

The Beginnings of Indian Civilization | Easy Notes for class 6th

Introduction:-

A long time ago, humans lived in caves and hunted animals for food. Slowly, they learned farming and started living in small groups. Over time, these small groups grew into villages, towns, and big cities. This is how the first civilizations started! But how did it happen in India? Let's find out!

What is Civilization?

- Civilization is a way of life where people live in organized societies.
- It began when humans settled in one place and started farming.
- People built houses, formed rules, and created new skills like pottery and weaving.

Characteristics of a Civilization

or How do we know a place is a Civilization?

1. **Cities and Villages** – People live in big towns near rivers.
2. **Agriculture** – They grow crops and keep animals for food.
3. **Trade** – They exchange goods like grains, clothes, and pottery.
4. **Writing System** – They use symbols or scripts to communicate.
5. **Rules and Leaders** – Kings or leaders make laws to maintain order.
6. **Religion and Worship** – People pray to gods and build temples.
7. **Art and Craft** – They create beautiful pots, jewelry, and paintings.

Thus, Indian Civilization is known as a civilization because it had all these features.

Civilization Around the World

- Civilization began at different times in different places.
 - The **Mesopotamian Civilization** (modern Iraq and Syria) started about 6,000 years ago.
 - Ancient **Egyptian Civilization** developed a few centuries later in 3100 BCE.
 - Later, The **Indus-Sarasvati Civilization** began in 2600 BCE.
 - Cities like **Harappa** and **Mohenjo-Daro** developed.
- These early civilizations made important contributions to human progress.

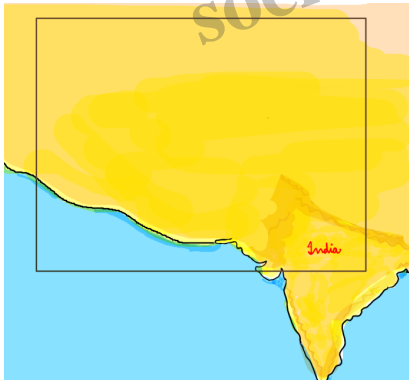
Indian Civilization

- We will now focus on the Indian Subcontinent.

- The first civilization in this region began in the **northwest**.
- **Note:- Indian Civilization is one of the world's oldest, beginning around 4,500 years ago.**

From Village to City:-

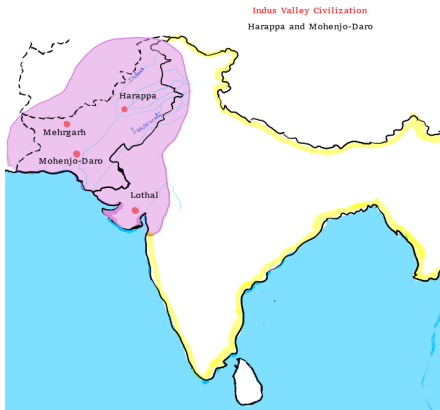
- The **Indus River** and its tributaries made the **Punjab and Sindh plains** fertile, helping farming grow.
 - Five main tributaries of Indus :- **Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej**.
- Long ago, the **Sarasvati River** also flowed through **Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat**.
 - Many ancient sites **exist** near the **Sarasvati River**.
 - Today, it is **known as Ghaggar** in India and **Hakra** in Pakistan.
 - It flows only during the **rainy season**.
 - **Note:-** The **Rig Veda** mentioned it as a great river flowing **“from the mountain to the sea.”**
 - Over time, the river **dried up and disappeared**.
- **Around 3500 BCE**, small villages started growing into towns. (*in the northwest region*)
- **By 2600 BCE**, these towns developed into big cities due to trade and exchanges.
- This civilization is called the **Indus, Harappan, Indus-Sarasvati, or Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization**.
- The people of this civilization are known as **Harappans**.
 - It is one of the **oldest civilizations in the world**.
- The civilization is named **Harappan** because **Harappa** was the first city found in 1920–21.
- Moreover, this development is also called **India's First Urbanization**.



Town Planning of Harappan Civilization

- **Harappa** and **Mohenjo-daro**, located in present-day Pakistan, were the first discovered cities in 1924.
- Later, more cities like **Dholavira** (Gujarat), **Rakhigarhi** (Haryana), and **Ganweriwala** (Pakistan) were found.

- The Sarasvati basin had many sites, including **Rakhigarhi**, **Ganweriwala**, **Farmana**, **Kalibangan**, **Bhirrana**, and **Banawali**.



City Layout:-

- Cities followed a planned structure with wide, well-oriented streets.
- They had fortifications (strong wall or structure).
 - Each city had an **upper town** (for elites) and a **lower town** (for common people).
- Large buildings, including warehouses, stored trade goods.
- Houses, made of bricks, had uniform construction quality regardless of size.

The Great Bath:-

- Mohenjo-daro had the **Great Bath**, a waterproof tank (12 × 7 m) with a well and drainage system.
- **Note:-** It was likely used for *royal bath*, *religious rituals*, but not a public bath as most houses had private bathrooms.

Water Management in Harappan Civilization

- Harappans focused on **water management and cleanliness**.
- Houses had **separate bathing areas** connected to underground **drainage systems**.
- **Mohenjo-daro** had **hundreds of brick wells**, while other regions used **ponds, streams, or reservoirs**.
- **Dholavira** had **six large reservoirs**, the biggest being **73 meters long**, connected through underground drains.
- Large-scale water structures suggest **organized labor, precise planning, and a local authority** for maintenance.
- Archaeologists believe that **a city administration** managed water supply and cleanliness.

What Did the Harappans Eat?

- Harappans built settlements by rivers to get water and rich soil.
- They grew cereals like **barley, wheat, millets**, and sometimes *rice*; they also **grew pulses and vegetables**.
- Also, they **raised animals for meat** and **fished** in both rivers and the sea.
- They grew cotton and wove it into clothes.
- They used farming tools like the plough, which modern farmers still use.
- Moreover, tests (scientific examination) of clay pots show they stored various types of food.
 - such as, **dairy, turmeric, ginger, and banana**.
 - Thus, we can say that their diet was diverse.

A Brisk Trade

- Harappans actively **traded** within their cities and with other cultures.
- They **exported** ornaments (especially **carnelian beads**), timber, gold, cotton, and daily items.
 - Craftsmen **drilled** and **decorated** carnelian beads and **crafted** shell bangles.
- They likely **imported** copper because it was rare at home.
 - **Note:-** Harappans knew the use of copper (a soft metal) very well.
 - They mixed **tin** with **copper** to make bronze, which is harder.
 - They used bronze to make **tools, pots, pans, and figurines** (small statues).
- Furthermore, Harappans **used** land routes, rivers, and the sea for trade.
- The settlement of **Lothal** in Gujarat had a huge **dockyard** (217 m × 36 m) for boats.
- Traders **used** small seals to **identify** goods and each other.

The End or a New Beginning?

- **Around 1900 BCE**, the Sindhu-Sarasvati civilization began to decline.
- Cities were **abandoned one by one** as people turned to a rural lifestyle.
- Without a strong government, Harappans **spread out** into many small settlements.

Causes of Decline

- **Climate Change:**
 - After **2200 BCE**, reduced rainfall made the weather drier.
 - This change **hampered** farming and **reduced** food supplies.
- **Sarasvati River Drying Up:**
 - The river **dried up** in its central area.
 - Cities like **Kalibangan** and **Banawali** were quickly abandoned.
- **No Evidence of War:**
 - Harappans **did not keep** armies or weapons.
 - The civilization **appeared** peaceful, ruling out warfare as the cause.

Note:- Despite the decline, much of the Harappan culture and technology **survived** and **influenced** the next phase of Indian civilization.

The chapter is now complete! I hope each concept was easy for you to understand and you feel confident about the material. Feel free to share your feedback and comments on the notes posted. Your thoughts are always welcome!

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