



মণিপুরৰ সৰ্বশিক্ষণ বিভাগ (সংস্কৃত)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (S)

Government of Manipur

CHAPTER- I

THE STORY OF THE FIRST CITIES : HARAPPAN ARCHAEOLOGY

(BRICKS, BEADS AND BONES)

INTRODUCTION

The great Indus valley civilization of India was the setting for one of the world's earliest urban societies. The story of discovery of Harappa, which lay buried for many centuries, is interesting. In 1856, the British were building the railway from Lahore to Multan, they found it in the form of finely baked bricks of Harappa-millions of them. It was in 1920-21 that R.D. Banerjee and R.B. Daya Ram Sahni had excavation at Mohenjodaro in Sindh (now in Pakistan) and Harappa in Montgomery district now called Sahiwal (in Pakistan) discovered bricks of an unknown type which led to the identification of the ancient civilization in Indian history.

In 1924, the Director General Archaeological Survey of India, Sir John Marshall announced that about 5000 years ago a rich and highly developed civilization flourished in the valley of Indus.

EXTENT OF HARAPPA CIVILISATION

At the time of partition of India in August 1947, only 40 settlements belonging to this civilization had been discovered. But the researches carried out by the archaeologist have altered the pictured completely and different phases of this culture are known from the Indian Sub-continent. Now about 1400 settlement, discovered so far are distributed over a wide geographical area. The influence of this culture extended to the Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana etc. This civilization was spread over an area about 1600 km east to west and 1400 km north to south and the Harappan civilization covers an area about 12,50,000 sq. km. These settlements are mostly located on river banks.

TOWN PLANNING

The Harappa and Mohenjodaro cities were known as well planned cities in the world. The settlement was divided into two section, citadel and lower town. The citadel was walled and separated from the lower town. The lower town was also walled. The cities of Harappan culture had an advanced system of drainage. The drains were made of mortar, lime and gypsum and were covered with bricks or stones. Mohenjodaro had wide streets laid out in a regular plan. All the streets were intersected at right angles.

The most imposing construction of the Indus Valley is Great Bath at Mohenjodaro. It consists of a large open quadrangle in the centre with verandahs, galleries and rooms on all sides. The Great Bath was a walled water tank probably used for a special ritual bath.

SCULPTURE

The Indus valley people were skilled in art of sculpture and fashioned. The most important monumental product of this culture are the stone-sculpture, Metal sculpture, sculpture of Terracotta etc. These sculpture had made an extensive and detailed study of the Harappan culture.



TRACING SOCIAL DIFFERENCES

The archaeologists generally determine the social and economic differences among the people living within a particular culture by studying the burials. Some burials have also been found in Harappa. The dead were generally landed in pits which also contained pottery and ornaments indicating a belief in after life or life after death. Another strategy the social differences were to study artifacts classified as utility and luxury. Some objects were categories under utility items like stone of clay, pottery, needles etc. The luxury objects were rare and made of costly and non local material, pots of faience (a large member of finely glaze ceramic beads).

TRADE COMMERCE AND POLITICS

The Harappans were gifted with great talents regarding crafts industries. Chanhudaro settlement was devoted to craft products using variety of materials. Specialized drills have been found at Chanhudaro, Lothal and Dholavira. The archeologist usually identify the centres of crafts production by raw material such as – stone nodules, shells, copper ore, tools etc. Through tools and implements were made of stone, they were aware of gold, copper, bronze and shells, etc. were used to make beads. Harappan culture acquired materials for crafts production from various part of sub-continent such as - copper from Rajasthan, steatite from Gujarat and Rajasthan, Lapis-Lazuli from Afghanistan, Gold from South India.

In Harappan civilization, inter country communication with Oman, Bahrain and Mesopotamia was done through the waterways. A terracotta model of ship was found at Lothal indicated that external trade was carried using ships and boats. The small and heavy weight plus metal scale pans had been found. The seals and sealings were used to facilitate long distance communication. The Harappan script remain undeciphered till date. It was not alphabetical, include many sign and the Harappan script was pictographic. According tjo Archeologist, the Harappan society had no ruler and everybody enjoyed equal status. Some Archeologists feel that there was no single ruler, other historians feel that there was a single ruler, given the similarity in artifacts, evidence of planned settlements, standard brick size, establishment of settlements near source of material, but there is no definite proof.

END OF THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

The scholars have no definite answer to the explain that how this remarkable civilization was destroyed. According to Sir John Marshall, the Indus Valley civilization collapsed about a thousand years before the coming of the Aryans. Various scholars have given their opinions regarding the decline of the Harappan civilization. The following causes have been put forward for the decay and disappearance of this magnificent Harappan culture such as – floods, famines, earthquakes, changes in the course of river Indus, deforestation, evidence of Invasions of the Aryans.

Some archeologists are of the view that the Harappan culture came to end. This contributed to the collapse of the entire civilization. This is evident from the disappearance of seals, the script, distinctive beads and pottery , the shift from a standardized weight system to the used of local weight and the decline and abandonment of cities.



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Although the Indus cities disappeared probably as a result of plaques, floods or invasions, yet culture and civilization of the Indus did not wholly collapse. In the course of time, the Aryans borrowed some features of the Indus culture.

