

A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION AND ITS EVALUATION THROUGH ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHICAL METHODS

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ABSTRACT

Harappan or Indus Valley Civilization is one of the remarkable ancient societies of the ancient world. Significantly, the cultural heritage of this civilization portrays it as indigenous civilization. Its artifacts endorse its aboriginality and attract the scholars to ponder over its cultural heritage. For the assessment of its cultural heritage, anthropology, archaeology, and ethnology are the best tools to distinguish it appropriately. Being a renowned civilization in the world, much of the archaeological work has been done, but less in the field of anthropology and ethnography. The urban life of the people of this civilization refers the zenith of advance the metropolitan approach that presents social, administrative, and political understanding about its people. The focusing aims of this manuscript denominate the cultural heritage, anthropology, ethnography and to assess the social, political, religious, agricultural, art, architecture, rites and rituals, traditions, and norms of the ancient people of Harappan Civilization. Most prominently, the application of scientific methods of anthropology and their role for the assessment of cultural heritage, specifically Tangible and Intangible is also a chief aim of the manuscript.

Keywords: Harappa, Indus Valley Civilization, Culture, Heritage, Anthropology, manuscript, Tangible

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a set of basic conventions and orientations to beliefs, behavior, and policies of life that formulates a group of people that sways their lives (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). In further, Tangible and Intangible Cultures are its divisions that portray the moveable and immovable heritage of any community or society. Ultimately, culture depicts its valuable prints on the lives of people. The study on the cultural heritage of ancient civilizations always magnetizes the scholars and in this sense, all ancient civilizations of the ancient world have been rendered and noted with their unique cultural

heritage. Harappan or Indus Valley Civilization (Figure 1) has been observed as one of the prominent ancient societies of the Pre-historic times during the Bronze Age (3300 B.C). Geographically, the Harappan Civilization covers an area of present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, and some expanses of India. (Singh, 2008). In further explanation, Harappa site (30°37'44"N 72°51'50"E), is its type-site or mother site through which this civilization spread out. Harappa is one of the important metropolitan cities of Indus Valley Civilization, such as Mohenjo-Daro, Ganweriwala, Dholavira, and Rakhigarhi (Kenoyer, 2008; Petrie, 2013) (Figure 2). The greater Harappan Civilization is roughly calculated with 2600 archaeological sites (Possehl, 1999) which show gigantic cultural denomination of this civilization. As far as the ancient world is observed, this civilization is famous for its urbanized culture, which was principled and unique (Wright, 2010; Possehl, 2002; Kenoyer, 1998; Lal, 1997; Wheeler, 1968). These ancient societies such as Egyptian, Chinese, Persian, Harappan, Greek, Mesopotamian, and Roman have unique cultures that attract scholars. This civilization emerged on the Indus River, which flows through the span of Pakistan and in addition, the Ghaggar-Hakra River (northwest India and eastern Pakistan) bears its footprints as well. This civilization has unique traits but full of its form can be observed in its Mature Phase (2500-1900 B.C). Chronologically, it is recognized with Early Harappan Phase, Harappan Phase, Mature Harappan Phase Late Harappan Phase, and Post Harappan Phase respectively. To evaluate the cultural values of the people, anthropology illustrates all hidden mysteries and it is upright as the best source of it. In addition, it is dealt with the cultural values of the human being from their origins. In this regard, ancient societies have also been under the concentration of anthropologists. With the context of anthropology, the culture of Harappan Civilization is documented as the urbanized culture in the ancient world. With the advantage of archaeology as a sister subject of anthropology, Harappan Civilization can be examined well regarding its cultural heritage. For the documentation of this civilization with the consideration of anthropology, ethnography, and ethnology, the scientific methods and theories are the best tools to formulate the scheme of this research. All the aspects such as political values, administration, kinship, socio-cultural worth, religion beliefs, dress, gender, arts, human relationships, customs, norms, traditions, etc. are the main features of the culture that are analyzed in this manuscript with the help of anthropological scientific methods.

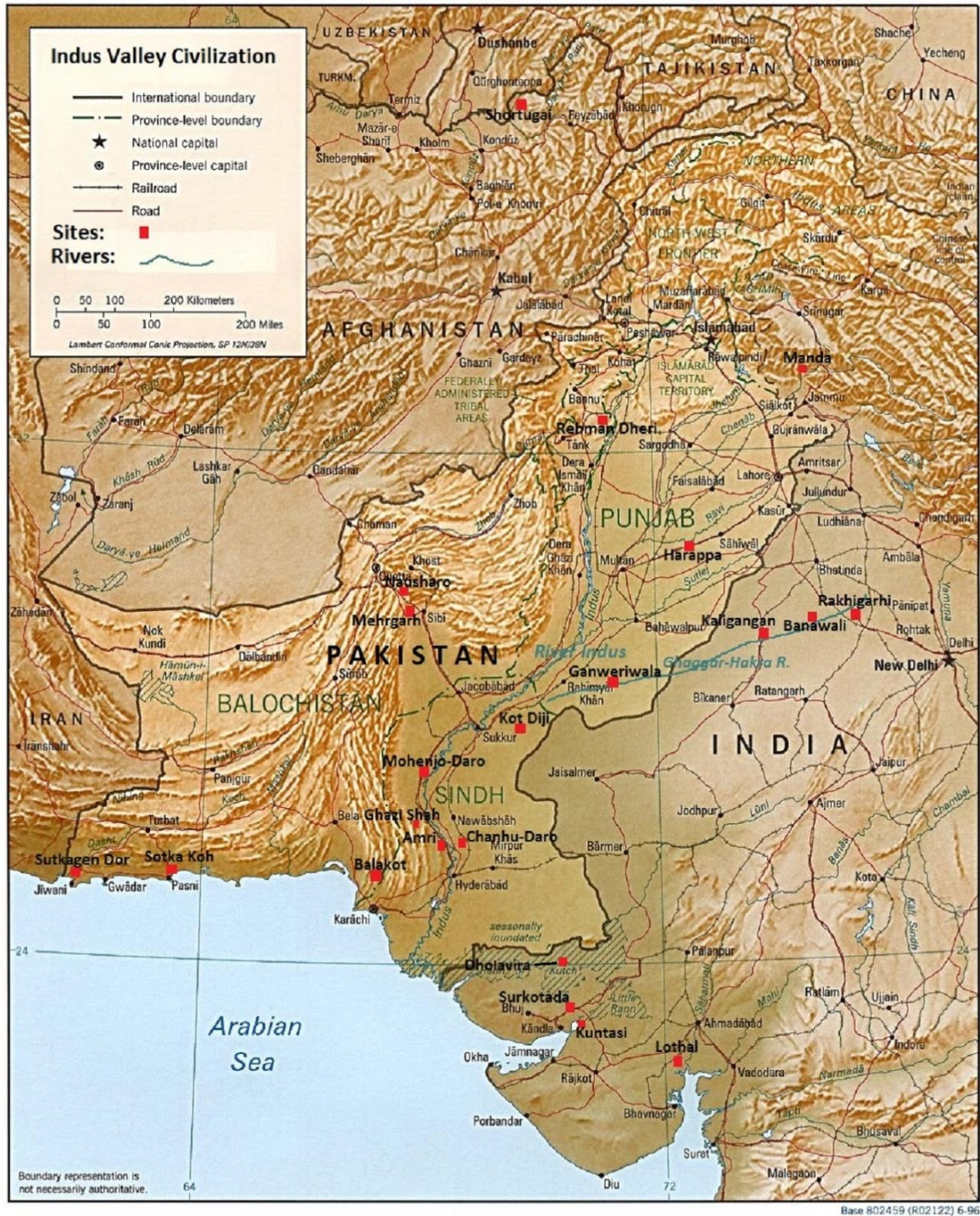


Figure.1 The extent and key sites of Harappan Civilization

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HARAPPAN_CIVILIZATION -major-sites-2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HARAPPAN_CIVILIZATION_-_major-sites-2.jpg))

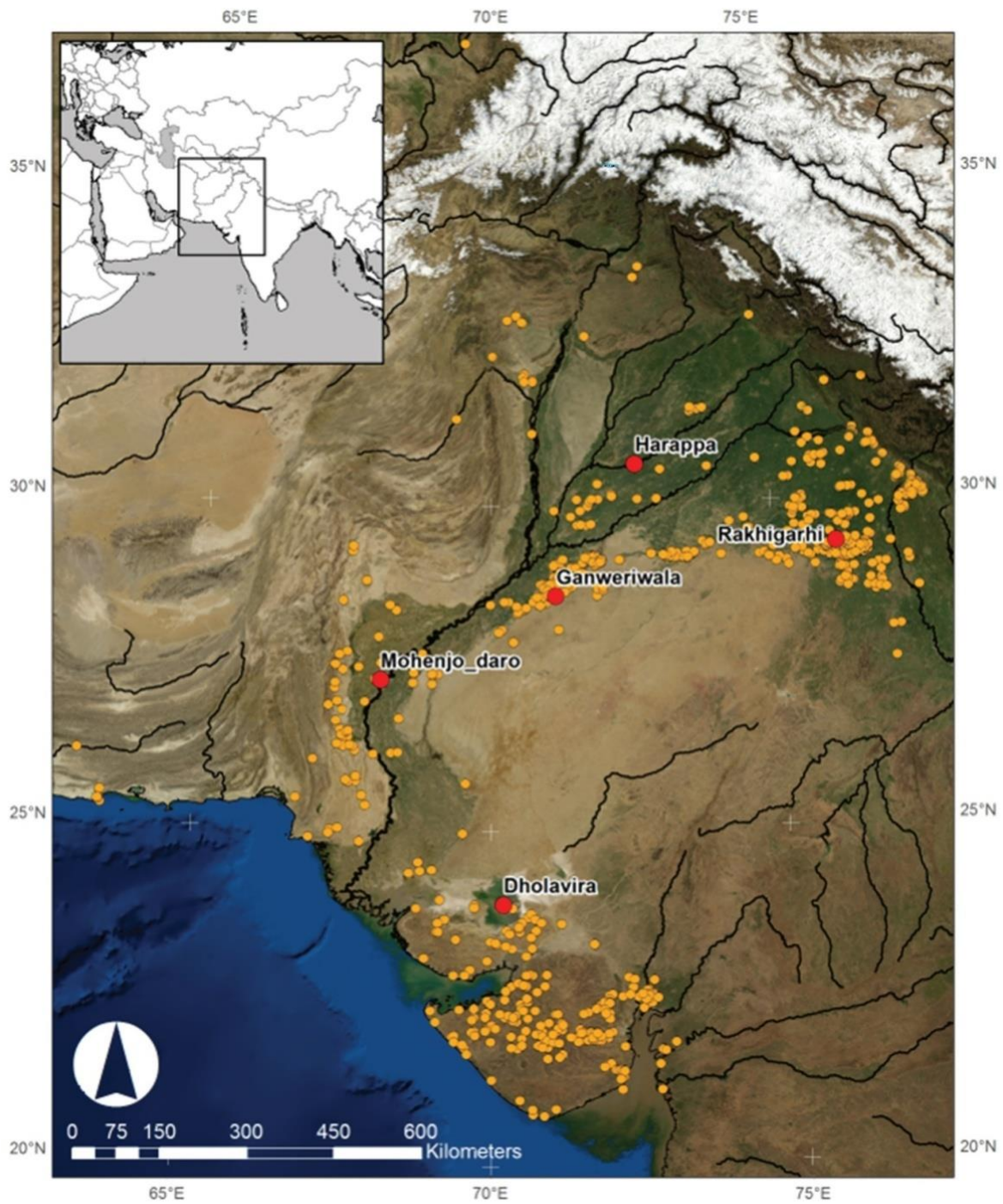


Figure.2 The depiction of 5 metropolitan cities of Indus Valley Civilization (After Petrie et al. 2017)

SCIENTIFIC METHODS

The qualitative and quantitative analysis for data collection regarding Harappan Civilization is apt with the outlook of anthropology that is obtained from the antiquities or artifacts. Great number of sites, artifacts, social conditions, and structures related to Harappan Civilization are also handy resources that endow with qualitative and quantitative data. The applications of anthropological techniques would intricate a scientific viewpoint, society structure, and cultural values. Through the implication of anthropological techniques, the social-cultural circumstances and familiarity about Harappan Civilization can also be under the management of anthropology. Proportional anthropological techniques are another superlative methodology, which gives the utmost understanding of the ancient remains of Harappan Civilization. With the help of proportional or comparative method, the cultural constituent of any society is highlighted in a framework. As far as the evolution of culture is observed, most of the cultural assumptions evaluate the central figure of culture and its philosophy. In a clear wise saying, the cultural frameworks always have the assumptions that can be modified for further effect (Lumsden, 1981; Durham, 1991). In addition, the comparative method penetrates the human attitude in various spheres. With the help of this comparative method, the behaviors of ancient people of Harappan Civilization can be observed scientifically. Another effective method to analyze the culture of Harappan Civilization, mapping of cultural assets, both tangible and intangible. In this efficient method, the ways of living, norms, behaviors, architecture, houses, linguistics, and wearing can be evaluated. This is the ultimate process, through which complete cultural associations are focused with the assistance of anthropological considerations. In a broader spectrum, Tangible Cultural Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage are the domains of this method. With further concerning, Ethnographical techniques are also handy and useful. These techniques cover the systematic cultural study of any community is carried out which surrounds the social groups of people. The ethnographical methods depict the qualitative and quantitative analysis through which the testing and learning are centered which is as like a pack of knowledge about people (Moll, 1990). Another striking feature of this method is to execute an exploration progression that holds the inductive techniques to test the hypothesis. In this feasibility, the ethnographical study on Harappan people is striking and result based. The remarkably, ethnographical methods are also considered as empirical (Gobo, 2008b). On the other hand, it is also like the observatory method through which the anthropological observations about Harappan culture are featured and centered. All the cultural aspects are encircled with observational perspectives. Above all, the Quantitative and qualitative analysis in anthropological methods is valuable through which the cultural differences and cultural identities are evaluated scientifically. With the help of these methods, the census, statistics, percentile, and observations and past confrontations related to Harappan Civilization can also be centered.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

A BRIEF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE

With the context of the material got from the archaeological sites, it is firmly proved that is purely indigenous (Mughal, 1970), which is also the first civilization of South Asia flourish by the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. In addition, it has deep roots towards prehistoric times and available archaeological material speaks about Paleolithic culture to Neolithic culture respectively. This civilization is noticed by many a sole and distinct features among its contemporaneous civilizations of the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates Valleys. In this regard, this civilization was local but contemporary to Mesopotamian Civilization. Therefore, archaeological insights are interesting and unsurpassed. The available data claims that this civilization emerged with the progression of agriculture with the attributes of urban culture and well-organized town planning. In a concise way, the archaeological perspectives of Harappan Civilization lead towards the Neolithic era of this region. Indus Valley or Harappan Civilization has been observed since the early 20th century, having cultures such as Early Harappan (3300-2800 B.C.), Harappan (2800-2600 B.C.), Mature Harappan (2600-1900 B.C.) and Late Harappan (1900-1700 B.C.). There are about 2600 archaeological sites have been discovered which portrayed the Harappan culture. With this, five important urban or metropolitan cities such as Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Ganweriwala, in Pakistan and Lothal, Rakhigarhi and Dhulavira in India, depict the civilized urban culture of Harappan Civilization (Shinde, 2016b). The discovery of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro (Pakistan) is considered as the zenith of discovery beginning in 1861. There have been many of archaeological excavation conducted by local and foreign archaeologists or some organizations through which, countless artifacts recovered which denominated this civilization as aboriginal one since 20th of the century. In the 20th century, first of its type-site was excavated called Harappa, present-day in Pakistan. Through the archeological expeditions, it is acknowledged that around 6500 B.C, on the margins of the Indus alluvium, the agriculture surfaced in Baluchistan, a province of Pakistan (Dyson, 2018). After this agricultural discovery, the different phases of archaeobotany started and it developed in present-day Pakistan and India through which ancient crops also recovered in the later period from different sites. Most importantly, the artifacts of Harappan Civilization is the best sources to study the Harappan Civilization. All these artifacts included ancient seals, terracotta figurines, shells, bangles, terracotta cakes, perforated jars, potsherds, blades, stone tools, beads, garlands, etc. depict the valuable features of this civilization.

THE CULTURAL ASSETS

The culture portrays the expressions and characteristics of any community or society. Culture is a set of basic assumptions and worthy direction to beliefs and behaviors of the people. In further understandings, it is also categorized into Tangible (immovable) and Intangible (moveable) Culture Heritage. As far as the culture of

Harappan Civilization is observed, this culture in principle urbanized one through which the heritage of this civilization can be estimated. The Neolithic culture of this has also been with the depiction of the social and cultural lives of the ancient Harappan people. The Intangible Cultural Heritage concludes the whole features with the description of traditional ways of living. Because this Intangible cultural Heritage tells the attitudes of the people, which are transferred generation-to-generation (Bouchenaki, 2007). To map the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage, some of the special techniques denominate the cultural assets well. Resultantly, the cultural mapping process highlights the customs and traditions with hierarchy. GIS (Geographical Information System) system and GPS (Geographical Positioning System) are the best tools used in the mapping of cultural assets. On the whole, the understanding with traditions, linguistics, fine arts, living practices, events, rites and rituals, cultural norms etc. are traced out with the help of cultural mapping. The ancient cultural assets of Harappan Civilization still existed while visiting the ancient archaeological sites and its surrounding towns or villages. The Past is alive if present has a connection with it. The best example is the Harappa Village, Pakistan that is nearby ancient Harappa site of Harappan Civilization This village still has some of the norms and traditions that were practiced by ancient people in the Neolithic age.

ETHNOGRAPHICAL ASSESSMENT

Ethnography is appearing from anthropology and it highlights the social interactions, beliefs, behaviors, and surveillance of the people of any community or society with the goal of interpretation of the culture (Sharif and Thapar, 1999). In addition, the study about the people and their cultural aspects is called ethnography that highlights the activities of the groups of people (Philipsen, 1992). Ethnography progressed as the best resource of the social sciences and portrays the social behaviors in a good manner as well as it provides the understanding about recognition of the culture and social relationship. Overall, it provides the illustration of the culture with different methods such as a collection of data, field notes, audiovisual material, etc. The major goal of ethnography is to emphasize the people who share the experience with each other that denominates the features of a community. The ethnography of the Harappan Civilization gives the knowledge about the ancient people of Harappan culture through which all the phases from Pre-Harappan to Late Harappan are featured. The daily routines of the ancient people are also focused on. In this regard, the practice of the people such as the making of ceramics and other objects is a crucial study about Harappan Civilization. All the civilized and urbanized activities of the people have been noted in almost all the metropolitan cities of this civilization. The cross-cultural examination also gives handy consideration about different phases with different practices. After studying, all the phases, the activities of Pre-Harappan phase are observed slightly different from Mature Phases because the style of pottery and its

appearance have differences, as the pottery of Mature Harappan Phases is more refined than the Pre-Harappan Phase. On the other hand, some objects are rarely found in Late Harappan Phases as in Mature Harappan Phase. The cultural exchange and its relation with the people is a precious objective of the ethnography.

THE PRE-HARAPPAN CULTURE

It is a fact that Harappan Civilization begins from the Bronze Age and then different phases appeared too. However, before the Bronze Age, there was also a culture, which is called Pre-Harappan culture, which attributes are different from the later stages of Harappan Civilization. The available archaeological record refers the ancient agricultural activities as well as socio-religious practices of the people. There is also a blend through which the Pre-Harappan culture transferred into the Harappan culture respectively and this is all happened after 3300 B.C. it can also be called as the transition of two different phases. The Pre-Harappan culture is also studied in anthropological science that is already a part of archaeology. In the Pre-historic, the Stone Age culture and its further categories like Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic, also observed by different scholars. Simply, a renowned and worthy Mehargarh culture is the best source to know about the Pre-historic culture. This Mehargarh, which belongs to 7000 B.C to 2500 B.C., situated in Baluchistan, present-day Pakistan that also refers to the early farming of this region that was a small farming village. In a broader spectrum, for the understanding with earliest ceramics and other objects, overall the Mehargarh culture is the best source. Furthermore, Mehargarh has two divisions like Mehargarh I (7000 B.C. to 5500 B.C.) which is considered aceramics when there is no ceramics and then Mehargarh II-VI, (5500 B.C. to 3000 B.C.) when there was ceramics. The Mehargarh site is the best source for the study of Pre-history culture that was first discovered in 1974 by a French archaeological team and in later stages, this site was excavated by other archeologists resultantly about 32000 artifacts were recovered from Mehargarh site. The ancient people of this era mostly lived in mud-brick houses and used to store the grains in granaries. With the perspective of archaeobotany, these ancient people cultivated different crops especially six-row barley, wheat, and dates. Their domestication has also been recorded through which they herded some animals such as goats, sheep, and cattle. The archaeological record also refers the flint knapping and bead manufacturing as well as some crafts. Importantly, the Mehargarh figurines have also been considered as the valuable sign of Mehargarh crafts.

SOCIO-POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS EVALUATION

The Harappan Civilization was first discovered in 1921-22 and since that time, many discoveries have been made by different local and foreign archaeologists. According to the archaeological record, this civilization had similar conditions as Mesopotamian and Iranian civilizations regarding settlements. Some of the other urbanized features of this civilization also similar to other ancient civilizations of the

world. There was also a systematic trade system between this civilization and Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Chinese, Iranian, and Central Asian civilizations through which gold, silver, copper, tin, granite, marble, and lapis lazuli were traded. There are also some records of the Indus Seals found in other civilizations like Mesopotamian Civilization. This shows the grandeur and vastness of the trade culture of this civilization. Same like this, the activities regarding arts and crafts also portray the valuable features of this civilization. It is unanimously admitted that the people of this civilization had great specialization in the field of craft making. Whether it was ceramics, bangles, animal figurines, terracotta cakes, bowls, dishes, and offering stands, expertise, and proficiency can be noted well. The geometrical designs and the floral pattern on ceramics also tell the story about the worthy art. These all show the social and cultural phenomenon of the Harappan people. On the other side, the Indus script has not been deciphered which is mostly concise on pictographic also shows the unanimity and vitality of this civilization. As far as the political structure is observed, a single ruler or head and many other rulers governed at different urban and small cities. The people were treated according to their ranks and status. On the contrary, side, the King or Raja or Priest was not as powerful as like Egyptian Kings. The Rajas were a close inclination toward the trade, not military control. Architecturally, the town planning of the urban cities displays the socio-cultural strength as well as the sagacity of the Harappan people. These cities were mostly in the pattern of a beehive with the presentation of citadels and lower areas and the streets; a drainage system was well planned. The best example is the city of Mohenjo-Daro where the covered drainage system, which is built with bricks with corbelled roofs and well-patterned bath system, and the organized streets of the city which were straight and on right angles and meet each other show the pinnacle of the urban culture which is not observed in other ancient civilizations. Furthermore, from the west side, people used to construct the citadels on the higher place and from the east side they built the residential areas. They also built the granaries and road sided houses showing the symmetry. The cuisines of this civilization were also well delicately made. The significant cuisines show the agricultural lives of the people. Usually, the Harappan people used to eat barley and wheat, rice, and millets in routine, which were used as the staple food. In addition, they also used lentils, sesame, and peas. It is also obvious that the people of this civilization were inclined toward the music and they used to use some musical instruments in leisure. Habitually, Bow shaped- harp and drums were used by them. Another valuable feature of this ancient society is the religion of its people. The religious beliefs of the Harappan people get much attention of the scholars due to the diversity and uniqueness. Mostly, people worshipped the Mother goddess and some other deities. In their religious practices, meditation has also been noted. In addition, they also worshipped the Pinal tree or Acacia tree. The people also inclined toward charms, magic, amulets, and sacrifices because much of the depiction of altars observed on the Indus objects. Overall, the Indus religion is polytheistic. Additionally, the Indus seals are best resources because of many

of the gods, trees, and animals (snake, bull, goat). One seal also showed a male figure, who is seated in a position maybe that is the father god of the Indus or Harappan people. This male figure is depicted with a horned headdress, surrounded by animals. According to Marshall, this figure as an early form of the Hindu god Shiva (lord of animals), with the association of Yoga and “linga” and this seals is called Pashupati Seal (Marshall, 1931). With this, people also believed in some sacred symbols like Swastikas, they also performed some rituals in bathhouses, and the best example is the great bath of *Mohenjo-Daro*. In further religious practices, the cemetery culture of this civilization portrays the concept of life after death, as the Egyptian people are famous for this concept, and some famous Harappan sites like Harappa, Lothal, Rakhigahi, and Rojdi explain the cemetery culture well. In detail, Cemetery R-37 and Cemetery H are the best sites to focus on the burial practices of the Harappan people. The cemeteries were designed according to the status of the dead people and with the dead body, some of the used goods were also kept. The people believed, after death, a person would have needed with the goods that were used when the person was alive. The pots or vases were remarkably unique because with the corps these big or small pots have been observed frequently with other goods like shells, bangles, jewelry, eatables, etc.

THE INDUS SEALS

To know the Indus Valley Civilization with better understanding, its seals are considered as a key to focus on. The seals' functions cover almost every section of the civilization including social, religious, cultural, and others. Material, graphic designs and motifs of the seals also present the making as well as techniques of ancient times. These seals have different names and different functions, which is a unique aspect of the Indus Valley. The uniqueness of these seals is that there are mythological features that have the mysterious aspects and the Mesopotamian seals have such mythological features. Covering the aspects of the Indus Seals, these seals are ornamented with some different motifs that depicted to elaborate some unique meanings. The scholars who study seals, they divide into two kinds like stamp seals that are pressed vertically to depict some motifs and other are cylinder seals, which were used in different parts of South Asia (Kenoyer, 2006). Talking about the first appearance of Indus Seal that was appeared in proto-urban settlements of Harappa in 2800 B.C. with some motifs of animals. From the Early Harappan to Late Harappan Periods, Indus Seals had some designs which were changed time to time, having the motifs of both animals and some floral patterns as well as geometrical patterns, depicted the aspects of Harappan Civilization. Some of the famous seals are discussed here. Button Seal, this seal was made in Early Harappan and in Late Harappan. Mostly, it was made with the material of Terracotta that was easily available and practiced in Indus Valley Civilization. In this respect, many of the Harappan Sites like Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Mehargarh are famous. Sometimes, this seal was treated with bones and marine shells (Jarrige et al, 1995). The unique aspect about this seal is that it had many motifs that were only used at the surface of this seal,

not any other seal. Above all, the symmetrical designs were mostly used on the surface of this seal. Consequently, such type of seal is found at almost all the Harappan sites situated in present-day Pakistan. Another type is Animal Seals, on which animal depiction is considered the social clans as well as official phenomena of the Harappan society in the mature phase of this civilization. Between 2200 to 1900 B.C, most of the Animal seals existed in Late Phase. However, in later periods, there had some changes happened in animal shapes as well as in writing which was used on the surface of this kind of seal. Mentioned as Animal seal, it had motifs of animals. The Early Harappan Elephant motif is found which is rough in its depiction same like Elephant, other animals like Bull, One Unicorn, and Cow also depicted respectively. Unicorn Seal, this kind of seal existed from 2600 to 2450 B.C. This kind of seal was introduced by the local people of Harappa. The depiction of one unicorn is mythically and religiously pronounced at all. Such seals are as fabricated as the seals with the inscription of buffalos. The Unicorn is the sole feature of Harappan Civilization because such kind of seal is not found in any other ancient civilization in the rest part of the world. This mythical animal was created by the Indus people and these people had their strong association with it. Wherever the Unicorn seal would be found, Harappan association would be named to it. The key aspect of Unicorn seal is that almost every city of Harappan Civilization had the carving style as well as same techniques in the making of this seal. *Yogi/Pashupati Seal*, This seal is mostly associated the metropolitan features depicts Mohenjo-Daro. A three-headed seated person is portrayed with horn headdress surrounded by animals. The people called that person as the horned deity, in further explanation, it may be the Hindu god Shiva or *Pashupati*. That is why this seal is also called a *Pashupati seal*. Mostly, Shiva is associated with yoga or “linga” too. The deep association of the people with *Pashupati* is not so much strange thing but the representation of the myths as well as religious beliefs of the people, which were depicted. To study the Indus seal is motivating to enhance the best understanding of the cultural aspects of Harappan Civilization. There are interesting features about Indus Seals; the Indus Seals have not been found in burial sites. Indus Seals are best sources to know the economic changeover, Indus Seals tell the administrative structure of this civilization, and these seals depict the religious integrity of this civilization.

CONCLUSION

All ancient civilizations have their own cultural attributes and flaunt through which the cultural essence have been observed. Same in the case of Harappan Civilization, the characteristics of culture portray the unique features of this civilization. Some of the Indus objects show the cultural exchange with other ancient civilizations but most of the objects furnish the evidence of aboriginality of this civilization. The anthropological aspects of also furnish the commendable lives of the Indus people. The cultural denomination of provides the expertise, capability, civility,

urbanized eminence, and aptitude of the Indus people too. After examining the anthropological attributes, the ethnography and Cultural Heritage have been observed. The Mature Phase of the Indus Valley Civilization is full of urban life that depicts the graciousness. All the phases of this civilization have the social setup but in the mature phase, all these activities including architecture, agriculture, religion, social, political structure, and Bronze Technology. The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Harappan Civilization demonstrates the unparalleled traditions and cultural norms. The essence of Intangible Cultural Heritage depicts the accuracy of the measurement, uniformity in weights, plough tools, domestic tools, urban planning. The motivating aspect of this civilization is that the Indus artifacts have been imperative and peerless in the past time that tells the valuable stories about the socio-cultural life. The findings of this research are uniquely approaching the ancient culture of above-mentioned civilization that is key for further anthropological research.

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