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Q5(b)

Prehistoric significance of Rakhigarhi

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Principles of Prehistoric Archaeology. Chronology

(a) Principles of Prehistoric Archaeology. Chronology: Relative and Absolute Dating methods.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on the prehistoric significance of **Rakhigarhi**
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Rakhigarhi is a very large Harappan site in Haryana on the Ghaggar-Drishadvati belt.

ASI and Deccan College excavations exposed town and cemetery.

Craft and agriculture match the Indus urban economy.

2019 aDNA lacked a Steppe signal in the reported Mature Harappan genome.

The site joins settlement archaeology to biological prehistory.

Introduction

Rakhigarhi in Hisar, Haryana, is among the largest Harappan settlements. Its significance is size, a cemetery, craft, and the aDNA that tied the Indus people to a wider prehistoric map.

Body**Site and culture**

- The mound complex on the now-dry **Drishadvati-Ghaggar** belt shows planned streets, brick, drains, and craft debris of the Mature Harappan, excavated in major seasons by **Amarendra Nath** for the ASI and later by **Vasant Shinde** of Deccan College.
- Cemetery work, including RGR-7, gives burial practice and osteology, which most Harappan cities still lack at this scale.
- Beads, copper, and agricultural remains place **Rakhigarhi** inside the Indus craft and food economy, not as a frontier camp.

Prehistoric significance

- Extent argues that the Harappan world had more than Mohenjo-daro and Harappa as capitals of density.
- **Niraj Rai**, Shinde, and collaborators published aDNA in 2019 showing ancestry related to Iranian farmers and South Asian hunter-gatherers, without a Steppe pastoralist signal in that Mature Harappan individual, which matters for later Indo-Aryan debates.
- The site therefore links archaeology, biological anthropology, and language prehistory without turning one skeleton into a whole invasion story.

Flow diagram

Rakhigarhi -> Mature Harappan city
Rakhigarhi -> Cemetery craft
Rakhigarhi -> aDNA 2019
aDNA 2019 -> Prehistoric population map

Conclusion

Rakhigarhi is prehistoric evidence of a first-rank Harappan city with burials and genome data. Its significance is the Indus as a large, biologically sampled civilisation in the Ghaggar belt, not only as two famous Pakistani mounds.

Facts & figures

Rakhigarhi

Harappan urban complex in Hisar district, Haryana, among the largest known Indus settlements.

Vasant Shinde

Led later Deccan College excavations, including cemetery and aDNA collaboration.

2019 aDNA paper

Reported Iranian farmer-related and South Asian hunter-gatherer-related ancestry without Steppe admixture in the sampled Mature Harappan individual.

Ghaggar-Drishadvati

The river belt in which Rakhigarhi's urban Harappan occupation sat.

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