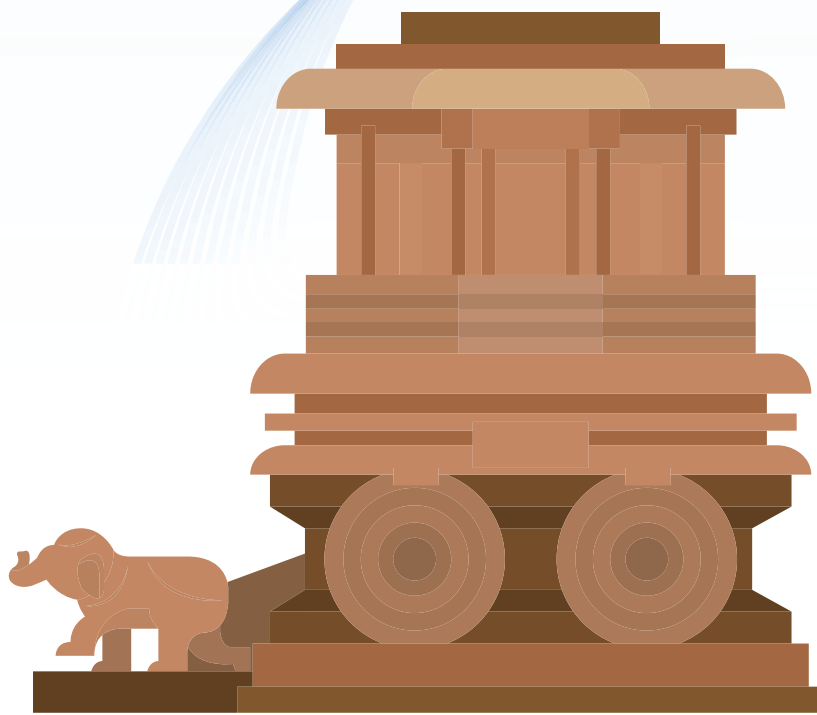


# ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY



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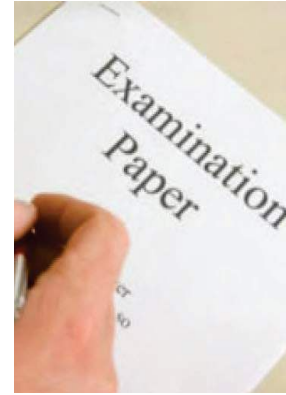
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# SOURCES TO UNDERSTAND ANCIENT INDIA

- India has a rich cultural heritage. History is concerned with the development of civilization in the past. We must go back to Ancient India in order to comprehend the present-day India.
- However, historians face a daunting challenge in reconstructing its history and culture. Generally, the problem arises when it comes to the existence of sources and forms in which they are present. Historians rely on a large number of sources of Indian history to research the Indian people who lived in the past.
- Generally, the sources used for reconstruction of the ancient Indian history are classified into three categories: **Literary sources, Archaeological sources and Accounts of the foreign historians and travelers.** These sources have two significant limitations: availability and decipherment.
- Initially, it was the British administrative officers who first paid attention to Ancient Indian history. But their objective was to meet their own administrative needs. For example, **Sir William Jones, in 1784, founded 'Asiatic Society of Bengal',** for learning, understanding, and publishing sources of Ancient Indian History.
- Then **Archaeological Survey of India was founded in 1861.** This gave legal momentum to the search for archaeological sources. From there on, various types of sources are coming forth and their interpretation is becoming a more challenging job for the historians.

## Literary/written sources

- There are three major types of literary/written sources for understanding and interpreting Ancient Indian History. They are (i) Religious, (ii) Secular and (iii) Scientific. Some other kinds of literary sources are also included in this: (iv) Sangam literature and (v) Travelogues (writings about travel) of foreign travelers.

## Religious literature

- The religious literature, though primarily religious in nature, throws light on the socio-economic, political and even the ideological aspects of the period. But religious sources need to be used with huge caution. This caution is primarily for two reasons. First, majority of religious sources were passed down from one generation to the next through oral traditions. Secondly, religious literatures were mainly written with the aim of providing guidance to the society with an idealist approach.
- The religious literature includes:
  - » **The Vedas: Rig-Veda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda.**
  - » **Sanskrit Epics: The Ramayana and Mahabharata.**
  - » **The Puranas, Dharmashastras, Aranyakas, Brahmanas, Upanishadas etc.**
  - » **Buddhist Literature: Tripitakas (Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhammapitaka), Jataka stories, Dipvamsha, Mahavamsa**

etc.

- » Jaina Literature: Anga, Agamas, Chedasutras, Mulsutras etc.

## Secular Literary Sources

- Alongside religious literature, India also created a large amount of secular literature throughout thousand years of its history. The secular literature includes:
- **Histories:** As generally said or quoted in analysis by western scholars, India was not unaware of history-writing. E.g. **Rajatarangini** (River of Kings in Sanskrit) written by **Kalhana** (born in 1100 AD in Kashmir), is considered as the **first book of history of India**, as per modern lines of historiography.
- **Eulogies:** These are highly refined literature concerning to a ruler, a noble, a saint or a learned man, intended to praise them and their deeds by court poets, also called as charan/bhat/poet. For example, **Banabhatta**, was a court poet in Harsha's and has written the book **Harshacharita**. In this book he praises Harsha. Similarly, **Vikramankadev Charita**, written by **Bilhan** praises the king Vikramaditya (of Chalukya dynasty) and his various deeds.
- **Epic and Kavya Literature:** Dramas, poetry, epics, and other works of literature are included in this category. Here, we find accurate details about culture, economy, and sometimes polity of a particular age. E.g. **Mudrarakshasa** was written by **Vishakhadatta**. It is a drama that narrates how Chanakya, the Prime Minister of king Chandragupta, wins over Rakshasa, the minister of the Nandas to the side of Chandragupta.

## Scientific Treatise

- Ancient India was well aware of the

Scientific practices. As a result, a significant amount of scientific works were generated during ancient time. The scientific works in early centuries generally dealt with subjects like political science, economy, grammar etc. In due course, several other subjects began to appear in scientific works such as agriculture, medical science, astrology and astronomy, mathematics, art, iconography, architecture, etc.

- The Gupta era, in particular, saw the emergence of large number of scientific works on various subjects. Eg. **Aryabhatiya** by **Aryabhatta**, **Arthashastra** by **Kautilya**, **Ashtadhyayi** by **Panini**, **Brihat Samhita** by **Varhamihir** etc.

## Sangam Literature

- We can learn about the early history of Southern India from the Sangam literature. The term **'Sangam'** means **"assembly"**. Three such Sangams are considered to be held. The poems of Tamil poets were introduced in these three assemblies and is called as the Sangam Literature.
- The poets themselves compiled these poems from different eco-regions in southern India. As a result, these are mainly folk-lore, compiled by urban poets.
- The literature is mostly a secular one and provides vast information on subjects like ancient ecology, modes of subsistence, society etc.

## Foreign Accounts

- Ancient India attracted a large number of travellers from across the world. These travellers were strangers to the land. They owed no allegiance to any of the regions or to any of the kings. As a result, generally the accounts of foreigners can be considered as largely unbiased.



- They being 'eye-witness' to a large number of events in India, give us firsthand information on the subjects they touched upon. E.g. **Indica by Megasthenes** or **records of Buddhistic Kingdoms by Fa-Hien** etc.

## Archaeological/ Material sources

Another type of sources to study Ancient India are material/archaeological sources. (i) Coins, (ii) Inscriptions, (iii) Sculptures and Paintings, (iv) Ancient Monuments, and (v) Archaeological Remains are among the material/archaeological sources.

### Inscriptions

- After India came in contact with Persia, India came to know the importance of 'art-in-stone'. In Ancient India, the stone inscriptions were used to engrave king's instructions, laws, and outlooks to the public. These were also used to record the grant of land by the kings. With the same notion, court-poets also engraved eulogies by using such material to make it immortal.
- » **Epigraphs:** The **earliest epigraphs in India belong to Ashoka**, the Mauryan Emperor. He issued 14 edicts to propagate his Dhamma policy. These were inscribed on rocks, e.g. Junagadh (Gujarat).
- » **Copper plates:** Generally for 'land-grants', the copper-plates were engraved and issued to the grantee. For example, the **'Sauhagaura Copper Plate'** informs us about severe drought and the measures undertaken by authorities to tackle the problem of food-shortage.

### Coins

- The Mahajanapadas (republic kingdoms) of ancient India minted the first Indian coins, the punch marked coins known as Puranas, Karshapanas, or Pana in the sixth century BC. These included Kuntala, Gandhara, Kuru, Shakya, Panchala, Surasena, and Saurashtra.
- Later, Mauryas also punch marked their coins with a royal standard. The Indo-Greek Kushan kings introduced the Greek tradition of engraving portrait heads on coins. The Kushan Empire's massive coinage encouraged a large number of tribes, dynasties, and kingdoms to issue their own coins.
- Generally, these sources come with added advantages. Because they generally do not degrade like the literary sources. If any alteration is made to these inscriptions, it is also easily identifiable.

### Ancient Architecture/ Monuments

- Earlier people found refuge in caves during the Stone Age. Agriculture, on the other hand, forced them to live on the plains. The settlements started developing after the neolithic period. Initially, the houses of people were made of perishable materials like wood and grass. As a result, we do not know much about them.
- But in due course of time, the scenario has changed. The use of burnt bricks started for constructing houses or public buildings and Monuments. This can be seen dating back to the Chalcolithic period. This architecture provides valuable information to study the past.
- Similar to literary sources, the architecture can also be broadly classified into Secular and Religious architecture.

- » **Secular architecture** includes granaries/warehouses, thrashing floors, dockyards, man-made ports, sanitary arrangements like bathrooms and gutters, stadium, pavilion, palaces, fortification, bastion etc.
- » **Religious monuments** are the buildings that were used by the people to express and satisfy their religious needs. Religious structures started showing up from the Mauryan period. These structures include Chaityas, Viharas, Temples etc.

## Sculptures and Paintings

- **Sculptures:** In India, we can find evidence of sculptures dating back to the Harappan period. Steatite, stone, terracotta, clay, lime, ivory, bronze, and wood were among the materials used for making sculptures. Some of them were transformed into Gods or idols and enshrined in shrines. Some of them were made to adorn the walls of temples. Individual sculptures were also made for other purposes, such as toys and entertainment.
- **Paintings:** The earliest examples of painting art can be found in Bhimbetka's rock shelters (Madhya Pradesh). Mesolithic cave dwellers built them using colours and tools found

in the natural world. From these rock paintings, we will learn about Mesolithic people's lifestyles, including their way of life, hunting practises, and the flora and fauna in their surroundings. Then, there are the beautiful paintings, especially from Ajanta and Bagh. The world-famous Ajanta paintings include details on religious philosophy, ornaments, spiritual serenity, costumes, international tourists, and so on.

## Archaeological Remains

- People settle, work, and construct institutions and physical structures. People leave the place when the situation becomes unfavourable. But, region have some material remains that people have mistakenly left behind. Beads, pottery, faunal remains, and domestic materials are only a few examples.

Thus, in order to research Indian history in detail, one must rely on literary and archaeological sources, both of which assist us in forming a complete picture of ancient times. When literary texts are supplemented with archaeological evidence, historians may increase the scale of historical accuracy and reliability of their claims.



# PRE-HISTORIC PHASE

- The ancient human history is classified into two categories: The prehistoric era and the historic era. The prehistoric era encompasses the time before the invention of literature, while the historic period encompasses the time afterward.
- Since there are no written records in the prehistoric era we do not know much of human history in this period. The prehistoric period has been further divided into three ages:
  - » Stone age
    - » Bronze age
    - » Iron age
  - The Stone Age began about 2.6 million years ago, when researchers found the earliest evidence of humans using stone tools, and lasted until about 3,300 B.C. when the Bronze Age began.
  - There are three phases in stone age. They are:
    - » Paleolithic
    - » Mesolithic
    - » Neolithic
- The Timeline of this period with respect to India.

Period	Timeline	Lifestyle	Tools and weapons
Paleolithic	2,50,000 BC- 10,000 BC	Hunters and food gatherers	Hand axe, blade tools and chopper
Mesolithic	10,000 BC-6,000 BC	Hunters and Herders	Microlithic tools
Neolithic	6,000 BC-4,000 BC	Food-Producer	Polished tools

- The Paleolithic and Mesolithic stages reflect the hunting-gathering lifestyle of humans. In contrast, in the Neolithic phase humans started to settle and indulge in crop cultivation and animal husbandry. The Neolithic period is notable because it marks the beginning of humans settling down rather than roaming.
- The Stone Age was replaced by a civilization that used metal for the first time in human history. This phase of human history is called the "Chalcolithic" age. "Chalcolithic", or "Copper Age" refers to a transitional period where early copper metallurgy appeared alongside the widespread use of stone tools.
- The Chalcolithic culture is followed by the Iron Age culture, which uses metals. The Iron Age is the time of human history when ferrous metallurgy first appeared.

# Paleolithic Age

- The Paleolithic Period started when the man first learned how to make stone tools. The discovery of how to make the fist-hatchet, spear, and fire was the earliest man's greatest achievement.
- The old stone age or Paleolithic culture of India developed in the Pleistocene epoch or the Ice Age, which is a geological period of the age when the earth was covered with ice and weather
- was so cold that human or plant life could not survive. However, the earliest species of man could have existed in the tropical region, where ice melted.
- Food gathering and hunting were the primary occupations of these people, and Paleolithic men learned to cover themselves in animal skins.
- There was no knowledge of houses, pottery, agriculture. It was only in later stages they discovered fire.

Name of Age	Time Period	Tools and weapons
Lower/Earlier Paleolithic Age	2,50,000 BC-1,00,000 BC	Hand axe and cleaver, Chopper and Chopping;
Middle Paleolithic Age	1,00,000 BC – 40,000 BC	Flake Implements
Upper/Later Paleolithic Age	40,000 BC- 10,000	Implements made of Blade and flake

- The rivers Tapi, Godavari, Bhima and Krishna have yielded a large number of Paleolithic sites.

## Lower Paleolithic Age

- All of the tools were made by extracting flakes from a stone block or core until they took the right size and shape.
- Tools used were hand axes, choppers and cleavers. Tools were rough and heavy.
- Bori in Maharashtra near Pune is considered to be the earliest Lower Paleolithic site. In some parts of India like Hunsgi in Karnataka, limestone was the main material.

## Middle Paleolithic Age

- Middle Paleolithic tools were primarily made on smaller, light flake tools and blades.
- The era was dominated by the flake industry, which produced tools such as scrapers, points, and borers. The size of tools decreased in this age.
- In the north-west, lots of stone tools, mostly of middle Paleolithic, have been found in the Potwar Plateau between Indus and Jehlum rivers.

# Upper Paleolithic Age

- This era is characterised by advances in tool technology as well as an improvement in human cognitive capacity.
- In this age, the size of tools further decreased. It saw the introduction of Microliths (tiny stone tools), which were made from a variety of silica-rich raw materials.
- The tools of this age were found in Bhimbetka (South of Bhopal), Kurnool caves (Telangana), Son Valley (Madhya Pradesh), and Patne in Maharashtra.
- The earliest paintings at Bhimbetka date from this phase, that is the Upper Paleolithic phase. During this phase, the people lived in small groups. Hunting is expressed as the main subsistence activity in the rock paintings found at Bhimbetka.

## Salient Features of Paleolithic Culture in India

- During the Paleolithic period, people were nomadic herders. They travelled around a lot for fishing, hunting, and gathering food.
- In the beginning people used to hunt big and slow moving animals like elephants but with the development of hunting tools they started to hunt small fast moving animals like antelope, wild boar, etc.
- Owing to a lack of evidence, historians generally find it difficult to comment on their social structures. However, large manufacturing sites dating from this period have been discovered, indicating

that people were able to meet the needs of distant communities. This, in fact, hints at some sort of Paleolithic social organisation.

- We can also decipher some aspects of their religious beliefs. A mother-goddess has been identified as a carved piece of bone discovered in Lohanda Nala (Belan valley, Uttar Pradesh). Around the same time, an ostrich shell bead was found in Patane. Almost definitely, this tooth was used as a pendant. All of this suggests that in this process, there might be some sort of religious belief system.

## Mesolithic Age

- It was a transitional phase between the Paleolithic and Neolithic phase.
- The people of this age lived on hunting, fishing and food gathering initially but later on they also domesticated animals and cultivated plants, thereby paving the way for agriculture.
- Mesolithic people used different kinds of stone tools which were tiny stone artefacts often not more than five centimeters in size. Therefore, these tools are called the Microliths.
- The Mesolithic men started to wear clothes made of animal skin.
- Bagore in Rajasthan, Morhana Pahar in Uttar Pradesh, Coastal plains of Odisha are few Mesolithic sites in India.

## Salient Features of Mesolithic Culture in India

- The Mesolithic people lived in semi-permanent and temporary settlements. Therefore, domestication of animals,

horticulture and primitive cultivation also started.

- The beginning of plain cultivation was seen in the last period of this phase. During this time, they resorted to a small amount of pastoralism and minimal trade.
- Though pottery was absent at most Mesolithic sites, they have been found in Langhnaj (Gujarat) and in the Kaimur region of Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh).
- Adamgarh, Bhimbetka, Mirzapur and Pratapgarh are Mesolithic sites known for their rich art and paintings. Animals are the most common subjects of many of these depictions, with deer or antelope being the most commonly depicted, while tigers and monkeys are uncommon.
- Bones of wild animals (rhinoceros) have been excavated from Langhnaj. Several human skeletons and a large number of Microliths have been recovered from these places.

## Neolithic Age

- It is also termed as 'Neolithic revolution' since it introduced a lot of important changes in man's social and economic life. The Neolithic age saw man turning into a food producer from food gatherer. The term **Neolithic Revolution is given by V. Gordon Childe.**
- The Neolithic people lived more settled lives and paved the way for the dawn of civilization. The Neolithic people did not dwell far from the mountainous regions. Since they were entirely reliant on stone arms and tools, they mostly lived in hilly river valleys, rock shelters, and the slopes of the hills.
- The use of pottery and the wheel, as well as the subsequent invention of crafts such as spinning, weaving, and bead-making, indicate the Neolithic

phase's uniqueness.

- Pottery was first appeared in this age on a large scale and included grey ware and black burnished ware. With a settled life and expansion of agriculture people needed pottery to store their food grains.
- The people used microlithic blades in addition to tools made of polished stones. A detailed understanding of metallurgy was not established during the Neolithic period. It is thus also dubbed as "**metal-less society.**"
- Cultivation of wheat, barley, fruits, corn like ragi and horse gram and lentils has been reported from the beginning and between 6000 BC and 5000 BC.
- We can see 'division of labour' based on gender in the Neolithic period. We find women engaged in agricultural activities during the Neolithic period. As a result of the increased agricultural demand, women began to work in the pottery industry. Men hunted and fished, as they had done in the past.
- Important Neolithic sites include **Mehrgarh (Pakistan), Chirand (Bihar), Burzahom (Kashmir), Hallur (Karnataka)** etc.

## Salient Features of Neolithic Culture in India

- In the northern Himalayas, the **best-known Neolithic site is Burzahom** in Kashmir where the earliest occupation was characterized by pit dwellings with conical roofs.
- Gufkral, literally 'the cave of the potter' is another important Neolithic site in Kashmir. It was a site inhabited by potters who utilized the caves cut into the karewa. Interestingly, the site is still

inhabited by the potters who see these caves as their inheritance.

- The advent of sedentary rural societies led to the building of mud brick houses rather than grass huts. These houses were somewhat more permanent than the grass huts.
- 'Community-festivals' also began during this time period. The butchering-place at Budihal denotes the importance of communal animal butchering.
- The people of Cachar Hills of Assam lived in mud walled houses and their hand-made pots were decorated with basket impressions.
- Koldihwa and Mahagara lying south of Allahabad have thrown evidence of many strata of circular huts along with crude handmade pottery. The most intriguing finding is evidence of rice dating from between 5440 and 4530 BC, which is the earliest evidence of rice not only in India but also elsewhere on the globe.
- Neolithic people were aware of the art of making boats and could weave cotton and wool to make cloth. At this age, man started growing cotton and learnt about clothes.
- Instances of earlier cave dwelling have also been discovered with walls decorated with scenes of hunting and dancing.

## Chalcolithic Age (3,500 BC-1,000 BC)

- The culture based on the use of copper and stone was termed as Chalcolithic meaning stone-copper Phase. These cultures exhibit a distinct regional identity.

**Chalcolithic age is divided into three stages**

Age	Timeline
Pre-Harappan Age	3,500 BC-2,500 BC
Harappan Age	2,500 BC- 1,750 BC
Post Harappan Age	1,750 BC- 1,000 BC

- The people living in the stone age were characterised by rural settlements and were not acquainted with burnt bricks. They lived in thatched houses made of mud bricks.
- Animals were domesticated and food grains were grown by people living in the stone-copper period. They hunted deer and domesticated cows, sheep, goats, pigs, and buffaloes.
- People during the stone-copper period used various forms of pottery, one of which is known as black and red pottery and seems to have been widely prevalent. The potter's wheel was used, and painting with white linear patterns also done.
- The chalcolithic people were expert coppersmiths. They knew the art of copper smelting and were good stone workers as well.
- This age also marked the beginning of social inequalities, as chiefs lived in rectangular houses while the commoners lived in round huts. Their villages consisted of more than 35 houses of different sizes, circular or rectangular in shape. The chalcolithic economy is considered as a village economy.
- Some of the important chalcolithic sites are Ahar (Banas valley, South Eastern Rajasthan), Gilund (Banas valley, Rajasthan), Daimabad (Ahmadnagar, Gujrat), Malwa (Madhya Pradesh), Sonpur (Bihar) and Songaon, Inamgaon

and **Nevasa in Maharashtra**.

## Characteristics of India's Chalcolithic cultures

- The Chalcolithic culture of India includes non-urban, non-Harappan cultures that are distinguished by the use of copper and stone.
- Pastoralism, agriculture, hunting, and fishing were some of the alternative subsistence methods they used. Farming was performed with a wooden or bony plough and irrigation systems. They were cattle-pastoralists, but when the climate was adverse, they switched to sheep-goat pastoralism.
- These people used to live in mud and mud brick houses that were generally rectangular or circular in shape. The houses had a larger number of rooms, a rammed board, and a thatched roof.
- They were devotees of the cults of 'Bull' and 'Mother-Goddess'.
- Fire-worship seems to have been a very widespread phenomenon among the Chalcolithic people of Pre-historic India. This can be deduced from the fact that fire-altars have been found from a large number of Chalcolithic sites during the course of excavations.
- Pots played an important role in their daily lives, so we see consistency and specialisation in pot-making. These are black-on-red painted wares, but various sub-cultures have different characteristics.
- Pots and other funerary objects have been found along with burials of the Malwa and Jorwe people. This also indicates that the people might have had a belief in life after death.
- They also engaged in exchanges

with other cultures, as shown by the presence of foreign goods and tools in their regions.

- They honed their copper-smithing skills. However, since copper was scarce and only mined in Rajasthan, they made tools out of bones and stones.
- Chalcolithic sites belonging to the Jorwe culture (ca. 1300–700 BCE) have been discovered throughout Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and other states. The key features of this culture include red pottery, generally with matt surface bearing paintings in black. Jorwe is a small village and an archaeological site in Maharashtra.
- The chronological series of India's chalcolithic cultures is as follows:
  - » Kayatha Culture: C. 2000-1800 BC
  - » Banas or Ahar Culture: C. 2000-1400 BC
  - » Malwa Culture: C. 1700-1200 BC
  - » Jorwe Culture: C. 1300–700 BC
  - » Chirand Culture: C. 1600-600 BC
  - » Pandu Rajr Dhibi: C. 1700-700 BC
  - » Golabai Sasan: C. 2200-700 BC
  - » Nagarjuna Konda: C. 2000-1000 BC
  - » Brahmagiri: C. 2000-1000 BC

## Megalithic Culture

- A megalith is a **large stone that** has been used alone or in combination with other stones to build a structure or monument.
- These were used to mark burial sites and were carefully arranged by people.
- There are a few characteristics that all of these burials have in common. Mostly, the dead were buried with distinctive pots, which are known as Black and Red Ware.
- Iron tools and weapons have also been



discovered, as well as horse skeletons, horse equipment, and stone and gold ornaments.

- There is also a broad time evolution with the megaliths in central India and the upper Indus valley where the oldest megaliths are found, while those in the east are of much later date.
- While evidence of their settlements is scarce, their burials have been discovered in large numbers throughout

the Deccan region.

- Most of the information about the iron age in South India comes from the excavations of the megalithic burials.
- Iron objects have been found universally in all the megalithic sites right from Junapani near Nagpur in Vidarbha region (Central India) down to Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu in the far south.



# THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION)

- Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) can be dated around 2500-1750 BC on the basis of radiocarbon dating. It is also called as Harappan Civilization.
- The site was first discovered through excavation in 1921 under the supervision of Daya Ram Sahni.

• Harappa was first discovered by R. B. Dayaram Sahni (on river Ravi) in 1921. R. D. Banerjee discovered Mohenjodaro or 'Mound of the Dead' (on Indus River) in 1922. Sir John Marshall played a crucial role in both of these discoveries.

- The long-term indigenous evolution of this civilization was originally began on the periphery of Indus Valley in the hills of eastern Baluchistan and then extended into the plains.
- However, it can be documented by an analysis of four sites which have been excavated in recent years: Mehrgarh, Amri, Kalibangan and Lothal.

## Chronology

- Harappan culture was actually a long and complicated cultural process with at least three stages: the early Harappan, mature Harappan, and the late Harappan. The following general chronology for the three phases of the Harappan culture is derived from the calibration of radiocarbon dates from different sites: early Harappan, C. 3200–2600 BC mature Harappan, C. 2600–1900 BC and late Harappan, C. 1900–1300 BC.
- » The early Harappan phase was the

formative, proto-urban phase of the culture.

- » The mature Harappan phase was the urban phase, the full-fledged stage of civilization. Most of the urban characteristics are associated with this phase.
- » The late Harappan phase was the post-urban phase when the cities started to decline and gradually declined.

## Geographical Distribution

- » The archaeological excavations reveal that this culture was spread over a vast area which included not only the present day states of India such as Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Western Uttar Pradesh but also Pakistan and some parts of Afghanistan. Sutkagendor on the Makran Coast (near Pakistan-Iran border) is the western most site of the Harappan civilization and Alamgirpur in western Uttar Pradesh marks its eastern most limit.

## Settlement pattern

- The fact that the Harappan civilization was urban does not imply that all, or even the majority, of its settlements were urban. Besides the urban settlements of the Harappans, there were many sites inhabited by the primitive communities consisting of stone-age hunter-gatherers or pastoral nomads, which existed side by side.

- **Varying size of the Harappan sites:** The Harappan sites varied a great deal in size and function, from large cities to small pastoral camps. Some of the largest settlements include Rakhigarhi, Mohenjo-daro, Dholavira, Harappa and Ganweriwala. The many settlements less than five hectares include Nausharo, Kot Diji, Allahdino, Rugar, Balakot, and Surkotada.
- **Town Planning:** The most interesting urban feature of Harappan civilization is its town-planning. Almost all the major sites (Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Kalibangan and others), are divided into two parts—a citadel on higher mound on the western side and a lower town on the eastern side of the settlement. The citadel contains large structures which might have functioned as administrative or ritual centres. The residential buildings are built in the lower town. The streets intersect each other at right angles in a criss-cross pattern. It divides the city in several residential blocks. The main street is connected by narrow lanes. Dholavira was divided into three parts in its most evolved phase: the citadel, middle town, and lower town. The citadel complex at Lothal and Surkotada is not separate; it is part of the main settlement.
- **Planning of houses:** The houses were largely built of burnt bricks. The bigger houses had many rooms surrounding a square courtyard. These houses were provided with private wells, kitchens and bathing platforms. The majority of doorways and windows faced the side streets, and only a few opened onto the main streets. There were stairs in some buildings, suggesting that there was an upper floor as well.
- **Drainage system:** The drainage system of the Harappans was elaborate and well laid out. Every house had drains, which opened into the street drains. These drains were covered with manholes, bricks or stone slabs (which could be

removed for cleaning) were constructed at regular intervals by the side of the streets for cleaning. The drainage was made from burnt bricks which were smoothed from inside. This shows that the people were well acquainted with the science of sanitation.



IMAGE 3.1: REGULARITY OF STREETS AND BUILDINGS SUGGESTS URBAN PLANNING IN MOHENJO-DARO.



IMAGE 3.2: GREAT BATH AT MOHENJO-DARO

- **Rural-Urban interaction:** As the urban population had to depend on the surrounding countryside for the supply of food and many other necessary products, there emerged a village-town (rural-urban) interrelationship.

## Agriculture

- This area had certain uniform features in terms of the soil type, climate and subsistence pattern. The land was flat and depended on the monsoons and

the Himalayan rivers for the supply of water. Due to its distinct geographical feature, agro-pastoral economy was the dominant feature in this region. Agriculture along with pastoralism (cattle-rearing) was the base of Harappan economy.

- This area's resource capacity was adequate to produce food surpluses, which is an important feature of urbanisation. The variety of the subsistence base may also have played a role in its survival for a long time.
- The chief food crops included wheat, barley, sesasum, mustard, peas, jejupe, etc. The evidence for rice has come from Lothal and Rangpur in the form of husks embedded in pottery. Cotton was another important crop. Apart from cereals, fish and animal meat also formed a part of the Harappan diet.
- A ploughed field was discovered at early Harappan levels at Kalibangan. Irrigation canals have been found at Shortughai.

## Animal husbandry, Hunting and Riverine and Marine resources

- **Wild animals:** Bones of wild animals have been found at Harappan sites. These include many varieties of Deer, Rhinoceros, Elephant, Camel etc. Tigers are commonly portrayed in figurines, while leopards are less frequently depicted.
- **Riverine and marine resources:** The Harappans exploited riverine and marine resources where these were available. Dried fish and molluscs provided an important protein-rich element in people's diets.

- **Domesticated animals:** Harappan sites have also yielded remains of domesticated animals such as humped and humpless cattle, buffalo, sheep, and goat. The question whether the people's new horse is controversial.
- **Crafts and Techniques:** Pottery-making was also an important industry in the Harappan period. These were chiefly wheel-made and were treated with a red coating and had decorations in black. These are found in various sizes and shapes. They were aware of the Potter's wheel and the majority of the pots were turned on a wheel.
- The Harappans manufactured seals of various kinds. More than two thousand seals have been discovered from different sites. These were generally square in shape and were made of steatite.
- It is noteworthy that while the seals depict a number of animals there is no representation of horse on these. Most of the seals were made of steatite. They were used for commercial purposes as well as used as amulets.
- One important seal has three heads and is sitting in a yogic posture surrounded by four animals viz. elephant, tiger, rhinoceros and a buffalo. He has been identified by many scholars with the ancient form of the god Pashupati (Lord of beasts).
- Terracotta has been found in abundance at Harappan sites. Animal figurines such as bulls, buffaloes, monkeys, and dogs are available.
- Bead-making also was an important craft. Beads were made of precious and semiprecious stones such as agate and carnelian. Steatite was used for making beads. The evidence of bead makers' shops has been found at Chanhudaro and Lothal.
- The Harappan people were aware of almost all the metals except iron. A

significant number of copper artefacts can be found in the Harappan civilization. Harappan sites have yielded exquisitely crafted gold and silver jewellery, including necklaces, bracelets, brooches, pendants, and earrings.

- The Harappans made cotton and woolen textiles, according to the available evidence, and the terracotta figurines wearing clothing (shawls, dresses, etc.) represent the types of clothing people wore.
- Stonework was also another crucial craft. At Dholavira, fine polished pillars and stone masonry were discovered. Another advanced craft was bone working. Bone was used to make beads, awls, and pins.
- **Sculpture in stone and metal:** A few pieces of stone and metal sculpture have been discovered at Harappan sites, in addition to utilitarian objects made of stone and metal. The majority of them exhibit excellent artistic abilities and sensibilities. They include the following:
  - » The 'priest-king' or Head of a Yogi,' a stone bust of a male figure discovered at Mohenjo-daro and called the 'priest-king' or Head of a Yogi.
  - » At Harappa, two fine stone torsos of a male figure (approximately 10 cm high) were discovered.
  - » A seated stone ibex or ram (49 × 27 × 21 cm) at Mohenjo-daro.
  - » A stone lizard at Dholavira.
- No life size sculptures have been found. The only large sculpture is a Dholavira sculpture of a shattered, seated male figure.
- At Mohenjo-daro, two bronze female figurines were discovered. One of them has gained attention as the 'dancing girl.' The lost-wax technique, which is still used in some parts of India, was

used to build the figure. It stands at 10.8 cm tall.



IMAGE 3.3: DANCING GIRL SCULPTURE.



IMAGE 3.4: TERRACOTA FIGURES AT HARAPPA





IMAGE 3.5: BEARDED MAN OR THE PRIEST KING SCULPTURE.

Steatite	South Rajasthan
Copper	Rajasthan and Oman
Gold	Kolar (Karnataka)
Silver	Afghanistan, Iran, and South India
Tin	Afghanistan

- **Commodities traded.**

1. Traders must have carried out a brisk trade in grains and other food items, shipping them between villages and towns.
2. Rice was imported from Gujarat to Punjab.
3. Lothal and Surkotada provided cotton for the developing townships of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Banawali, etc.
4. Balakot and Chanhudaro were centers for shell-working and bangle-making.
5. Lothal and Chanhudaro were centers for the manufacturing of beads of carnelian etc.

## Trade

- Trading network, both internal (within the country) and external (foreign), was a significant feature of the urban economy of the Harappans. Harappan preferred the exchanges through the barter system. It is important to note that various kinds of metals and precious stones were needed by craftsmen to make goods, but as these were not available locally they had to be brought from outside.

Sources of major raw materials:

Material	Site or Source
Shell	Nageshwar and Balakot.
Lapis lazuli	Shortughai
Carnelian	Lothal

## External Trade:

- The Harappans were engaged in external trade with Mesopotamia. It was largely through Oman and Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. It is confirmed by the presence of Harappa artefacts such as beads, seals, dice etc. in these regions. The main imports were copper, gold, tin, and several semi-precious stones. Agricultural products such as barley, wheat, peas, oil seeds and a variety of finished products including cotton goods, pottery, beads, terracotta figures and ivory products were the