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Tender Heart High School,
Sector 33 B, Chandigarh

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Class IX

Subject:- History and Civics

Chapter 1 The Harappan Civilisation

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Good Morning Students!

This lesson is of Class IX for the subject of History Chapter 1 The Harappan Civilisation starting on Page No. 5 of your textbook titled Total History and Civics ICSE 9 and is being submitted to you on 15.04.24

In this chapter we will study about the Harappan civilisation. But before we study about it let us first understand the meaning of the term civilisation. It is said to be an advanced state of human cultural development. This can be seen in urbanisation, division of labour, a system of writing and development of technology. This development is a gradual process.

There were four river valley civilizations in ancient times — Mesopotamian, Chinese, Egyptian and the Harappan civilisation. Since it developed around the river Indus, it is also called as Indus Valley Civilization. It was discovered in the 20th Century.

Sources:- We rely on archaeological sources for the study of the Harappan civilisation. The script of Harappan civilisation has not yet been deciphered. So we fail to get any information from it.

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1. Great Bath - The most imposing structure unearthed at Mohenjodaro was the Great Bath. It had a large rectangular tank in a courtyard surrounded by a corridor on all four sides. There were two flight of steps leading down to the pool. It was filled with water from the nearby well. The walls of the pool were made watertight, using specially-made bricks and gypsum mortar. The Great Bath is an important source of information. It shows the high level of building activity at that time. For constructing such a structure, there must have been a ruling class. It was probably used for religious purposes.
2. Seals - More than 2000 seals have been discovered from the various sites. From the seals we come to know about the physical features, dress, ornaments and religious beliefs of the people. The seals are valuable sources of information.
 - i) They throw light on the religious faith of the people.
 - ii) They give us an idea about their commercial activities.
 - iii) They reveal the remarkable skill of the artists.
 - iv) They also show the scripts prevalent in those days.

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3. Harappa and Mohenjodaro each had its own citadel which was probably occupied by the members of the ruling class.
4. The most outstanding work in metal is the bronze figure of a Dancing girl with her right hand on her hip in a dancing posture.
5. A dockyard, surrounded by a massive brick wall, was discovered in Lothal in Gujarat. The dockyard suggests that they practised navigation on the coast of the Arabian Sea. It was an important trading centre.
6. The Harappans invented the art of writing but the Harappan script has not been deciphered so far. It is pictographic since its signs represent birds, fish and varieties of the human form.
7. Objects of Sumerian origin found at the Indus Cities indicate that there were trade relations between India and Mesopotamia. The Harappans used sets of cubical stones as weights.

Let us take a short break. Please read the lecture carefully again and answer the following questions.

1. Name the four river valley civilizations.

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2. What information do the seals provide?
3. Name the place where dockyard was discovered.

We will now discuss the answers

1. Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Harappan and Chinese civilizations.
2. We come to know about physical features, dress, ornaments and religious beliefs of the people from the seals.
3. Lothal

Let us resume our lecture and study about the origin and extent of the civilization. There are mainly two theories of the origin of the Harappan civilisation. Some scholars believe that Harappan civilisation developed from the Mesopotamian civilisation. But the recent excavations point out that the roots of Harappan civilisation lies in the Indian soil. It developed from the local village cultures and the support must have been provided by contact with Mesopotamia.

The Harappan civilisation extended from Suktagendor in the West to Alamgirpur in the East and from Mandi in the north to Bhagtrav in the south.

Features of Urban Planning

1. The city was divided into two parts - citadel which was a raised area and the lower town. In the citadel were located all important buildings. The lower town had residential

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areas.

2. The streets divided the entire city into square or rectangular blocks, each of which was divided by a number of lanes. The main streets were wide and straight and intersected each other at right angles. The corner of the streets were rounded off to make it easy for the movement of the heavy carts. Houses were not allowed to encroach upon the streets.
3. Finally we will discuss about the drainage system of the Harappans. A brick-lined drainage channel flowed alongside every street. The house drains were connected to the underground main drains. The drains were provided with manholes at regular intervals for proper inspection and cleaning. It shows that the people paid great attention to sanitation and health.

There were a number of dwelling-houses situated on either side of the streets. The houses were of different sizes and were built on raised platform. They were made of burnt bricks of high quality and were furnished with paved floors. The rooms were built around the open courtyard. The houses had wells and bathrooms.

Apart from the dwelling houses, the Great Bath we also find some other important buildings. The most remarkable

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building at Harappa was the Great Granary. It was built on a raised platform to protect it from floods. It was used for storing food grains.

A pillared hall with long corridors and low benches were probably used as an Assembly Hall or believed to be a place where the ruler carried out ceremonial and administrative duties.

Let us again take a short break.
Read the assignment again and answer the following questions.

1. What was the extent of the Harappan civilisation?
2. How can we conclude that the Harappans were aware about health and sanitation?
3. Write one feature of the houses of the Harappans.

We will discuss the answers now.

1. It extended from Suktagendor in the West to Alamgirpur in the East and from Mandla in the north to Bhagtrav in the south.
2. Well planned drainage system.
3. Houses had wells and bathrooms.

We will study briefly about the economy of the Harappans. Agriculture was an important occupation. Apart from it Harappans had trade relations with southern and eastern India, Kashmir and the countries of Central Asia. It is believed that they imported gold from Karnataka, copper from Rajasthan and

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precious stones from Afghanistan and Iran.

Trade needs uniform weights and measures. There is evidence that the Harappans used sets of cubical stone weights even in the far flung areas.

Some of the objects found at the ruins of the city help us to know about the religious faith and beliefs of the Indus people. There was probably prevalence of worship of Mother Goddess, Pashupati, animals and trees.

There is no clear evidence for the decline of the Harappan civilisation. Some scholars show that earthquake might have caused the decline of this civilisation. Others say that it might have been destroyed by floods which did occur periodically. Some others say that the river Indus might have changed the course submerging the cities. Mortimer Wheeler believed that an Aryan invasion might have caused the destruction of the civilisation.

Students, please give a reading to the whole chapter and focus on important things.

Home assignment

1. Short Answer Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15
2. Structured Questions 1(a, b, c); 2(a, b); 3(a, b, c); 5(a, b, c)
6(b)