

Harappan Civilization or Indus Valley

- The Indus Valley Civilization was established around 3300 BC. It flourished between 2600 BC and 1900 BC (Mature Indus Valley Civilization). It started declining around 1900 BC and disappeared around 1400 BC.
- This is also called Harappan Civilization after the first city to be excavated, Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan) was first discovered through excavation in 1921 under the supervision of Daya Ram Sahni.
- Pre-Harappan civilization has been found in Mehrgarh, Pakistan which shows the first evidence of cotton cultivation.
- Geographically, this civilization covered Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Western Uttar Pradesh. It extended from Sutkagendor (in Baluchistan) in the West to Alamgirpur (Western UP) in the East; and from Mandu (Jammu) in the North to Daimabad (Ahmednagar, Maharashtra) in the South. Some Indus Valley sites have also been found as far away as Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.
- Civilization is belongs to Bronze Age (Chalcolithic Age).
- Town planning was the most distinctive features of the civilization. Town were divided into two part- Citadel (Occupied by ruling class) & Lower Town (Inhabited by common people)
- Dholavira is the only site of the civilisation where city was divided into three parts.
- Chanhudaro was the only city without a citadel.
- Systematic town planning was based on grid system; burnt bricks were used to construct houses; well-managed drainage system; fortified Citadel; highly urbanised; absence of iron implements.
- Indus people were the first who produces cotton, which Greeks termed as *Sindom* (derived from Sindh).
- They produced wheat and barley on large scale. The other crops grown were pulses, cereals, cotton, dates, melons, pea, seasmum and mustard.
- Animals known were oxen, sheep, buffaloes, goats, pigs, elephants, dogs, cats, asses and camels.
- Humpless bull or Unicorn was the most important animal.
- Well-developed external and internal trade but the mode of payment was Barter System.
- People of the civilization had developed their own kind of weighing and measurement system which was the multiple of 16.
- Dead Bodies were buried or cremated in North-South Orientation.
- The greatest artistic of the Harappan culture were the seals, made of steatite. Harappan script is pictographic but yet to be deciphered. The script was written from right to left in the first line and left to right in the second line. This style is called Boustrophedon.
- Origin of the 'Swastika' symbol can be traced to the Indus Valley Civilization.
- There was prevalence of Mother Goddess (Matrivedi or Shakti) known through figurines and also evidences of the prevalence of Yoni (Female Sex Organ) worship.
- The Chief male deity was the 'Pashupati Mahadeva' i.e. lord of Animals (Proto-Shiva) represented in seals as sitting in yogic posture; he is surrounded by four animals (elephant, tiger, rhino and buffalo) and two deer appear at his feet. There was also prevalence of Phallic (Lingam) worship.
- Occupations practiced were spinning, weaving, boat making, goldsmiths, making pottery and seal making.

Indus Valley Civilization 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).
- The civilization was first discovered during an excavation campaign under Sir John Hubert Marshall in 1921–22 at Harappa following the discovery of seals by J Fleet.
- Harappan ruins were discovered by Marshall, Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni and Madho Sarup Vats.
- Mohenjodaro ruins were excavated for the first time by R.D. Banerjee, E. J. H. MacKay and Marshall.

- The Indus Valley cities show a level of sophistication and advancement not seen in other contemporary civilizations.
- Most cities had similar patterns. There were two parts: a citadel and the lower town.
- Most cities had a Great Bath.
- There were also granaries, 2-storied houses made of burnt bricks, closed drainage lines, excellent stormwater, and wastewater management system, weights for measurements, toys, pots, etc.
- A large number of seals have been discovered.
- Agriculture was the most important occupation. The first civilization to cultivate cotton.
- Animals were domesticated like sheep, goats, and pigs.
- Crops were wheat, barley, cotton, ragi, dates, and peas.
- Trade was conducted with the Sumerians.
- Metal products were produced including those with copper, bronze, tin, and lead. Gold and silver were also known. Iron was not known to them.
- No structures like temples or palaces have been found.
- The people worshipped male and female deities. A seal which was named 'Pashupati Seal' has been excavated and it shows an image of a three-eyed figure. Marshall believed this to be an early form of Lord Shiva.
- Excellent pieces of red pottery designed in black have been excavated. Faience was used to make beads, bangles, earrings, and vessels.
- Civilization also was advanced in making artworks. A statuette named 'Dancing Girl' has been found from Mohenjodaro and is believed to be 4000 years old. A figure of a bearded Priest-King has also been found from Mohenjodaro.
- Lothal was a dockyard.
- Disposal of the dead was by burial in wooden coffins. Later on, in the H Symmetry culture, bodies were cremated in urns.
- The Indus Valley script has not yet been deciphered.

The decline of Indus Valley Civilization

- Causes of the decline of this civilization have not been firmly established. Archaeologists now believe that the civilization did not come to an abrupt end but gradually declined. People moved eastwards and cities were abandoned. Writing and trade declined.
- Mortimer Wheeler suggested that the Aryan invasion led to the decline of the Indus Valley. This theory has now been debunked.
- Robert Raikes suggests that tectonic movements and floods caused the decline.
- Other causes cited include a drying up of the rivers, deforestation, and destruction of the green cover. It is possible that some cities were destroyed by floods but not all. It is now accepted that several factors could have led to the decline of the Indus Valley civilization.
- New cities emerged only about 1400 years later.