

Indus Valley Civilization

- Indus Valley Civilization existed between 3300-1500 BC in three phases namely early, mature and late phases.
- It was discovered in 1921 and belonged to Bronze Age.
- Indus Valley Civilization was located on the banks of the river Indus, particularly at the bends that provided water, easy means of transportation of produce and other goods and also some protection by way of natural barriers of the river.

Important Sites

- In India: Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Lothal, Dholavira, Rangpur, Surkotda (Gujarat), Banawali (Haryana), Ropar (Punjab).
- In Pakistan: Harappa (on river Ravi), Mohenjodaro (on Indus River in Sindh), Chanhudaro (in Sindh).

Three phases of IVC are:

- the Early Harappan Phase from 3300 to 2600 BCE,
- the Mature Harappan Phase from 2600 to 1900 BCE, and
- the Late Harappan Phase from 1900 to 1500 BCE.

Town Planning and Structures

- The Harappan culture was distinguished by its system of town planning.
- Harappa and Mohenjodaro each had its own citadel or acropolis, which was possibly occupied by members of the ruling class.
- Below the citadel in each city lay a lower town containing brick houses, which were inhabited by the common people.
- The remarkable thing about the arrangement of the houses in the cities is that they followed the grid system.
- Granaries constituted an important part of the Harappan cities.
- The use of burnt bricks in the Harappan cities is remarkable, because in the contemporary buildings of Egypt mainly dried bricks were used.
- The drainage system of Mohenjodaro was very impressive.

- In almost all cities every big or small house had its own courtyard and bathroom.
- In Kalibangan many houses had their wells.
- At sites such as Dholavira and Lothal (Gujarat), the entire settlement was fortified, and sections within the town were also separated by walls.

Agriculture

- The Harappan villages, mostly situated near the flood plains, produced sufficient foodgrains.
- Wheat, barley, rai, peas, sesame, lentil, chickpea and mustard were produced. Millets are also found from sites in Gujarat. While rice uses were relatively rare.
- The Indus people were the earliest people to produce cotton.
- While the prevalence of agriculture is indicated by finds of grain, it is more difficult to reconstruct actual agricultural practices.
- Representations on seals and terracotta sculpture indicate that the bull was known, and archaeologists extrapolate shows oxen were also used for ploughing.
- Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands, where irrigation was probably required for agriculture.
- Traces of canals have been found at the Harappan site of Shortughai in Afghanistan, but not in Punjab or Sindh.
- Although the Harappans practised agriculture, animals were also reared on a large scale.
- Evidence of the horse comes from a superficial level of Mohenjodaro and from a doubtful terracotta figurine from Lothal. In any case the Harappan culture was not horse centred.

Economy

- The importance of trade in the life of the Indus people is witnessed by the presence of numerous seals, uniform script and regulated weights and measures in a wide area.
- The Harappans carried on considerable trade in stone, metal, shell, etc.
- Metal money was not used and trade was carried by barter system.
- They practised navigation on the coast of the Arabian Sea.
- They had set up a trading colony in northern Afghanistan which evidently facilitated trade with Central Asia.
- They also carried commerce with those in the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

- The Harappans carried on long distance trade in lapis lazuli; which may have contributed to the social prestige of the ruling class.

Crafts

- The Harappans were very well acquainted with the manufacturing and use of Bronze.
- Copper was obtained from the Khetri copper mines of Rajasthan and Tin was possibly brought from Afghanistan.
- Textile impressions have also been found on several objects.
- Huge brick structure suggest that brick-laying was an important craft. This also attests the existence of a class of masons.
- The Harappans practised boat-making, bead making and seal-making. Terracotta manufacture was also an important craft.
- The goldsmiths made jewellery of silver, gold and precious stones.
- The potter's wheel was in full use, and the Harappans produced their own characteristic pottery, which was glossy and shining.

Institutions

- Very few written materials have been discovered in the Indus valley and the scholars have not been able to decipher the Indus script so far.
- As a result, there is difficulty in understanding the nature of the state and institutions of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- No temples have been found at any Harappan sites. Therefore the possibility of priests ruling Harappa can be eliminated.
- Harappa was possibly ruled by a class of merchants.
- If we look for a centre of power or for depictions of people in power, archaeological records provide no immediate answers.
- Some archaeologists are of the opinion that Harappan society had no rulers, and that everybody enjoyed equal status.
- Another theory argues that there was no single ruler, but a number of rulers representing each of the urban centers.

Religion

- In Harappa numerous terracotta figurines of women have been found. In one figurine a plant is shown growing out of the embryo of a woman.
- The Harappans, therefore, looked upon the earth as a fertility goddess and worshipped her in the same manner as the Egyptians worshipped the Nile goddess Isis.
- The male deity is represented on a seal with three horned heads, represented in the sitting posture of a yogi.
- This god is surrounded by an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros, and has a buffalo below his throne. At his feet appear two deer. The depicted god is identified as Pushupati Mahadeva.
- Numerous symbols of the phallus and female sex organs made of stone have been found.
- The people of the Indus region also worshipped trees and Animals.
- The most important of them is the one horned unicorn which may be identified with the rhinoceros and the next important was the humped bull.
- Amulets have also been found in large numbers.

Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization

- The IVC declined around 1800 BCE but the actual reasons behind its demise are still debated.
- One theory claims that Indo-European tribe i.e. Aryans invaded and conquered the IVC.
- In later cultures various elements of the IVC are found which suggest that civilization did not disappear suddenly due to an invasion.
- On the other hand, many scholars believe natural factors are behind the decline of the IVC.
- The natural factors could be geological and climatic.
- It is believed that the Indus Valley region experienced several tectonic disturbances which causes earthquakes. Which also changed courses of rivers or dried them up.
- Another natural reason might be changes in patterns of rainfall.
- There could be also dramatic shifts in the river courses, which might have brought floods to the food producing areas.
- Due to combination of these natural causes there was a slow but inevitable collapse of IVC.

Indus Valley Sites in Rajasthan:

- Kalibangan (Hanumangarh)
- Baror (Sri Ganganagar)
- Karanpura (Hanumangarh)

Kalibangan

- Kalibangan is located in present Hanumangarh district.
- The site was discovered by Luigi Pio Tessitori, an Italian Indologist and linguist.
- After Independence in 1952, Amlanand Ghosh identified the site as part of Harappan Civilization and marked it for excavation. Later, during 1961-69, excavation was carried out by B. B. Lal & Balkrishna Thapar.

Kalibangan has settlements belonging to:

- Pre-Harappan Period from the 3500 BC - 2500 BC.
- Harappan Period from the 2500 BC - 1500 BC

Features of Pre-Harappan Settlement:

- The pre-Harappan settlement was a fortified parallelogram, the fortification wall being made of mud-bricks.
- The houses within the walled area were also made of mud-bricks.
- The distinctive trait of this period was the pottery which was significantly different from that of the succeeding Harappans.
- An outstanding discovery was a ploughed field, showing a cross-grid of furrows. This is perhaps the earliest ploughed field excavated so far.

Features of Harappan Period:

Town Planning:

- During the Harappan period, the structural pattern of the settlement was changed. There were now two distinct parts: the **citadel** on the west and the **lower city** on the east.
 - The **citadel** was situated on a higher level and looked like fortified parallelogram. The fortification was built throughout of mud- bricks. The northern half of the citadel contained residential buildings of the elite. The southern half of the citadel contained some five to six massive platforms, some of which may have been used for religious or ritual purposes.
 - The **lower city** was also fortified and within the walled city, there was a grid of streets running north-south and east-west, dividing the area into blocks. The houses were built of mud-bricks, baked bricks being confined to drains, wells, sills, etc.
- Beside the above two principal parts of Kalibangan, there was also a third one, situated 80 m east of the lower city. It consisted of a modest structure, containing four to five '**fire-altars**' and as such could have been used for ritualistic purposes.
- Of the finds obtained from this excavation, a cylindrical seal and an incised terracotta cake are quite significant.

Terracota:

- The best terracota figure from Kalibangan is that a charging bull which is considered to signify the "realistic and powerful folk art of Harappan Age".

Seals:

- Most noteworthy is a cylindrical seal, depicting a female figure between two male figures, fighting or threatening with spears.