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Dairy Production in Indus Valley Civilisation

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Why in News

Recently, a study by Indian and Canadian archaeologists has **found that dairy products were being produced by the Harappans as far back as 2500 BCE**. The finding reveals the **earliest evidence of dairy production**.

The year 2020 also marks 100 years of discovery of Indus Valley Civilisation.

Key Points

- **Milk Production:**

- The results of the study are based on **molecular chemical analysis** of residue in shards **of pottery** found at the archaeological site of **Kotada Bhadli, in Gujarat**.
- Traces seen in cooking vessels indicate the **presence of milk, which may have been boiled for consumption**. There are also remains of a **perforated vessel**, which indicates **processing of milk into different forms**.
 - Pots are porous and absorb liquid from food. This helps the pots to preserve the molecules of food such as fats and proteins.
 - Using techniques like C16 and C18 analysis the source of foods can be identified.
- The **large herd indicates that milk was produced in surplus** so that it could be exchanged and there could have been some kind **of trade between settlements**.

This could have also given rise to an industrial level of dairy production.

- **Types of Animals:**

Through a process called **stable isotope analysis**, the researchers were also able to identify that **cattles used for dairy production**.

Most of the **cattle and water-buffalo died at an older age**, suggesting they could have been **raised for milk**, whereas the majority of **goat/sheep died when they were young**, indicating they could have been **used for meat**.

- **Faceless Civilisation:**

The Indus Valley Civilisation was faceless — no king, no bureaucratic organisations, but there were **very close regional interactions between settlements**, a symbiotic **relationship of give and take** that helped the civilisation survive for so long.

- **Background:**

- Indus Valley Civilisation is known for its **metropolitan cities and the big towns, great urban planning, trading systems, jewellery making.**
- Earlier, there was no idea how the common people were living during the Harappan times, and how they were contributing to the larger network.
- However, the new study throws fresh light on the rural economy of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

Indus Valley Civilization

- The **history of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**, also known as **Harappan Civilization.**
- It flourished around **2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia**, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India.
- The Indus Valley was home to the **largest of the four ancient urban civilizations** of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.
- In the 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. **Mohenjodaro and Harappa** were unearthed.
- In 1924, **John Marshall, Director-General of the ASI**, announced the discovery of a new civilisation in the Indus valley to the world.

Important Sites of IVC

Site	Excavated by	Location	Important Findings
Harappa	Daya Ram Sahni in 1921	Bank of river Ravi in Montgomery district of Punjab (Pakistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sandstone statues of Human anatomy• Granaries• Bullock carts

Mohenjo-Daro (Mound of Dead)	R.D. Banerjee in 1922	Bank of river Indus in Larkana district of Punjab (Pakistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great bath • Granary • Bronze dancing girl • Seal of Pasupati • Steatite statue of beard man • A piece of woven cotton
Sutkagendor	Stein in 1929	In southwestern Balochistan province, Pakistan on Dast river	A trade point between Harappa and Babylon
Chanhudaro	N.G. Majumdar in 1931	Sindh on the Indus river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bead makers shop • Footprint of a dog chasing a cat
Amri	N.G. Majumdar in 1935	On the bank of Indus river	Antelope evidence
Kalibangan	Ghose in 1953	Rajasthan on the bank of Ghaggar river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire altar • Camel's bones • Wooden plough
Lothal	R. Rao in 1953	Gujarat on Bhogva river near Gulf of Cambay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First manmade port • Dockyard • Rice husk • Fire altars • Chess-playing
Surkotada	J.P. Joshi in 1964	Gujarat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bones of horses • Beads
Banawali	R.S. Bisht in 1974	Hisar district of Haryana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beads • Barley • Evidence of both pre-Harappan and Harappan culture
Dholavira	R.S Bisht in 1985	Gujarat in Rann of Kachchh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water harnessing system • Water reservoir

Source: TH