



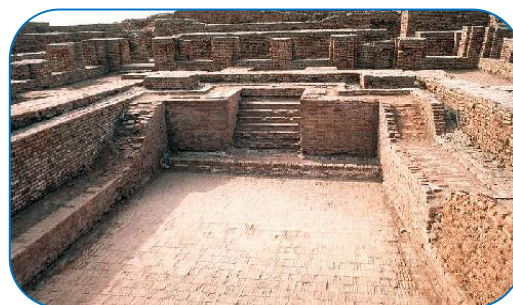
## INDUS CIVILIZATION

**Dr. R. Muthu**

**Assistant Professor , Department of History ,  
M.V.Muthiah Govt . Arts College For Women Dindigul, Tamil Nadu.**

### ABSTRACT :

*Pre-Harappan culture had its arms extended to a very wide area including the Indus Valley. We see at least three subregions of this pre-Harappan culture: the Central (including Kot Diji, and pre-Harappan Harappa), the Southern (or Amrian) and the eastern (or Kalibangan). In Indus Valley it existed for nearly five or six centuries. In the Indus plain the great river formed a natural highway of communication. Great cities developed here. Some of the major sites are: Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, Ruar, Lothal, Kalibangan and Alamgirpur. Every house provided with a bathroom and latrine which are linked to the brick drains running down the streets by means of chutes. Numerous terracotta figurines of birds and animals from the Indus civilization. Seal-cutting was a highly developed art in Harappan culture.*



**KEYWORDS :** *Indus, Harappa, Burnt Bricks, Civilization, Excavation.*

### INTRODUCTION

This pre-Harappan culture had its arms extended to a very wide area including the Indus Valley. We see at least three subregions of this pre-Harappan culture: the Central (including Kot Diji, and pre-Harappan Harappa), the Southern (or Amrian) and the eastern (or Kalibangan). In Indus Valley it existed for nearly five or six centuries. In fact it provided the matrix in many ways for the peculiarly Indian Civilization to develop on the banks of the Indus around 2500 B.C. and this is what is known as the Indus Civilization or archaeologically the Harappan Culture.

In the Indus plain the great river formed a natural highway of communication. Great cities developed here. It was not a conglomeration of petty city states, but a highly centralized state or even an 'empire'. So, the diversity seen in earlier settlements of Baluchistan and pre-Harappan Sind is replaced now by a uniformity of culture over a vast area.

In the present state of our knowledge the Harappan culture extends from Dabarkot in Baluchistan to Alamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh. The uniformity of this culture is seen in its following achievements : i) Its pottery vessels are identical and show a mass produced type; ii) The houses are built of baked bricks of standard dimensions; iii) The seals are engraved with similar scenes and a uniform script; iv) A Standard system of weight was followed; v) This uniformity is most pronounced in the town planning and vi) A standard range of copper and bronze tools are found from almost all sites.

In the course of excavations during the last Fifty years over Two Hundred Harappan sites are located. Some of the major sites are : Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, Rupar, Lothal, Kalibangan and Alamgirpur. Among them Harappa in the Punjab and Mohenjodaro in Sind stand out on account of their size and finds. As the alluvial deposition of the centuries has raised the level by more than 30 feet, the archaeologists could not reach the bottom of the Harappan occupation at Mohenjodaro, where the water table has also correspondingly risen. The Harappan culture had contact with West Asia both by land and sea routes. Scholars have shown the similarity in objects found in Harappan culture and West Asia. They are the terracotta bullock carts, boats and amulets, representations of ships on stone seals and so on. The dockyard excavated at Lothal is an evidence of the maritime activities of the Harappans.

### TOWN PLANNING

Already we noted that Harappans achieved a great uniformity of culture especially in their town planning. The basic lay out of the cities shows a regular orientation. That is, the streets are broad and they run from East to West and from North to South. They form a carefully oriented grid. Every city has a dominating high citadel on the West. The city is more or less square. But the Harappan level has a layout which is well planned and regularly oriented. So there is a dramatic suddenness in this change, which must have been imposed by a well organized central authority. Every house provided with a bathroom and latrine which are linked to the brick drains running down the streets by means of chutes. These drains have soakage pits at intervals. The maintenance of these pits shows that there was a highly effective municipal authority.

### ART

Numerous terracotta figurines of birds and animals from the Indus civilization. They include monkeys, dogs, sheep, humped and humpless bulls and male and female figurines. A little bronze statuette (5 ½ inches tall) of a "dancing girl in re-pose" from Mohenjodaro is a very significant specimen of metal art. (Fig. 26:7) Her right arm rests in the hip and the left which is heavily bangles hangs down. She is naked except for a necklace. She has strong Negroid features. Her hair is plaited in an elaborated manner. The artist had full mastery of body torsion.

Stone Sculptures are rare – only a dozen pieces have been found from Mohenjodaro and three from Harappa. Mostly they are mutilated. They used soft stones like steatite, Alabaster, Limestone etc., for making Sculpture. Of the pieces from Mohenjodaro., the famous "Bearded Priest" deserves mention. He wears a cloak which is drawn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. The cloak is covered with sacred trefoils. He may be a priest – king. The diadem he is wearing is markedly Sumerian.

### STEATITE SEALS

Seal-cutting was a highly developed art in Harappan culture. So far nearly 2000 seals have been excavated. Sawn from blocks of steatite. Elephant, bison, rhinoceros and tiger are other animals on the seals. The inscription on the seals have not been satisfactorily deciphered.

### RELIGION

No structure that can definitely be labelled as 'religious' has so far been unearthed in any of the Harappan sites. Scholars believe that the Harappan citadels and the buildings connected with them were temples. Many male and female figures are shown with horns and tails and some have the hind legs and hoofs of cattle. These give some clue to the religious ideology of the Harappans.

Snake was also plausibly, a cult symbol. Some postherds from Lothal have snakes and trees painted on them. In one of the steatite seals there is cobra near the 'Yogi' figure. Certain copper seals bear some abstract symbols and motifs like Swastika, pipal leaf and a kolam motif the last one is very popular even today in Indian religious functions.

## BURIAL CUSTOMS

The graveyard is definitely separated from the city. Extended in – humation was the predominant burial rite. The head generally points to the north. Some of the graves are square in the form of brick Chambers or cists; others are small circular pits with large urns. Lot of pottery was placed in the graves. Some skeletons are found with ornaments. There is a peculiar burial type found at Lothal. Here several examples of pairs of skeletons, one male and one female in each case, from the same grave have been found. It is debatable whether it indicates any practice akin to sati.

Bones are collected in large urns and buried. The pottery paintings have much Iranian influence. Peacocks with long streaming feathers on their heads are influence. Peacocks with long streaming feathers on their heads are common motifs. The two examples of stone Sculptures from Harappa have drawn the attention of the art critics. Both of them are tiny representing a male torso. The modelling of the fleshy part is very exquisite, refined and true to life. One of them is made of red sand stone with tabular drill holes on the front of the shoulder. Probably they are meant to take an inlay. The other one male dancing with twisted shoulder and one raised leg.

Some Sumerian and Akkadian documents confirm the trade con-tracts with Indus culture. These texts refer to the lands called Dilmun, Meluhha etc. “Dilmun is referred to as ‘worldly paradise’, where the sun rises and which is the source of several raw materials like gold, silver, copper, lapis lazuli, ivory-combs, wood and pearls. All chin’s poinout it is necessary to admit that not only the end of the cities, but ever their initial due to Indo – European speaking peoples.

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