

## CBSE Notes Class 6 History Chapter 8-Vital Villages, Thriving Towns

The use of iron began in the subcontinent almost 3000 years ago. Some of the largest collections of iron tools and weapons were found in the megalithic burials. Around 2500 years ago, there is evidence for the growing use of iron tools. These included axes for clearing forests and the iron ploughshare.

### Iron Tools and Agriculture

Use of iron can be traced back 3000 years with growing use reflecting some 2500 years ago. These iron tools used included axes for clearing forests and the iron ploughshare, most useful for increasing agricultural production.

### Other steps to increase production: irrigation

Kings and kingdoms needed the support of flourishing villages to exist-new tools and the system of transplantation increased production-irrigation was also used-Irrigation works built during this time included canals, wells, tanks, and artificial lakes.

### Who lived in the villages?

3 different kinds of people - in villages in the southern and northern parts of the subcontinent-large landowners were known as vellalar- ordinary ploughmen were known as uzhavar-landless labourers, including slaves, were known as kadaiyar and adimai. The northern part of the country-village headman-grama bhojaka-men from the same family held the position for generations-post was hereditary-grama bhojaka-the largest landowner-had slaves-hired workers to cultivate the land-was powerful-king often used him to collect taxes from the village-functioned as a judge and policeman. Apart from the gramabhojaka-other independent farmers-grihapatis-most were smaller landowners-men and women such as the dasa karmakara-did not own land-had to earn a living working on the fields owned by others-In most villages, there were also some crafts persons such as the blacksmith, potter, carpenter and weaver.

### Finding out about cities: stories, travellers, sculpture and archaeology

Jatakas-stories that were composed by ordinary people-written down and preserved by Buddhist monks-Other kinds of evidence to find out about life in some of these early cities-Sculptor's carved scenes depicting peoples' lives-in towns, villages and forest-were used to decorate railings, pillars and gateways of buildings-visited by people.

Cities developed from about 2500 years ago-capitals of the mahajanapadas-some of these cities were surrounded by massive fortification walls-archaeologists have found rows of pots or ceramic rings arranged one on top of the other-known as ring wells-used as toilets in some cases and as drains and garbage dumps-are usually found in individual houses- hardly any remains of palaces, markets, or of homes of ordinary people-yet to be discovered by archaeologists-Others, made of wood, mud-brick and thatch, may not have survived. Find out about early cities- from accounts of sailors and travellers who

visited them- most detailed accounts that have been found was by an unknown Greek sailor-described all the ports he visited.

## Coins

Wealth measured in terms of coins-Archaeologists found several thousands of coins belonging to this period-earliest coins were in use for about 500 years-punch marked coins-generally rectangular or sometimes square or round in shape-cut out of metal sheets or made out of flattened metal globules (a small spherical body)-not inscribed, but were stamped with symbols using dies or punches- found over most parts of the subcontinent- in circulation till the early centuries CE.

## Cities with many functions

Mathura-an important settlement for more than 2500 years-important-located at the crossroads of two major routes of travel and trade — from the northwest to the east and from north to south- fortifications around the city and several shrines-Farmers and herders from adjoining areas provided food for people in the city-Mathura a centre where some extremely fine sculpture was produced- Around 2000 years ago- Mathura became second capital of the Kushanas. Mathura was also a religious centre — there were Buddhist monasteries, Jaina shrines-an important centre for the worship of Krishna-inscriptions on surfaces such as stone slabs and statues found in Mathura-are short inscriptions- recording gifts made by men (and sometimes women) to monasteries and shrines-made by kings and queens, officers, merchants, and crafts persons who lived in the city.

## Crafts and craftspersons

Archaeological evidence for crafts-extremely fine pottery, known as the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)- generally found in the northern part of the subcontinent-know from texts-manufacture of cloth was important-famous centres such as Varanasi in the north-Madurai in the south-men and women worked in these centres-craftspersons and merchants now formed associations known as *shrenis*-*shrenis* of crafts persons provide training, procured raw material, and distributed the finished product- shrenis of merchants organised the trade-also served as banks, where rich men and women deposited money- invested, and part of the interest was returned or used to support religious institutions such as monasteries.

## A closer look — Arikamedu

Arikamedu (in Puducherry)-a coastal settlement where ships unloaded goods from distant lands-massive brick structure (a warehouse found at the site)-pottery from the Mediterranean region, such as amphorae (tall double-handled jars that contained liquids such as wine or oil) -stamped red-glazed pottery, known as Arretine Ware, named after a city in Italy- made by pressing wet clay into a stamped mould-another kind of pottery made locally, though Roman designs were used-Roman lamps, glassware and gems found at the site. Small tanks found-were probably dyeing vats, used to dye cloth-plenty of evidence for the making of beads from semi-precious stones and glass.

## Elsewhere

Rome-one of the oldest cities in Europe-developed around the same time as the cities in the Ganga valley-capital of one of the largest empires — spread across Europe, North Africa, and West Asia.

Augustus- most important emperors-ruled about 2000 years ago-found Rome a city of brick-made it into a city of marble-He, and later rulers, built temples and palaces-also built huge amphitheatres— open arenas surrounded by tiers of seats — where citizens could watch all kinds of shows, and public baths (with separate timings for men and women), where people met and relaxed. Huge aqueducts — channels to supply water — were built to bring water to the city — for the baths, fountains and toilets.

