

## **Social Life**

On the basis of the archaeological remains found from the various sites of the Harappan civilisation, a clear picture can be drawn of its society and the food and costumes etc. of its people. The salient features of the society of this period were as under:

### **① Food**

The archaeologists have been able to reconstruct dietary practices of the Harappans from finds of

charred grains and seeds. These are studied by specialists in ancient plant remains who are known as archaeo-botanists. The Harappan people were both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Their food included wheat, barley, rice, millets, pulses, fruits, vegetables and milk and ghee etc. The Harappans ate wheat and barley in Sindh and Punjab whereas they had to satisfy themselves only with barley in Rajasthan. Rice and millets were favourite diets of the Harappans at Rangpur, Surkotda etc. in Gujarat. They procured oil and fat from sesame and mustard seeds and perhaps from ghee. They, probably used honey to sweeten their food as it is not ascertained that they knew how to grow sugarcane. The finds of the seeds of jujube fruit and date from the Harappan sites, reveals that both of them were an important part of the Harappan food. The finds of rubbing stone querns from the archaeological remains at various Harappan sites, suggest that the Harappans used many spices to make their food more palatable. Milk and curd also were a part of their food. The Harappans ate meat of various animals. Bones of animals such as cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig have been found at various Harappan sites. Studies done by

archaeozoologists or zoo-archaeologists suggest that these animals were domesticated. Bones of wild species like bear, deer and gharial have also been found. But, it is not ascertained whether the Harappans hunted these animals themselves or procured meat from other hunting communities. However, it is certain that they used to eat meat of these animals. They also ate fish and eggs. Bones of fish and fowl have also been found from various sites.

## ② **Costumes, Ornaments and Make-Ups and Cosmetics**

A clear picture of the costumes, ornaments and fashions of the Harappans can be made out from the terracotta figurines and the paintings on pottery. They used cotton and woollen clothes. Their dress mainly included unstitched clothes like modern sarees which were just wrapped around the waist. The women wore colourful and printed skirts, blouses and dupattas. Both men and women were ornament-loving and they used ornaments of various types. Necklaces, fillets, armlets and finger rings were used by both the sexes.

(The rich wore beautiful and artistic ornaments made of gold, silver, ivory and precious stones but the ornaments of the poor were made of shell, bone, copper and terracotta.)

(Both men and women used cosmetics of various types. Beautiful ivory combs, artistic bronze mirrors, razors, powder, perfumed oils, lipsticks and rouge found at various sites, suggest the Harappan's love for make-ups and cosmetics.)

### 3 Amusements

Entertainment and amusement occupied an important place in their lives. They were fond of indoor means of entertainment. They had a special love for dancing. They played a game which was more or less similar to modern chess. Hunting, fishing, animal fighting, bird rearing, fowl hunting etc., were also their pastimes. Children played with clay toys like rattles, whistles, birds, wheeled sparrows, bullock-carts, and figurines of men and women etc.)

### Status of Women

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Women enjoyed a high status in the Harappan society. They were given much respect in family and society. Parda system was not in vogue. Several figurines found in excavations from various sites, suggest that the Harappan women were not considered only a means of entertainment or the house keeping device but were also worshipped as Mother goddess.)