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## Antiquities unearthed in Indus site “Rakhigarhi” findings of largest archaeological site

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### Abstract

The sight of rakhigarhi has opened new horizons regarding the mystery of sindhu civilization and the various findings are expected to reveal buried ciphers of ancient India. Grey ware, perforated vessel, etc. The sight Rakhigarhi have completely changed the scenario for all the history lovers and historians around the world. Many artefacts including pottery, toys, vessels, etc. and there have been found the specimens of bones of humans and animals at the site. “There are striking similarities in the lifestyle and socio-culture behavior of people of Indus Valley Civilization and that of modern civilization.

**Keywords:** Indus site, archaeological site, Valley Civilization

### Introduction

#### Preface

The Saraswati river has fascinated historians, archaeologists, geologists, and scholars throughout the world and major part of the Indus Valley civilization lies between the river Saraswati and its tributaries. According to the archaeologists, the Indus civilization had a life span of at-least 500 years. Mohenjodaro and Harappa have been in spotlight due to their significance and the extent of discoveries over there but recent findings at Rakhigarhi have turned the tables for the Indian history and is likely to do the same with the world history. This paper reveals the importance of rakhigarhi in today's scenario and the also about the recent findings at the site. Indus valley civilization has been one of the most important links with our past, our ancestors, the mysteries of our origin and many more things and Rakhigarhi can be the milestone to reach beyond all the mysteries.

### Indus Civilization

The discovery of Mohenjo-Daro near the banks of Indus in the Larkhana district of Sindh by R.D Banerjee in 1922 and that of Harappa in Sahiwal district of west- Punjab, Pakistan led to the recognition that they were the earliest cities of the Indian subcontinent and two of the earliest in the world. “Sir John Marshall, the director of the Archaeological Survey of India used the term ‘Indus Civilization’ for the culture discovered at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Others, including the Archaeological Survey of India after independence have called it “Harappan” or “Mature Harappan <sup>[1]</sup>”.

The Saraswati river has always fascinated historians, archaeologists, geologists and scholars throughout the world. empirical evidence corroborated by archaeological findings has revealed that only 3% of Indus civilization settlements are located on the banks of river Indus while more than 80% settlements are located on the vast plain between the Indus and the Ganges comprising mainly the Saraswati and its tributaries. After originating from the glaciers of Himalayas near Naitwar, the Saraswati flowed majestically in the South-Westerly direction through the present day Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat before joining the Arabian sea near the Rann of Kutch. According to the archaeologists, the Indus Civilization had a life span of 500 years. The best method to assign to the Indus civilization is a period in which most carbon dates are concentrated i.e. 2500-2000BC. We could take the century preceding 2500 BC as a period of transition when Indus Civilization spread from its nucleus to other parts. Excavations conducted at rakhigarhi indicate that the settlement witnessed all the phases of Harappan Civilization-the early Harappan (3200-2700 BC) as well as the Mature Harappan (2700-1800 BC).

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This positions Rakhigarhi as a unique Harappan site which promises to reveal new civilization by a thousand years or more. "Mohenjo Daro was the capital city of the Indus Valley Civilisation. "Instead, the scientific data collected on the basis excavations here have strongly pointed that Rakhigarhi, a metropolis, was perhaps the capital of its times about 5,000 years ago," said Prof Vasant Shinde, in charge of the excavation and Vice Chancellor of Deccan College, Pune. Deccan College and the Haryana archaeological department have been jointly carrying out the excavation at the site from last three years. To prove his point, Prof Shinde said this site was spread in over 550 hectares, which is about double than that of the Mohenjo Daro site, which was considered the biggest site till now [2]."

### **Rakhigarhi**

Village Rakhigarhi is in Hisar district of Haryana. The place where the ancient site is situated is located on Jind-Narnaund-Hansi road about 8 km from the narnaund in Hisar district. Rakhigarhi is the biggest Harappan site in India. Major portion of the site is occupied by the present day village. There are seven mounds which have been designated Rakhigarhi-1 to Rakhigarhi-7 by the excavator. This site was taken up for excavation by Archaeological Survey of India, under the direction of Mr. Amarendra Nath in 1997-98. Since then it has come a long way and recently in 2016 the new part was excavated whose conclusions are yet to be announced as the excavated materials have been sent to various worldwide universities in England, S.Korea, America, etc. Archeological excavations at Rakhigarhi have revealed all the defining features of the Indus such as potters Kiln wheel made pottery bake to a red colour, Indus script appearing on the seals, baked bricks in the ratio of 1:2:4, a tendency to layout straight roads, an elaborate drainage system, a granary, citadel, North-south cemeteries, etc.

"Nine mounds of Rakhigarhi village sit atop a huge slice of ancient Indian history — a human settlement spread well over 300 hectares dating back close to 5,000 years. Excavation led to its being described as the biggest of the nearly 2,000 sites of the Harappan era or the Indus village civilisation in the subcontinent. The Rakhigarhi site is considered bigger even than Mohenjo-daro, now in Pakistan. Rakhigarhi among Asia's 10 most significant archaeological sites facing irreparable loss and destruction. "It is one of the largest and oldest Indus sites in the world, which is facing threat due to development pressures, insufficient management and looting [3]."

"There is 80 per cent of mound 6 — a residential site — and 7, a burial site where human skeletons were unearthed recently, have been destroyed due to cultivation and lifting of soil. "Though some villagers recover antiquities while ploughing, we ensure nobody destroys the site. Some people own the articles but don't indulge in illegal trade," he claims. A good part of the site has also been destroyed by soil erosion and illegal sand lifting. Vazir Singh, whose contribution to the excavation process has been immense, says successive governments have ignored the site. "A museum is a must. Archaeologists and residents are in possession of a huge volume of artefacts. The village would figure on the world tourism map only if the government is forthcoming [4]."

"Rakhigarhi's historicity was noticed a century back, when the Survey of India mentioned the mounds in 1915. In 1969, Prof Suraj Bhan for the first time recorded the mature

Harappan traditions in town planning, architecture, art and craft in a part of the site that was excavated. It was in 1997 that Dr Amarendra Nath, then Director (Archaeology) of the Archaeological Survey of India, started work at this site. In 2016 two more mounds were discovered. Till then, the archaeological remains spread across 300 hectares made Mohenjo-daro the biggest Harappan site, followed by Harappa, also in Pakistan. Dholavira in Gujarat was the biggest site in India.

As archaeologists unfold the layers and turn the earth over at Rakhigarhi, new facts and findings are emerging that establish it as the largest town of the Harappan era. The ancient city had flourished along the banks of Drishadvati river, a tributary of the Saraswati. It is being termed a cosmopolitan city and a hub of trade and culture during the Harappan civilisation that extended over vast areas in the northwest of the subcontinent. The site has gained prominence in view of its large size and the volume of antiquities and other startling facts that came up during the excavations, indicating it to be the most important of its time. Of the nine mounds, those numbering 1 to 6 are residential localities. Mound 7 is a cemetery, from where four human skeletons were dug out recently. The ASI has got carbon dating done of mounds 1, 2 and 6, which establishes the preformative age of 5,640 years Before Present (BP), and 5,440 (BP) from samples from mound number 6. Excavations prove the existence of wheat, barley in the mature Harappan era and seeds of "bathua" in the early Harappan period [5]."

### **Findings**

Findings at Rakhigarhi have completely changed the scenario for all the history lovers and historians around the world. Many artefacts including pottery, toys, vessels, etc and there have been found the specimens of bones of humans and animals at the site. "There are striking similarities in the lifestyle and socio-culture behaviour of people of Indus Valley Civilisation and that of modern civilisation. The study has revealed that Haryana people are descendents of Harappan people. Walking in present-day Rakhigarhi gives an impression that we are in a Harappan village. The remains of earthen pottery, house building structure made with cross bricks, drainage system, water conservation and chulha (traditional firewood stove) found at the site had striking similarities to the modern times, claimed Prof Shinde.

"We found no palace-like structure or evidence of a rule of a king anywhere in Harappan sites. Unlike Egypt, people of Indus civilisation did not waste their resources and forced common people to create structures such as pyramids which symbolise slavery [6]."

"civil engineering and houses built of bricks were first conceptualised during the Indus civilisation and the technology had travelled to other contemporary civilisations. "Then, people of had trade relations with Iran, Afghanistan, and even Egypt and Mesopotamia." Jamkhedkar said the Indus civilisation had flourished more in the Saraswati river basin than near the Indus river. "Cross-bricked technique was used in Egypt during 3000 BC. It was prevalent in Indus during 5000 BC [7]."

"The most interesting feature of the Harappan civilisation, he says, is its homogeneity — the uniform products of artistes that can be found in all cities and towns throughout the vast territory which came under its influence.

“Rakhigarhi occupants produced tools, weapons and ornaments conforming to the standard in the Indus valley. The recovery of intaglio, seals, cubical stones, parallel-sided blades, gemstones, copper implements and earthenware similar to Mohenjo-daro and Harappa is significant [8].”



#### Antiquities unearthed in Rakhigarhi village

- Figurines: Of animals and mythical characters and made of terracotta, these give a peak into the toy culture. A dog with a leash, an elephant calf, a four-horn deer, bulls, buffalo, unicorn, mini wheels, miniature lids and sling balls have been found, says Prof Nilesh Jadhav, co-director of the excavation by Deccan College, Pune.
- Tools: Net sinker for fishing, copper arrow for hunting, sharp chert blades and bone sticks are among the finds.
- Beads: Harappan women adorned themselves with articles made of lapis lazuli and carnelian; shell bangles; beads of ivory and jasper; and pendants made of basal and agate. They brought lapis lazuli from Afghanistan; carnelian beads and shell bangles from coastal areas; chert blades from Rohri in Pakistan; and sandstones from Rajasthan.

- Skilled craftsmen: They knew how to polish beads to a high mirror shine and drill holes. Bead-makers were experts in etching, engraving and inlaying.
- Manufacturing units: Having thousands of bead rough-outs, waste flakes and cores, tools, implants and bead polishers have also been found. Over 11,000 beads were found in 1997 from Rakhigarhi.

#### **Refined pottery**

- Earthen pots: Complete sets of fired earthen pots, both hand and wheel-made, have been found from the graves, indicating that the Harappans believed in rebirth
- Terracotta cakes: These, says research scholar Malavika Chatterjee, are triangular and circular, to be used as tiles and for heating purposes
- Mud-brick: Occupants lived in mud-brick houses and used fired bricks in foundation and drainage <sup>[9]</sup>.”

#### **The pottery in Rakhigarhi can be classified into two groups**

- 1) Red Ware
- 2) Grey ware

#### **Among the ceramic ware, red ware pre-dominates and it can be subdivided into-**

- 1) Red slipped ware
- 2) Black Painted Red
- 3) Black painted ware

Important types in red ware included perforated jars, goblets, dish on stand, vase, jar, fluted vessel, ribbed vessel dish and trough. The pottery was mainly wheel made with a few exceptions of handmade specimens. The design are geometric including horizontal bands, latticed triangles, row of dots, fish scales etc. Among the motifs used are four petalled flowers, pipal leaf and circle with radiating arches.

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