

Revision Notes

Class - 6 Social Science(History)

Chapter 8 - Vital Villages, Thriving Towns

India's cultural heritage and societal structure were highly reflective of her present political and social scenarios. The practices and activities of the past, in terms of resources, class, and livelihood, are essential to know to understand better and analyse our present-day way of living. The people's lives in ancient villages and towns of the Indian subcontinent are an excellent example for us to study and learn from CBSE Class 6 science (History) Chapter 8 informs us about the first ages of agriculture and tools utilized in doing that. From there, we are given a vivid picture of the villages and the cities both now and then.

Iron Tools and Agriculture

- Although iron is an ever-present metal in our lives nowadays, it has a fascinating history of discovery and uses.
- The usage of iron began in the Indian subcontinent during the ancient period of about 3000 years ago.
- Some of the most essential iron tools and weapons that have been collected were found in megalithic burials
- The growing usage of iron was around 2500 years ago, as per evidence.
- Iron was used mainly by the people of the Indian subcontinent to make iron tools.
- Some iron tools include axes and ploughshare.
- Axes were used to cut trees and clear forests, while ploughshare was a valuable tool for increasing agricultural production.
- Other Steps to Increase Production: Irrigation
- The existence of the kings and kingdoms was possible because of flourishing ancient villages.

- a number of the irrigation works built during this point included canals, wells, tanks, and artificial lakes.
- The production in those ancient times saw the usage of new tools and systems of transplantation.
- Irrigation played a significant role in increasing the production of those ancient kingdoms.
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Who Lived in the Villages?

- Since a village cannot be set up and prospered on its own, the people who lived in the villages of ancient India played a huge role in establishing the cultures and norms of the society we know of today.
- From the evidence, a minimum of three different sorts of people lived within the Southern and Northern villages of the Indian subcontinent.
- In the Tamil region of the subcontinent, the landlord was called Vellalar, and the ordinary peasants were called Uzhavar, so landless laborers, including slaves, were called Kadaiyiar and Adimai.
- The King used him to gather taxes from villagers and also functioned as judge and policeman
- The men and the women of the villages who didn't own any land were referred to as the DasaKarmakar.

Finding Out about Cities: Stories, Travellers, Sculpture and Archaeology

- The cities of ancient India and the people who lived in them used stories, sculptures, etc. to promote their culture. This is why these stories, sculptures, and archaeological discoveries are used to understand their lives.
- The 'Clever Poor Man' is an example of a Jataka.
- Jatakas were initially composed by ordinary Indian people in ancient ages that were later written down and preserved by the Buddhist monks of India.
- Sculptures were also used to depict the daily lives of people during those years.

- Statues depicted people's lives in towns, villages, and forests.
- They were mainly used to decorate railings, pillars, and gateways of buildings.
- The Sanchi Stupa contains numerous sculptures inscribed in its bars and pillars.
- Many of the cities developed 2500 years ago were capitals of the Mahajanapadas and were surrounded by fortification walls.
- Archaeologists have found ring wells, rows of pots or ceramic rings arranged on top of every other from these areas.
- During ancient times, ring wells were used as toilets, drains, and garbage dumps and were found primarily on individual houses.
- The accounts of sailors and travelers are also used to find out about the early cities and the lives of their people.
- An account by an unknown Greek sailor is one among the foremost detailed accounts about ancient India and its ports

Coins

- Coins were used to measure the wealth of an individual in the ancient Indian subcontinent.
- Archaeologists have found several thousand of the coins that belonged to this period.
- The earliest coins were used about 500 years ago in the Indian subcontinent and they were punched marked.
- Coins are also called thorn marks because the pattern is pierced into the silver or copper surface of the coin.

Cities with Many Functions

- The cities of the ancient Indian subcontinent were significant for the people who lived in them for many reasons, including food, trades, etc. Therefore, the cities of ancient India had several powerful functions.
- In Ancient India Mathura had been an important city for more than 2500 years.

- Mathura is vital because it was located at the intersection of two main routes in ancient India.
- The two routes were from the northwest to the east, and the other was from the north to the south.
- There are many fortifications around Mathura, as well as many shrines.
- Numerous farmers and shepherds from neighbouring towns provide food for the people of Mathura.
- Mathura also produced some magnificent sculptures.
- The Kushanas second capital was Mathura for around 2000 years ago.
- Mathura was also a major religious centre, and it had several Buddhist monasteries, Jaina shrines.
- Mathura was also an important centre for the worship of Krishna.
- Various statues and sculptures found in Mathura have many inscriptions on their surfaces, recording the gifts provided by the people of Mathura to monasteries and shrines.
- Kings and queens made the inscriptions of the city towards the craftspersons of the city.

Crafts and Craftspersons

- The ancient Indian subcontinent was known worldwide because of its crafts and its practices. Therefore, during that period, the villages and cities showed prominence of some of the best craftsmanship in the country.
- The primary evidence of crafts is outstanding pottery which archaeologists have found.
- The pottery was known as the Northern Black Polished Ware.
- The pottery is commonly found in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent.
- The Northern Black Polished Ware is usually black and has a delicate sheen to it.
- From the texts of the period, it is known that clothes manufacture was influential in the Indian subcontinent during this period.

- There were famous clothes manufacturing centers in Varanasi and Madurai where both men and women worked.

A Closer Look- Arikamedu

- There was a coastal settlement in Pondicherry which existed between 2200 and 1900 years ago known as Arikamedu
- Vessels unloading cargo from far away from Ricardo.
- A massive brick structure is found on this site which is assumed to have been a warehouse.
- Other objects were found at the Arikamedu site, such as ceramics from the Mediterranean region.
- A double-handled double-handled tall pot containing oil, wine and other liquids was unearthed at the site. Red-glazed embossed pottery was also unearthed, known as Arikamedu porcelain.
- In addition, lamps, glassware and gems of Roman design were also found at the Arikamedu site.
- Small cloth dyeing tanks have also been found on the site.

Important Questions and Answers

1. What were the tools that were used in the ancient Indian subcontinent?

Ans: Iron began to be used frequently in the Indian subcontinent around 3000 years ago. The iron tools were used to perform a wide variety of activities. Iron tools that were used also included several weapons in the ancient period. The tools that were made of iron were primarily used around 2500 years ago. The tools had axes and ploughshares. While axes were used to cut down trees and clear forests to set up villages or cities, ploughshares were used in order to increase the agricultural production of the subcontinent's kings. Therefore, these were the iron tools that were used.

2. What kind of people lived in the villages during the ancient period?

Ans: According to historical evidence, at least three kinds of people lived in the ancient villages of the Indian subcontinent. In the Tamil region, large land owners were called Vellalar, while the ordinary ploughmen were known as Uzhavar, and landless laborers, including slaves, were called Kadaiyiar and Adimai. Similarly, in the northern part of the subcontinent, a village headman called the Gramabhujaka was the largest landowner in the village. In contrast, independent farmers were called Grihapatis, who owned smaller lands, whereas the DasaKarmakar were people who didn't possess any land of their own and worked in others' fields.

3. What are the most reliable sources for learning about ancient Indian cities?

Ans: The most reliable sources used to obtain information about the ancient Indian subcontinent and its cultures include stories, traveller accounts, sculptures, and archaeological evidence. Stories such as the Jatakas serve as excellent study materials that taught people about life's moral values. Similarly, sculptures and inscriptions on the walls and pillars of buildings and roads reveal the daily lives of those who lived during the period. Apart from that, traveller accounts by an unknown Greek traveller showed a lot about the then-present part of the Indian subcontinent, along with the other archaeological evidence.

4. Why was Mathura considered an important city?

Ans: Mathura was considered one of the most important cities in ancient India due to its location and religious display. The city was located in the crossroads of the two most important routes in ancient India- the northwest to the east and the north to the south. Several herders and farmers also came into the city to provide food to the city's people. Fortifications with massive sculptures on them surrounded Mathura and its centre. Apart from these, the city was also a religious centre with numerous monasteries, shrines and it also served as a primary city for Krishna worship.

5. What kind of crafts and craftspersons lived in ancient India?

Ans: Since Indian crafts have always been widely popular and sought after worldwide, the craftsmanship of the ancient Indian craftspersons has been carefully preserved in the crafts of pottery that have been found from

numerous areas of the Indian subcontinent. The Northern Black Polished Ware, which is generally found in the northern part of the country, refers to excellent pottery. Similarly, the clothing manufacturing of Varanasi and Madurai has also been a glorious display of Indian craftsmanship in ancient India. Several craftspersons and merchants have now come together to form associates called shrines in India.