



1. Discuss the evidence of craft production in Early Historic cities. In what ways is this different from the evidence from Harappan cities?

Ans: Widespread and deep excavations in the early historic towns have not been possible due to the fact that these towns are still inhabited. In Harappan Civilisation, we have been fortunate enough that excavations have taken place widespread. Despite this shortcoming, we have found many artefacts in the historic towns. These throw light on the craftsmanship of those days. There are other evidences too, that throw light on the craftsmanship of those days. The salient features of such evidences are as follows:

1. From the sights the fine pottery bowls and dishes have been found. They are glossy too and we call them Northern Black Polished Ware. It looks they were used by the rich people.
2. There have also been evidence of ornaments, tools, weapons, vessels and figurines. There are a wide range of items made of gold, silver, copper, bronze, ivory, glass, shell and terracotta.
3. The donor inscription tells who all lived in towns in terms of professionals and craftsmen. It included washer men, weaver, scribes, carpenters, goldsmith, ironsmith, etc. It is notable in Harappan towns there are no evidences of iron use.
4. The craftsmen and artisans built their guilds too. They collectively bought raw materials, produced and marketed their products.

2. Describe the salient features of Mahajanapadas.

Ans: Mahajanapadas were states that existed between 6th and 4th BC centuries. Buddhist and Jain texts mention sixteen Mahajanapadas. The name of all these are not uniform in all texts but some names are common and uniform which means they were the powerful ones. These Mahajanapadas are Vajji, Magadha, Kaushal, Kuru, Panchal, and Gandhar.

The important features of the Mahajanapadas are as follows.

1. Most of the Mahajanapadas were ruled by powerful kings. However, there were some Mahajanapadas where rule was in the hands of people, we call them republics. In some states the king and the subject had collective control on the economic resources of the state.
2. Every Mahajanapadas had its own capital. The capital normally would be surrounded by fort. The fortification of the capital was needed for protection and economic resources.
3. It was around 6th Century BC, Brahmins began to compile scripture called "Dharmashastra" which states rules of morality including that of monarch. Herein it was mentioned that the king should be Kshatriya.
4. The main job of the king was collection of taxes from farmers, traders, craftsmen. They also accepted donations.
5. It was considered fair to plunder neighbouring countries for riches.
6. Gradually Mahajanapadas began to have full time army and officials. Soldiers were from the ranks of farmers.

3. How do historians reconstruct the lives of ordinary people?

Ans: Ordinary people could not leave behind any historical evidence

about their life. Hence, the historians use a variety of sources to reconstruct the lives of the common people during the ancient times. The important sources are:

1. Remains of houses and pottery give an idea of the life of common men.
2. Some inscriptions and scriptures talk about the relation between monarchs and the subject. It talks about taxes and happiness and unhappiness of the common men.
3. Changing tools of craftsmen and farmers talk about the lifestyle of the people.
4. Historians also depend upon folklores to reconstruct the lives of the people during the ancient times.

4. Compare and contrast the list of things given to the Pandyan chief (Source 3) with those produced in the village of Danguna (source 8). Do you notice any similarities and differences?

Ans: The gifts given to Pandya chief included things like ivory, fragrant wood, honey, sandal-wood, pepper, flowers, etc. in additions to many birds and animals were also given as gifts. On the contrary, items produced in the village of Danguda included grass, skin of animals, flower salt and other minerals, etc. In both the lists the only common item is flower.

5. List some of the problems faced by the epigraphists.

Ans: The specialists who study inscriptions are called Epigraphists. Some of the important problems they encounter when they try to decipher inscriptions are as follows:

1. Many of the inscriptions are not found in proper shape, they are partly damaged, hence deciphering them becomes a knotty problem.
2. The inscriptions are written from the point of view of those who have created it. Hence, in order to get an impartial understanding, we need to go beyond the written words, get into its interpretations.
3. Many of the inscriptions have descriptions in symbolic words. Hence deciphering them have become difficult.
4. Sometimes the inscriptions are engrafted in very light colors. Hence, deciphering them becomes difficult.

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