



# A review of the Indus civilization

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**Abstract:** *Indus civilization, which is known as the Indus Valley or Harappan civilization. This civilization is the most primitive known urban culture of the Indian subcontinent (Current India and Pakistan). The nuclear dates of Indus civilization are about 2500–1700 BCE. Indus civilization valley is in the northwest of South Asia, a dramatic shift towards more localized cultural unity and away from urban complexity is begun at the end of the 3rd millennium BC. The Mohenjo-Daro Archaeological Site, the Metropolitan City of the Great Indus Civilization, which is situated about 450 km north of Karachi Pakistan. Indus civilization thriven from 2500-to 1800 B.C. This civilization is culturally as imperative as other civilization such as Mesopotamian and Egyptian Civilizations. This paper will emphasis on the brief history of the Indus or Harappan civilization, which explores the history, transformation and changes related to the socio-economic structure.*

**Key Words:** *Indus civilization, Indian subcontinent, 2500–1700 BCE, Civilization,*

## 1. THE INDUS CIVILIZATION:

Indus civilization, which is known as the Harappan or Indus Valley civilization. This civilization is the most earliest civilization and known as urban culture of the Indian subcontinent (Current India and Pakistan)<sup>[1]</sup>. The nuclear dates of Indus civilization seem to be around 2500–1700 BCE<sup>[2]</sup>. But the sites on the south side may have remained later into the 2nd millennium BCE. Which is considered the world's three earliest civilizations—the other two are those of Mesopotamia and Egypt—and the most extensive one is the Indus civilization<sup>[3]</sup>.

Approximately, around 2600 BC, the Indus or Harappan Civilization included many sites, which are distributed around in northwestern Indian subcontinent (India and Pakistan), fluctuating from farms, villages, farming communities and small towns to several fully developed city complexes housing large populations, with tens of thousands of people<sup>[3]</sup>. The Archaeological Site of Mohenjo-Daro, the Metropolitan City of the Great Indus Civilization, is situated about 450 km north of Karachi. The civilization flourished from 2500-to 1800 B.C. It is culturally as imperative as that of Mesopotamian and Egyptian Civilizations<sup>[4, 5]</sup>.

The people of the Indus civilization were highly advanced, progressive, and innovative and their social, cultural, economic, and religious conditions are reflected, inter-alia, from their planning of cities, towns, and the development of writing characteristics<sup>[6]</sup>. Those people were related to the agriculture field, but they also have maintained trade relations with different areas, especially, with Gulf countries. The trade relation of them could be because of the much easier access to the Arabian Sea through the River Indus (Sindh)<sup>[7, 8]</sup>.

## 2. Location and Basic climate situation :

The architecture of the town is plain and practical with straight streets and roads. Notably, this town was covered with a drainage system<sup>[6]</sup>. Their Cultural continuity is manifested in the variety and style, and still in practice, of the artifacts, relics, and objects like those excavated from the excavations, besides dexterous craftsmanship and artistic adroit<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, local habitants had their well-developed scripts, which are known as Indus characters and excavated around<sup>[9]</sup>.

### Location

One of the Indus civilizations, which is one of the districts and in one such small patch of unfruitful land that Mohenjo-Daro, the "Mound of the Dead", is situated<sup>[10]</sup>. It stands on what is known locally as "The Island" - a long, narrow strip of land between the main riverbed and the Western loop, its precise position being 2719' N. by 688' E.,



some 7 miles by road from Dokri on the North- Western Railway, and 25 from Larkana town<sup>[11, 12]</sup>. The mounds, embankments which hide the leftovers of the ancient city, or rather series of are conspicuous from afar in the riverine flat, the highest of them, near the north-west corner, rising to a height of some 70 feet, the others averaging from 20 to 30 feet above the plain. The actual area covered by the mounds is now no more than about 240 acres<sup>[12]</sup>. Floods and erosion, accelerated by the extreme aridity of the climate, have worked much destruction in the mounds that have survived, cutting them up into hillocks, contracting their sides, and spreading and expanding the long depressions that mark the lines of the ancient streets of this great civilization. In addition, the previously published study has shown that the salts also which saturate the local soil of the Sind area (currently in Pakistan, Sindh province) have speeded the falling-off of the site. With the slenderest moisture and humidity in the local air, these salts crystallize on any uncovered surface of the ancient stonework or brickwork, causing it to collapse and flake away, and ultimately plummeting it to powder. Rapid is their action that after a single rain lately excavated buildings take on a layer of white rime like fresh snow. The desolation that thus discriminates this group of mountains is shared by the plain immediately all around them, which for the most part is also white with salt and sustains little besides the dwarf tamarisk and the babul, the camelthorn, and tussocks of coarse grass. Moreover, Add the local climate is one of them in that the temperature ranges from below to are bitterly cold winds during the winter season, dust in the local area and dust in that rainfall not more than 6 inches, but (as in 1929) varied by heavy rainstorms that clouds of sandflies and mosquitoes increase the distresses of life—and it is a great attractive spot Mohenjo-Daro is to-day<sup>[13]</sup>.

### 3. The Recovery and study of the Indus civilization :

The first time the first site of the Indus civilization was identified was in the year 1921 at Harappa in the Punjab region (Currently in Pakistan) and later, in the year 1922 at Mohenjo-Daro (Currently in Pakistan Sindh), near the Indus River in the Sindh (Sind) region. Notably, both of sites these sites are in present-day Pakistan, One in the Punjab province, while another one in the Sindh province.

The ruins of the Mohenjo-Daro site were nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1980. Subsequently, leftovers of this civilization were found as far apart as Sutkagen Dor in southwestern Baluchistan province, of Pakistan. This site is near the shore of the Arabian Sea, about 300 miles (480 km) west of Karachi; and at Ropar (or Rupar), in eastern Punjab state, northwestern India, at the foot of the Shimla Hills some 1,000 miles (1,600 km) northeast of Sutkagen Dor. The later investigation established the existence of this site the southward down the west coast of India as far as the Gulf of Khambhat (Cambay), 500 miles (800 km) southeast of Karachi, and as far east as the Yamuna (Jumna) River basin, 30 miles (50 km) north of Delhi. Since now, It is thus particularly the most widespread of the world's three earliest civilizations, even though Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations both began somewhat before it<sup>[14]</sup>.

The Indus civilization is known to have consisted of two large cities, Harappa, and Mohenjo-Daro. While more than 100 towns and villages, often of relatively small size. Both cities were each perhaps originally about 1 mile (1.6 km) square in overall dimensions, and their outstanding magnitude suggests political centralization, either in two large states or in a single great empire with alternative capitals, a practice having analogies in Indian history. It is also possible that Harappa succeeded Mohenjo-Daro, which is known to have been confounded more than once by incomparable floods. The inhabitants were estimated to be 23,500–35,000 in Harappa and 35,000–41,250 in Mohenjo-Daro<sup>[8, 15]</sup>. The southern region of the civilization, on the Kathiawar Peninsula and beyond, appears to be of later origin than the major Indus sites<sup>[16]</sup>.

The Indus civilization deceptively progressed from the villages of neighbours or predecessors, using the Mesopotamian model of irrigated cultivation with adequate ability to obtain the advantages of the spacious and productive Indus River valley while monitoring the daunting annual flood that instantaneously fertilizes and destroys. Indus civilization subsisted primarily by farming, supplemented by considerable but often indefinable commerce. Wheat and six-row barley were grown; field peas, mustard, sesame, and a few date stones have also been found, as well as some of the earliest known traces of cotton. Domesticated animals included dogs and cats, humped and shorthorn cattle, domestic fowl, and possibly pigs, camels, and buffalo. The Asian elephant probably was also domesticated, and its ivory tusks were freely used.

### 4. Society and political system :

The social and political structures of the Indus civilization remain objects of conjecture. The outward craft specialization and localized craft groupings at Mohenjo-Daro, along with the great divergence in house types and size, point toward some degree of social stratification. In the Indus civilization, trade was all-embracing and ostensibly well-regulated, delivering imported raw materials for usage at internal production centres, and distributing finished goods in the region. The noteworthy uniformity of weights and measures in the local area of Indus land, and the development of



such civic works, implies a strong degree of political and administrative control in the whole region. Moreover, the extensive existence of writings in the Harappan writing designates the use of a single lingua franca<sup>[17]</sup>.

### 5. Craft, technology, and artifacts :

Excavations on the site of the local region in Pakistan to find out the Indus cities have produced many indications of artistic activity. All these findings which have been found during the excavations are significant, as all of them stipulate insights into the thoughts, minds, living style, and religious beliefs of their creators in the Indus civilization<sup>[18]</sup>. Founded sculpture of Stone is extremely rare, and much of it is quite crude. available collection cannot comparability to the work completed in Mesopotamia during the same periods. All these figures which have been found during the excavation are seemingly all envisioned as images for worship and religious belief. Such religious and worship figures include seated men, recumbent composite animals, or—in unique instances (from Harappa)—a standing nude male and a dancing figure. The finest and the best available pieces, which have been founded are of excellent quality. In addition, during the excavation, found a small but notable repertoire of cast-bronze figures, including several fragments and complete examples of dancing girls, small chariots, carts, and animals. The technical excellence of the bronzes suggests a highly developed art and craft, but the available number of examples are still very less. They appear to be Indian workmanship rather than imports.

### 6. End of Indus civilization:

There is no clear evidence and proof that How and when this great Indus civilization came to an end. In addition, there is no uniform ending theory that need to be hypothesized for a culture so widely distributed. But previously published claims that the decline of this great and widely spread civilization probably happened in different stages. Some of the studies suggested that occurred to the end of this great civilization, perhaps took over a century or even more<sup>[19]</sup>. According to the previously published research, this civilization is end around the period between about 2000 and 1750 BCE and seems to be a reasonable estimation. Available literature suggested that the downfall of the urban system does not inevitably indicate a complete breakdown in the lifestyle of the population in all parts of the Indus region. But study pointed out that, it seems to have complicated the end of whatever system of social and political control had headed it. After that date the cities, many of their idiosyncratically urban traits—the use of writing, inscription, seals, and several the specialized urban crafts—disappear. While some other studies suggested that the end of Mohenjo-Daro is known, however, and was dramatic and sudden. One study pointed out that the Mohenjo-Daro was attacked toward the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE by raiders who swept over the city and then passed on, leaving the dead lying where they fell but there is no evidence to prove this theory<sup>[20]</sup>. The trend seems to be consistent in time and place with the earlier invaders from the north into the Indus region, in which the newcomers are represented as attacking the “walled cities” or “citadels”.

### 7. CONCLUSION :

Around 2600 BC, this great Civilization involved nearly many sites distributed throughout the Indian sub-continent (Present north western India and Pakistan). All these grander communities had communities, houses with uniformized bricks, city walls, city gates, gateways, and widespread areas of craft production to store the agriculture production. Most of the craft products were standardized and many of them were distributed in Indus whole Indus region. In the Indus civilization, the survival system, which was consisted of animals, food production with plants, domestic animals, some hunting, fishing, and wild plant gathering. Supply of raw materials according to the local demands, including food products, and final and finished goods was a major mechanism in participating in the widely distributed settlements. In addition, pottery, weights, and seals are strong evidence of a shared ideology and suggest the existence of an administrative system to oversee the manufacturing and distribution of goods as most of them were like each other.

About 2000 BC, this great cultural integration begins to break down. A rise in regional systems which were no longer held together by a single ideological or socio-economic system was associated with an increase in settlements and the abandonment of many larger urban sites. These scrappy, regional cultures, which are referred to as Late Harappan, occur at a time when the inhabitants of the large urban centers lost control of the trade networks that had helped integrate this vast region. However, the Indus civilization, cities, culture and development were already in an advanced stage of economic and social decline before it received the coup de grace. As the evidence stands from the available studies, the civilization flourished in the Indus valley of poverty-stricken cultures, deriving a little from a sub-Indus heritage. For many centuries urban civilization was dead in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent.



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