

### The Impact of Geography in India

- Sub-continent: India is a huge, triangle shaped land mass that hangs off the S. ridge of Asia
- Himalayas: the tallest mountains in the world are on India's NE corner
- Ganges River: directly to the South of the Himalayas, this river valley is a main area of Indian culture and population
- Indus River: to the west, is the Indus River is mostly in Pakistan now. The valley was much more productive and moderate in ancient times. This is where the civilization began and thrived before spreading east.
- Deccan Plateau: between the two River valleys is a dry area that extends to the S. tip of India
- Coastal area: on the east and west coasts are very fertile plains. These have been where the greatest populations have lived throughout the years
- Monsoons: seasonal winds that blow heavily over southern India. Main *climate feature*.  
June-Sept - winds from the s/sw blow over the Indian Ocean and deposit huge amounts of rainfall into India, esp. on the w. coast.  
Oct-Feb. - the cooler season wind pattern reverses and blows air from the n/ne. The air is cooler and drier, but still brings rainfall to the east coast.

Discuss: Why would more people want to live in coastal areas such as these? What might be some problems associated with so much rain, especially for farmers?

### Indus Valley Civilization

*Just like in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Indus River Valley supported a large civilization in India from around 3000 BC to 1500 BC. There were thousands of small settlements in the area. The civilizations were very advanced, and were known as the Harappan civilization.*

- Two cities: **Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro** - with populations of around 35,000 each
- Grid pattern - carefully planned streets with N/S and E/W layouts
- Houses: all followed the same plan - small courtyard surrounded by rooms
- Wells: public wells supplies regular drinking water to all
- Drainage: a very advanced system took waste-water out beyond the city walls
- Trash: went through chutes to street-level containers
- Leadership: religion and political power were closely linked (comb. Palace/temple)

Discuss: *What do the features above show about the government in H-MD?* It was very well organized and powerful to be able to plan and carry out such advanced features.

*What would be needed to bring about these types of things?* Strong, intelligent leaders many workers, supervision among all levels, etc.

*There is much speculation and debate about why the Harappan civilization declined and no definitive information exists. Another, known later as Aryans, migrated into India their culture began to dominate the area. The Aryans gave up their nomadic ways and settled permanently. Farming was improved by the use of iron and irrigation.*

- Crops: wheat, barley, millet. Rice was the most common. Vegetables, spices and cotton
- Sanskrit: the written language that appeared about 1000 BC. Before this, everything was passed down orally.
- Vedas: early writings that reveal their history  
Many small kingdoms/ not empires as in some areas  
Rajas - princes who often warred with each other
- Patriarchy: males dominated society and had prominence over females. *The family* was the basic unit in society. Only males could own property. Children were expected to care for parents in their old age.
- Suttee: women were encouraged to throw themselves on their husband's funeral pyre and commit suicide. Some were disgraced if they did not. Others were forced. It was banned by the British in 1829.

Discuss: *How did a system of writing improve life for ancient people?* Records for trade and religious ceremonies, history, traditions - students give examples if possible.