

Ans: ● **Wheel:** The Harappans made utilize of wheels within the cart. They, too utilized a wheel for turning. The wheels were too utilized by the potters to deliver a shape to a pot.

- **Plough:** People used the plough to prepare their land to farm.

- **Metals:** The Harappan people were very intelligent, and they made unique things. They used copper to make various tools. They also made ornaments of silver and gold.

- **Scripture:** This was an important part of the Harappan cities. Scribes were the people who could write. They helped to prepare the seals and most probably have written on materials that have been washed.

3. Write a short note on the Great Bath of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Ans: The Great bath has a rectangular structure, similar to a swimming pool. It was one of the best structures of the city, which had six entrances, including dressing rooms, a central bathing pool on all the sides, and also had an adjacent well. Some steps led to the bottom of the pool. The pool was filled with water from the adjacent wells that were attached to its sides. There was also an outlet present which was used to drain the water. The Great Bath was made of strong baked bricks and was watertight with natural tar. It was used by prominent people on special occasions.

4. Mention a few causes that are given by the scholars for the decline of the Harappan Civilization.

Ans: The following theories have been placed by the scholars for the decline of the Harappan Civilization:

- Few of them said that probably some sort of natural calamities could be the cause of its destruction that includes floods, earthquakes, or a serious kind of epidemic.

- Invasion by foreign traders in the city can also lead to the decline of civilization. According to the archaeologists, the Aryan invasion could have caused a decline.

- Another important cause could be the change in the course of the river that could have led to an infertile land which caused a collapse in the economy as well as the society of the Harappan Civilization.

5. Give features to show that Harappan people enjoyed a high standard of living compared to those of Mesopotamia.

Ans: The people of Harappa indeed enjoyed living with high standards of civic amenities. One of its examples is the Great Bath of Mohenjo-Daro that was built with a lot of special features. Also, most of the houses in the Citadel part of the town were well constructed, with houses having their own balcony and bathrooms. Most of them were double-storey houses with a great drainage system attached to them. The masses enjoyed a huge amount of luxuries that are unknown to others.