

Indus Valley Civilization Notes With Trick to Remember Sites & Rivers, PDF

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Indus Valley Civilization notes based on syllabus and previous year questions of UPSC, State PSC and other competitive exams, with direct PYQ highlights. Memorize in minutes! You can download a PDF of this note by clicking the Download PDF Note button at the bottom of this notes page.

Trick to Remember IVC Boundaries (N-S-E-W)

Basic Timeline & Geography

👉 **Timeline:** 2500 BC to 1750 BC (Established accurately by **Carbon-14 Dating**).

👉 **Nature:** It was a **Bronze Age** (Chalcolithic) civilization. It was highly **urbanized**.

👉 **Core Trap:** Iron was absolutely **UNKNOWN** to the Indus Valley people. **UPSC TRICK**

M-A-D-S (Directional Extremes)

Trick: **My Assistant Draws Sketches** (North, East, South, West)

👉 **North (M): Manda** (Jammu & Kashmir) on the Chenab River.

👉 **East (A): Alamgirpur** (Uttar Pradesh) on the Hindon River. **UPPSC PYQ**

👉 **South (D): Daimabad** (Maharashtra) on the Pravara River.

👉 **West (S): Sutkagendor** (Balochistan, Pakistan) on the Dashk River.

Trick to Remember IVC Sites, Rivers & Discoverers

H-R-D & M-I-R (The Big Two)

H-R-D: Harappa is on **Ravi** river, discovered by **Daya Ram Sahni** (1921).

M-I-R: Mohenjo-Daro is on **Indus** river, discovered by **RD Banerjee** (1922).

BPSC PYQ

Site Name	River	State/Country	Excavator / Discoverer
Lothal	Bhogava	Gujarat	S.R. Rao (1954)
Kalibangan	Ghaggar	Rajasthan	Amlanand Ghosh (1951)
Dholavira	Luni	Gujarat	J.P. Joshi (1967) / R.S. Bisht
Chanhudaro	Indus	Sindh, Pakistan	N.G. Majumdar (1931)
Banawali	Ghaggar	Haryana	R.S. Bisht (1973)

Important Findings at Harappan Sites (UPSC Notes)

Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro

👉 **Harappa:** 6 Granaries in a row, Coffin burials, Cemetery H & R-37, Stone symbols of Lingam & Yoni.

👉 **Mohenjo-Daro (Mound of Dead):** The Great Bath, The Great Granary (largest building), **Bronze Dancing Girl**, Steatite statue of **Bearded Priest**, Seal of Pashupati.

UPSC PYQ

Lothal & Kalibangan

👉 **Lothal (Manchester of IVC):** World's first artificial **Dockyard**, Rice husk, Fire altars, **Double burial** (male & female in single grave), Terracotta model of a ship.

BPSC PYQ

- 👉 **Kalibangan (Black Bangles):** Ploughed field surface (earliest evidence), Fire altars, Bones of camel, Wooden drainage system.

🏛️ Dholavira, Chanhudaro & Others

- 👉 **Dholavira:** Unique **Water Harvesting System**, City divided into **3 parts** (Upper, Middle, Lower), A massive 10-alphabet signboard. **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Chanhudaro:** The **ONLY** Indus city **without a citadel**. Famous as a bead-making factory, inkpot found. **UPPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Banawali:** Terracotta replica of a **Toy Plough**, Radial streets.
- 👉 **Surkotada:** **ONLY** site with actual remains of **Horse Bones** (though horses were generally not central to IVC). **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Rakhigarhi:** The **Largest** Harappan site in India (Haryana).

Harappan Town Planning & Drainage System (BPSC/UPSC)

🏙️ Urban Grid & Architecture

- 👉 **Grid System:** Streets intersected at exact **right angles (90 degrees)**, dividing the city into rectangular blocks.
- 👉 **City Division:** Divided into **Citadel** (Raised western part for ruling class) and **Lower Town** (Eastern part for commoners). Exception: Dholavira (3 parts) and Chanhudaro (No citadel).
- 👉 **Burnt Bricks:** Used standardized burnt bricks in a ratio of **4:2:1** (Length:Breadth:Thickness). Contemporary Egypt used mostly dried bricks. **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Doorways Trap:** Doors and windows opened into side-alleys, **NOT** onto the main streets. (Exception: Lothal, where doors opened onto the main street).
- 👉 **Underground Drainage:** Extremely advanced. Drains were built of burnt bricks and covered with stone slabs/bricks. Soak pits were used. Mortar and Gypsum were used to make the Great Bath watertight. **BPSC PYQ**

IVC Art, Sculpture & Metallurgy Techniques (UPSC Notes)

Bronze Casting & The Lost Wax Technique

- 👉 **Cire Perdue (Lost Wax) Technique:** Harappans mastered this metallurgical process. A wax figure was covered with clay, baked to melt the wax, and the hollow clay mold was filled with molten bronze. **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **The Bronze Dancing Girl:** Found at **Mohenjo-Daro**. She stands in a relaxed *Tribhanga* (three-bends) posture. Her left arm is heavily covered in bangles, while her right hand rests on her hip.
- 👉 **Bronze Animals:** Famous examples include the Bronze Bull of Kalibangan and the Bronze Dog/Bird of Lothal.

Stone Sculptures

- 👉 **The Bearded Priest:** A famous steatite bust found at **Mohenjo-Daro**. The priest has half-closed eyes (meditative) and wears a shawl decorated with a **Trefoil (three-petaled) pattern**. **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Male Torso:** A remarkable red sandstone sculpture found at **Harappa**, known for its realistic rendering of human anatomy and socket holes in the neck and shoulders.

Terracotta Art & Craft

- 👉 **Pinching Method:** Terracotta figures were largely handmade using the pinching method. They are generally cruder than stone and bronze statues.
- 👉 **Subject Matter:** The most common terracotta figures are of the **Mother Goddess**, toy carts with solid wheels, whistles, and birds.
- 👉 **Bead Making:** Highly advanced bead-making factories were discovered at **Chanhudaro and Lothal**, using materials like carnelian, lapis lazuli, and steatite.

UPPSC PYQ

Agriculture, Crops & Status of Livelihood (BPSC/UPSC)

Agronomy & Crop Production

- 👉 **Principal Crops:** The main food crops were **Wheat and Barley**. They also cultivated mustard, sesamum, peas, and dates.
- 👉 **The Rice Trap:** Rice was NOT a staple crop. Evidence of rice (husks) has ONLY been found at **Lothal and Rangpur** in Gujarat. **BPSG PYQ**
- 👉 **First Cotton Growers:** They were the earliest people in the world to cultivate cotton, which the Greeks later referred to as *Sindon*. **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Sowing Season:** Flood agriculture was practiced. Seeds were sown in the floodplains in November, and crops were reaped in April before the next flood.

Farming Tech & Irrigation

- 👉 **The Ploughed Field:** The world's earliest evidence of a ploughed field with intersecting furrows (suggesting two crops grown simultaneously) was found at **Kalibangan**. **BPSG PYQ**
- 👉 **Agricultural Tools:** They used wooden ploughshares. A terracotta model of a plough was discovered at **Banawali**.
- 👉 **Irrigation:** Traces of ancient canals have been found at the IVC site of **Shortughai (Afghanistan)**, and a massive water reservoir was utilized for farming at **Dholavira**. **UPSC PYQ**

Animal Husbandry & Diet

- 👉 **Domesticated Stock:** They reared cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. The **humped bull** was particularly favored and revered.
- 👉 **Wild Animals Known:** They were well acquainted with the elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, and monkey.
- 👉 **The Horse Debate:** While horse bones were found at **Surkotada**, the horse was NOT central to the Harappan economy or military, unlike the later Vedic Aryans. **UPPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Diet:** The Harappan livelihood supported a diverse diet consisting of both vegetarian (wheat, barley, fruits) and non-vegetarian (fish, beef, mutton, poultry) foods.

IVC Society, Economy & Religious Beliefs

Economy & Agriculture

- 👉 **First Cotton:** IVC people were the **first in the world** to produce cotton. Greeks called it *Sindon*. **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Foreign Trade:** Traded extensively with Mesopotamia (Sumeria). Mesopotamian records call the Indus region **Meluhha**.
- 👉 **Weights:** Used standardized weights in multiples of **16** (16, 64, 160...). Made of chert, cubical in shape.
- 👉 No metallic money; trade relied entirely on the **Barter System**.

Religion & Worship

- 👉 **No Temples:** Absolutely no temples or special places of worship were found. **BPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **Matriarchal:** Heavy worship of the **Mother Goddess** (terracotta figures).
- 👉 **Pashupati Seal:** Male deity (Proto-Shiva) sitting in yogic posture. Surrounded by 4 animals: **Elephant, Tiger, Rhino, Buffalo**, with 2 deer at his feet. (*TRICK: No Lion, No Cow on this seal!*) **UPSC PYQ**
- 👉 Worshipped the Peepal tree, Humped Bull, and practiced amulets (belief in ghosts/evil forces).

Indus Seals, Script & Causes of Decline Notes

Seals, Script & Art

- 👉 **Steatite Seals:** Most seals were made of steatite (soft stone). The most frequently depicted animal on seals is the **Unicorn Bull**.
- 👉 **Missing Animal:** The **Lion** was completely unknown and is NEVER found on any IVC seal. **UPPSC PYQ**
- 👉 **The Script:** It is **Pictographic** and has NOT been deciphered yet.

👉 **Boustrophedon Style:** The writing style alternated directions (Right to Left on the first line, Left to Right on the second). **UPSC PYQ**

👉 Made beautiful Red pottery painted with Black designs.

Causes of Decline

👉 **No Single Cause:** Historians agree there was no single cause, but a combination of factors.

👉 **Aryan Invasion Theory:** Proposed by Mortimer Wheeler. (*Mostly rejected by modern historians*).

👉 **Ecological Imbalance:** Proposed by Fairservis. (Most accepted).

👉 **Floods & Earthquakes:** MacKay (Floods) and Raikes (Earthquakes) suggest natural disasters ruined Mohenjo-Daro and Kalibangan.

👉 **Change in River Course:** The drying up of the Saraswati/Ghaggar rivers.


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