

Indus Valley Civilization | Important PYQ Topics

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INTRODUCTION

- **First major civilization in South Asia**, which spread across a vast area of land in present-day India and Pakistan (**around 12 lakh sq.km**).
- **Largest of the four ancient urban civilizations** of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.
- Northern-most site **Manda (Jammu-Kashmir)**, Southern-most site **Daimabad (Maharashtra)**, Eastern-most site **Alamgirpur (Uttar Pradesh)**, Western-most site **Sutkagendor (Pakistan-Iran border)**.
- **Phases:**
 - **Early Harappan Phase:** 3300 to 2600 BCE
 - **Regionalisation era:** centralised authority and an increasingly urban quality of life.
 - **Mature Harappan Phase:** 2600 to 1900 BCE
 - **Integration era:** turning into large urban centres, like Harappa and Mohenjodaro in Pakistan and Lothal in India.
 - **Late Harappan Phase:** 1900 to 1300 BCE
 - **Localisation era:** signs of a gradual decline.

FEATURES

- **Town Planning:**
 - Divided into **Citadel (West) and Lower Town (East)**.
 - Streets followed a **grid pattern** (intersect at right angles).
 - Drains connected all houses.
 - **Standardised burnt-bricks of ratio 1:2:4.**
- **Society:**
 - **Three distinct social groups:** Ruled, rich merchants, and poor labourers who lived in the lower part of the city.
 - 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.
 - **Earliest people to produce cotton.**
 - **Nature Worship** – Peepal and animals (bull). Idolatry was prevalent. Also worshipped Mother goddess, Pasupati yogi (lord of cattle), and Phallic symbols.

- Harappan Script is **Pictographic and Logo syllabic**. Harappan writing was **Boustrophedon** (right to left and then left to right in alternate lines).
- **Economy:**
 - **Terracotta:** figurines of animals, humans, Bangles, seals
 - **Art of Bead-making** (Chanhudaro and Lothal).
 - Harappans did not use Iron but **used Copper, bronze, silver, and gold**
 - Harappans were the **first to use silver in the world**.
 - **Red and Black pottery** and also knew the **use of Potter's wheel** with ease.
 - Harappans had trade with **Mesopotamia (Sumeria), Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan Makan (Oman), and Dilmun (Bahrain)**. Trade was through the **barter system**.
 - **Weights followed a binary system** — 1, 2, 8 to 16, 32 and so on.
 - **Harappan seals** are made up of Steatite (soft stone).
 - **Half an inch to 2.5 inch.**
 - Generally **Square and Rectangular** (carved animals and inscription).

IMPORTANT SITES

- **Harappa (River ravi):**
 - Sandstone statues of Human anatomy.
 - Granaries & Bullock carts.
 - Evidence of Coffin burial.
- **Mohenjodaro (Mount of the Dead):**
 - Great Bath, Great Granary, Dancing Girl, Man with Beard, Cotton, Assembly Hall, bronze dancing girl.
 - 3 cylindrical seals of Mesopotamia.
- **Chanhudaro (River Indus):**
 - Known for cotton textile (Lancashire of IVC).
 - No Citadel (only IVC city).
 - The largest number of copper tools found.
- **Kalibangan (Ghaggar River):**
 - Wells were found in every house.
 - Evidence of mixed cropping. The earliest ploughed field in India.
 - Fire altars (shows cult of sacrifice).
- **Lothal (Bhogava River):**
 - Artificial dockyard (**world's 1st tidal port**).
 - Cremation site, Dockyard, Granaries, Rice husk, Double burial.
 - Models of Egyptian Mummies (trade relation with Nile valley civilization).
- **Dholavira:**
 - **Dams, irrigation, water reservoir, water harvesting system** and embankments.

- The town is divided into **three parts (Upper, Middle, and lower)**. It was a walled city with heavy fortifications.
- An important centre of **maritime trade**.
- Named as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** (India's 40th).
- **Rakhigiri:**
 - **Largest IVC site in India** (also claimed to be largest IVC site).
 - Manufacturing centre of terracotta (Idly shaped terracotta).
- **Bhirrana (Haryana):**
 - **Oldest discovered IVC site** dating back to 7500 BCE (earlier Mehrgarh (Pak)).

DECLINE OF IVC

- **After 2000 BC IVC declined & gradually faded away.**
- Possible reasons – declined soil fertility, depression in land, Aryans invasion, decline of trade, Floods, Earthquake etc.

PYQ Pre & Mains

Q. Which of the following animals was not represented in seals and terracotta art of Harappan Sculpture?

- a) Cow
- b) Elephant
- c) Rhinoceros
- d) Tiger

Q. To what extent has the urban planning and culture of the Indus Valley Civilisation provided inputs to present-day urbanisation? Discuss.

Q. The ancient civilisation in the Indian sub-continent differed from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece in that its culture and traditions have been preserved without a breakdown to the present day. Comment.