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Indus Valley Civilization- Remarkable History, discoveries and sites

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Indus valley civilization:- In this article we have covered various topics related indus valley:-

- Discovery
- Extents
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I. Discovery of Indus valley civilization

1. In 1921 AD, Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni, an officer of the Department of Archeology, found some ruins and objects from the excavation of a place called Harappa located in Mintgumri district of western Punjab, which seemed to be the remains of an ancient civil civilization.
2. Soon after this, in 1922 AD, another officer of the Archaeological Department, R. D. Banerji (R. D. Banerji) excavated a Buddhist stupa at a place called Mohenjodaro in Sindh province and obtained huge bricks and seals.
3. Due to this the idea arose in his mind that these ruins must be related to an ancient civilization.
4. After this, the Director General of the Department of Archeology, Sir John Marshall, under his supervision, started the work of getting these two places excavated on a large scale, which continued for many years.
5. As a result, detailed information about this ancient civilization was obtained.



Extent of Indus valley civilization

1. The expansion of civilization to the Indus Valley was not limited to the Sindh province only.
2. After 1931 AD Amri, Chahudaro and Kaut DG in Sindh, Shahi Tump and Sutkagen Dor in Balochistan, eleven places located in the erstwhile princely state of Bahawalpur (Pakistan), Kalibangan and 24 other places in Rajasthan, Lothal and Rangpur in Gujarat Kathiawar, near Ropar in Punjab Kotla Nihang Khan and some places in Fatehgarh Sahib district, Mitathal, Banwali etc.
3. In Haryana Alamgirpur, in Uttar Pradesh and modern Chandigarh have yielded similar things as those found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa.
4. From this modern historians have come to the conclusion that this civilization was widespread in Balochistan, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Gujarat, Kathiawar, Rajasthan and some parts of the Gangetic plain, apart from the entire Indus province.

Period of Indus valley civilization

1. Nothing can be said with certainty regarding the period of the Indus Valley Civilization. Scholars have presented different views on this subject.
2. According to Sir John Marshall and scholars who consider the Indus civilization to be contemporary of Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, the period of this civilization is 3250-2750 BC.
3. Dr. A.D. Pusalkar says that the period of this civilization is 2800-2200 BC.
4. In the view of Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the period of Indus Valley Civilization may be considered 2500-1700 BC.
5. The period of this civilization determined by radio-carbon method was 2300 to 1750 BC.

II. Main sites of Indus Valley civilization



Map of Indus valley civilization- Various sites

1. Harappa:-

1. Harappa city is situated on the banks of Ravi river in the district of Mintgumri (Pakistan) of Punjab.

2. It is situated at a distance of about 170 kms towards west from Lahore.
3. It was discovered by Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni in 1921 AD.
4. M. S. Vatsa named scholar wrote a book related to the excavations of Harappa which was published in 1940 AD.
5. Harappa was divided into two parts – the western part and the eastern part.
6. The western part was located on high ground where a rectangular fortification was built.
7. This rectangular fort was 460 yards long from north to south and 215 yards wide from east to west.
8. The eastern part was situated on a less elevated ground, which is called 'Mound of the Lower City'.

Items recovered from excavation:-



The utensils, ornaments, seals and sculptures received from here help a lot in the making of the history of the Indus civilization. They reared cattle and also grew crops like wheat, barley, rice, vegetables, peas etc. They also used to worship Mother Goddess and Shiva.

2. Mohenjodaro:-

1. Mohenjodaro was the second most important center of the Indus Valley Civilization.
 2. The city is located in the Larkana district of Sindh province, Pakistan, and is located at a distance of about 3 kilometers from the Indus River.
 3. It was discovered by RD Banerjee in 1922 AD. He was the great director of the Department of Archeology.
 4. He published a book titled 'Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization' in 1931 AD.
 5. In 1938 AD E.J. Mackay published a book titled 'More excavations in Mohenjodaro' which was published by E. J. H. Mackay, an archaeologist and scholar.
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Town planning of Mohenjodaro

Items recovered from excavation:-

1. The ruins of this city were brought out by digging 30 feet deep soil at this place.
2. 1200 seals, various types of utensils, ornaments and sculptures were found from this city.
3. The buildings of Mohenjodaro are made of solid bricks. Living rooms, kitchens, open courtyards and bathrooms have been found in each house. Some houses are of two or more storeys.
4. Apart from this, ruins of a big warehouse, huge bath, hall, public building have also been found in the city, which are all within the fort.
5. The roads of Mohenjodaro are wide from 13 feet to 33 feet and arrangements for drains have also been made.
6. From all these evidences it can be inferred that what was the religious, social and economic life of the people there.

3. Chanhydro:-

In 1931 AD and 1935-36 AD, a place called Chanhydro was excavated by Annie G. Muzumdar. This place is situated at a distance of about 125 kms from Mohenjodaro. In 1943 AD E.J. H. Mackay published the book 'Chanhydro ki Khudaiyan'. Many tools made of copper and bronze have been found from this place. From this it can be inferred that most of the people were craftsmen who were skilled in making beads and seals.

4. Amri:-

In 1969 AD Annie G. Majumdar discovered a place called Amri, located about 105 km south of Mohenjodaro in Sindh. The objects found from which it is known that this place is also related to the Indus Valley Civilization.

5. Kot Diji:-

During 1955-57 AD, the officer of the Department of Archeology, F. A. Khan got a place called Kot Diji excavated. This place is situated at a distance of 40 kms towards South East from Mohenjodaro. A wall made of bricks has been found around this city on a 5 feet wide stone foundation. The utensils, sculptures, weapons and bangles found at this place are similar to those found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, but the houses here have not been used with baked bricks.

6. Sutkagendor:-

Sutkagendor was discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in 1927 AD. This place is located 30 miles from the coast of Arabian Sea in Balochistan. Two other places named Shahi Tump and Alimurad related to the Indus Valley Civilization have also been found here.

7. Kotla Nihang Khan and Ropar :-

Excavation was done by MS Vats in 1929-30 at a place called Kotla Nihang Khan in Ropar district. Where the remains of Harappan culture were found. This place is located in Punjab, India. During 1953-55 AD, Yagya Dutt Sharma got Ropar city excavated.

8. Locations in erstwhile princely state of Bahawalpur:-

In 1940-41 AD, 11 places related to the Indus Valley Civilization were discovered in the former princely state of Bahawalpur by the efforts of Sir Aurel Stein. These places are Ahmawala Chanbuwala, daiwala, Darawar, Garkwali II, Jalpur, Khanpur, Thar, Kudwala, Shikhri, Drekoa.

9. Kalibanga

Kalibanga is located in the Sriganganagar district of Rajasthan. In 1951-52 AD, A. Ghosh discovered 25 places related to the Indus Valley Civilization in Rajasthan. After 1960 AD B. B. Lal and B. Of. Thapar got a deep excavation done in Kalibanga on behalf of the Archaeological Department. Many ruins and objects related to Harappan culture were received from there.

10. Sanghol :-

Sanghol is located in the present Fatehgarh Sahib district of Punjab, 32 kms from Ropar. Its ancient name was Sanghalaya or Sanghapur because it housed a Buddhist vihara or 'home of the Sangha'. Later its name was changed to Sanghol. Archaeologist S. S. Talwar got it excavated in 1968 AD. Various types of clay and copper utensils, jewellery, sculptures, beads and bricks have been found from here. Which are similar to the ruins and objects found at other places related to the Indus Valley Civilization.



Ornaments found from discovery of Indus Valley Civilization. Image source

[harappa](#)

11. Mitathal, Banwali, Rakhigarhi:-

Archaeologists and scholars of ancient Indian history – Due to the efforts of Suraj Bhan and R. S. Vishit, ruins and various objects related to Indus Valley Civilization have been found from many places of present Haryana. These places are Mitathal (Bhiwani), Banwali (Fatehabad), Rakhigarhi (Jand), Balu (Kaithal) and Bhagwanpura (Kurukshetra).

12. Chandigarh :-

In 1976 AD. A scholar named Lalman of Panjab University got the site of present Chandigarh excavated. Some utensils and other items were found from there, which made it clear that this place was also related to the Indus Valley Civilization.

13. Alamgirpur :-

This place is located in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh, at a distance of about 50 kms, North-East of Delhi. It was discovered by Yagyadutt Sharma in 1958 AD. The objects recovered from there show that the Harappan culture was formerly extended to some areas of the Gangetic plain.

14. Lothal :-

Lothal is located in the present state of Gujarat, at a distance of about 90 kilometers to the south of Ahmedabad. It was discovered in 1954 AD. by S. R. Rao. From its excavation, the ruins of the port made of baked bricks have been found. Where there were arrangements for the stay of ships. The people of the Harappan culture carried on maritime trade with the people of foreign civilizations through the Arabian Sea. The ruins and remains found in Lothal prove that the city-plan and the arrangement of drains there was similar to that of other cities of Harappan culture. The people there used utensils, tools, beads, seals, picture-sign script etc. in the same way.

Apart from Lothal, places named Rangpur and Bhagatrav in western India were also related to the Indus Valley Civilization.

The above sites and centers related to the Indus Valley Civilization show that the area of this civilization was not limited only to Balochistan, Sindh and western and eastern Punjab. But in the east, some regions of the Gangetic plain and in the west, Rajasthan and Gujarat extended up to Kathiawar. Its total area was about 13 lakh square kilometers.

III. Town planning of Indus Valley Civilization

(1) Two parts of cities:-

The two most famous cities of the Indus Civilization were Mohenjodaro and Harappa. The meaning of Mohenjodaro is 'Mound of the Dead'. This city is located near the Indus river in the Larkana district of Sindh province (Pakistan). Its radius was a little over four kilometres.

The city of Harappa was located on the banks of the river Rabi in the district of Mintgumri in Pakistan. It was a little bigger than Mohenjodari. The difference between the two was 483 km. It is believed that Mohenjodaro was the capital of the southern province and Harappa was the capital of the eastern province. Both these important cities were built according to a definite plan.

Both have two parts. The western part is built on some higher ground and resembles a rectangular fortification or citadel. The Harappan fort is 460 yards long from north to south and 215 yards wide from east to west. The size of the fort of Mohenjodaro is relatively small.

2. Roads and streets:-

The roads of Mohenjodaro and other cities range from 13 feet to 33 feet and the streets are 9 feet to 12 feet wide. The speciality of these roads and streets is that they run straight from east to west and north to south and intersect each other at right angles. There was provision of lights in the streets and alleys during the night. At some distance there were pillars on which lamps were hung at night.

3. Houses:-

Different sizes of buildings have been found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Apart from the simple houses, ruins of a very big godown, hall, huge bath, palace etc. have also been found there. All the buildings of the city are made of pucca bricks but at some places raw bricks and stones have been used. Huge bricks were found in the ruins of many buildings. In addition to the living rooms, each house had a kitchen, an open courtyard, a bathroom, etc. Every house had a well for water. Ruins show that many houses were of two or more storeys and had stairs leading to the terrace.

4. The Great Bath :-



Huge bath of Mohenjodaro

A particularly noteworthy building of Mohenjodaro is the huge bath there. It is 180 feet long and 108 feet wide. Its outer walls are 8 feet thick. The pond located inside it is 39 feet long, 23 feet wide and 8 feet deep. There are steps to enter the pond and its entire floor is made of bricks. It has six entrances. There is a well near it, which was probably used to fill water in it. There is another building adjacent to the bath, which was probably a hammam at that time and had a system for heating water. The walls of the bathroom are of a type plastered and they are very strong.

5. Public Buildings and Granaries:-

Ruins of public buildings have also been found at Mohenjodaro. For example, to the north-east of the great bath, a huge building with many rooms has been found, which is 230 feet long and 78 feet wide.

This will be the school. Similarly, a big hall 90 feet long and 90 feet wide has been found in the southern part of the city, where probably a public meeting would have taken place.

Grain-warehouses have been found in many cities of Harappan culture. The biggest building of Mohenjodaro was the Great Granary which was 45-71 meters long and 15-23 meters wide. This huge building was constructed according to the definite plan. It had arrangements for skylights.

In Harappa, 12 small grain-godowns were found to the north of the Citadel, in rows of 6-6, with a 23-foot wide passage left between them, each 50 feet long and 20 feet wide. To the south of these godowns were circular platforms of bricks where grain (wheat, barley etc.) was threshed.

6. Drainage System:

The cities of the Indus Valley Civilization had a commendable system of drains. In each road and street, there were drains from 1 foot to 2 feet deep from 9 inches to one foot wide.

IV. Script of Indus valley civilization



Seals found from excavation of Indus valley civilization

- The people of the Indus Valley Civilization were familiar with the art of writing.
- From the seals available from the excavations of various places related to this civilization, they get to know about the script.

- But linguists have not yet been able to read and understand that script. Some scholars have opinion that it is somewhat similar to the scripts of contemporary Sumer Elam, Egyptian, Croat, China etc.
- Some other scholars associate it with the Dravidian language.
- Many scholars believe that it was a pictographic script.
- About 400 symbols have been found in it and each sign represents a tune or utterance, idea or thing.
- It is clear from such a large number of symbols that it was not an alphabetic script. This script was usually written from right to left.

V. Reasons for the decline and destruction of Indus Civilization

Nothing is known with certainty on this subject as to when and why the Indus Civilization came to an end. The decline of this civilization spread over such a vast area could not have happened suddenly nor could it be due to any one reason.

Floods – According to some scholars, this prosperous civilization collapsed due to the floods in the Indus river. Since most of the territories of this civilization were near this great river, it is possible that the regions were destroyed due to floods and the cities were buried under layers of mud and swamps.

Earthquake: – From the excavation of the Indus Valley, there were bones of men, women and children, which were found in stairs, wells, streets etc. From this it appears that there must have been earthquakes, which destroyed the Indus Civilization.

Drought, Famine and Epidemic :-

It is also estimated that the Indus Valley civilization may have been destroyed due to drought, famine and epidemics. It is said that 2500 BC. There used to be a lot of rain in the Indus region, but over a period of time there was very little rainfall. Due to prolonged severe drought and famine in these regions, humans and animals could not find anything to eat and they died in thousands. Along with the famine, a large number of people died due to the outbreak of the epidemic.

Change in climate:- Some scholars have told the change of climate in the Indus region as the main reason for the decline of Indus civilization. There was very dense forest in this area. Many forests were cut down to meet the requirement of timber. As a result, due to the lack of rainfall in the second century BC, there was a drastic change in the climate, which had a devastating effect on agriculture and animal husbandry, which ultimately proved to be the reason for the decline of the Sindh civilization.

Invasions of the Aryan race:– It is also believed that the reason for the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization was that the Aryans, who were skilled and powerful in fighting wars, attacked these people and defeated them and destroyed their civilization.

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