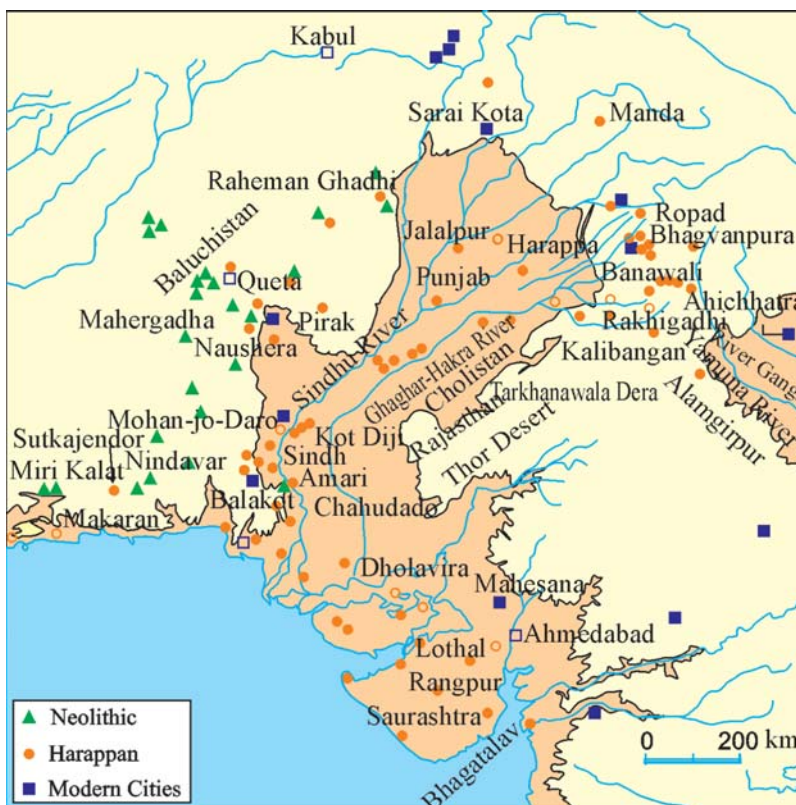


3

Ancient towns and Scripture



We often hear two words-culture and civilization. Do you know its meaning ? Culture is a matter related to human life. While, civilization is developed by human being, which he creates with his own caliber, skill and creative skills. Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Rome exhibit such great civilization of human society. Centuries old civilizations still inspire human life. Out of these civilizations we shall study about Harappan Civilization.



3.1 Places of Harappan Civilization

We know Harappan Civilization also as Indus Valley Civilization. Remains of this civilization were first discovered from Harappa, in 1921. Many of the places the civilization, in the northwestern part of India include Harappa, Mohan-jo-daro, Lothal, Dholaveera, Kalibangan, Rakhigadhi etc. See the locations of places of Harappan civilization in the map (3.1). Let's get introduction of town planning of some of the major cities and their features.

Discuss

- Comparison between Harappan towns and today's towns.

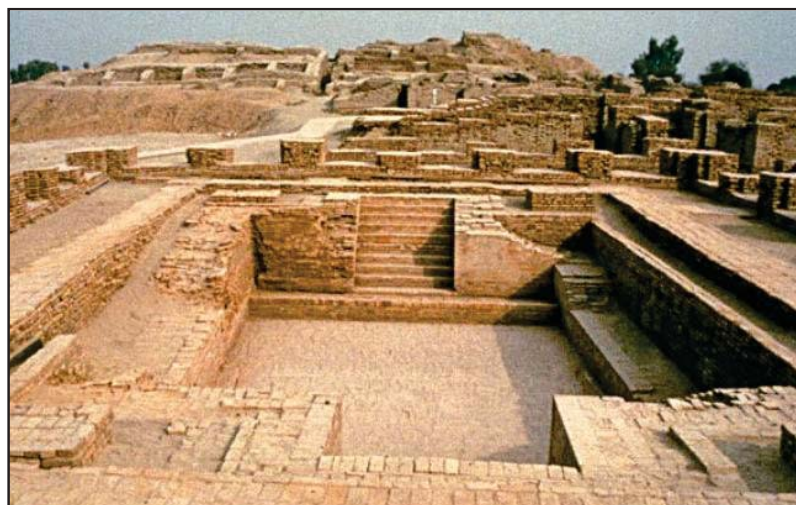
Town Planning

Organized town planning was the most important feature of Harappan Civilization. All the towns were planned in a similar way. In all places fort was on westward side and colony of common people



on the eastside. Highway separated both of them. The fort on the West was surrounded by a fortress. Most probably rulers would have lived in the fort. Bricks were often used in their town structures. Let's study about various features of Harappan civilization.

Main feature of Harappan Civilization was their organized house arrangement. Houses were constructed on high platforms, to protect them from flood and dampness. One of the feature of houses of Harappa was that the main gate opened in the lanes rather than towards the main road. Here, single and double storeyed houses were seen. Roads were very comfortable. There were two highways in the city, one of which connected North with South and the other connected East with West.



3.2 Public Bath Mohan-jo-daro

Here, streets were parallel to the main road. Roads intersected each other at a right angle. Roads and streets were organized in such a manner that the whole town could be divided into squares and rectangular sections. Evidence of night light system has also been obtained on public roads. There was highly developed and systematic system for disposal of water, in Harappan civilization. The water from each house flowed into small sewer and from small sewer to the large sewer. Water from large sewer flowed out of the (city) town. A public bath has been found in Mohan-jo-daro. In the center of this public bath is a pond for bathing. There are steps arranged on both the sides to get into the pond. There are changing rooms around the pond. This public bath would have been used on festivals or religious occasions. In addition to this, pillared houses used as assembly halls have also been found in Mohan-jo-daro. Harappa is an archeological site, located in Montgomery district of Punjab (Currently in Pakistan). Harappa must have been the main town of Indus Valley Civilization. The main feature of Harappa is its grainary. About 12 grain stores have been found on the bank of River Ravi.

Lothal is situated on the banks of Bhogavo river in Dholka taluka, in Ahmedabad district. Lothal was a commercial port and an industrial town in ancient times. A structure made of bricks has been found in Lothal. It is considered that it must have been a Dockyard. It can be assumed that the vessels (ships) arriving here were used for loading and unloading of goods. In addition, warehouses and bead factory have been found here. So it can be said that Lothal was a prosperous port of ancient India and international trade of Harappan civilization must have been done through the port of Lothal.





3.3 Dock Yard of Lothal port

Dholaveera is an archaeological site located in the Khadirbet area in Bhachau taluka in Kutch district. Generally, the Harappan towns are divided into two parts (bilateral), while the town of Dholaveera is divided into three parts (trilateral) : (1) Citadel-Fort (2) Upper town (3) Lower town. The main speciality of Dholaveera town is rainwater harvesting system and stadium.

Kalibangan town of Rajasthan was the headquarter of agricultural revolution in Harappan civilization. The remains of farms here provide proof of this. The copper residue found here proves that copper tools must have been manufactured here and these tools might have been used in agriculture.

Thus, the town planning of Indus civilization was well-organised, well-engineered, well-planned and efficient. It is a wonderful reflection of the governing power of ruling elite, the intelligence of the engineers and the craftsmanship of the craftsmen.

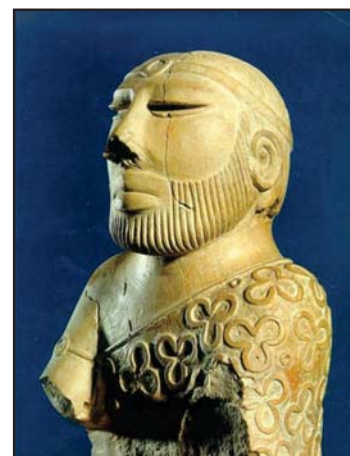
The Economic life in Harappan Civilization

People of Indus valley civilization were engaged in various economic activities like, agriculture, livestock rearing, trade, silk industry. In agriculture, they produced crops like wheat, barley, peas, sesame, mustard etc. They used ploughs to plough the land. They reared animals like cows, buffaloes, goats and bullocks. They were engaged in internal as well as international trade. Historians believed that cotton cloth produced here, used to reach Mesopotamia and Egypt via Mesopotamia. In addition of this, people living here were also involved in professions like pottery, metal work, bead making, sculpture etc.

Social life of the Harappan Civilization

The main occupations of the people of Indus valley were, agriculture and livestock rearing. People of this time, used to have wheat, barley, millet, peas, sesame, date palms etc. in their diet. Due to pastoralism (cattle-rearing), their diet consisted of milk and milk products also. A fishing hook has been found in the remnants of this civilization. So, their food must have included fish also.

We get information regarding attire of the people of that time, on the bases of sculptures found from Indus Valley Civilization. Men and women here wore two clothes. They wore cloth similar to dhoti on their waist and in the upper part they wrapped a short cloth which



3.4 A stone statue found in Mohan-jo-daro wearing garments.



came down from the shoulder. They mainly used cotton clothes. They were also familiar with woollen clothes. As the needles made of metal and ivory have been found, we can assume that they wore stitched clothes. Although most of the people wore unstitched clothes.

People of this time wore ornaments like necklace, ring in finger, hand bracelets, were worn by women as well as men. Women wore jewellery like bangles, earrings, waist belt, anklets etc. These ornaments were made of gold, silver and precious stones.

People of Indus valley civilization made utensils of earthenware, copper, bronze etc. These included utensils like mug, bowl, earthen mug, metallic pot, saucer, casserole etc. People of Indus valley civilization made special type of toys for their children, which included bird shaped whistles, rattlers, carriages, carts, marbles, toys in the shape of birds, animals and men and women. In a way, creativity and artistry of these people is expressed in these toys. Toys like head shaking animals and monkey climbing tree were seen here.



3.5 Toys

Religious Life and Funeral :

We get information regarding religious life of Harappan civilization from the idols and postures. Among the idols excavated, the idol of Maatrakadevi has been found. Historians consider it the symbol of Mother Earth. It means people of Harappan civilization must have been worshipping Mother Earth specially, as it gives grains (food) and water. Besides this they might have been worshipping trees, animals, Nagdevta, Swastik etc. Remains of worshipping fire have been found from Lothal and Kalibangan.

People of Harappan civilization might have been burning dead people. Also, evidences of Agni sanskar have been found at many places. They buried dead person and also kept some of the things with the dead body. It tells us about their imagination, that there is life after death.

Script and Language :

Coins, seals, copper plates have been found from remains of Harappan civilization. Over which some text is transcribed, which is written in some unresolved mysterious language. Although these writings are short words with matras and joined words are found. Lot of attempts have been made to decipher this script but it has not been successful yet.

Places of Harappan Civilization in Gujarat :

Small and big colonies of Harappan civilization have been found in Gujarat like Rangpur and Lothal in Ahmedabad district, Rozdi (Shrinathgarh) in Rajkot district, Desalpur in Kutch district, Dholaveera, Surkotda, Lakhavaval in Jamnagar district Amra, Bhagatalav on the bank of Kim river in Bharuch district.

End of Harappan Civilization :

The historians believe that Harappan civilization may have ended because of earthquake, flood, epidemic or external invasion. However, for today's historians the end of it has been the subject of research.



Our Ancient Texts

Rigveda and its study : Four vedas are there : Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda and Atharvaveda. Rigveda is our oldest text. It includes 1028 hymns, which are called Suktas. Rigveda is a repository of ancient knowledge. It is written in old Sanskrit or Vedic Sanskrit language. With the help of Rigveda, we get information about political, social, economic and religious life of Aryans. Historians, Archaeologists study Vedas along with relics to know about history. Some of the hymns of Rigveda are in dialogue form.

There are references of life of common man in Rigveda. There are references of political institutions like Gana, Sabha and Samiti. Sabha was a smaller institution as compared to samiti. Head of the state sat in it and discussed important issues of the state and gave justice. The samiti was an elaborate body that elected the king. Army chief and priest were appointed to assist the king. One of the work of king was Gaweshna. Gaweshna means war. From Rigveda we get reference of battles between ten kings, on the banks of Ravi river.

Rigveda provides us information about social life of the Aryans. One of the unit of society was family. And family system was patriarchal and it was also joint family system. Society was not divided into castes and races. So all were equal in the society. There was no discrimination of high and low status. Women had high status in society. Feminism was there and women were considered as co-workers and their presence in Yagna was essential. They could also study. Among them Apala, Lopamudra, Ghosha etc. created Richas of Rigveda. Girls got married only when they were adults.

Mention of worship of nature is found in the Rigveda. Worshipping of Indra, Varun, Agni, Surya etc. is mentioned in Rigveda. There is mention of 'Usha' as the goddess of morning and 'Aditi' as the goddess of evening.

Cows, horses and bulls have been discussed at many places in Rigveda. As compared to other animals, horses have been mentioned more times, which indicates importance of pastoralism in their lives. It was common among the tribals, to fight for animals. Property was mainly decided on the basis of number of cattle. Animal husbandry was done collectively and agriculture was secondary in the early stages of Rigvedic age.

Learn this

Sukta means well spoken.

Exercises

1. Choose the correct alternative and write correct answer :

- (1) From where were the ruins of Indus valley civilization first found ?
(A) Harappa (B) Lothal (C) Mohan-jo-daro (D) Kalibangan
- (2) Which city was the headquarter of agriculture revolution in Harappan civilization ?
(A) Lothal (B) Mohan-jo-daro (C) Kalibangan (D) Dholaveera



(3) How many mandals are there in Rigveda ?

(A) 12

(B) 15

(C) 10

(D) 4

2. Answer the following questions briefly :

(1) Give introduction of roads of Harappan civilization.

(2) 'Creativity and Craftsmanship of Harappan people are expressed in toys'. Explain the statement.

(3) Write a note on Lothal.

3. Fill in the blanks :

(1) Kalibangan is currently situated in state.

(2) Public bath found in Harappan civilization, is located in town.

(3) Dholaveera is an archaeological site found in district.

4. State whether the following statements are True or False :

(1) Harappan civilization is considered to be contemporary to Egyptian civilization.

(2) Dholaveera had a rainwater harvesting system.

(3) The town structure of Dholaveera is divided into two parts.

(4) There are mainly seven vedas.

Activity

- Take a tour of Lothal as an educational tour from your school and collect information about it.
- Make a handwritten issue about Human life of the Harappan civilization.