

Unraveling the Enigma: Exploring the Indus Valley Civilization in the Prehistoric Era

Welcome back to our ongoing blog series on General Knowledge, where we explore the rich tapestry of Indian history. In this installment, we transport ourselves to a time long before written records, to an era known as the Prehistoric Era. Among the many remarkable civilizations that emerged during this period, one stands out for its extraordinary achievements and enigmatic legacy—the Indus Valley Civilization.

Flourishing in the vast floodplains of the Indus River in present-day Pakistan and northwest India, this ancient civilization thrived from approximately 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE. Join us on a captivating journey as we delve into the depths of the Prehistoric Era, unearthing the secrets of the Indus Valley Civilization. From their advanced urban planning and remarkable craftsmanship to their sophisticated drainage systems and enigmatic script, we will unravel the fascinating tale of this remarkable civilization. So, put on your explorer's hat and prepare to be captivated by the wonders of the Indus Valley Civilization!

Introduction:

Indus valley civilization is one of the **oldest civilisations** of the world along with the mesopotamian civilisation, the Euphrates civilizations and the Chinese civilization.

The **Ghaggar - Hakra river system** has the most concentration of settlements. Haryana has the largest number of sites. In 1922 R.D. Banarjee excavated **Mohenjo-Daro (mound of the dead)** in Larkana district of Sindh.

The northernmost site of the Indus Valley Civilization is MANDA in Jammu and Kashmir. The southernmost site is DAIMABAD on the banks of PARAVARA rivers in Maharashtra. ALAMGIRPUR in Uttar Pradesh is eastern most site of Indus Valley Civilization. And western most site is Suktagendor on the banks of DASHT river in Balochistan.

The indus valley civilisation is Bronze age, older but surprisingly more developed than the chalcolithic age, culture in the sub continent.

The Harappan Civilisation which flourished between 2600 BC and 1900 BC had major contributions. Some of them include standardised weight and measures, planned city construction, and public buildings like the Great Bath. The Harappans worshipped fire, Mother goddess, tree, phallus which was carried forward by the Aryans.

The agricultural practice, use of seals for trade, ornaments and dresses were also the great contributions of Harappans. Hence, the impact of Harappan civilization could be seen on the socio, economic, political and religious life of the people.

Major sites of Indus Valley Civilization are as follows:

Mohenjo-Daro:



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Mohenjo-Daro, found within Sind on the bank of the Indus, is among the biggest sites of the Harappan Civilization. Most of the data with respect to the town arranging, housing and seals of this civilization comes from this site. Unearthings started at this location in 1922, with R.D. Banerjee and Sir John Marshall taking up the work. Unearthings show that people lived here for a really long time and went on building and modifying houses in the same area.

Harappa:

Harappa was the first location to be unearthed and archaeologists like Dayaram Sahni, M.S. Vats and Mortimer Wheeler carried out unearthing at Harappa. It lay on the bank of the Ravi river in the Punjab region. In terms of its size and the assortment of objects found, it positions as the chief city of the Harappan Civilization. In Harappa, a substantial segment of the populace was locked in activities other than food production. It was found within the middle of a few critical exchange courses which are still in utilization. These courses associated Harappa with Central Asia, Afghanistan and Jammu.

Kalibangan:

The settlement of Kalibangan is found in Rajasthan along the river Ghaggar. As pointed out prior this zone had the biggest concentration of the Harappan settlements. Kalibangan was unearthed within the 1960s under the direction of B.K. Thapar. This yielded proof for the presence of Pre-Harappan and Harappan homes. There appears significant variation from Harappan within the circle of religious convictions.

Lothal:

Lothal is located between the Bhogavo and Sabarmati rivers near the Gulf of Khambhat in Gujarat. The word 'Lothal' literally means mound of dead similar to Mohenjo-Daro. The city was discovered by SN Rao in 1957. The city was mathematically planned and it had a grid pattern with streets crossing at right angles. The dockyard proves the maritime activity of the Harappans. As the Indus script is yet to be deciphered, it is not known if this was really India's first port as is claimed by some and questioned by some historians.

Chanhudaro:

Chanhudaro is situated around 100 km south of Mohenjo daro in the sindh on the bank of river indus. It was discovered by NG Majumdar in 1931. The Chanhu Daro has given evidence of factories of various figurines, seals, toys, bone implements so it has been interpreted that it was a settlement with lots of artisans and was an industrial

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Dholavira:

Dholavira is an archaeological site in Kutch district of Gujarat state. The site was discovered in 1967-68 by JP Joshi and is the fifth largest of the eight Harappan Majors sites. Dholavira is an archaeological site in Kutch District, Gujarat State. It is one of the top five Harappan sites and the most prominent archaeological sites in India belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization. It was named as UNESCO world heritage site on 27 July 2021.

Town Planning:

- Town planning was not uniform but some common features can be highlighted there was systematic town planning on the lines of the grid - system i.e; streets and lanes cutting across one another almost the right angles, thus dividing the city into several rectangular blocks.
- There was large scale use of standardised burnt bricks and the total absence of the stone building.
- There was a remarkable underground drainage system connecting all houses to the street drains which were covered with either bricks or stone slabs and equipped with manholes.

Agriculture and Economy:

- Agriculture technology was well developed. Main crops that were cultivated were wheat and barley. We have evidence of cultivation of rice in Lothal and Rangpur only.
- Indus people were the first to produce cotton in the world. We have evidence of mixed cropping in Kalibangan.
- Along with agriculture, animal rearing also practised, they reared buffaloes, camels, oxen sheep, asses, goats, pigs, elephants, dogs, cats etc. The remains of a horse have been found in SURKOTADA in GUJARAT.

Decline of Indus Valley Civilization:

There is no proper evidence of decline of harappan culture. Indus valley civilization declined around 1800 bce. There has been conflict between historians on the factors which led to the decline of the civilization. One theory suggested that a nomadic, Indo-European tribe called the Aryans invaded and conquered the Indus Valley Civilization, though more recent evidence tends to contradict this claim.

Many scholars believe that the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization was caused by climate change. Some experts believe the drying of the Saraswati River, which began around 1900 BCE, was the main cause for climate change, while others conclude that a great flood struck the area.



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So, that's it for today. In the next blog, we will discuss the **Vedic Age**.



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Address : 1997, Mukherjee Nagar, 110009

Email : online@kdcampus.org

Call : +91 95551 08888

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