

# Emergence and Decline of Indus Valley Civilization

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## *ABSTRACT*

Indus Civilization represents the earliest manifestation of urban development in the plains of the Indus valley and its extension along the Arabian sea-coast. The four chief settlements so far unearthed give the material to recreate the social substance of the human progress. Two lie in Pakistan: Harappa, normally related to Hariyupiya of the Rigveda is arranged on an old bed (sukbrawa) of the waterway Ravi in Sahiwal District of Punjab, and Mohenjo-daro (truly 'hill of the dead') is on the correct bank of the Indus stream in Larkana District of Sind. The other two locales are in western India; Lothal is arranged on the Sabarmati waterway at the leader of the bay of Cambay on the west shore of India, and Kalibangan<sup>6</sup> (truly 'dark bangles') lies somewhere in the range of 310 km north-west of Delhi along the left bank of the now-dry Ghaggar (old Sarasvati) stream in northern Rajasthan. The present research paper will examine the emergence and decline of Indus valley civilization and its impact on society. This research paper is based on secondary data only which have been collected from different research journal papers, book aviale on concerned topic, websites and some manuscripts available in different library of India.

**Keywords:** Indus valley, Agriculture, Animal, Harappa, Civilization, Archeological Survey

## **Introduction:**

The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) or Harappa Civilization was a Bronze Age civilization (3300–1300 BCE; mature period 2600–1900 BCE) mainly in the northwestern regions of South Asia, extending from what today is northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India. Along with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, it was one of three early cradles of civilizations of the Old World, and of the three, the most widespread. Acidification of this district amid the third thousand years BCE may have been the underlying goad for the urbanization related with the civilization, yet in the end additionally decreased the water supply enough to cause the civilization's downfall, and to disseminate its populace eastbound. At its pinnacle, the Indus Civilization may have had a populace of more than five million. Tenants of the antiquated Indus River valley grew new strategies in craftsmanship (carnelian items, seal cutting) and metallurgy (copper, bronze, lead, and tin). The Indus urban areas are noted for their urban arranging, heated block houses, expound waste frameworks, water supply frameworks, and groups of expansive non-private structures. Youngsters' toys were found in the

urban communities, with couple of weapons of war, proposing peace and success. Their exchange seals, enriched with creatures and legendary creatures, show they led flourishing exchange with lands as far away as Sumer in southern Mesopotamia. The Indus Valley Civilization is likewise named the Harappa civilization after Harappa, the first of its locales to be unearthed in the 1920s, in what was then the Punjab region of British India. The revelation of Harappa, and soon a while later Mohenjo-daro, was the summit of work starting in 1861 with the establishing of the Archeological Survey of India in the British Raj. Uncovering of Harappan destinations has been continuous since 1920, with essential leaps forward happening as of late as 1999. This Harappan civilization is some of the time called the Mature. Harappan culture to recognize it from the way of life quickly going before and tailing it. Of these, the prior is regularly called the Early Harappan culture, while the later one might be alluded to as the Late Harappan, both of which existed in an indistinguishable zone from the Mature Harappan Civilisation. The early Harappan societies were gone before by neighborhood Neolithic

rural towns, from which the waterway fields were populated. An aggregate of 1,022 urban areas and settlements had been found by 2008, predominantly in the general locale of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra Rivers, and their tributaries; of which 406 destinations are in Pakistan and 616 locales in India; of these 96 have been exhumed. Among the settlements were the major urban focuses of Harappa, Mohenjo-daro (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Dholavira, Ganeriwala and Rakhigarhi. The Indus River Valley human progress, otherwise called the Harappan development after the main site of their disclosure, is a Bronze Age culture that spread over generally from 3300 to 1300 BC. It stood toe to toe with the three other old heavyweights of the world - Egypt, Mesopotamia, and old China - regularly outperforming their logical accomplishments; out of the four old supports of human progress, the general population of the Indus Valley could claim to be the biggest and ostensibly generally prosperous. Their prosperity was based on a strong rural base (they developed different products, from dates to cotton, in the ripe soils of the valley) and forefront innovations, including indoor pipes, complex city-arranging and open sewage frameworks, achievements in creating systems, composing, and a standout amongst the most progressive understandings of metallurgy at the time. They likewise appear to have been a quiet people; notwithstanding their expertise with metal, we've discovered strikingly few Harappan weapons. Not a similar thing can be said in regards to their youngsters' toys, in any case, of which they apparently couldn't get enough of, both in amount and assortment.

The Harappans were one of the most mysterious groups to, tragically, never truly make it out of antiquity. Despite its status as an economic, technological, and social powerhouse, the Harappan civilization simply fell apart in a span of two or three centuries. The reasons as to why this happened are still a subject of passionate debate and they may be more relevant now than ever before.

### Methodology:

Studying the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)

requires a multidisciplinary approach, combining archaeological, historical, and scientific methodologies. Here's a comprehensive research methodology to explore the IVC:

### Historical and Textual Analysis

1. **Epigraphy:** Study the inscriptions and scripts found on IVC artifacts, such as the Indus script.
2. **Historical Records:** Analyze ancient texts, such as the Rigveda and the Mahabharata, for references to the IVC.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** Compare the IVC with other ancient civilizations, such as ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt.

### Scientific Methods:

1. **Radiocarbon Dating:** Use radiocarbon dating to determine the age of organic materials found at IVC sites.
2. **Thermo luminescence Dating:** Use thermoluminescence dating to determine the age of ceramics and other inorganic materials.
3. **Geoarchaeology:** Analyze the geological context of IVC sites to understand their environmental setting and natural resources.
4. **Bioarchaeology:** Study human and animal remains found at IVC sites to understand their diet, health, and subsistence practices.

### Interdisciplinary Approaches:

1. **Ethnographic Analysis:** Study the cultural practices and traditions of modern communities in the Indus Valley region to gain insights into the IVC.
2. **Computational Modeling:** Use computational models to simulate the growth and decline of IVC cities and to understand their social and economic dynamics.
3. **Collaborative Research:** Collaborate with researchers from diverse fields, such as archaeology, history, anthropology, and environmental science, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the IVC.

### Research Objectives:

1. To critically evaluate the existing literature and

research on the Indus Valley Civilization: Analyze the current state of knowledge, identify gaps in research, and propose new avenues for investigation.

2. To develop a comprehensive and interdisciplinary framework for understanding the Indus Valley Civilization: Integrate insights from archaeology, history, anthropology, and environmental science to provide a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of the IVC.
3. To contribute to the preservation and conservation of Indus Valley Civilization heritage: Investigate ways to protect and promote the cultural and archaeological heritage of the IVC for future generations.

## Results and Discussion :

### Indus Valley Civilisation

The Indus Valley Civilisation existed through its early years of 3300-1300 BCE, and its mature period of 2600-1900 BCE. The area of this Civilisation extended along the Indus River from what today is northeast Afghanistan, into Pakistan and northwest India.

The Indus Civilisation was the most widespread of the three early civilizations of the ancient world, along with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were thought to be the two great cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, emerging around 2600 BCE along the Indus River Valley in the Sindh and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. Their discovery and excavation in the 19th and 20th centuries provided important archaeological data about ancient cultures.

### Chronology

Sir Mortimer Wheeler, British archaeologist who is noted for his discoveries in Great Britain and India and for his advancement of scientific method in archaeology. After serving in World War II, Wheeler was made director general of archaeology for the government of India (1944–47), where his research focused on the origins and development of the Indus civilization.

Wheeler's work provided archaeologists with the means to recognize approximate dates from the civilization's foundations through its decline and fall. The chronology is primarily based, as noted, on

physical evidence from Harappan sites but also from knowledge of their trade contacts with Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Lapis Lazuli was the only product that was immensely popular in both cultures and, although scholars knew it came from India, they did not know from precisely where until the Indus Valley Civilisation was discovered. Even though this semi-precious stone would continue to be imported after the fall of the Indus Valley Civilization, it is clear that, initially, some of the export came from this region. Various regions emerged at different phases of the Harappan civilisation, which projected a chronology of human advancement. These phases can be categorised as follows:

- **Pre-Harappan** – c. 7000 - c. 5500 BCE: The Neolithic period best exemplified by sites like Mehrgarh which shows evidence of agricultural development, domestication of plants and animals, and production of tools and ceramics.

- **Early Harappan** – C. 5500-2800 BCE: Trade firmly established with Egypt, Mesopotamia, and possibly China. Ports, docks, and warehouses were built near waterways by communities living in small villages.

- **Mature Harappan** – c. 2800 - c. 1900 BCE: Construction of the great cities and widespread urbanisation. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro are both flourishing c. 2600 BCE. Other cities, such as Ganeriwala, Lothal, and Dholavira are built according to the same models and this development of the land continues with the construction of hundreds of other cities until there are over 1,000 of them throughout the land in every direction.

- **Late Harappan**—C.1900- C.1500 BCE: Decline of the Civilisation coinciding with a wave of migration of the Aryan people from the north, most likely the Iranian Plateau. Physical evidence suggests climate change caused flooding, drought, and famine. A loss of trade relations with Egypt and Mesopotamia has also been suggested as a contributing cause.

- **Post-Harappan**– 1500 - 600 BCE: The cities were abandoned, and the people had moved

south. The Civilisation had already fallen by the time Cyrus II (the Great, r.c. 550-530 BCE) invaded India in 530 BCE.

### Discovery & Early Excavation

The story of the Indus Valley Civilization, therefore, is best given with the discovery of its ruins in the 19th century CE.

James Lewis (better known as Charles Masson, l. 1800-1853 CE) was a British soldier serving in the artillery of the East India Company Army when, in 1827 CE, he deserted with another soldier. In order to avoid detection by authorities, he changed his name to Charles Masson and embarked on a series of travels throughout India. Masson was an avid numismatist (coin collector) who was especially interested in old coins and, following various leads, wound up excavating ancient sites on his own. One of these sites was Harappa, which he found in 1829 CE. He seems to have left the site fairly quickly, after making a record of it in his notes but, having no knowledge of who could have built the city, wrongly attributed it to Alexander the Great during his campaigns in India c. 326 BCE.

When Masson returned to Britain after his adventures (and having been somehow forgiven for desertion), he published his book *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and Punjab* in 1842 CE which attracted the attention of the British authorities in India and, especially, Alexander Cunningham. Sir Alexander Cunningham (l. 1814-1893 CE), a British engineer in the country with a passion for ancient history, founded the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1861 CE, an organisation dedicated to maintaining a professional standard of excavation and preservation of historic sites. Cunningham began excavations of the site and published his interpretation in 1875 CE (in which he identified and named the Indus Script) but this was incomplete and lacked definition because Harappa remained isolated with no connection to any known past Civilisation which could have built it.

In 1904 CE, a new director of the ASI was appointed, John Marshall (l. 1876-1958 CE), who

later visited Harappa and concluded the site represented an ancient Civilisation previously unknown. He ordered the site to be fully excavated and, at about the same time, heard of another site some miles away which the local people referred to as Mohenjo-Daro ("the mound of the dead") because of bones, both animal and human, found there along with various artefacts. Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro began in the 1924-1925 season and the similarities of the two sites were recognized; the Indus Valley Civilisation had been discovered.

In 1912, John Faithfull Fleet, an English civil servant working with the Indian Civil Services, discovered several Harappan seals. This prompted an excavation campaign from 1921-1922 by Sir John Hubert Marshall, Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, which resulted in the discovery of Harappa. By 1931, much of Mohenjo-Daro had been excavated, while the next director of the Archaeological Survey of India, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, led additional excavations.

The Partition of India, in 1947, divided the country to create the new nation of Pakistan. The bulk of the archaeological finds that followed was inherited by Pakistan. By 1999, over 1,056 cities and settlements had been found, of which 96 have been excavated.

### Indus Valley Civilization Decline

In this section, we discuss the possible reasons and theories given by experts for the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization.

- The causes of the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization have not been firmly established. Archaeologists now believe that the civilization did not come to an abrupt end but gradually declined. People moved eastwards and cities were abandoned. Writing and trade declined.

- Mortimer Wheeler suggested that the Aryan invasion led to the decline of the Indus Valley. This theory has now been debunked.

- Robert Raikes suggests that tectonic movements and floods caused the decline.



● Other causes cited include a drying up of the rivers, deforestation, and destruction of the green cover. It is possible that some cities were destroyed by floods but not all. It is now accepted that several factors could have led to the decline of the Indus Valley civilization.

● New cities emerged only about 1400 years later.

### Conclusion:

By around 1800 BC, the Indus Valley Civilization was starting to crack. A widely-accepted theory is that they fell to a nomadic Indo-European tribe called Aryans, which invaded and subsequently conquered the Harappians. Evidence in support of this comes from the fact that cities were being abandoned at the time and an increase in the apparent incidence of violence and violent death—which both fit with what you’d expect to see in a war zone. More recent evidence, however, contradicts this theory. Some experts believe that the collapse was caused by climate change. By 1800 BC, the whole area grew colder and drier, and it’s suspected that tectonic movements in the area heavily disrupted or diverted the rivers on which the Harappans relied. The drying of the Saraswati River, which began around 1900 BC, is believed to be a major driver of these local changes. Combined with monsoon-associated periods of flooding and drought, these changes in river patterns splintered the once-monolithic block of the Indus Valley Civilization. Farmers fled eastwards, towards the basin of the Ganges. While the river allowed them to re-establish villages and farms, these communities could not dream to produce the same agricultural surplus as the Indus River basin and the extensive irrigation systems built there. Faced with starvation, large cities tore themselves apart or vacated for rural settings. Without their craftsmen, trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia shriveled and then ended altogether.



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