

## Research

The first Indian civilization, Harappa (Sindhu Valley) Civilization was the contemporary civilization of the world's oldest civilizations, such as Mesopotamia and Egyptian civilization. The world class civilization revealed itself with its great features in 1921 A.D.. Under the guidance of Sir John Marshal and Kernel Macay (1921 A.D.), Dayaram Sahani discovered the site Harappa in Montgomeri district of Punjab. As this site was discovered first near a village called Harappa, according to the tradition of archeology, entire civilization is named as Harappan Civilization. R.D. Banerjee (1922 A.D.) discovered another important Harappan site, Mohan-Jo-Daro in Larkha district of Sindh. This process continued during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Approximately 1000 Harappan sites have been discovered so far. There is a possibility of Gujarat having approximately 100 Harappan sites.

Harappan Civilization is called the oldest historical civilization, because we have not yet been able to decipher the Harappan script so far. Hence the knowledge that we have of the life of the people their different aspects of life and its relations with other civilization is based on archeological ruins and remains.



**Harappan Civilization - Picture**

Culture and Civilization are two different words. Culture means the life pattern that man creates using natural factors, whereas civilization is necessary to have city in it. It implies that civilization is a way ahead of the life pattern of culture. The origin of Civilization is civitas and the meaning of civitas is city, hence, civilization can be there where there exists a city. In a way civilization indicates development along with natural factors.

After the rural culture of New Stone Age, Harappan Civilization developed in North-Western part of India. Historians and archeologists believe that because of the technical knowledge the

production of grains increased immensely on the fertile banks of the rivers such as Sindhu, Sarasvati, Ghaghra-Haakara. Consequently the market for non-agricultural fields were also developed. Gradually such cities must have developed in the North-Western part of India (Close to 2500 B.C.). That is how Harappan Civilization developed and ultimately turned into complete urban culture.

In India this civilization (Aproximately 2000 B.C.) had completely developed. Apart from it, other Copper-stone cultures were existing, which were outside the area of Harappan Civilization.

## **Origin and Development**

Historians use words like pre-Harappan Period for the origin of Harappan Civilization, in which, (approximately 5000 B.C.) the discovery of copper and the subsequent changes that took place in agriculture are important. Due to which small towns came up and mature Harappan Civilization emerged. Historians consider the Pre-Harappan Period from 3500 B.C. to 2400 B.C. Whereas the mature Harappan Civilization time is arranged from 2350 B.C. to 1750 B.C. and the period after that is named as Post Harappan Period, in which this civilization gradually loses its urbanized character.

## **Expansion**

It is very important to understand the Harappan Civilization from the point of view of area as it is the largest among civilizations of the world. It includes Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Western Uttar Pradesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and some parts of Jammu and Kashmir. It includes Mada of Jammu-Kashmir, Harappa of Western Punjab (presently Pakistan), Mohen-jo-daro and Chanhudaro of Sindh-Pakistan; Lothal, Rangpur, Dholavira and Bhagatalav (Surat) of Gujarat; Kalibangan of Rajasthan; Banawali and Rakhigarhi of Haryana; Alamgirpur of Uttar Pradesh; and in the west, Sutakanjendor on the bed of Makaran. All these sites are spread in the North-West of India, which are clearly visible in the map. The rivers also are shown in the given map.

We are going to discuss in detail about some of the important sites of this civilization. It includes Harappa on the bank of river Ravi, Mohn-jo-daro on the bank of river Sindhu, Lothal on the bank of the river Bhogavo in Gujarat, Kalibagan on the bank of the river Ghaghar-Hakara (known as disappeared Sarasvati river) in Rajasthan and Dholavira of Kachchh. These sites were important and very special places of Harappa Civilization. In the entire civilization, the climate and life style of the Harappan people seem to be of the same kind. Harappan civilization was developed on a plain ground. For water they depended on rain and rivers originated from the Himalayas. The geographical features of the place gave rise to economy of agriculture and animal rearing. Because of the higher yields gradually it turned into Harappan civilization. Features related to urbanization like, town planning, drainage system, trade-commerce, administration, tax system, development of script and city culture are visible in Harappa Civilization.

## **Town Planning**

The most prominent aspect of Harappa Civilization was its town planning. In the entire civilization there was uniformity. The same planning is seen in cities, streets, types of buildings, bricks, and brick making. Almost the towns are divided in to two divisions. On the western part of town there was a citadel built on the raised platform, whereas on the eastern part, known as Lower Town, there was a settlement of the people. Western part Citadel was built specifically, in such a manner that looks like the residence of the ruler, and buildings associated with the organizational work of rulers. Here, the offices according to hierarchy are also visible. Along with it, the storages for keeping grains are also found. The Citadel is surrounded by walls to protect it. The Eastern part of the town includes residential buildings. There are roads which cut each other at right angles. The main roads are connected to by ways. Most of the buildings have bricks made in the kilns. In some of the

big houses three to four big rooms are visible. The remains also show open yards, wells, kitchens and high platforms. One of the important characteristics of these houses is that the doors of these houses opened towards the street and not to the main road. There was a difference in the shape of buildings. It indicates that rich people lived in big houses and common people lived in a house of one room. The most important feature of Harappan Civilization's town planning was its drainage system, which is found in all the towns. The dirty water of bathroom gets collected in the pool outside the bathroom, which through a small drainage line reaches the manhole connected to the main gutter line which was thrown out of the town. Such a modern planning is seen here. There was also the system of cleaning the manhole. Not only that the manholes were covered with stones so that the germs of the dirty water could not spread outside. It indicates the high standard notion of cleanliness. Besides this, the uniform pits on both sides at particular distances show that there must have been provision for the night lamps. The main road dividing the East and west part of the town was about 40 feet wide. The roads are set with the buildings in such a way that they automatically get cleaned. The use of well and burned bricks was a greater feature of civilization. In Mohan-jo-daro, some houses are of one-storey and some others are of two-storeys. In order to build storeys they used the wooden beams. Bathroom which is a main feature of urbanization is well visible here. The houses there were of high standards in view of facilities.

### **Some of the Main Remains of Harappan Town Planning**

Such a town planning as discussed above is found in almost all the towns of this civilization with little variations. Some Harappan sites have some unique or specific features which are discussed below in detail. The following sites are included among such sites.

### **A Huge Swimming Pool found in Mohan-jo-daro**

The swimming pool at Mohen-jo-daro resembles the modern day swimming pool. There are rooms around it. To go down, there are stairs on the North and South. At the bottom of the pool there is a plaster of Bitumen coal so that water does not get absorbed in the soil. For the clean water, well is constructed and there is also the arrangement for the dirty water to be out. Balconies are found around pool. On the western part of the pool there



**A Huge Swimming Pool found in Mohan-jo-daro**

are granaries as well as platforms of bricks. The specificity of this pool is that a statue made of steatite of human being was found. This statue is up to waist, that is, the upper part of man. The statue does not have moustache but has beard and has characteristically flat nose. It possesses designed cotton cloth. According to historians it must be of a priest.



Historians believe that, that huge water pool must be to take religious bath to perform rituals. It means that the importance of holy bath which is seen in India was also prevalent in the Harappan Civilization.

**Harappa :** The grain storages of different kinds have also been found from Harappa. The specimens of barley too have been found. About 12 such grain storages have been found on the bank



**Harappa- storage**

of river Ravi. They are given the similes of great storages. According to the historians, Harappa being the main town, the rulers must have been residing there. They must have been collecting taxes in the form of grains. They must have been bringing the grains from different places through water ways.

**Lothal:** Lothal has a strategic place because it was a port of trade and an industrial town. A dock yard and workshop to make ships also have been found. Anchors to anchor ships too have been found. It seems that the trade of Harappan civilization was carried out through Lothal which was an international port of India. Besides this, the factory of making and colouring of beads also have been found. The historians believe that it must have been a centre of cotton trade and business of lime stone.

**Kalibagan:** Kalibangan of Rajasthan is the headquarters of agricultural revolution of the Harappan Civilization. There has been information of a huge amount of copper near Kalibangan. It means that many different types of implements must have been manufactured in Kalibangan. These implements must have been used in agriculture. The evidence of a ploughed field is a sign that it had its special place in the agricultural field.



**Water management of Dholavira**



**Mohan-jo-daro town**

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**Dhakko Lothal**

**Dholavira:** Dholavira situated in Kachchh is a distinguished site of Harappan Civilization. Here, the rain water harvesting system was found. The rain water was directly collected and through pipes it was taken to three huge pools. Such a wonderful management of rain water was being implemented by Harappan Civilization before 4000 years ago. It is considered as the oldest ancient water management system.

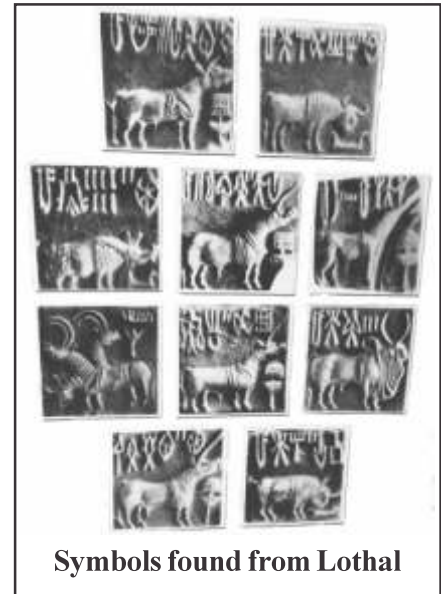
Besides this, remains of stadium and sign boards are also found, which give niche in history special.

Besides the above sites, many other sites too possess such specialities, in which Sutka-je-dor was an important port. Rangpur of Gujarat shows the movement from mature Harappa Civilization to Post-Harappa Civilization and the factory of bead making from stone has been found. Many such sites possess their distinguishing characters

### **Economic Condition**

The economic condition of Harappan was based on three things: agriculture, industries and trade.

First we discuss agriculture. Civilization situated in the fertile land of river Sindhu and other rivers developed first because of agriculture. Because of agriculture, industries and cities came up. Along with agriculture, animal rearing was another important occupation of the people. Harappa, Mohan-jo-daro, Lothal and Dholavira and such important places had the granaries. It shows the development of production. The remains of ploughed fields have been found in Kalibangan. The remains of earthen plough are found in Banawali. All these things point to the development of agriculture. Copper implements were used in agriculture. Irrigation through wells is found. Wheat, barley, tal and pulses were the principal crops. But the most important crop was cotton. They had the know how of mustard and sugarcane. The remains of cotton cloth are found in Mohan-jo-daro.



As the grains started increasing, the need for market arose. Mainly the rise in the production of cotton took the civilization to a newer height.

They know the skill of fishing. The hooks of copper to catch fish are found. It is believed that people ate fish and flesh of animals. There are remains of the development of agriculture in the North-West region of India due to fertile soil and suitable climate.

### **Sculptor and Industry**

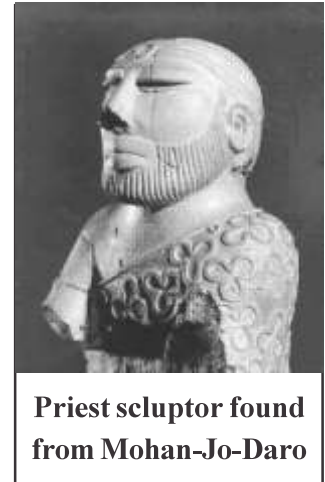
The people of Harappan Civilization used stones, copper and brass in the industry and sculptor. They were completely unaware of Iron. They used to make things of gold and silver. Armlets of pearls, needle type things too have been found from these places. The sculptors of silver are found more than gold. The ornaments and plates and saucers of silver have been found. The implements of copper have been found in big number. It includes weapons, axe-dagger, saw, knives, spears and arrows of copper. But the important fact is that most of the tools found are related to agriculture where as weapons are found in less proportion. It meant that they were making weapons only required for their protection. Weapons like swords are not found. Tools of stones too have been found. Implements made up by the mixture of stone and copper too have been found. They acquired copper from Khetadi of Rajasthan, whereas for gold they depended on some regions of Himalayas and South India. They brought silver from Mesopotamia (present Iraq). They had the skill of making an alloy of brass by mixing copper and tin. The most famous statue of brass is found

from Mohan-jo-daro. It is called the statue of brass dancing beauty. The statue of a lady in a dancing pose has even many bangles on her hand. This is the best sculptor of Harappa Civilization.

In the Handicraft the industry of making beads and cutting of precious stones as well as idol making skills had developed a great deal. Sculptors were made from the precious stones like kanalayan and gomed whereas pearls and coins were made from steatite. The factories of making of pearls have been found from Lothal and Chanhudaro. Beads of silver too have been found from several places of Harappa Civilization. Besides this, ornaments from ivory, armlets, mina and lime stone works too had developed in great deal. These matters indicate that handicraft and sculptor of good quality developed during Harappa Civilization.

The stone statue of a male with beard found in Mohan-jo-daro is a very famous artefact of Harappa Civilization. With half-opened eyes, sitting in a concentration pose is a statue of a male. A designed shawl is visible on its left shoulder. It looks like a bust of a priest.

The earthen statues of male and females have been found from many sites of this civilization. Along with them the statues of animals too are found. The statues of women have been found in great number. Therefore the historians believe that they must have been worshipping mother goddesses. Many statues of birds, monkeys, dogs, bullocks, domesticated animals and sheep and goats have been found from here. Bullock-carts and toys made up of tanned mud have been found in great deal. Hence a western archeologist, Gordon Child praises these people's love for children abundantly.



In the Harappan handicraft, the art of making earthen statues seems to be the best. The earthen vessels were made by the pot maker's revolver. They were colored red and then were decorated with black color. They are found in various shapes. Different figures are drawn on them, which are more of geometrical. Apart from it, leaves of tree, trees, birds, fish and animal figures too are drawn on them.

The coins that are found in Harappa Civilization contain quadrilateral figures in the coins that are made of steatite. There are paintings of animals on them. However, not a single painting of horse is found on them. It indicates that the people of Harappan Civilization were unaware of horses. Script too is found on Harappa coins, but it has not been deciphered yet. Among these coins, the painting of the male god with horns is the most famous. This three headed god, sitting in padmasana is surrounded by such animals as elephant, tiger, hippopotamus and buffalo. Hence many scholars believe it to be the form of Pashupati, however other scholars do not believe so.

### **Trade-Commerce and Contact with other Civilizations**

The biggest credit of the town's economic system of Harappa Civilization is their internal and international trade. They had created a unique infrastructure. The people of towns depended for grains and other commodities on the people of surrounding villages. Consequently economic relations grew between villages and towns. The handicraft artists sold their handicrafts and weapons in the markets of villages. From such interactions, the class of traders emerged. The internal trade of the Harappa Civilization developed very well. It is believed that the production of cotton, chalcedony, carnelian and lime stone as well as steatite used to be the most in Lothal



and around it. The above products used to be exported from many parts of Harappan Civilization. And from Kalibagan, things of copper used to be exported. Gold and cotton were imported from Karnataka and Sindh respectively. From Badkshamathi of Afghanistan, precious stones like lapis lazuli were imported. Stone beads were exported from Chanhudaro.

The trade of Harappa Civilization with foreign countries used to be carried out through important ports like Lothal and Sutkajendro with Mesopotamia and the Gulf of Iran. Here there used to be great demand of the things of Harappa Civilization. The traders used to go from place to place to get raw material and do the exchange with



**Emblem of bullock with salgee peak**

them. Things like cotton, pearls, precious stones and lime stone were being exported to Mesopotamia. The things that were imported included tin and silver. Scales and cells were available on the seashore of Gujarat. Best quality wood was acquired from Jammu and places around it. The trade of Lothal continued with ports like Oman, Bahrain, Susa, Kish of Iranian Gulf and Ur of Mesopotamia. The emblems of Mesopotamia are found from Lothal. Two dozen emblems of Harappa Civilization are found in Susa, Ur and cities of Mesopotamia. The earthen vessels and precious stones of Harappa Civilization are found in foreign places. It clearly indicates that the international trade of Harappa was of the best quality. The best illustration of the international trade of Harappa Civilization is the inscription found in Mesopotamia. In this inscription (approximately 2300 B.C.) the king Sargon of Akkad writes that in his area many traders from Dilmun, Meluha and Magan came to do the trade and the trade of many countries is in great proportion with them. According to the scholars, the word Meluha in the inscription is used for Harappa Civilization. Whereas Magan, Makran are for the seashore and Dilmun is for Bahrain. The things that came from Mesopotamia to Harappa Civilization included readymade clothes, wool, scent, animal skin things and silver.

### **Social Life**

On the basis of the remains of Harappa it seems that this society was matriarchal. This is confirmed by the remains of idols of mother goddesses. However since the script of Harappa has not been deciphered, it is not possible to determine fully about the social structure.

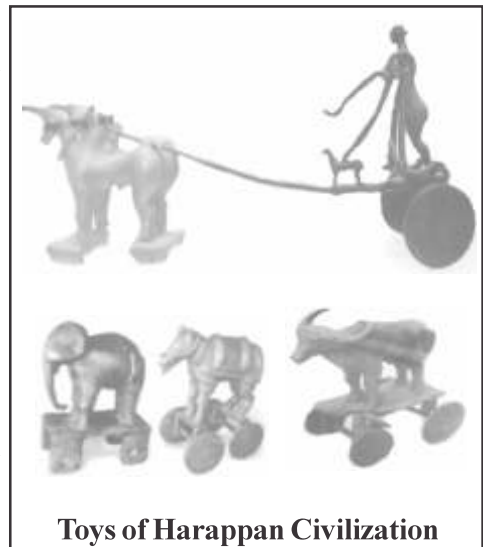
In the Harappa Civilization, many professional groups are seen, such as, priests, farmers, traders and artisans. From the houses too there is a distinction of different groups of houses. Artisans working in copper works, pearl works and precious stone works seem to be in greater proportion. The houses can be categorized in three groups: wealthy, artisans and labourers.



**copper-dancer, Mohenjo-daro**

From the statues, the type of clothes they must have been wearing can be assumed. Men wore cloth like dhoti. They mostly used cotton and woolen clothes. From the statues of women, it can be assumed that they too wore similar kind of dhoti or clothes. Cotton cloth was used more. Needles and weaving device have been found, which indicates that they knew to weave and spin.

From the remains it is found that the hair of women and men were long. They tied hair in different ways. They liked to wear ornaments. Men and women wore laces, armlets, ear rings, beads and embellishments of pearls. The wealthy used to wear costly diamonds and ornaments of gold and silver.



### Spiritual and Religious Life

Remains found from Harappan city indicate that the people of Harappan Civilization seemed to



be worshippers of trees and idols. From many sites of this civilization, the idols of mother goddesses are found in great proportion. In some statues the child is shown on the lap of woman. In one of the rare statues, a plant emerging from woman's womb is shown, which indicates mother earth. They seemed to be worshippers of linga and yoni.

Many emblems have been found from Harappan Civilization. These emblems give good information about their religion. In one of the coins, one male god is sitting. On his head there is a crown of horns. He is sitting in yogic posture and surrounded by animals. Historians call him the god of animals, that is, Lord Pashupati or the form of initial Shiva. In another coin there is a god with horns. His hair flies in the air. He is naked amidst the branches of a pipal tree are opposite to him a worshipper kneeling indicates that they worshipped the pipal tree. Even now in India, this is quite common practice. They also believed in animal worship.

In Harappan Civilization Kalibangan and Lothal provide information of regional religions. From these two places fire-altars have been found. According to historians these fire altars must have been used for the yajnas. Ashes and bones of animals are found from it. It seems to be havan kunda. From Lothal and Kalibangan it can be assumed that different customs were prevalent in different regions of the Harappa Civilization. Such havan kunds are not found elsewhere.

In the Harappan Civilization, the corpses of the dead men were buried as well as cremated. Both the customs were followed. The religious ritual after death is an important element for any civilization. While burying, they laid the dead body in North-South direction and the head was kept in such a way that it would be in north. Along with it they kept earthen vessels. In some tombs things like bangles, pearls and copper mirrors are also found. It indicates that they believed in reincarnation of soul. One rare remain is found in Lothal, in which, two persons are buried in one tomb. In Kalibangan, a symbolic burial is found, as vessels are found from that tomb but no human skeleton is located. It implies that there was a symbolic burial followed by cremation.



## **Harappan Script**

Harappan script, having 400 signs, is not yet deciphered. But definitely Harappan people were literate. From all the sites of Harappan Civilization, emblems of same type have been found. Some signs and figures have been inscribed. It seems that this script is written from right to left. Mostly the script seems to be pictorial. Not much information is available about their language. Some linguists believe that the language Brahui, spoken by the Baluchis of Pakistan, must have been spoken by the people of Harappan Civilization. However the scholars do not quite agree to it.

## **Fall of Harappan Civilization**

As seen earlier, the mature age of this civilization is 2350 B.C. to 1750 B.C. After this, gradually the signs of this civilization went on disappearing. Excellent town planning, writing skills, uniform weights, earthen vessels and such important features declined. Their population started decreasing, because in the olden Harappan period it was spread in 85 hectare. Which came to only 3 hectare. Such is the belief of historians. In all the sites of this civilization such a decrease of population must have occurred and the urban population must have migrated in to rural area. We can call it Post Harappan Period.

Some scholars are of opinion that this civilization must have got destroyed because of natural calamities like floods and earthquake. Due to earth quake, the plains of Sindhu River must have been raised up and there must have been blockages in the flow of rivers, resulting into drowning of big city like Mohen-jo-daro. However for the destruction of Mohen-jo-daro, different views are held by different scholars.

## **Heritage of Harappan Civilization**

If it is thought as to what is given to the world and India by this civilization, it becomes clear that it has given invaluable heritage to the world.

This civilization of India is considered as the largest in the world from the point of view of area. Its expansion is from the North-West part of India, today's West Punjab and Sindh to Kashmir in north and up to Uttar Pradesh in the East. No other civilization had such a vast area.

Being an urban civilization, specific urbanization has taken place. The town planning of this civilization is indeed wonderful. In the buildings, tanned bricks are used, which is foremost in India. Not only that, but such a meticulous town planning is not seen in any other civilization of the world. Drainage planning is really an embellishment. In no other civilization of the world such an excellent system for the removal of dirty water is seen. In its post period even in India, no remains, of such a clear system of drainage, are found.

This civilization has given a great heritage of trade and commerce to India. For trade-commerce, Harappan Civilization was connected up to Macedonia. Uniform weights and method of measurement were prevalent. The industry of ship building and international business are the greatest heritages of the civilization.

This civilization has revealed the then social life. It shows they were quite aware of the developmental aspects of children. The remains of different types of toys-chess reveal their understanding of development of children. The models of Stadium and Water System are special gifts of this civilization.

The coins of stalactite are important heritage of this civilization. The idols of mother goddesses indicate their matriarchic social system.

## EXERCISE

### 1. Answer the following questions in detail :

- (1) How did Harappan Civilization originate?
- (2) Explain the Town Planning of Harappan Civilization.
- (3) Sketch the Economic condition of the Harappan Civilization.
- (4) Give an idea of the social system of the Harappan Civilization
- (5) Explain the religion of the Harappan Civilization.

### 2. Answer briefly :

- (1) Mention the distinguishing features of Mohan-jo-daro and Dholavira.
- (2) Explain: "Lothal was a great economic centre of Harappan Civilization."
- (3) With whom did the Harappan Civilization trade?
- (4) Explain about the script of Harappan Civilization.
- (5) Give information about the coins of Harappan Civilization.

### 3. Choose the correct option from the given alternatives and give answers :

- (1) When was Harappan Civilization discovered?  
(A) 1920 A.D. (B) 1921 A.D.  
(C) 1922 A.D. (D) 1923 A.D.
- (2) The evidence of ploughed fields is found from.....  
(A) Harappa (B) Mohan-jo-daro  
(C) Kalibangan (D) Lothal
- (3) The evidence of stadium in Harappan Civilization is found from.....  
(A) Dholavira (B) Lothal  
(C) Kalibangan (D) Harappa
- (4) Which metal was unknown by the people of Harappan Civilization?  
(A) Gold (B) Silver  
(C) Copper (D) Iron
- (5) In which state of India is the archeological site Dholavira located?  
(A) Rajasthan (B) Maharashtra  
(C) Gujarat (D) Haryana.

