

IMPORTANT QUESTION CLASS – 12 HISTORY CHAPTER- 1 BRICKS , BEADS AND BONES THE HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION

Question 1.

‘One of the most distinctive features of the Harappan cities was the carefully planned drainage system.’ Elaborate.

Answer:

One of the most distinctive features of Harappan Civilisation was its carefully planned drainage system. If we look at the plan of the Lower Town, we can find that roads and streets were laid out along an approximate ‘grid’ pattern, intersecting at right angles. Every house had one wall alongside the street having drain connected to the street drain to flow out domestic waste water. It seems that streets with drains were laid out first and then houses built along them.

Mackay said about the drains, “It is certainly the most complete ancient system as yet discovered”. According to him, every house was connected to the street drains. The main channels were made of bricks set in Mortar and were covered with loose bricks that could be removed for cleaning. Sometimes limestone was used for the covers.

In Harappa, house drains first emptied into a sump or cesspit into which solid matter settled while waste water flowed out into the street drains. Very long drainage channels . were provided at intervals with sumps for cleaning.

Little heaps of material mostly sand were found lying alongside drainage channels, it meant that the debris was not always carted away when the drain was cleared.

Drainage systems were mostly found in smaller settlement, but were not unique to the larger cities. For example, at Lothal while houses were built of mud bricks, drains were made of burnt bricks. Therefore, we can say that Harappan cities have carefully planned drainage system.

Question 2.

How have historians provided new insight into the subsistence strategies of the Harappan culture?

Answer:

According to historians mature Harappan culture developed in some of the areas occupied by

the Early Harappan cultures. These cultures also shared certain common elements including subsistence strategies.

For example:

- The Harappans ate a wide range of plant and animal products, including fish and meat, wheat, maize, millets, pulses, rice and another eatables.
- Cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig were domesticated by the Harappans for their sustenance.
- The evidence of wild species like boar, deer and gharial have also been traced from the remains of bones, but it is not sure whether the Harappans hunted these animals themselves or obtained meat from other hunting community.
- Archaeological evidences suggested that oxen were used for ploughing and two different crops were grown together. As most of the sites are located in semi-arid lands, it is evident that water from canals and wells was used for irrigation.

Question 3.

Explain the distinctive features of the residential buildings of Mohenjodaro.

Answer:

The most unique feature of the Harappan Civilisation was the development of urban centres. Mohenjodaro is the most well-known site of Harappan Civilisation.

The following are the most unique architectural feature of Mohenjodaro: Citadel It was smaller but higher. It was walled and was physically separated from the lower town. Here the buildings were constructed with mud, bricks platform. Here, we find some structures that were probably used for special public purposes.

These include the warehouse, a massive structure and the 'Great Bath'. The uniqueness of the structure of 'Great Bath' suggested that it was meant for some kind of special ritual bath.

The Lower Town The lower town was also walled. Several buildings were built on platforms, which served as foundations. All building activity within the city was restricted to a fixed area on the platforms. Sun-dried or baked bricks were used at all Harappan settlements.

The courtyard of the houses was the centre of activities like cooking and weaving, particularly during hot and dry weather. There were no windows in the walls along the ground level. Besides, the main entrance did not give a direct view of the interior or the courtyard.

Drainage System Mohenjodaro had carefully planned drainage system. The roads and the streets were laid out along an approximate 'grid' pattern, intersecting at right angles. It seems that streets with drains were laid out first and then houses built along them.

Every house had its own bathroom paved with bricks, with drains connected through the walls, to the street drains. Drainage systems were not only unique to the larger cities, but were found in smaller settlements also. All these features indicated that Mohenjodaro had a well planned architectural system.

Question 4.

Explain the strategies used by the archaeologists to understand socio-economic differences among the Harappans.

Answer:

The archaeologists have tried to find out socio-economic differences among the Harappans through two types of evidences.

These were: Burials Burials have been significant evidence to establish social differences within the Harappan society’.

The dead were generally laid in pits. There were differences in the way the burial pit was made. In some cases, the hallowed out spaces were lined with bricks.

However, whether these variations were an indication of social differences or not, it is not yet established. Pottery ornaments, jewellery of both men and women have been found in some burials. But the Harappans did not believe in burying precious things with the dead.

Artefacts Two types of artefacts have been found, i.e. luxuries’ and ‘utilitarian’. Luxuries artefacts were made from costly and rare, non-local material with complicated technology e.g. little faience pots. Utilitarian objects included objects of daily use made of stone clay, e.g. querns, pottery, needles, flesh-rubbers (body scrubbers), etc. As far as distribution of such artefacts is concerned, we find that rare objects made of valuable materials were generally concentrated in large settlements like Mohenjodaro and Harappa and are rarely found in smaller settlements.

Thus, the findings of the above artefacts prove that there were social and economic differences in Harappan culture.

Question 5.

Explain the strategies for procuring materials by the Harappans for the craft production.

Answer:

In Harappan Civilisation, a variety of materials was used for craft production. These were:

- Clay was locally available, but stone, timber and metal had to be procured from outside.
- They established settlements, such as Nageshwar and Balakot in areas where shell was available. Other such sites were Shortughai, the best source of lapis lazuli, a blue stone found here; from Lothal Carnelian, steatite were found.

- Raw materials were also collected from Khetri region of Rajasthan (for copper) and South India (for gold). Recent archaeological finds suggest that copper was probably brought from Oman. The fact was also supported by Mesopotamian texts. Probably Harappan Civilisation was connected with Oman, Bahrain or Mesopotamia by sea.

Question 6.

Describe the opinions of the archaeologists over the central authority of the Harappan Civilisation.

Answer:

Opinion of some of the archaeologists about the Harappan society are as follows:

- Some archaeologists opine that Harappan society had no rulers and that everybody enjoyed equal status.
- Other scholars have the opinion that there was no single ruler but several. Mohenjodaro had a separate ruler, Harappans had another. In the same way, other regions had different rulers.
- Some scholars also argued that there was a single state given the similarity in artefacts, the evidence for planned settlements, the standardised ratio of brick size and the establishments near source of raw material.
- Of all, the last theory seems to be the most plausible as it is unlikely that entire communities could have collectively made and implemented such complex decisions.

Question 7.

Explain the exclusive features of the craft production in Chanhudaro.

Answer:

Chanhudaro was a tiny settlement as compared to Mohenjodaro. This area was exclusively devoted to craft production. Its features are:

1. The main craft productions included bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, seal-making and weight-making.
2. Here variety of materials were used to make beads. Stones like carnelian jasper, crystal, quartz, steatite; metals like copper, bronze and gold, moreover shell, faience and terracotta or burnt clay were used.
3. Some beads were made of two or more stones, these were cemented together and some were made of stones with beautiful gold caps. The shapes were of different types, e.g. dice cylindrical, spherical, barrel- shaped, etc. Some beads were decorated by incising or painting and some had designs etched (engraved) on to them.
4. Different techniques were applied in making beads. Steatite was a very soft stone and could be easily moulded. But how the steatite micro bead was made remains a surprise for the archaeologists. The red colour of carnelian

was obtained by firing the raw material. Grinding, polishing and drilling completed the full process. Specialised drills have been found at Chanhudaro, Lothal and Dholavira.

Question 8.

Mention any three features of Harappan cities.

Answer:

Historians suggest that the most unique feature of the Harappan Civilisation was the development of urban centres, i.e., cities. The main features of Harappan cities were:

- The Harappan cities were well planned. The cities were divided into two sections which are one smaller and higher, i.e. the Citadel and other much larger but lower, i.e. the Lower Town. Both these sections were walled and physically separated from each other.
- One of the most distinctive features of Harappan cities was the carefully planned drainage system. If we look at the plan of the Lower Town, the roads and streets were laid out along an approximate 'grid' pattern, intersecting at right angles.
- At burials in Harappan areas, the dead were generally laid in pits. Some graves contained pottery and ornament, which indicated the belief that these materials could be used in the afterlife. But the Harappan did not believe in burying precious things with the dead.

Question 9.

Describe briefly how the centres of craft production are identified.

Answer:

In order to identify centres of craft production, archaeologists usually look for the raw materials, like stone modules, whole shells, copper ore, unfinished objects, rejected and waste materials. Actually waste products indicate craft work. For example, if shell or stone is used to make any object, then pieces of shell or stone will be discarded as waste at the place of production.

These can be understood through following points:

- Both Nageshwar and Balakot are near coast and shell objects are found here. These areas were specialised centre for making shell objects, including bangles, ladles and inlay, which were taken to other settlement.
- Similarly, some finished products like different pots and beads are found in Lothal and Chanhudaro, which were taken to the large urban centres such as Mohenjodaro and Harappa.
- For making beads, stones like carnelian, jasper, crystal, quartz, steatite and metals like copper, bronze, gold, and other materials like shell, faience, terracotta were used. For making beads, grinding, polishing and drilling were done. Specialised drills have found at Chanhudaro, Lothal and Dholavira.

- In order to identify the craft production centre, archaeologists look for raw materials and tools. Large- waste pieces of raw materials indicated the specialised craft production centres. But sometimes minuscule bits suggest that craft production was also undertaken in large cities like Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

Question 10.

How did architectural features of Mohenjodaro indicate planning? Support the statement with examples.

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