

# Introduction

- The **history of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**, also known as Harappan Civilization.
- It flourished around **2,500 BC**, in the western part of **South Asia**, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India.
- The Indus Valley was home to the **largest of the four ancient urban civilizations** of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.
- In 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. **Mohenjodaro and Harappa** were unearthed.
- In 1924, **John Marshall, Director-General of the ASI**, **announced the discovery** of a new civilisation in the Indus valley to the world.

## Important Sites of IVC

Site	Excavated by	Location	Important Findings
Harappa	Daya Ram Sahini in 1921	Situated on the bank of river Ravi in Montgomery district of Punjab (Pakistan).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sandstone statues of Human anatomy</li><li>▪ Granaries</li><li>▪ Bullock carts</li></ul>
Mohenjodaro (Mound of Dead)	R.D Banerjee in 1922	Situated on the Bank of river Indus in Larkana district of Punjab (Pakistan).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Great bath</li><li>▪ Granary</li><li>▪ Bronze dancing girl</li><li>▪ Seal of Pasupathi Mahadeva</li><li>▪ Steatite statue of beard</li></ul>

			<p>man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A piece of woven cotton</li> </ul>
Sutkagendor	Stein in 1929	In southwestern Balochistan province, Pakistan on Dast river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A trade point between Harappa and Babylon</li> </ul>
Chanhudard	N.G Majumdar in 1931	Sindh on the Indus river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bead makers shop</li> <li>▪ Footprint of a dog chasing a cat</li> </ul>

Amri	N.G Majumdar in 1935	On the bank of Indus river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Antelope evidence</li> </ul>
Kalibangan	Ghose in 1953	Rajasthan on the bank of Ghaggar river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fire altar</li> <li>▪ Camel bones</li> <li>▪ Wooden plough</li> </ul>
Lothal	R.Rao in 1953	Gujarat on Bhogva river near Gulf of Cambay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First manmade port</li> <li>▪ Dockyard</li> <li>▪ Rice husk</li> <li>▪ Fire altars</li> <li>▪ Chess playing</li> </ul>
Surkotada	J.P Joshi in 1964	Gujarat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bones of horses</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Beads</li></ul>
Banawali	R.S Bisht in 1974	Hisar district of Haryana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Beads</li><li>▪ Barley</li><li>▪ Evidence of both pre-Harappan and Harappan culture</li></ul>
Dholavira	R.S Bisht in 1985	Gujarat in Rann of Kachchh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Water harnessing system</li><li>▪ Water reservoir</li></ul>

# Phases of IVC

- 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 1300 BCE.
- The Early Harappan Phase is related to the **Hakra Phase**, identified in the Ghaggar-Hakra River Valley.
- The earliest examples of the **Indus script** date back to 3000 BC.
- This phase stands characterized by **centralized authority** and an increasingly urban quality of life.
- **Trade networks** had been established and there are also evidences of the **cultivation of crops**. Peas, sesame seeds, dates, cotton, etc, were grown during that time.
- **Kot Diji** represents the phase leading up to Mature Harappan Phase.
- By 2600 BC, the Indus Valley Civilization had entered into a **mature stage**.
- The early Harappan communities were turning into large urban centers, like **Harappa and Mohenjodaro in Pakistan and Lothal in India**.

- The signs of a **gradual decline** of the Indus River Valley Civilization are believed to have started around 1800 BC and by 1700 BC, most of the cities were abandoned.
- However, one can see the various elements of the Ancient Indus Valley Civilization in later cultures.
- Archaeological data indicates the persistence of the Late Harappan culture till 1000-900 BC.

## 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.

# 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.