



**RISE AND DECLINE OF INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION**  
**(In special reference to Contemporary Business, Commerce and Administrative Conditions)**

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Sometimes, discoveries of great cultures of the past have been made by accident. In 1856, two brothers James and William Burton who were engaged in laying out the railway line from Karachi to Lahore, tried to get bricks for their line from the nearby mounds. This digging led to the discovery of two ancient cities, Harappa in West Punjab and Mohanjodaro in Sind.

The credit of search of this unknown civilization goes delivered to Ray Bahadur Dayaram. He excavated this place in 1921 under the guidance of Sir John Marshall. After approximately 1 year in 1922 at the time of excavation one more place was found in Larkana at Pakistan. Keeping in view the informations of this place it was assumed that this civilization was limited only to Sindhu valley. So, this civilization was called by the name 'Sindhu valley civilization'. But with the passage of time when the remains of this civilization were found beyond the boundry of this valley, this civilization was called by the name of 'Harappa civilization' also. Because, of the reason that the first remains of this civilization were found in Harappa, it seemed better to call it Harappa civilization. Approx. 1000 places are found in India, till now. The total area of Sindhu valley civilization is approx. 12,99,600 square km. It is like a Triangle.

As to who were the builders of the civilization is not certain yet. The skeletal remains show that the population consisted (include) Mediterraneans, Alpines, Proto Australoids and Mongoloids. However, according to changing concepts in physical anthropology and critical analysis of the skeletal material from excavation at Harappa, Mohan Jodaro, Chanhu-daro and Lothal, Dr. D. K. Sen rejects the old view. Broadly at each of these sites, the population was homogeneous with regard to head shape, nose shape and stature. Whatever their original composition, the population at these sites belonged each to a single biological group and are not recognizable as belonging to several races with distinctive characteristics. The people were broad nosed, tall and long-headed in Punjab and Sindh and had somewhat roundes heads in Gujarat.

### **1. METALS AND MEASUREMENT & WEIGHT**

It seems that the people of this civilization used gold, silver, copper, bronze etc. But they did not know about Iron. Besides it they used Bone, ivory etc. as metals. Though the script of Sindhu Civilisation is not translated, the knowledge of script must have helped the recording of private property and the keeping of accounts. The urban people of the Indus region also needed and used weights and measures for trade and other transactions. Numerous articles used for weights have been found. They show that in weighing mostly 16 or its multiple were used. For instance 16, 64, 160, 320 and 640. Interestingly the tradition of 16 has continued in India till modern times and till recently 16 annas made one Rs. The Harappans also knew the art of measurement. We have come across sticks inscribed with measure marks one of these is made by bronze.

### **2. SEALS-**

Seals had a special place in the study of Harappa Culture. Approx. 2000 seals have been obtained till now. These seals are found in circular and rectangular shape. Mostly these seals are made of Stealite. These seals have been obtained from the base of Ravi river from time to time. These seals are the best source to get knowledge about Indus valley. This statement is made by Journal Kannighum a great historision. According to Makay contemporary language and script can be detected by the monograph marks on the seals of Indus valley civilization.

Out of all these seals the most important seal is that in which a nacked deity having horns with three face has been marked. This deity sits on a table with religious gesticulation and many cattles are standing around him. According to Marshall this is a shape of Shiva. Three more seals of this type are also found. This deity is sitting on the table in two seals but in third seal he is sitting on earth. The deity is nacked but as far as the question is for horn all the deity have horn. It is apprehended that this is the picture of a unmareed goddess or the wife of any deity.

A seals of Mohan-jodaro tells us that a lion was a symbol of godess. According to Makay in ancient times this godess was considered as a wife of Shiva. On two seals there is a face of Lion & horn on their head but these horns are of a bull. It is possible that bull is considered as a riding of Shiva. In an another seals there is a picture of a buffallo which is standing with price and erect head after defeating a group of persons in the position of a warrion after defeating his enemy stands. Probably it is a picture of some deity who was a god of victory. Sealings are found from Mohan jo-daro, Kalibanga and Lothal which indicate that perhaps these sealings were used to mark the goods which were exported.

### 3. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Piggot writes that Harappa was administered by two capitals. The distance between these capitals was 350 miles. But they were connected with each other with the help of a river. If we want to divide it in south and north two region, even they seem two parts of one unit. Wheeler wrote that wheather this facts arised from any where preference of religious trend might be accepted. The masters of Harappa administrated their kingdom like priest kings of Sumar and Akkad. In such type of kingdom normal person had no right from the political point of view. If the Harappa cultural zone is considered identical with the political zone the subcontinent did not witness such a large political units until the rise of the Maurya Empire. The remarkable stability of this unit is demonstrated by its continuity for nearly 600 years. Harappa rulers were more concerned with commerce than with conquests and Harappa was possibly ruled by a class of merchants.

#### (a) Agriculture

Presently the rainless, Indus region is not fertile. But its prosperous villages and towns in the past show that it was fertile in ancient times. At present it has only a rain fall of about 15 cm. In the fourth century B.C. one of the historians of Alexander writes that Sindh was a fertile part of the country. In earlier times the Indus region possessed more natural vegetation which attracted more rains. It supplied timber fuel for baking bricks on a large scale and also for construction. With the passage of time, natural vegetation was destroyed by the extension of agriculture, large scale grazing, and supply of fuel. A far more important reason for the fertility of the area seems to have been the annual inundation in the Indus river.

The Indus people sowed seeds in the flood plains in November, when the flood water receded and reaped their harvests of wheat and Barley in April before the advent of the next flood. The Harappans probably used the wooden ploughshare. We do not know whether the plough was drawn by men or oxen.

The Indus people produced wheat, barley, rai, peas etc. They produced two types of wheat and barley. A good quantity of barley has been discovered at Banawali. In addition to this, they produced sesamum and mustard. But the position seems to have been different with the Harappans at Lothal. It seems that as early as 1800 B.C. the people of Lothal used rice whose remains have been found. Food grains were stored in huge granaries in both Mohan-jodaro and Harappa and possibly in Kalibangan. The Indus people were the earliest people to produce cotton. Because cotton was first produced in this area the Greeks called it a 'Sindon' which is derived from 'Sindh'.

#### (b) Domestication of Animals

Although the Harappans practised agriculture, animals were kept on a large scale. Oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep and pigs were domesticated. The humped bulls were favoured by the Harappans. From the very beginning dogs were regarded as pets. Cats were also domesticated and signs of the feet of both dogs and cats have been noticed. They also kept asses and camels, which were obviously used as beasts of burden. Evidence of the horse comes from a superficial level of Mohan-jodaro and from a doubtful terracotta figurine from Lothal. The remains of the horse have been reported from Surkotada, situated on the west of Gujarat and belong to around 2000 B.C. but the identity is doubtful. In any case it is clear that this animal were not in regular use in Harappan times. Elephants were well known to the Harappans who were also acquainted with the rhinoceros. The contemporary Sumerian cities in Mesopotamia practically produced the same food grains and domesticated the same animals as the Harappans did. But the Harraphan people in Gujarat produced rice and domesticated elephants, whichwas not the case with the people of Mesopotamian cities.

#### (c) Technology & Crafts

The Harappan culture belongs to the Bronze age. The people of Harappa used many tools and implements of stone, but they were very well acquainted with the manufacture and use of bronze.

Bronze was made by the Smiths by mixing tin with copper. The reason of mixing was that none of the two metals was easily available to the Harappans. However, the kit of bronze goods left by the Harappans is considerable, which suggests that the bronzesmiths constituted an important group of artisans in the Harrapans society. They produced not only images and utensils but also various tools and weapons such as axes, saws, knives and spears. Several other important crafts flourished in the Harappan towns. A piece of woven cotton has been recovered from Mohan-jodaro and taxtile impressions found on several objects. Weavers wove cloth of wool and cotton.

Huge brick structure suggest that brick laying was an important craft. There are the proof of the existence of a class of masons. The Harrapans also practised boat-making. As will be shown later, seal making and terracotta manufacture were also important crafts. The goldsmiths made jewellery of silver, gold and precious stones, the first two night have been obtained from Afghanistan and the last from south India. The Harappans were also experts in head-making.

The potter's wheel was in full use and the Harappans produced their own characteristics pottery which was made glossy and shining.

**(d) Science**

The Harappans knew mining, metal working and the art of constructing well-planned buildings, some of which were higher than two stories. They were also adopt at manufacturing Gypsum cement which was used to join stones and even metals. They knew how to make long lasting paints and dyes. Mohan-jodaro had a public bath worked by an ingenious hydraulic system.

**(e) Trade**

The importance of trade in the life of the Indus people is clear not only by granaries found at Harappa, Mohan-jodaro and Lothal but also by the presence of numerous seals, uniform script and regulated weights and measures in a wide area. The Harappans carried on considerable trade in stone, metal, shell etc. within the Indus culture zone. However, their cities did not possess the necessary raw material for the commodities they produced. They did not use metal money. Most probably they carried on all exchanges through barter. In return for finished goods and possibly foodgrains, they procured metals from the neighbouring area by boats and bullock-carts. They knew the use of wheels and carts. Solid wheels were in use in Harappa. It also appears that the Harappans used some kind of a modern 'Ekka'.

Following are the commodities which were imported by Harrapa citizens :

Outside of India	Inside of India
Afganistan - Tin, Silver, Gold, Led	Himalaya - Mineral pitch
Iran - Tin, Silver, Led	Khetadi - Copper
Baluchistan - Copper, Stealite	South India - Gold, Shell, Grey
Faras - Gold	Rajasthan - Stealite, Led
Mesopotamia - Lapis, Lazuli	Gujarat - Stealite
Badaksha - Blue Diamond.	Maharastra - Sapphire
	SauRastra - Shell, Grey
	Neelgiri - Green Stone.

Following are the commodities which were exported by Harrapa citizens :

1. Faras (bay) : Gold, Silver, Copper, Lapis Lazuli, bead of stone, ivory camb, Soot, Many types of Wooden, Diamond, Monkeys, Peacock.
2. Sumar : Marbal seals, Diamond, Images Wooden.
3. Greek : Cotton
4. Babylon : Cotton
5. Mesopotamia : Diamonds
6. Egypt : Diamonds, Neckless, Stool, Images, Candle stand, spoons.

Harappans had set up a trading colony in Northern Afganistan which evidently facilitated trade with Central Asia. Their cities also carried commerce with those in the land of Tigris and the Euphorates. The Mesopotamian records from about 2350 B.C. wards refer to trade relations with Meluha which was the ancient name given to the Indus region. The Mesopotamian texts speak of two intermediate trading stations called Dilman and Makan which lay between Mesopotamia and Malaha. Dilmun can probably be identified with Bahrain on the Persian Gulf. During excavation the seals that were found seem to be issued by the merchants. These seals were used as a bills of exchange. They knew about point system. They knew about measurements. Sumer and Sindhu have a great trade relations through by the way of Baluchistan. Greeks called cotton the word 'Sindhu' which clears that they had business relations.

Some folkore of Sumer used Dilban for Sindhu valley civilization. Outside business material is more clear than inside. Probably a way was famous from Quata. - Kandhar - Kalmamand - Hissar - Tehran. Probably the merchants of Sumar carried Indian commodities to Egypt. They know about the use of weights.



#### 4. DECLINE OF INDUS CIVILIZATION

The Harappa culture lasted for about a thousand years. By 1500 B.C. when the Aryans began to arrive in India, the Harappa culture had collapsed. According to Child, Garden and Wheeler attack of aryas is the main reason of decline of Indus Valley Civilization. According to Rig Veda Aryan had to fight such people who have a wall around their cities. It tells that the people of Indus civilization were the same whose description was found in Rig Veda. It is known from the excavation of Mohan-jodaro that man women and children all were killed by Arya and their dead bodies were thrown in streets and homes. Many skeletons were found in different positions. In one place many skeletons are found to as a pile. It is assumed that it all were the remains of a family and they were murdered. Undoubtedly it can be accepted that these remains are of that time when Mohan-jodaro is was attacked by enemies.

Administrative Laxity was also a reason of decline of Indus civilization. The building project of Indus time and its shapes, construction of walls and platform all had the marks of depreciation. At the final stage there was no place on the mound for more expansion and construction at the floor area. The people adopted such type of activities which were responsible to changes the atmosphere and finally the decline of the culture. Million tonnes of wood would have been burnt to make bricks used for construction and reconstruction. Where for standing (vegetation) would have been finished because of grazing of cattle. Wherefore atmosphere would have been influenced and it ill effected the rains. The fertility of land was ill effected by getting more and more yield every year. The nature also contributed in decline of this culture.

Setback in Foreign Business was also a reason of decline of Indus civilization. The available proof of Indus civilization and Mesopotamia indicate that in the final stage the business between both civilization decreased. It seems that Indus culture was deprived with tactful leadership at that time. Foreign business was the main reason of Indus prosperity. So, deficiency in foreign business naturally affected Indus civilization. By the reason of this deficiency the mutual exchange of views and inventions did not take place. So wherefore experience would have be made limited. It was also a main reason of setback of Indus civilization. According to Riecks and Walls because of geological changes, near the north, bank of Arabian sea a mound would spring up. Wherefore, it worked like a barrier to rivers. Sand mustered on the bank of rivers. Lake formation had took place in several places. Wherefore travelling and transportation became difficult. So the morale of people decreased. Most of the people left their homes yield of agriculture decreased and in this way the downfall of this culture took place.

After analysing it appears that it is uncomfortable to considered so big civilization would have got downfall only by one reason. It is comfortable to consider that a city would have many reasons for its down fall.

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