

# The Indus Valley Civilization

Presented by Utpal Saikia

# Early Excavations:

- In 1921, Dayaram Sahni excavated at Harappa in Punjab (Montgomery district).
- In 1922, R.D. Banerji operated excavations at Mohenjodaro or the “Mount of the dead”, in Sind (Larkana district). Here, excavations reached up to seventh layer.
- Sir J. Marshall made a comprehensive study of these sites. He observed that the Indus valley Civilization is the “Oldest of civilizations known.”

# Age of the Civilization:

- It has not been possible to fix the bottom limit as well as top limit of the Civilization with accuracy.
- In general, most of the scholars put the bottom age at 3000 B.C. And the top age at 1500 B.C.
- Human skeletons, Seals, Inscriptions and other material remains like beads are important as source for determining the age of the civilization.

# The Extent of the Civilization:

- Depending upon the excavations Dr. H.D. Sankhalia observed that the civilization covered an area of 1550 K.M. from North to South and about 1100 K.M. from East to West.
- Some of the important sites are: Mahenjodaro in Sind (on the bank of the Indus river), Harappa in Punjab (on the bank of the Ravi river), Kalibangan in Rajasthan (on the bank of the Ghaghar river), Rupar in Haryana (on the bank of the river Sutlej), Lothal and Rangpur in Gujarat.

# Town Planning:

- The Indus Civilization flourished around urban centres. The ruins of these centres show developed town planning and excellent system of drainage and sanitation.
- A city was divided into two main parts. The higher portion of the city was protected by a construction looks like a fort. Possibly, the ruling class of the town lived there. The other portion lower in height was inhabited by the common masses.
- The main streets ran from north to south and east to west intersecting one another at right angles. The breadth of the roads varied from 9 feet to 34 feet. Lanes were joined with the streets.
- Each of the lane had a public well.

- The houses were divided into three main groups: (i) dwelling houses (ii) larger buildings (iii) public baths. Smaller houses comprised of two rooms only. Courtyards attached to big buildings. Ordinary buildings had little ventilation arrangements.
- Both sun dried and burnt bricks were used as construction material which were of equal size.
- The elaborate drainage system was an unique feature of the civilization. D.D. Kosambi observed that the drainage plans of the Indus cities definitely establish the separate identity or independent character of the Indus civilization. The drains of individual houses were connected with the main drain along the roads. They were covered with stone slabs.
- Other important public buildings includes the public bath (108 ft. x 180 ft.) at Mohenjodaro and a large granary (169 ft. x 135 ft.) at Harappa.

# Social life:

- The cosmopolitan character of the population indicates that Indus valley was the meeting ground of different races. The population consisted of Mediterranean, Australoid, Mongoloid and Alpine races.
- Some scholars believe that there was a strong ruling class in the Indus cities who imposed their control over the rest. Mortimer Wheeler observed that the existence of the forts clearly indicates that the ruling class had used them to control the peasants and the workers.
- There was strong family organisation among the Indus people.

# Religious Life:

- There is absence of any temple among the remains of the Indus valley. But, some scholars believe that the large buildings discovered at Mohenjodaro and Harappa were in fact temples. But, Dr. Basham has rejected this view as no Idol was discovered in these buildings.
- The terracotta figurines found in nude form indicates about the prevalence of worship of the mother Goddess.
- The discovery of a figure of a deity with three faces, with horned head dress, seating cross-legged in a yogic posture and surrounded by animals was suggested as an indication of the worship of Pashupati Siva.
- The terracotta figurines and seals indicates about animal worship. Worship of tree, water, fire and sun seems to be worshipped by the Indus people.

# Trade and Commerce:

- Copper, tin, silver, gold were brought from Nilgiri region of south India, Kashmir, Mysore, Rajputana, Afghanistan and Persia.
- Indus seals were discovered in west Asian countries which indicates about the commercial relations with those areas.
- They used various types of weights and measures. A strict surveillance was maintained proper standard of weight.

# The causes of the Decay:

- Progressive desiccation and climate change.
- Influence of flood
- Deforestation
- Degeneration of civic standard
- External invasion



**Thank you**