DAILY CLASS NOTES

Ancient History

Lecture –02

Indus Valley Civilization



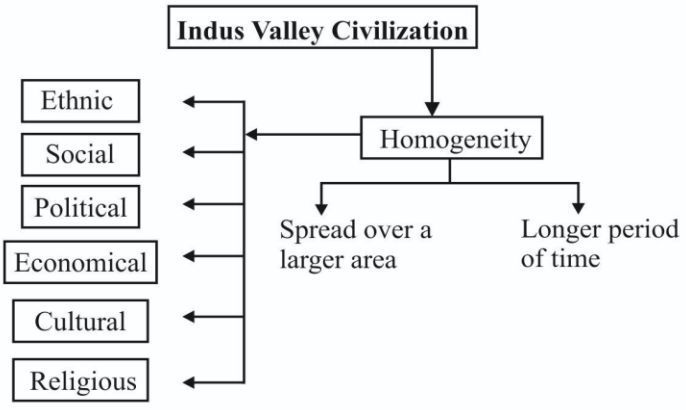
Indus Valley Civilization

Indus Valley Civilisation:

- Also known as the Indus Civilisation, it was a Bronze Age civilization in the northern areas of South Asia that lasted from **3300 BCE to 1300 BCE,** and from **2600 BCE to 1900 BCE** in its full form.
- It was one of three early civilizations of the **Near East and South Asia, along with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia,** and it was the most widespread of the three, with sites spanning an area stretching from today's northeast **Afghanistan**, through much of **Pakistan**, and into **western** and **northwestern India**.

Important Terms:

- **Civilization** refers to a complex society **characterised by advanced social, economic, and political organisation**, as well as a high level of cultural and technological development. A civilization typically has cities, specialised labour, trade, government, and a written language.
- **Homogeneity** refers to the quality of being **uniform or similar in composition** or character.
  - In the case of the Indus Valley Civilization, there is some debate among scholars about the degree of homogeneity that existed within the civilization.
  - Some argue that the civilization was highly homogeneous, with a common language, religion, and culture across its entire geographical extent.
  - Others suggest that there may have been significant regional differences and diversity within the civilization, particularly in terms of local languages and religious practices.
  - However, the lack of extensive written records from the civilization makes it difficult to determine the degree of homogeneity with certainty.

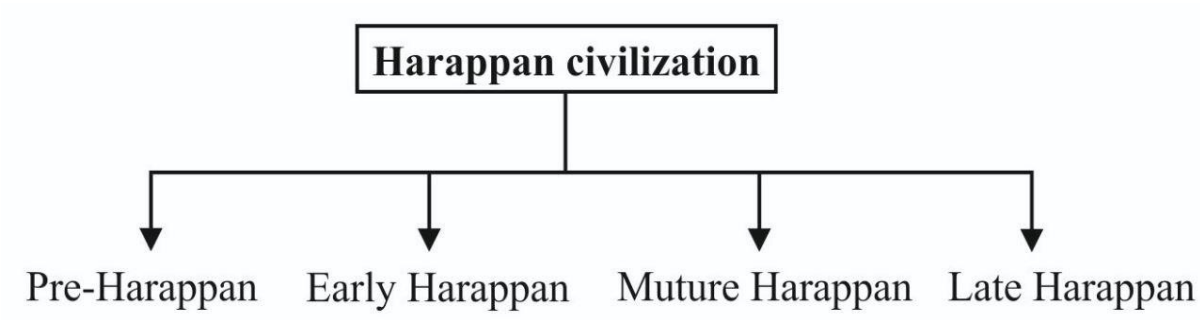


Indus Valley Civilisation:

- The Indus Valley Civilisation was named after the Indus river system, on which alluvial plains the early sites of the civilization were discovered and excavated.
- This is also known as the Harappan Civilization, after the first city unearthed, **Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan).**
- The **Indus Valley Civilization** began approximately **3300 BC-2600 BCE (Early Harappan phase).**
- **It flourished** between **2600-1900 BC** (**Mature Indus Valley Civilization**).
- It began to decline around **1900 BC** and vanished around **1400 BC.**

- The first evidence of **cotton production** has been discovered in **Mehrgarh, Pakistan,** dating back to the **Pre-Harappan civilization.**
- The **Archaeological Department of India** conducted excavations in the Indus valley in the **1920s**, unearthing the ruins of two ancient towns, **Mohenjodaro and Harappa.**
- In **1924, ASI Director-General John Marshall** proclaimed to the world the finding of a new civilization in the **Indus Valley.**

Stages / Periods of Harappan Civilization:



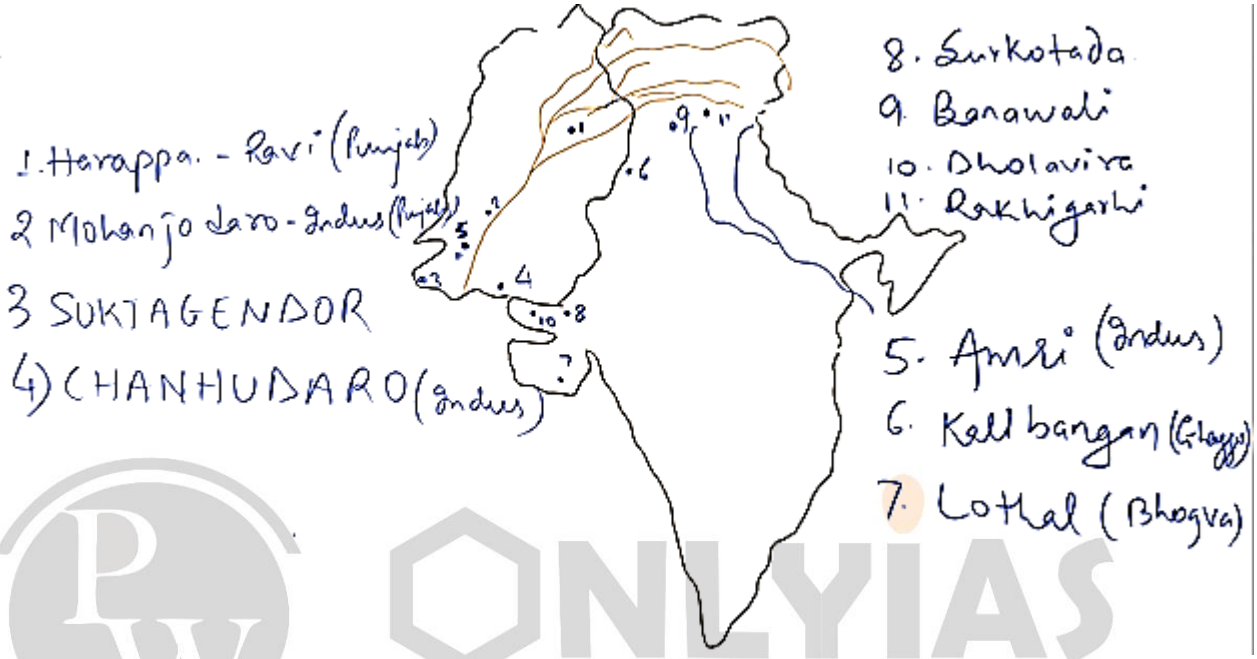
- Pre-Harappan Period (Before 3300 BC)
- Early-Harappan Period (3300-2600 BCE)
- Mature Harappan Period (2600-1900 BCE)
- Late Harappan period (1900-1400 BCE)

Origin and Evolution of Harappan Civilization:

- Pre Harappan period is characterised by setteled agricultural life.
- Nomadic people started settling in this time period.
- **Eastern Balochistan** is the location of the pre-Harappan stage.
- Excavations in Mehrgarh, 150 miles northwest of Mohenjodaro, have shown the presence of pre-Harappan civilization.
- The **Early Harappan Phase** is associated with the **Hakra Phase,** which was discovered in the **Ghaggar-Hakra River Valley.**
- People lived in huge communities on the plains during the Early Harappan period. The settlements in the Indus valley grew gradually.
- **During this time, there was also a movement from Rural to urban life.**
- The sites of **Amri and Kot Diji** continue to provide evidence for the early Harappan period.
- Great cities & elaborate town planning arose during the mature-Harappan era.
- The **excavations at Kalibangan**, with their intricate town planning and urban elements, demonstrate this stage of progression.

- The decline of the Indus civilization began in the late-Harappan era. This stage of progression is revealed by the **excavations at Lothal.**
- **Lothal,** with its harbour, **was established considerably later.** As flood protection, it was enclosed by a large brick wall.

Important Sites of Indus Valley Civilisation:



Site	Discovered by	Location	Features
Harappa	Marshall, Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni and Madho Sarup Vats. 1921	Situated on the bank of river Ravi(Punjab)	❖ Granaries ❖ Bullock carts ❖ Sandstone human anatomy sculptures
Mohenjodaro	R.D. Banerjee, E. J. H. MacKay and Marshall. 1922	Situated on the banks of Indus River(Punjab)	❖ Mound of Dead ❖ Great bath ❖ Granary ❖ Bronze dancing girl ❖ Seal of Pashupati Mahadeva statue ❖ Steatite of beard man ❖ A plethora of seals

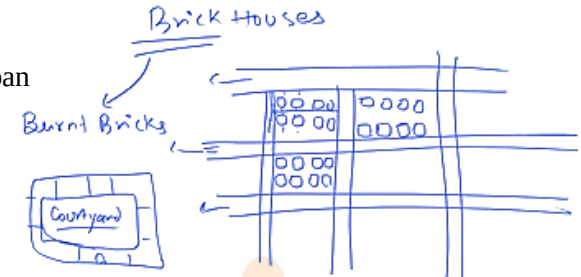
			❖ Woven cotton ❖ Domesticated animals including sheep, goats, and pigs.
Sutkagendor	Stein in 1929	Situated on the bank of river Dasht in southern Balochistan province	❖ Harappa's and Babylon's trading post
Chanhudaro	N.G Majumdar in 1931	Sindh, located on the Indus River.	❖ Shop with bead makers ❖ a dog chasing a cat's footprint
Amri	N.G Majumdar in 1935.	On the banks of the Indus.	❖ Evidence of antelope
Kalibangan	Ghose in 1953.	Rajasthan, beside the Ghaggar River.	❖ Fire Altars ❖ Bones from camels. ❖ Plough of wood
Lothal	R.Rao in 1953.	Gujarat, on Bhogva river near Gulf of Cambay.	❖ Man made port ❖ Dockyard. ❖ Rice Husk ❖ FireAltars
Surkotada	J.P Joshi in 1964.	Gujarat.	❖ Horse skeletons ❖ Beads
Banawali	R.S Bisht in 1974.	Hisar district of Haryana	❖ Evidence of Beads, Barley ❖ Both pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures have been discovered.
Dholavira.	R.S Bisht in 1985.	Gujarat, Rann of Kachchh.	❖ Water collection system ❖ Reservoir of water

Rakhigarhi:

- DNA samples collected from **two human skeletons unearthed** at a necropolis of a Harappan-era city site in Haryana have been sent for scientific examination, the outcome of which might tell about the **ancestry and food habits of people** who lived in the Rakhigarhi region thousands of years ago.
- The **skeletons of two women** were found a couple of months ago at mound number 7 (named RGR 7 by the Archaeological Survey of India), believed to be nearly 5,000 years old.
- **Pots and other artefacts** were also found buried next to them in a pit, part of the funerary rituals back in the Harappan Civilisation era.

Salient Features of the Indus Valley Civilisation:

- **Town Planning and Structure:**
  - Harappan civilization was characterised by its urban planning system.
  - Each of **Harappa** and **Mohenjodaro** had its own **citadel**,which was likely held by **ruling class/elite class** members.
  - Each city had a **lower town** with **brick homes** that were occupied by the **ordinary people** beneath the citadel.
  - Stone houses are absent.
  - Houses are arranged in a **rectangular grid system.**
  - Granaries were an essential feature of Harappan towns.
  - The usage of **burnt bricks in Harappan towns** is noteworthy, as **Sun dry** bricks were often used in **Egyptian constructions** at the time.
  - Mohenjodaro's drainage system was the most remarkable thing out here.
  - The Great Bath was Mohenjo Daro's most significant public space. At either end, a flight of steps led to the surface. There were **dressing rooms** on the sides. The **Bath's floor** was constructed of burned bricks.
  - Water was drawn from a large well in another room, and a drain was accessible from one corner of the Bath. It was probably used for ceremonial bathing.
  - A granary is the biggest structure in Mohenjo Daro.
  - However, there are as many as six granaries in Harappa's fortress.



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