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Q1(a)

Pit-dwellers of Kashmir

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Anthropology GS 2 · 10 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

- Write a note on pit-dwellers of Kashmir
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Pit-dwellers of Kashmir lived in sunken Neolithic floors at **Burzahom**, **Gufkral**, and Kanispur.

Houses later rose on filled pits as mud-and-rubble rectangles.

Bone tools, cereals, and dog burials mark mixed subsistence.

Sankalia set the valley Neolithic beside other Indian food-producing cultures.

The tradition is highland and local, not an Indus copy.

Introduction

Pit-dwellers of Kashmir are the Neolithic households who lived in sunken floors at **Burzahom** and related valley sites. They show a highland farming and hunting life that is not a copy of the Indus city.

Body**Sites and house form**

- **Burzahom**, excavated under **T. N. Khazanchi** and later teams of the Archaeological Survey, is the type site of Kashmir Neolithic pit-dwellings.
- **Gufkral** and **Kanispur** repeat the same sunken floors, storage pits, and later mud-and-rubble houses on the old pits.
- Early floors are circular or oval, cut into loess, with steps, post-holes, and hearths. Later levels fill the pits and raise rectangular houses.

Economy and burial

- Bone tools, harpoons, and dog burials sit with wheat, barley, and lentil, so the pit-dwellers mixed hunt, fish, and early farm.
- **H. D. Sankalia** placed this Kashmir Neolithic beside other Indian food-producing cultures, but the pit house and the dog grave remain a valley signature.
- Human burials in house pits, sometimes with dogs, mark a domestic rite, not a Harappan cemetery pattern.

Flow diagram

Kashmir Neolithic -> Burzahom pits
Kashmir Neolithic -> Gufkral Kanispur
Burzahom pits -> Hunt farm dog burial

Conclusion

Kashmir pit-dwellers are a dated Neolithic house tradition centred on **Burzahom**. They record highland mixed subsistence, not an Indus suburb.

Facts & figures

Burzahom

Type site of Kashmir Neolithic pit-dwellings, with later rectangular houses over filled pits.

T. N. Khazanchi

Led major Archaeological Survey work that defined the Burzahom sequence.

Gufkral

Another Kashmir Neolithic settlement with sunken floors and a similar mixed economy.

Dog burial

Dogs interred with people in house pits, a distinctive Kashmir Neolithic rite.

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