

## Unraveling the Indus Valley Civilization for WBCS Exam

In the grand tapestry of human history, the Indus Valley Civilization stands as a remarkable thread, weaving its legacy through time. For WBCS exam aspirants, understanding this ancient civilization is not just a scholarly pursuit but an essential key to unlocking the past. The Indus Valley Civilization, with its advanced urban planning, intricate script, and rich cultural heritage, remains an enigmatic marvel of antiquity. It is a testament to human ingenuity, trade, and societal organization.

This comprehensive guide is your portal to unraveling the mysteries of this ancient world. Delve into the intricate details of its history, architecture, art, and culture, all meticulously curated to empower you with the knowledge needed to excel in the WBCS exam. By embarking on this journey of discovery, you not only enrich your historical insights but also equip yourself with a powerful tool for success in one of the most prestigious examinations, the WBCS.

## Indus Valley Civilization

The **Indus Valley Civilization** was established around **3300 BC**. It flourished around **2500 BC**, which is often called the age of matured Indus Valley Civilization. It forms the backbone of India as it is one of the major civilizations of the world. **Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)** is one of the four great civilisations of the world. It flourished along the flood plains of Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra. Indus Valley Civilization was spread across the western part of South Asia that now lies in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It started declining around 1900 BC and disappeared around 1400 BC.

The Indus Valley Civilization, also known as the **Harappan Civilization**, was a Bronze Age civilization that flourished in the **Indus River** Valley of modern-day Pakistan and northwestern India. It was one of the three earliest civilizations of the Old World, along with Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.

As discussed earlier, the Indus Valley Civilization flourished from approximately 2500 to 1700 BCE, and its major urban centers included **Harappa**, **Mohenjo-daro**, **Lothal**, and **Dholavira**. These cities were well-planned and had advanced sanitation systems, public baths, and granaries. The Indus Valley Civilization also had a sophisticated system of trade and commerce, and its merchants traded with other civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Central Asia.



[Source: World History Encyclopedia]

So let's discuss these **Ancient Cities** in detail.

## Mohenjo-daro

Mohenjo-daro is an archaeological site in the province of Sindh, Pakistan. It is one of the most important sites of the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished from approximately 2500 to 1700 BCE. "Mohenjo-daro" means "**the mound of the dead**". It was a large and well-planned city, with a population of up to 35,000 people. The city was built on a grid system of streets and had a number of public buildings, including granaries, baths, and a citadel. The unearthings started at this location in 1922, with **R.D. Banerjee** and **Sir John Marshall** taking up the work.

Mohenjo-daro is known for its advanced sanitation system. The city had a network of drains that carried waste water out of the city. This system was much more advanced than any other sanitation system in the world at the time. It was also a center of trade and commerce. The city was located on a major trade route between Mesopotamia and Central Asia. Mohenjo-daro merchants traded a variety of goods, including pottery, jewelry, and textiles.

Mohenjo-daro is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site is open to the public and is a popular tourist destination.

### Some of the most famous features of Mohenjo-daro include:

- **The Great Bath:** A large, public bath that was built around 2500 BCE. The bath was made of brick and lined with bitumen.
- **The Citadel:** A fortified area that was located at the center of the city. The Citadel contained a number of public buildings, including a granary, a palace, and a temple.
- **The Granary:** A large building that was used to store grain. The granary was made of brick and had a capacity of up to 100,000 tons of grain.
- **The Lower City:** The residential area of Mohenjo-daro. The Lower City was home to the majority of the city's population.



[Source: Britannica]

Well, these 4 things are common in **Harappa** also. We will discuss **harappan civilization** after this. Mohenjo-daro is a fascinating and important archaeological site. It provides a glimpse into the life of a sophisticated and advanced civilization that flourished in the Indus Valley thousands of years ago.

## Harappa

Harappa, a pivotal city of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, is located in what is now modern-day Pakistan. Flourishing between approximately 2500 and 1700 BCE, Harappa represents one of the most significant archaeological sites from this era. The city was meticulously planned and is believed to have housed up to 35,000 inhabitants. Its well-organized grid layout, advanced drainage system, and public structures, including granaries and baths, showcase the engineering and organizational skills of its time.

Harappa was the first location to be unearthed and archaeologists like **Dayaram Sahni**, **M.S. Vats** and **Mortimer Wheeler** carried out unearthing at Harappa. It lay on the bank of the **Ravi river** in the Punjab region.



[Source: Harappa]

Harappa's significance extends beyond urban planning and infrastructure. The undeciphered script of the Indus Valley Civilization adds an element of mystery, while its role as a trade hub along major routes connecting Mesopotamia and Central Asia highlights its economic importance. Today, Harappa is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, allowing visitors to explore its iconic features, such as the Great Bath and the Citadel, providing valuable insights into the advanced and enigmatic civilization that once thrived in the Indus Valley.

## Kalibangan

Kalibangan is an archaeological site in Rajasthan, India, dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization, which existed around 3300–1300 BCE. The name "Kalibangan" means "**black bangles**", derived from the discovery of a large number of black bangles at the site. This ancient city was a significant urban center and is known for its fire-altars and unique terracotta ploughshares, providing insights into agricultural practices of the time.

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Kalibangan also revealed a well-planned town layout with a fortified settlement and a well-organized drainage system. The site's excavation has contributed to our understanding of the Indus Valley Civilization, offering glimpses into their culture, technology, and everyday life. Kalibangan was unearthed within the 1960s beneath the direction of **B.K. Thapar**. This yielded proof for the presence of Pre-Harappan and Harappan homes.



[Source: Harappa]

## Lothal

Lothal is an ancient archaeological site situated in Gujarat, India, and it dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization, flourishing between 3300 and 1300 BCE. This historic city, known for its advanced urban planning and maritime trade, provides valuable insights into the remarkable achievements of this ancient civilization.

Lothal is located between the Bhogavo and Sabarmati rivers near the Gulf of Khambhat in Gujarat. The word "Lothal" literally means "**The mound of dead**" similar to Mohenjo-daro. The city was discovered by **SN Rao** in 1957. The city was mathematically planned and it had a grid pattern with streets crossing at right angles.

The city's well-structured layout showcases paved streets, a dockyard, and a complex drainage system, revealing the engineering prowess of its time. Lothal was strategically positioned near the Gulf of Khambhat, facilitating trade not only with other regions of the Indian subcontinent but also with Mesopotamia and Egypt.

The discovery of seals, pottery, and other artifacts has shed light on the Indus Valley Civilization's writing system and trade networks. Furthermore, Lothal's dockyard, one of the world's earliest, underlines its maritime activities.



[Source: Wikipedia]

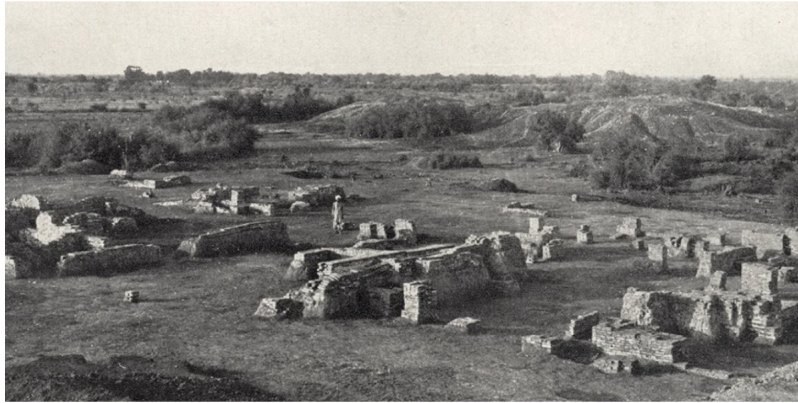
Lothal serves as a vital link to understanding the culture, technology, and economic activities of the Indus Valley Civilization, making it a significant archaeological site in India.

## Chanhudaro

Chanhudaro is an ancient archaeological site located in the Sindh province of Pakistan, belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization. Dating back to around 2600 BCE, it is one of the lesser-known but significant sites from this ancient civilization. Chanhudaro is known for its well-planned urban layout with streets and drainage systems, indicative of the civilization's advanced urban development. It was discovered by **NG Majumdar** in 1931.

Archaeological excavations at Chanhudaro have unearthed artifacts such as pottery, seals, beads, and terracotta figurines, shedding light on the culture, trade, and craftsmanship of the people who inhabited the site. The presence of seals with Indus script adds to the mystery of the civilization's writing system, which remains undeciphered.

Chanhudaro's historical importance lies in its contribution to the broader understanding of the Indus Valley Civilization, highlighting its urbanization, craftsmanship, and trade networks, despite being relatively less recognized than other major Indus Valley sites like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.



[Source: Harappa]

## Dholavira

Dholavira is a remarkable archaeological site located in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, India, and is a testament to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. It dates back to around 2500-1500 BCE, making it one of the most recently discovered and well-preserved sites of this civilization. The site was discovered in 1967-68 by **JP Joshi** and is the fifth largest of the eight Harappan Majors sites.

The city of Dholavira is renowned for its sophisticated urban planning and engineering. It features a unique water management system with well-constructed reservoirs, channels, and step wells, reflecting the civilization's ability to manage water resources in a desert environment. The site's fortified citadel and lower town reveal insights into the societal organization and governance of the time.

Dholavira's excavation has yielded a treasure trove of artifacts, including seals, pottery, and a signboard with the longest known example of the Indus script. These findings have significantly contributed to our understanding of the culture, trade networks, and script of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Dholavira is not only a remarkable archaeological site but also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, allowing visitors to explore the rich history and technological achievements of this ancient civilization.



[Source: The Indian Express]

Now, let's understand the reasons of the **decline of Indus Valley Civilization**.

## Decline of Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley Civilization declined for unknown reasons around 1700 BCE. However, its legacy can still be seen in the region today. The Indus Valley Civilization's cities and artifacts have provided archaeologists with a wealth of information about this ancient civilization. The decline of the Indus Valley Civilization is a mystery that has baffled archaeologists for centuries. There are a number of theories about what caused the civilization to collapse, but none of them have been definitively proven.

**Some of the most popular theories include:**

- **Environmental factors:** Some experts believe that the Indus Valley Civilization declined due to environmental factors, such as droughts, floods, or changes in river courses.
- **Climate change:** Other experts believe that the Indus Valley Civilization declined due to climate change, such as a gradual cooling of the climate or an increase in monsoon rainfall.
- **Social factors:** Some experts believe that the Indus Valley Civilization declined due to social factors, such as overpopulation, economic inequality, or political instability.
- **Outside invasion:** Some experts believe that the Indus Valley Civilization declined due to outside invasion, such as by nomadic tribes from Central Asia.

It is likely that a combination of factors contributed to the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization. However, the exact cause of the collapse remains unknown.

**Here are some of the specific evidence that archaeologists have found to support each of these theories:**

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- **Environmental factors:** Archaeologists have found evidence of droughts and floods in the Indus Valley region around the time of the civilization's collapse. They have also found evidence of changes in river courses, which could have disrupted irrigation systems and made it difficult to grow crops.
- **Climate change:** Some studies have shown that the climate in the Indus Valley region became cooler and drier around the time of the civilization's collapse. This could have made it difficult to grow crops and support a large population.
- **Social factors:** Archaeologists have found evidence of overpopulation and economic inequality in the Indus Valley cities. They have also found evidence of urban decline and the abandonment of some cities. This suggests that the Indus Valley society may have been unstable and unable to cope with the challenges it faced.
- **Outside invasion:** Some archaeologists have found evidence of weapons and fortifications in the Indus Valley cities. This suggests that the cities may have been attacked by outsiders. However, there is no clear evidence of who these outsiders were or what their motives were.

It is important to note that none of these theories is conclusive. More research is needed to determine the exact cause of the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization.



[Source: Anthropology Now]

The Indus Valley Civilization was a complex and sophisticated society, and its people made significant contributions to the development of human civilization. The Indus Valley Civilization's urban planning, sanitation systems, and trade networks were far ahead of their time. The Indus Valley Civilization's artisans were skilled in a variety of crafts, and their artworks are still admired today. The Indus Valley Civilization's written language, though undeciphered, suggests that the Indus Valley Civilization people had a sophisticated culture.

The Indus Valley Civilization's decline is a mystery, but its legacy continues to inspire and amaze people all over the world. So, this is all for today. In our next unit, we will discuss about the **Vedic Age**. Till then, stay tuned!