

# Pre-Historic India and Harappan Culture Quiz for IAS Prelims Preparation

Given the way history portion is being asked in the IAS prelims exam, Tamil Nadu state education board books can prove to be very useful because a lot of questions related to southern India culture can be directly solved from them. Hence, we have decided to start a new initiative of covering all the chapters related to ancient and medieval history from the Tamil Naidu state board books.

## Chapter 1: Pre-Historic India and the Harappa Culture

### Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Paleolithic or Old Stone Age?

1. The Old Stone Age sites are generally located near water sources.
2. Several Rock shelters and caves were not used by the Paleolithic people. They mostly lived in huts made of leaves.
3. They used stone tools called Microliths and flaked-off large pebbles for hunting animals. But hunting was an individual affair.
4. Some of the famous sites of Old Stone Age in India are: Bhimpetka, Adamgarh hill and Kurnool.

### Choose the correct statement(s)?

- a) Only 1
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 2 and 3
- d) All the statements are correct

**Answer: b**

### Explanation:

The Old Stone Age sites are widely found in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. These sites are generally located near water sources. Several rock shelters and caves used by the Paleolithic people are scattered across the subcontinent. They also lived rarely in huts made of leaves.

In the Old Stone Age, food was obtained by hunting animals and gathering edible plants and tubers. They used stone tools, hand-sized and flaked-off large pebbles for hunting animals. Stone implements are made of a hard rock known as quartzite. Large pebbles are often found in river terraces.

Microliths are tiny stone artifacts found in the Mesolithic Stone Age. The hunting of large animals would have required the combined effort of a group of people with large stone axes. A few Old Stone Age paintings have also been found on rocks at Bhimbetka showing hunting as a group activity and other places.

**Q2. Match the following:**

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Kot Diji   | a) Haryana   |
| 2. Dholavira  | b) Rajasthan |
| 3. Kalibangan | c) Sind      |
| 4. Banawali   | d) Gujarat   |

**Choose the correct option?**

1 2 3 4

- a) (c),(d),(b),(a)
- b) (c),(a),(b),(d)
- c) (b),(d),(c),(a)
- d) (a),(c),(b),(d)

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The earliest excavations in the Indus valley were done at Harappa in the West Punjab and Mohenjodaro in Sind. Both places are now in Pakistan. The findings in these two cities brought to light a civilization. It was first called the 'The Indus Valley Civilization'.

Among the many other sites excavated, the most important are

-->Kot Diji in Sind,

-->Kalibangan in Rajasthan,

-->Rupar in the Punjab,

-->Banawali in Haryana,

-->Lothal, Surkotada and Dholavira, all the three in Gujarat.

**Q3. The Iron Age of the southern peninsula is often related to Megalithic Burials. Choose the most appropriate explanation for this:**

- a) The burial pits were covered with megaliths (large stones). Such graves are extensively found in South India.
- b) The practice of twin burial was prominent in the southern peninsula.
- c) Burial was considered a form of rebirth and hence celebrated.
- d) Both (a) and (b)

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The Chalcolithic age is followed by Iron Age. Iron is frequently referred to in the Vedas. The Iron Age of the southern peninsula is often related to Megalithic Burials. Megalith means Large Stone. The burial pits were covered with these stones. Such graves are extensively found in South India.

Some of the important megalithic sites are:

-->Hallur and Maski in Karnataka,

-->Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh and

-->Adichchanallur in Tamil Nadu

Black and red pottery, iron artifacts such as hoes and sickles and small weapons were found in the burial pits.

**Q4. The Salient features of town planning in harappan culture were:**

1. System of town planning was on the lines of hexagonal view where streets and lanes together looked like honeycomb .
2. The large scale use of mud bricks and underground drainage system was remarkable.

**Choose the correct statements:**

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

The Harappan culture was distinguished by its system of town planning on the lines of the grid system – that is streets and lanes cutting across one another almost at right angles thus dividing the city into several rectangular blocks. Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan each had its own citadel built on a high podium of mud brick. Below the citadel in each city lay a lower town containing brick houses, which were inhabited by the common people. The large-scale use of burnt bricks in almost all kinds of constructions and the absence of stone buildings are the important characteristics of the Harappan culture. Another remarkable feature was the underground drainage system connecting all houses to the street drains which were covered by stone slabs or bricks

**Q5. Consider the following statement regarding the port city of Harappa culture –‘Lothal’?**

- a) Lothal was found in the early-Harappan stage.
- b) Lothal was surrounded by a massive brick wall .
- c) Lothal remained the most important port for trade with the Mesopotamia civilization.
- d) Both (b) and (c)

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

In the late-Harappan stage, the decline of the Indus culture started. The excavations at Lothal reveal the stages of evolution. Lothal with its port was founded much later. Lothal was surrounded by a massive brick wall as flood protection as the city experienced frequent floods like the city of Mohenjo-Daro. It was observed that the city of Mohenjo-Daro was often hit by floods created due to changing course of river Indus. Lothal remained an emporium of trade between the Harappan civilization and the remaining part of India as well as Mesopotamia.

**Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the improvements in life style of common people in the Neolithic age?**

1. The use of bow and arrow are hunting began during this period
2. Wheels were used to make pottery.
3. Large urns were used as coffins for the burial of the dead.
4. Emergence of village communities based on sedentary life.

**Choose the correct statement(s)?**

- a) Only 4
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 2,3 and 4
- d) All the statements are correct

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The use of bow and arrow are hunting began during Mesolithic or middle stone age period.

There was a great improvement in technology of making tools and other equipments used by man. Stone tools were now polished. Wheels were used to make pottery. Pottery was used for cooking as well as storage of food grains. Large urns were used as coffins for the burial of the dead.

There was also improvement in agriculture. Wheat, barley, rice, millet were cultivated in different areas at different points of time. Rice cultivation was extensive in eastern India. Domestication of sheep, goats and cattle was widely prevalent. In fact, the cultivation of plants and domestication of animals led to the emergence of village communities based on sedentary life.

**Q7. Which of the following Harappa site is relevantly matched with the stage of origin and evolution it represents in hardpan culture?**

Sites	Stage
1. Kot Diji	reveal the existence of pre- Harappan culture
2. Amri	Transition from rural to urban life is seen
3. Kalibangan	its elaborate town planning and urban features prove mature phase.

**Choose the correct option?**

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 3
- c) 1 and 2
- d) All the correctly matched

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

There are four important stages or phases of evolution and they are named as pre-Harappan, early-Harappan, mature-Harappan and late Harappan.

The pre-Harappan stage is located in eastern Baluchistan. The excavations at Mehrgarh 150 miles to the northwest of Mohenjodaro reveal the existence of pre-Harappan culture. In this stage, the nomadic people began to lead a settled agricultural life. In the early-Harappan stage, the people lived in large villages in the plains. There was a gradual growth of towns in the Indus valley. Also, the transition from rural to urban life took place during this period. The sites of Amri and Kot Diji remain the evidence for early-Harappan stage. In the mature-Harappan stage, great cities emerged. The excavations at Kalibangan with its elaborate town planning and urban features prove this phase of evolution.

**Q8.Which of the following is not one of the postulated causes for decline of happen culture?**

- a) Recurring floods and drying up of rivers portraying extremes of climate.
- b) Decrease in fertility of soil due to excessive exploitation of resources.
- c) Invasion by Aryans with superior war skills and weapons.
- d) All of the above are the probable theories of decline of harappan culture

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Various theories have been postulated. Natural calamities like recurring floods, drying up of rivers, decreasing fertility of the soil due to excessive exploitation and occasional earthquakes might have caused the decline of the Harappan cities. According to some scholars the final blow was delivered by the invasion of Aryans. The destruction of forts is mentioned in the Rig Veda. Also, the discovery

of human skeletons huddled together at Mohenjodaro indicates that the city was invaded by foreigners. The Aryans had superior weapons as well as swift horses which might have enabled them to become masters of this region.

**Q9. Consider the following statement regarding the burial methods prominent among the Harappans:**

Sites	Stage
1. Mohenjodaro	Complete burial and post-cremation burial
2. Harappa	The practice of pot burial
3. Lothal	Wooden coffins were found here

**Choose the correct option?**

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 3
- c) 1 and 2
- d) All the correctly matched

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The cemeteries discovered around the cities like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal and Rupar throw light on the burial practices of the Harappans. Complete burial and post-cremation burial were popular at Mohenjodaro. At Lothal the burial pit was lined with burnt bricks indicating the use of coffins. Wooden coffins were also found at Harappa. The practice of pot burials is found at Lothal sometimes with pairs of skeletons.

**Q10. Consider the following the statements regarding religious beliefs of harappan people**

- 1. The chief male and female deities were Pasupati and mother goddess represented in figurines respectively.
- 2. Nature worship was prominent among Harappans.

**Choose the in correct statements:**

- a) Only 1

- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

The seals, terracotta figurines and copper tablets give an idea on the religious life of the Harappans. The chief male deity was Pasupati, (proto-Siva) represented in seals as sitting in a yogic posture with three faces and two horns. He is surrounded by four animals (elephant, tiger, rhino, and buffalo each facing a different direction). Two deer appear on his feet. The chief female deity was the Mother Goddess represented in terracotta figurines. In latter times, Linga worship was prevalent. Trees and animals were also worshipped by the Harappans. They believed in ghosts and evil forces and used amulets as protection against them.