

# Indus Valley Civilization

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**Abstract:** The Indus valley civilization raises a great many, largely unresolved, questions. Why did this civilization, considering its sophistication, not spread beyond the Indus Valley? In general, the area where the Indus valley cities developed is arid, and one can surmise that urban development took place along a river that flowed through a virtual desert. The Indus Valley people did not develop agriculture on any large scale, and consequently did not have to clear away a heavy growth of forest. Nor did they have the technology for that, since they were confined to using bronze or stone implements. They did not practice canal irrigation and did not have the heavy plough.

**Keywords:** Harappan, Indus Valley, Saraswati, Himalayan, culture, river.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The often term "Indus Saraswati valley civilization", Indus valley is not the only or even the main river valley where it grew. Its geographical limits stretch from the Dasht valley of Markan coast in the west to Meerut and Saharanpur in the upper Ganga-Yamuna Doab in the east and from Jammu in the north to the Tapti valley in the south."<sup>1</sup> It also has a distinct presence as far south as the upper Godawari in Maharashtra and an outlying settlement at Shortughai near the oxus in North Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

For the sake of continuity one may prefer the term "Indus Saraswati valley civilization", the term used by Sir John Marshall, the architect of its discovery; however, the archaeologically correct term is "Harappan civilization" after the name of the site where in first excavations work scholar are of the opinion that the more than 1000 Harappan sites have been found near the bed of extinct river Saraswati.<sup>3</sup> hence the proper name should be "Indus Saraswati valley civilization".S.P.Gupta <sup>4</sup> prefer to call the same because most of the ancient civilization grew and developed on the bank of Twin River.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HARAPPAN RESEARCH

The historical Research of the "Indus-Saraswati valley civilization can be divided in between first phase (1921-22) to fifth phase (2008-09) as stated below:

### 2.1 First phase (Pre-Independence):

It began with excavations by D.R. Sahnii at Harappa in 1920-21 and by R.D. Banerjee at Mohenjo-Daro in 1921-22. On the basis of these excavations the civilization was identified in 1924 as Bronze age comparable to those of Mesopotamia and Egypt. A series of explorations established its distribution from Baluchistan to near Ambala in Punjab, the dried up Ghaggar-Hakra valley of Bahawalpur and Gujrat.<sup>5</sup> The most significant publication to date on the Indus civilization was under editorship of John Marshall in 1931. He provided a synthesis of its basic points among which three stood out and became the focus of later researches: 1] The civilization was deeply rooted in the Indian soil, (II) it foreshadowed many features of the historic civilization of India especially in religious beliefs sculptural style and pottery /craft activities, (III) in term of India's "Vedic history" it was pre and non vedic. The third premise was based on two publications 0926 and 1929 of R.P. Chanda one of Marshall's juniors at the Archaeological survey of India.

### 2.2 Second Phase (1947-63):

Began with the publication in 1947 of Sir Mortimer Wheelers excavations across the defenses at Harappa in 1946 which argued for the beginning of the civilization in circa 2500 B.C. and its destruction by the Vedic Aryan invaders in circa 1500 B.C. This led to prolonged and detailed excavations and surveys in Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Rangpur and Lothal (Gujrat) Ropar (Haryana) and Alamgirpur (U.P.). Excavations were also conducted at Kot Diji in Sind and in Quetta valley and elsewhere in Baluchistan all of which gave the context of this civilization a sharper outline. This phase was dominated by Mortimer Wheelers ideas also expressed in his books.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.3 Third phase (1964-84):

It began with a questioning of the Aryan invasion theory by G.F. Dales (1964), D.P.Agrawal's analysis of the newly emerging radiocarbon dates (1964) and the postulate of a uniform pre-Harappan, substratum named sothi after a site in the Ghaggar system of Rajasthan by A. Ghosh (1965). The last premise found detailed expression in M. Rafique Mughals elaboration (1971) of the concept of early Harappan mainly on the basis of his study and distribution of the kot Diji material. In India excavation at Kalibangan in Rajasthan continued through the 1960s. This idea also received support from proponent of the nation that long distance trade between the Harappan civilization and Mesopotamia was most important factor behind Harappan genesis.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.4 Fourth Phase:

The Fourth phase of Harappan study be said to have began in 1985 and been dominated by the Indian excavations at Dholaceira in kutch and American Pakistani excavations at Harappa, one of the important results of these excavations is the absolute establishment of the continuity of the civilization from in early to mature and from Mature to late stages. Another fundamentally important feature is the discovery of signs resembling Harappan script in the early Harappan levels of padri in Gujrat, Harappa in pakistani Punjab and kalibangan in Rajasthan. The phenomenon is apparently widespread. A third equally important feature is the discovery of gold and silver Jewellery including tiara in the early Harappan site of kunal in Haryana, which suggests that kingship was possibly emerging as early as that period. This is also a phase of study in which our perception of the details of its close interaction with the land."<sup>8</sup>

One can also understand how this civilization in all its phases interacted with hunter-gatherer and incipient farmers of the rest of the subcontinent leading to the growth of farming settlements and the introduction of irrigation canals and how in it late phase it moved towards the Ganga Yamuna Doab, central India and Maharashtra. The fact that the indus civilization is being accepted as a large and inextricable part of landscape is enormously significant. The old dominant nation that it was pre and non-vedic has been subjected to intense criticism in recent years and although this is not strictly an archaeological issue and should not be discussed by us the fact that this nations being increasingly challenged reflects the spirit of questioning which characterized the south Asian civilization at the beginning of 21st century."<sup>9</sup>

### 2.5 Fifth Phase:

The last but not least current phase of Harappan study may be said to have began with the project name "Saraswati Heritage project" in 2003-04. The excavations were carried out on the basis of NASA (VSA) satellite-Paleo-Image of vedic river. Saraswati.

The major excavations has been carried out but Archaeological survey of India in Saraswati valley by a team of archaeologists: Barror<sup>10</sup> and Tarkhanvealadera (Rajasthan) Jhunikuran (Gujrat) and Bhirana (Harayana).

## III. STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SARASWATI

A sizeable literature on vedic saraswati has emerged in recent years mainly due to the effort of "Vedic Saraswati Nadi Sodh Pratisth") broadly the available literature it can be grouped in three categories.

### 3.1 Historical Literature:

The primary sources are Rig-Veda, Puran, Ramayana and Mahabharata as ancient sources of Indian history.

Dr. Renu Bala (1996)<sup>11</sup> Dr. Jha<sup>12</sup> (1956) Dr. Tripathi<sup>13</sup> (1996) etc. are some of the scholars who have provided excellent compilation for the historical source material that merit special reference. Its geographical details have been described by other scholars like Phadke<sup>14</sup>(1996)

### 3.2 Geological Literature:

The various elements studied by researchers include remote sensing applications, geomorphologic appreciations, Petrological borehole data analysis etc. Gradual shifting of the sutlej away from Saraswati and mid tectonic activities are the other associated factors for drainage (Saraswati) disappearance.

### 3.3 Archeological Literature:

Dr. Kaiserani<sup>15</sup> (1996) catalogued pre-Harappan, harappan and past Harappan sites in Haryana' in relation to the course of vedic Saraswati. He remarked that no Harappan sites have been located so far an present day course of the sutlej west-southwest wards from Ropar and the Yamuna; so it can be concluded that these rivers were flowing in different course in the past.

## IV. SARASWATI GAP AREAS

On Scrutiny of the published work on vedic saraswati we can identify two significant gap areas that hardly invited attention of scholars. The identified gap areas need to be addressed carefully without which the knowledge on the pattern of vedic saraswati will always remain incomplete.

### 4.1 The sources of vedic saraswati and its drainage patteren in Himalaya:

Hardly any scholar addressed himself to ascertain the source of vedic saraswati as every river is bound to originate from a particular source located in basin such a mighty river that traversed a length of almost 1000km is bound to posses a perennial source in Himalaya only casual and metaphorical references are available pertaining to the source of saraswati Nadi in the literature.<sup>16</sup>

### 4.2 Secular Sequence of Desiccation:

The researchers have painted out two causes for the desiccation of Saraswati river course migration due to tectonic activity and secular changes in palaeo-climates .However, none of the scholars have presented a chromological sequence to events that contributed to the desiccation of Saraswati.<sup>17</sup>

## V. PALEO-CLIMATES

Neogene quaternary climates during the past may have played a major role sculpturing Himalayan terrain and its river systems cumulative effects of changing climates, degradation and addregation processes and Himalayan tectonics that has remained active in the region resulted in generation enormous quantity of sediments (due to weathering and erosion) valley fills, terrace formation and constant shifting of major river courses.

### 5.1 Origin of Saraswati from Saraswati group of glaciers:

A Model for the origin of Vedic Saraswati has been developed on the basis of geomorphologic, glaciological and geological parameters inparts of western Garhwal Himalaya.<sup>18</sup>

## VI. COURSE OF SARASWATI IN HIMALAYA

After origination from Naitwear Saraswati started flowing in south- westerly direction for nearly 40 km. and huge dimension and very high discharge, from pabbar (Xet another) glacier bed river at that time confluence it took a southerly manner for nearly 100km before entering in paonta doon. Here Agler yamuna and Giri river joined the Saraswati followed the course of the present day Tones river in the intial stage but a remarkable change is perceived in paonta Doon. From here it took a course that is alleged along south of Kalsi Gabrinath, Paonta and Batal valley i.e. west to south westerly direction and flowed over the raised and filled platform of sivaliks subsequently in Bata valley, Saraswati took a south westerly swing and entered the plains through Adi Badri . The field evidence suggests that the area between Gabrinath, kalesar and makandra valley was once filled with a huge pile of fluvial sediments.<sup>19</sup>

## VII. CLIMATE

The area cocered by the present investigations is broadly comprised of the state of Rajasthan (20<sup>03</sup>'N-30<sup>012</sup>'N lat and 69<sup>030</sup>'E 78 <sup>017</sup>' E Longitudes ) and characterized by a progressive fall in the rainfall towards it core, centering on the thar desert or lower Saraswati valley with less than 10 cm. average annual rainfall. One witnesses the occurrence of more or less eccentricly placed zone of increasing rainfall round the central core which, proceeding outwards, are here described

as Arid (1025cm average annual rainfall), Semi, Arid (25-50cm.) Semi Humid (50-60 cm) and Humid (60-100cm) . The climate of North West India as a whole is divisible in to four seasons: winter (cool and dry) spring or pre-monsoon (hot and dry) summer (hot and dry) summer or monsoon (hot & wet and autumn or post -monsoon (warm and dry)

The Agawali shows considerable variation in it as the mount of rainfall and temperature distribution even though as a whole the area is denoted by strong periodical rains and more or lest uniform temperature.<sup>20</sup>

## VIII. SARASWATI RIVER

### 8.1 Literature of Historic Legacy:

The ancient course of the mighty Himalayan river Saraswati adored in ecstatic terms in the most ancient literature work of humanity, the Rigveda have been established: The perennial sacred Saraswati river had nourished on her bank, an ancient the most expansive remarkably homogenous civilization of the times circa 3000 s.c.<sup>21</sup>

### 8.2 Chronology:

The Scribes of ancient Mesopotamia writing in the distinctive wedge-shaped script known as cuneiform, were the first to make lists of king alongwith the year that they reigned. Sir John Marshall thought that Indus seals found at Mesopotamia cities ur an kish belonged to the Intermediate period of Mohenjodaro and in 1931 he suggested that the Indus cities flourished between 3250 and 2750 B.C. (Marashall, Mohenjodaro and the Indus civilization). This dating was provisional after more than twenty years new discoveries combined with revisions of the Mesopotamian chronology. Sir Mortimar Wheeler proposes 2500 B.C. as the beginning the Indus cities and 1500 B.C. as their decline. This terminal date was based on the approximate dating of Rigvedic hymns, but he later revised it to around 1700 B.C.<sup>22</sup>

## IX. CONCLUSION

Many scholars were not satisfied with these relative dating methods which relied on distant Mesopotamian chronologies but its was not until after the introduction of the radiocarbon dating technique in 1950s that the situation began to change. In course of the formation of large urban centers such as Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa located in the lore areas of the Indus valley can be dated from around 2600 to 1900 B.C. In speaking in cultures however, 700 years is an extremely long time spanning and even religion took place during the lives of these cities. The recent studies at the site of Harappa and also as Baror (under Sarswati Heritage project Ganganagar Rajasthan) & some sites in Paksthan to rectify may help this problem, so that it is now possible to identify and date in several major phases in the growth and development of the city changes in artifact of the city, change in artifact styles and painted pottery motif-s are also being identified.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby declare that all information given on above are true of my knowledge and correct.

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