

INTRODUCTION

History is a narration of events which have happened among mankind. The study of ancient Indian history is important for several reasons. It tells us how, when and where people developed the earliest cultures in India, how they began understanding agricultural and stock raising which made life secure and settled. It shows how the ancient Indians discovered and utilized the natural resources, and how they created the means for their livelihood. We get an idea of how the ~~animal~~ ancient habitants make arrangements for food, shelter and transport and learn how they took to farming, spinning, weaving, metal-working and like, how they cleared forests founded villages, cities and eventually large Kingdoms.

Pre-historic times :- The history of human settlements in India goes back to pre-historic times. No written records are available for the pre-historic period. However plenty of archaeological remains are found in different parts of India to reconstruct the history of this period. They include the stone tools, pottery, artifacts, and metal implements used by pre-historic people.

The Pre-historic period in India is divided into

- ① The stone Age (10000-4000 BCE)
- ② The Chalcolithic Age (4000-1500 BCE)
- ③ The Iron Age (1500-600 BCE)

Chalcolithic Culture :

The metal first used was copper and several cultures were based on the use of copper and stone ~~etc~~ implements.

Such a culture is called Chalcolithic, which means the copper, stone phase.

The Chalcolithic settlements of India are spread over a long chronological span ranging from the Early III millennium BCE to the 8th century BCE.

Some of them are certainly pre-Harappan, while others are post-Harappan.

The contact between the technologically advance Harappan & Chalcolithic groups may not be ruled out all together but the latter could not acquire the traits of a civilization on account of their limitation.

Though they were good at working in copper, they didn't know the art of mixing tin with copper to make much stronger metal called bronze which paved the way for the rise

of the earliest civilization in Crete, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Indus Valley.
Mesopotamia

The people of the Chalcolithic Age didn't know the art of writing, nor did they live in cities. These elements of civilization, however, appeared for the 1st time in Indus region.

HARRAPAN Civilization. Unit-I

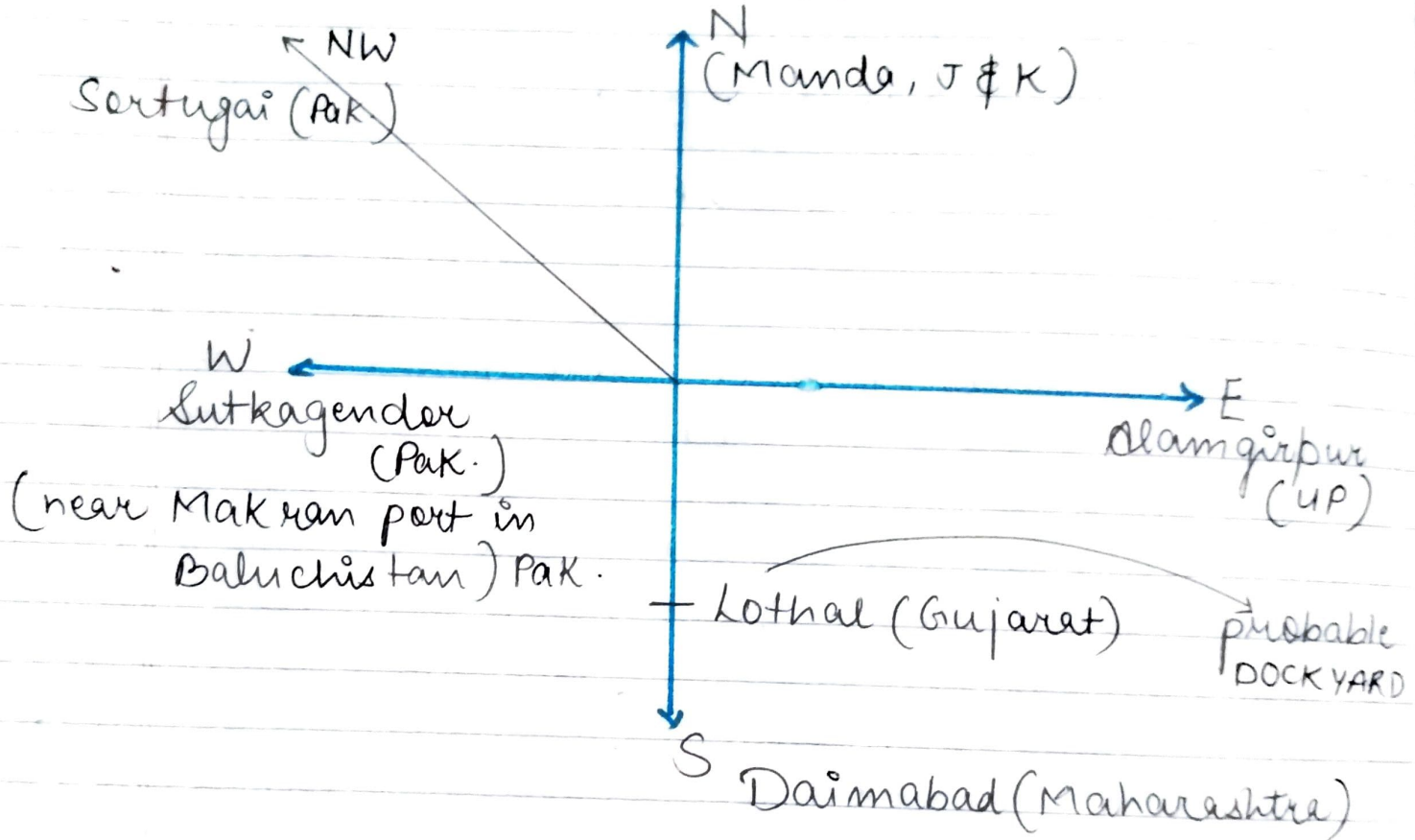
(2600 - 1900 BCE)

- Harappan culture is considered as a part of Chalcolithic culture. It was 1st called Indus Valley Civilization because more & more sites were found around the Indus Valley. Later, it was named as Indus Civilization due to the discovery of more & more sites far away from Indus Valley. Also it has ~~to be~~ come to be called as Harappan Civilization because its first site was found at Harappa and the earliest excavations were done here.

EXTENT :

The Indus or Harappa culture originated in the north western part of Indian subcontinent and seems to have covered an area larger than those of contemporary civilization of Egypt & Mesopotamia. Discovered in 1921, this culture was

spread over the parts of Punjab, Haryana, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and western parts of UP and the other sites include the postal cities of Surkotada, in Gujarat and Suktagender, near Makran port, close to the Pakistan - Iran border.



Chronology : nearly about 2800 Harappan sites have been discovered or explored till now which relate to the early, mature and the later phases of the Harappan culture.

* early, mature and later sites.
Of the early phase, Mehargarh is important which lies NW of

Mohenjo-daro

Another is, ~~Kot Kotdiger~~ Kot-Dijji (Sindh).

Mature Period Though a limited number of excavated sites belong to the developed phase of the civilization and only half a dozen can be described as cities. Of the mature phase sites, the most important were Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.

→ Harappa which lies on the bank of the river Ravi in Montgomery district of Punjab was the first site to be excavated, whence the name Harappa is derived.

→ The other is Mohenjo-daro which lies in the Larkana district of Sindh on the River Indus. Indus is the largest Harappan settlement. Both these sites are now in Pakistan.

The third Harappan site is Chanhudaro which is about 130 Kms South from Mohenjo-daro in Sindh.

→ Lothal (sea port) in Gujarat situated at the head of the Gulf of Cambay, Kalibangan in the dry bed of the river Ghaggar. Ghaggar in northern Rajasthan and Banawali in Hissar in Haryana are the most important sites giving evidence of the mature and flourishing phase of the Harappan civilization in India.

Other sites include the coastal cities of Surkotada in Gujarat and Suktagerdort near Makran coast, close to the Pakistan - Iran border.

Later ★
Period

The later phase of the Harappan civilization is represented in Rangpur and Rajdi in the Kathiawar Peninsula in Gujarat.

In addition, Dholavira, lying in the Kutch area of Gujarat has Harappan fortification and all the three phases of the Harappan culture. These phases are also manifested in Rakhigiri arhi, which is situated on the Ghaggar in Haryana. In Comparative terms, Dholavira covers an area of about 50 hectares.

Harappa - 150 hectares

Rakhigiri - 250 hec.

Mohenjo daro - 500 hec.

★ Some new discoveries at Hirakana Bhiraana, is said to be one of the oldest Harappan sites. Bhirrana also lies on the banks of Ghaggar river in Haryana.

Despite the fact that, ~~the~~ a large number of sites associated ^{with} the Harappan culture have been discovered till date, the culture itself is still best known by the two cities Mohenjo daro & Harappa.

★ Town Planning

A sophisticated and technologically advanced urban culture is evident in the Harappan civilisation. The most remarkable ~~fact~~ feature of Harappan civilization was its urbanization. The first thing that strikes a visitor to these sites whether at Harappa or Mohenjo-daro or Kalibangan is the town planning on the lines of grid system, i.e., streets and lanes, cutting across one another almost at right angles, thus dividing the city into several rectangular blocks. The towns were divided into upper town and lower town. Only at Dholavira three sections i.e., upper, middle and lower are found.

• Drainage System

Another remarkable or unique feature of the Harappan Civilization was the underground drainage system. Water flowed from the houses to the streets where there were drains connecting all houses to the street drains. All soakpits and drains were ~~so~~ occasionally cleared by

workmen and drains were provided with main holes at intervals for cleaning. Most of the houses had their own well. The town planning of the H. Civilization was one of the most fascinating feature and it shows the prosperity and the sanitary Engineering skills of the workmen of Indus Civilization. They laid down great emphasis on Hygiene.

• Citadel

A small fort built on a raised platform
Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Kalibangan each had its own citadel built on a high podium of mud and brick. Below the citadel lay a lower town containing brick houses inhabited by common people known as workers' quarter. The use of burnt bricks and absence of stones in buildings are the important characteristics of Harappan culture. The citadel was mainly occupied by the members of the ruling class.

• Grainery

To the west of Mohenjo-daro is found a great grainery measuring 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. At Harappan graineries are also found which are in rows of two, they are 6 in numbers. Harappan graineries also have ~~ed~~ evidences of rice. Husk is a rare phenomenon for Harappan sites.

Great Bath

A great bath at Mohenjo-daro is also discovered which measures 39 feet long, 23 feet wide and 8 feet deep. Probably it ^{served} for certain occasional, ceremonial or for ritual purposes. The Great Bath was one of the most important public places and it comprises a tank which was made of bricks.

Houses

The dwelling houses were also a striking feature of the Harappan cities. The houses were built very simple as the Indus people were trade oriented people and devoted to a life of materialism and had utilitarian outlook. As the city was a great centre of trade and business, caravan sarais (inns) and public store houses were provided. The ~~interwalls~~ innerwalls of the houses were coated with mud plaster. The doors and windows of the houses were not opened on the main roads but in the lanes. There was a courtyard in every house in which there was a well also. There were both double and single storied houses.

General Amenities in the city of Mohenjo-daro was divided into several wards. Lamp found at various intervals indicate the existence of street lightening. Rows of trees and plants were also allowed to grow in enclosure. Systematic construction of houses and absence of encroachment upon main street ~~inside~~ indicates the existence and working of an efficient municipal authority. The ancient Indus systems of ~~sea~~ sewage and drainage that were developed and used in cities throughout the Indus Empire were far more advanced than any other found in the contemporary urban cities. So ^{also} the advanced architecture of the Harappans is shown by their impressive dockyards at Lothal, graineries, brick platforms, houses and ~~productive~~ protective walls. The massive citadels of Indus city protected the Harappans from floods and attackers were larger than most Mesopotamian structures.

★ Administration

In absence of any written documents, our knowledge about political organisation of Harappan remains vague. There is no evidence of a dynastic rule of divine warlords, neither has any ~~an~~ palace been identified nor has any monuments of glorious conquerors been discovered. They were peace loving people and were not concerned much with conquest is proved by few feeble weapons. In fact dagger, knife, ^{arrows} ^{swords} ^{spears etc} were tools and not weapons. They kept them just for their security. There was a chief undoubtedly because the presence of citadel, graineries, lower town show that there must be some head who must have resided in the citadel, collected revenues for the grains, and the well managed town system which unagreeably might have required a chief to control. The rulers might have wealthy merchants or powerful landlords. They showed their power and pelf by clothes and jewellery as also by the seals. Seals were decorated with animal motifs. Unicorn was depicted on most of the seals and the most artistic seals were those on which

humped bull was depicted.)

★ Society

• Class Structure

The excavations at Mohenjo-daro proved the existence of different sections of people - the ruling class, the trader and the workers. There was no warrior class, the commercial class appears to have been dominant. Structural remains of houses indicate that class differences were present in Harappan society. Big houses were meant for the rich people while small houses of two rooms unearthed at Mohenjo-daro and Harappan were used by the poor sections of the society.

• Dress

Statues and figurines from this period indicate that they wore upper and lower garments. Common people probably did not wear anything about the waist. Garments of the upper classes were often richly patterned. Both man and woman loved jewellery -

• Recreation and Games

Several kinds of dices both of terracotta and stones have been discovered of this period. Chess was one of their favourite game. Hunting also appears to ~~be~~ have been one of the recreation of the Harappans. Seals showing man shooting at a wild goat ~~by~~ ^{and} a large antelope with bows and arrows are some of the examples. Bull fighting was also one of the favourite past times of the Harappans. Marbles, balls were also used for games. They preferred indoor games than outdoor games.

★ Economy

• Agriculture

The prosperous villages and towns of this civilisation shows that it was fertile in ancient times. The Indus valley possess more natural vegetation which attracted more rainfall, floods took place annually. The Indus river carried for more alluvial soil and the Indus people sowed seeds in the flood plains in November, when the flood water receded and reaped their crops in April before the advent of the next flood. The Harappan villagers produced sufficient foodgrains

like wheat, barely, mustard, rice, cotton, etc. Cotton was the best to our knowledge were just used by the Harappan people.

- Animal Husbandary

The people of Harappan Civilization were familiar with a large range of animals like oxen, buffaloes, goat, sheep, pigs, cat, dog, camel, elephants, deer, etc. It cannot be concluded that horses existed in Harappan Civilization during the IVC phase due to lack of suitable evidences. Finding of wild ass in the Kachch region makes historians confused about the presence of horses in the Harappan Civilization. In any case, the Harappan culture was not horse-centered. The use of horse is not yet firmly established. Humped bull were favoured by Harappans.

- Crafts & Industries

Various techniques of working in copper was known to them namely hammering, chiselling, lapping, coating, etc. The city dwellers appeared to have been traders or artisans. The bronzesmiths constituted an important group of artisans in the Harappan society.

They were highly technologically advanced people and were familiar with the art of mixing copper with tin and making Bronze. The metal, of which, other contemporary civilizations of Egypt or Mesopotamia were unknown.

Harappans also possessed knowledge of gold and silver. ^{And silver} seems to have been first used by the Indus civilization people. Bead making was another craft at Chanhudaro and Lothal. Besides metal making they also practised numerous other arts and crafts like cloth weaving, brick laying, pottery, etc. They also practised boat making.

Among the artifacts made of beautiful beads of glazed stone were called "Faience". (फ़िन्सिया)

● Trade & Commerce

A well organised commerce was a characteristic feature of Harappan Civilization. These people traded not only with other parts of India like Kashmir and Rajasthan but also with many other foreign countries like Mesopotamia, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iran, etc. The seals found at Mesopotamia indicates huge trade relations with that country. The importance of trade in the life of Indus people is supported by numerous seals, uniform scripts and regulated weights and measures. The Harappan weights and measures were cubical and spherical in shape and were made up of jasper (stone), chert and agate. They followed decimal system. They did not

• The seals have images of animals etc. and also have inscriptions. The seals are assumed to be used as a means of Exchange.

used metal money (coins) and in all probability carried exchanges through barter system (exchange of goods, double coincidence of wants).

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

• Religion

The inhabitants of Indus region worship God in the form of animals, trees and human beings. Numerous female ~~fig~~ figurines in terracotta are believed to represent the mother goddess. They looked upon earth as fertility goddess. The most striking deity of Harappan culture is of Pashupati Shiva in the Yogi Mudra surrounded by four animal buffaloes, tiger, rhino and elephant & below his throne two deer appear on his feet. Sir John Marshall called this god as 'Proto-Shiva'. We also come across the prevalence of 'Phallus' 'Lingha worship'. Animal worship was also there and the most important animal which was worshipped was 'humped bull'. Certain trees like 'peepal' were considered sacred. The worship of fire, water, etc was also in practice. Probably the Harappans also believed in the presence of ghost and evil forces and they used ~~amulets~~ 'amulets' (tabiz) to ward

off these evil forces away.

Burial system

It appears that burial was a ritual right. A cemetery has been discovered containing 57 dead bodies. The dead were buried in an extended form ^(North-South Direction) or posture, with pottery, vessels, beads of ivory, bangles, etc. However, ^{three} forms of burials have been found:

1) Complete burial

2) Fractional burial

3) Twin burial

Un burial are also found in high numbers.

This shows that the mortality rate was very high and this shows that the Harappan's were not advanced in medical science.

* Causes of decline of Harappan Civilization

Various causes have been suggested as regard to the decline of Harappan Civilization. Among them some of them were these:-

(i) Flood - It is assumed that the overflowing of the Indus river lead to its decline.

(ii) earthquake - It is also assumed that the earthquake might have lead to the vast destruction.

- (iii) Aridity - Increased aridity might also have been one of the cause of its decline.
- (iv) Ecological Imbalance - Here it means population explosion. People ~~&~~ might have migrated due to lack of natural resources.
- (v) ~~Explosion~~ Epidemic - It is also assumed that there was an epidemic and large number of people might have caught in that epidemic ~~for~~ and this might be one of the reason for its decline.
- (vi) Fire - Some historians assumed fire might have taken place. There must have been great explosion and the city was destructed. There were layers of ash at some extent places prove this. But not accepted by other historians.
- (vii) Change of river flow and direction - This might have affected the economy and trade of people and they might have left the town in search for better life.

(viii)

Aryans Invasion - Historians believed that the forest tribals, Aryans came and invaded this urban center. So according to some scholars the final blow was delivered by the invasion of Aryans. The destruction of forts is mentioned in the Rigveda. Also, the discovery of human skeletons huddled together at Mohenjo-daro indicates that the city was invaded by foreigners. The Aryans had superior weapons as well as swift horses which might have enabled them to become masters of this region.