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Q2(a)

Critically discuss the origin of Indus Valley Civilization. Mention the evidences of its endogenous origin from the pre-Harappan sites

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Evolution of the Indian Culture and Civilization

1.1 Evolution of the Indian Culture and Civilization-Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Neolithic-Chalcolithic), Protohistoric (Indus Civilization). Pre-Harappan, Harappan and post-Harappan cultures. Contributions of the tribal cultures to Indian civilization.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the origin of the **Indus Valley Civilization**. Argue the case for an endogenous origin from pre-Harappan sites
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

Mature Harappan cities grew from a long village prelude in the greater Indus world.

Mehrgarh supplies an early farming and craft base.

Kalibangan, **Kot Diji**, **Rakhigarhi**, and Bhirrana show Early Harappan intensification.

Seals, weights, and drains intensify local organisation rather than import a Sumerian city.

Trade with Mesopotamia is contact, not a founding transplant.

Introduction

The **Indus Valley Civilization** is the urban Mature Harappan order of the third millennium BCE. Endogenous origin means that order grew from older farming villages in the same greater Indus world, not from a sudden Sumerian transplant.

Body

Against a simple foreign transplant

- Early writers compared Indus cities with Mesopotamia and guessed a western import. Chronology now puts a long local prelude before street grids and seals.
- Trade with Dilmun and Mesopotamia is real in the Mature phase. Trade is not the same as a founding migration of city builders.

Pre-Harappan and Early Harappan sequence

- **Mehrgarh** in Balochistan shows aceramic and ceramic farming, cattle, wheat, and craft from the seventh millennium onward, a deep village base.
- Hakra and **Kot Diji** levels, **Kalibangan** Early Harappan, and Ghaggar-Hakra farm sites show fortified villages, pottery, and plough agriculture before full urbanism.

- **Rakhigarhi**, **Bhirrana**, and **Kunal** in the Ghaggar belt extend that prelude into Haryana. They argue a eastern as well as a western village root.

What becomes urban

- Craft specialisation, stamp seals, weights, and planned drains at **Harappa** and **Mohenjo-daro** intensify local habits rather than replace them overnight.
- **Dholavira** shows a regional urban grammar in Gujarat, another argument against one imported blueprint.
- Collapse and transformation after 1900 BCE into Late Harappan village worlds also look like an internal trajectory, not an emptied foreign colony.

Caution

- Endogenous does not mean isolated. Ideas and goods moved. The claim is that the urban package was assembled on an Indian-Balochistan farming stem.

Flow diagram

Mehrgarh farming -> Early Harappan villages
Early Harappan villages -> Kalibangan Rakhigarhi
Early Harappan villages -> Mature Harappa Mohenjo-daro Dholavira

Conclusion

IVC cities rest on **Mehrgarh**-to-Early-Harappan village growth at **Kalibangan**, **Rakhigarhi**, and related sites. Mesopotamia was a trading neighbour, not a sufficient origin.

Facts & figures

Mehrgarh

Balochistan sequence of early farming, cattle, and craft that underpins later Indus urbanism.

Kalibangan

Ghaggar site with Early Harappan occupation before Mature urban levels.

Rakhigarhi

Large Haryana settlement showing a long pre-urban to urban Indus sequence.

Kot Diji

Early Harappan cultural horizon often used as a local prelude to Mature cities.

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