



## Mains Practice Question

Q.What were the main factors that led to the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization?(150 Words)

13 Mar, 2023 GS Paper 1 History

### Approach

- Start your answer by briefly introducing Indus Valley Civilization (IVC).
- Discuss factors led to decline of Indus Valley Civilization.
- Conclude accordingly.

### Introduction

- The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) was **one of the earliest and most advanced civilizations of the ancient world**. It flourished from approximately 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE in the **region that is now modern-day Pakistan and northwest India**. However, the civilization declined and ultimately collapsed, leaving behind enigmatic ruins and mysteries.

### Body

- **Factors led to decline of Indus Valley Civilization:**
  - **Environmental Factors:**
    - The Indus Valley Civilization **flourished in a fertile region that benefited from the annual flooding of the Indus River**. However, climate change and natural disasters could have played a significant role in its decline.
      - For example, a **prolonged drought period** that lasted for several decades could have led to the depletion of natural resources, including water and food.
  - Similarly, a **series of earthquakes and floods could have damaged the infrastructure** of the cities and disrupted the trade networks.
    - Moreover, changes in the course of the Indus River could have led to the abandonment of some cities, such as Mohenjo-daro.
  - Further, the **drying up of the Saraswati River**, which was one of the main sources of water for the Indus Valley Civilization, could have contributed to the decline of the civilization.
    - The depletion of water resources would have affected agriculture, which was the backbone of the economy.
  - **Economic Factors:**
    - The Indus Valley Civilization was an urban society with a well-developed trade and commerce system that involved long-distance trade with other civilizations.
      - However, economic factors such as **over-reliance on a single crop, the decline of trade networks, and the emergence of new trade routes** could have affected the civilization's economic stability.
        - Moreover, the decline of **agricultural productivity due to soil exhaustion** or environmental factors could have led to food shortages and economic decline.
          - For example the **decline of the trade network between**

**the Indus Valley Civilization and Mesopotamia**, which was one of its major trading partners, could have contributed to its decline.

- The reasons for the decline of this trade network are not clear, but they could be related to political or economic factors.

◦ **Social Factors:**

- There is evidence to suggest that the IVC had a **hierarchical social structure**. However, this system may have become **less effective** over time. The **cities of the IVC were highly planned and organized, with a sophisticated drainage and sewage system**.
  - However, towards the end of the civilization, there is evidence to suggest that the infrastructure started to deteriorate. This may have been due to a lack of resources, manpower, or effective leadership.

## Conclusion

- The decline of the Indus Valley Civilization was likely caused by a combination of environmental, geographic, economic, and social factors. The drying up of the rivers, natural disasters, a decline in trade networks, and a deteriorating social and economic infrastructure all likely played a role in the decline of the civilization.
  - Although there is still much that is unknown about the IVC, studying its decline can provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the rise and fall of civilizations.

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