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Credits

The NCERT of Class 12 **Themes in Indian History (Part 1)** has been referred while preparing this PDF notes. All the facts, information and data has been taken from NCERT textbook itself. The facts, information and data has been organised in a reading friendly manner for students so that they can understand it easily.

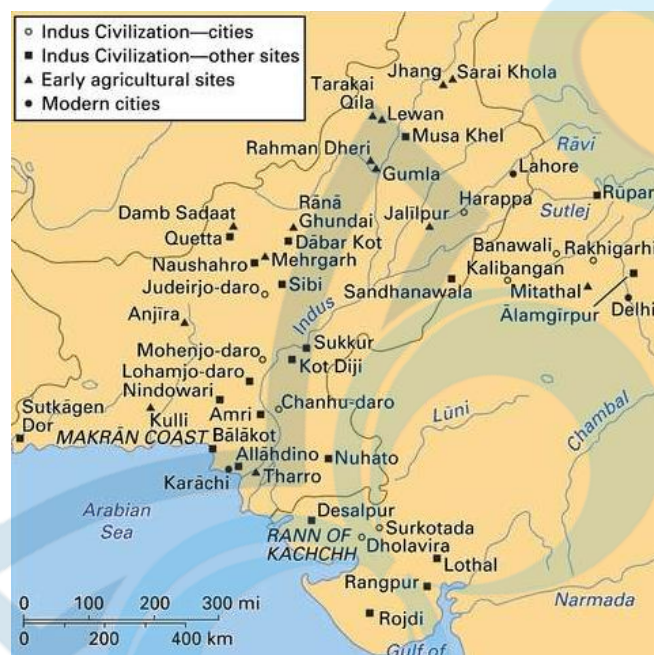
Theme 1

Bricks, Beads and Bones

(The Harappan Civilisation)

Introduction

- Indus valley civilization is also known as **Harappan civilization**.
- It started flourishing along **River Indus** (now in Pakistan) at around 2600 B.C.
- Harappan civilization was the **largest Bronze Age civilization** in the world.
- Harappa was the first site of this civilization discovered.
- It was an **urban civilization**.
- Its writing is not deciphered
- After 1900 B.C., most of the sites were abandoned due to some reason. By 1900 B.C. major part of the civilization ended.



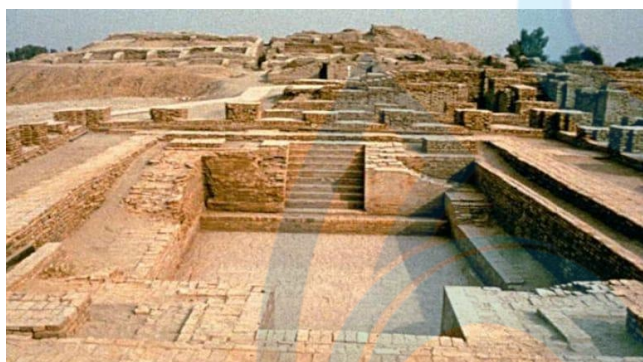
Archaeological Evidence

- The Harappan Civilisation is also known as Indus Valley Civilisation.
- This civilisation is dated between **BCE 2600 and 1990 BCE**. It is the oldest civilisation of India.
- We know about the civilisation from **archaeological evidence** like houses, pots, ornaments, tools and seals used by the people of that period.

- There were also earlier and later cultures, known as **Early Harappan** and **Late Harappan Civilisation**.
- **Cunningham was the first Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India who began archaeological excavations in the Harappan sites.**
- Cunningham was unable to find the significance of Harappan Civilisation and thought that Indian history began with the first cities in the Ganga valley.
- **Daya Ram Sahni, Rakhal Das Banerji, John Marshall** were some of the important archaeologists associated with the discovery of Harappan Civilisation.
- The frontiers of the Harappan civilisation have no connection with present-day national boundaries.
- The major sites are now in Pakistani territory.
- In India, a number of Harappan settlements were found in **Punjab and Haryana**.
- The main centres where this civilisation flourished in India are **Kalibangan, Lothal, Dholavira, Rakhi Garhi and Banawali**.
- Archaeologists tried to classify artefacts in terms of material and in terms of function by comparing these with present-day things.
- The problems of archaeological interpretation are most evident in attempts to reconstruct the **religious practices of the Harappan**.
- Unusual objects like **terracotta figurines of women, stone statuary of men, the motif of unicorns, and figures in yogic posture on seals** and structures like the great bath and fire altars may have had a religious significance.
- Several reconstructions regarding the Harappan civilisation remain speculative at present and there is a vast scope for future work.

Mohenjo-Daro

- Mohenjo-Daro was the most well-known urban site of the Harappan Civilisation.
- Although Harappa was the first site to be discovered, it was badly destroyed by brick robbers.
- The settlement in Harappa civilisation was divided into **two sections**, one smaller in terms of land but higher in terms of power known as the **Citadel**, the other much larger in terms of area but lower in terms of power was known as **Lower Town**.
- All the Harappan cities had carefully **planned drainage systems**.
- The residential buildings at Mohenjo-Daro were centred on a courtyard, had their own bathrooms, the drains of which were connected to the street drains.
- In Mohenjo-Daro, many houses had well and their estimated number was about 700.
- **Structures like warehouses and the Great Bath' were used for public purposes.**



Seals, Script, Weights

- **Seals and sealing** were used to facilitate long-distance communication.
- If the bag of goods reached with its sealing intact, it meant that it had not been tampered with.
- Seals also conveyed the identity of the sender.
- **The Harappan script remains undeciphered to date.**
- The script was not alphabetical and had many signs between 375 and 400.



- Exchange was regulated by a precise **system of weights**, usually made of a stone called **chert** with no marking.
- The lower denominations of weights were binary and the higher denominations followed the decimal system.



Food Habits

- The people of Harappan Civilisation ate a **wide range of plant and animal products** including fish and meat, wheat, maize, millet, pulses, rice and another eatable.
- For this, **cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig** were domesticated by the Harappan people.

Agricultural Techniques

- Archaeological pieces of evidence suggested that oxen were used for ploughing and **two different crops** were grown together.
- As most of the Harappan sites are located in **Semi-arid lands**, it is evident that water from canals and wells was used for irrigation.

Social and Economic Differences

- Archaeologists use certain strategies to find out ***social and economic differences*** among people.
- These include studying ***burials and artefacts*** which can be divided into utilitarian and luxuries.
- Valuable materials are generally concentrated in large settlements but rarely found in smaller settlements.



Craft Production

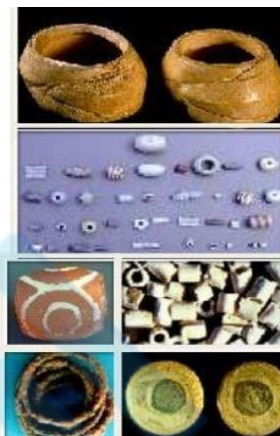
- Harappan people knew the art of making beautiful ***sculptures, toys, pottery, ornaments, etc.***
- ***Chanhudaro*** was a tiny settlement exclusively devoted to craft production, including bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, seal-making and weight-making.
- ***Grinding, polishing and drilling*** were done for making beads.
- ***Nageshwar and Balakot*** were specialised centres for making shell objects as both these settlements are near the coast.
- Apart from smaller settlements, larger cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were also the specialised centres for craft production.



Ornaments in Indus Valley Civilization

Procuring of Materials

- Shells from Nageshwar and Balakot
- Lapis lazuli, a blue stone from Shortughai in Afghanistan
- Carnelian from Lothal
- Steatite from Gujarat and Rajasthan
- Copper from Rajasthan
- Gold from South India



- The Harappan people procured materials for craft production in various ways.
- Sometimes they established settlements where raw materials were available.
- Another strategy for procuring raw materials may have been to send expeditions to areas where these were available e.g., ***Khetri region for copper (Rajasthan) and South India for gold.***
- The Harappan made contact with distant lands like ***Oman for procuring copper.***
- The Harappan seals, weights, dice and beads were found in other countries, ***Oman, Bahrain and Mesopotamia.***

Economic Life and Trade

- The economic life of the people was very prosperous the main occupations of the people were ***agriculture and domestication of animals.***
- Trade was well developed. Both internal and external trade was carried out.
- ***Pictures of ships, boats*** have also been found on seals that throw light on Harappan contacts in far-off places.

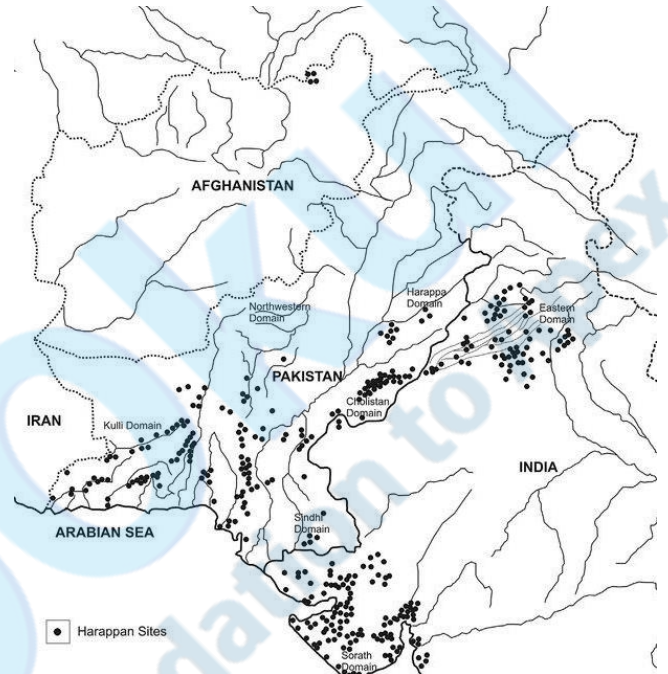
Religious Belief and Caste System

- ***People of this civilisation worshipped many Gods and Goddesses.***
- They worshipped Lord Shiva, mother Goddesses, animals, birds, trees and the sun.
- ***The caste system was not present in society.***
- All people live together with mutual love and understanding.
- Women held a high position or rank in society.



deforestation, excessive floods, the shifting and drying up of rivers, and overuse of the landscape.

- All these factors may have weakened the civilisation, but its ultimate extinction is more likely to have been completed by deliberate and large-scale destruction or by an invasion.



The decline of Harappan Civilisation

- By **1800 BCE**, most of the mature Harappan sites were abandoned.
- Around 1200 BCE, this civilization had completely vanished.
- After **1900 BCE**, a rural way of life what was known as 'Late Harappan' or '**successor cultures**' emerged.
- **The reasons for the end of civilization range from climatic change,**
