



Be Mains Ready

Q. The decline of Harappan cities did not mean the end of the Harappan traditions. Discuss. (150 words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Provide a brief introduction of the Harappan Civilization
- Discuss how Harappan traditions continued into the later periods even after the decline of Harappan Civilization
- Conclude suitably

Answer

The Indus Valley Civilization was the earliest known urban culture of the Indian subcontinent—one of the world's three earliest civilizations, along with Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. The nuclear dates of the civilization appear to be about 2500–1700 BCE.

The Indus Valley Civilization interestingly declined around 1800 BCE without leaving any clear reasons for its demise, leaving scholars debating about the causes that resulted in the civilization's decline. Many such theories include Aryan invasion, climate change, drying of the Saraswati River, while others conclude that a great flood struck the area.

The end of the cities however did not mean the end of the Harappan tradition. The Harappan communities which continued after the urban phase retained their older traditions which is evident through various examples such as:

- The priests of the Harappan urban centres who were part of a highly organised literate tradition merged into the ruling groups of the Aryans.
- The cults of Pashupati (Siva) and of the mother goddess and phallic worship seem to have come down to us from the Harappan tradition.
- Similarly, the cult of sacred places, rivers or trees and sacred animals show a distinct continuity in the subsequent historic civilization of India.
- The evidence of fire worship and sacrifice in Kalibangan and Lothal is significant. These were the most significant elements of the Vedic religion.
- Many aspects of domestic life like the house plans, disposition of water supply and attention to bathing survived in the settlements of the subsequent periods.
- The traditional weight and currency system of India, based on a ratio of sixteen as the unit, was already present in the Harappan civilization. It might well have been derived from them.
- The folk communities also retained the traditions of craftsmanship as is evident from the pottery

and tool making traditions.

- The technique of making a potter's wheel in modern India is similar to those used by the Harappans. Bullock carts and boats used in modern India were already present in the Harappan cities.
- As such we can say that many elements of the Harappan civilization survived in the subsequent historical tradition.

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