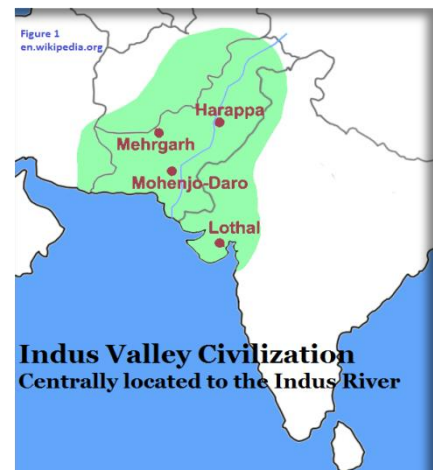


India is a country that has suffered through years of conflict brought on by the infiltration of outsiders desiring to take the country of India from the Indian civilization. From prehistoric times to the present, day India has taken many steps forward in progress, yet remains distinctly reminiscent of the earliest of Indian establishment of civilization. This work will examine the first civilization of India in the Indus Valley, to the 21st century Indian civilization in Ladakh and the effects globalization has had on Indian citizens.

Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley civilization developed in 3300 B.C.E. during the Bronze Age, “in the basin area of the Indus River”.¹ The citizens of the Indus Valley survived in this area by cultivating the land during the prime growing season in order to sustain themselves during the winter season. In 1920, during an excavation of land, the remains of the Indus Valley civilization were discovered in what is now Pakistan. The discovery led to the area being renamed the Harappan Civilization, after the city of Harappa.² (see Figure 1 above)



The unearthing of this civilization shed light on the aspects of that area’s lifestyle. Remains of writing were discovered engraved in stone and pottery, but there has not been a translation made to read the ancient Dravidian language. (see Figure 2) Archeologists found pottery, jewelry, and castings buried under the ground. Homes

¹ D.R. SarDesai, *India: The Definitive History*. (Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2008), p. 19

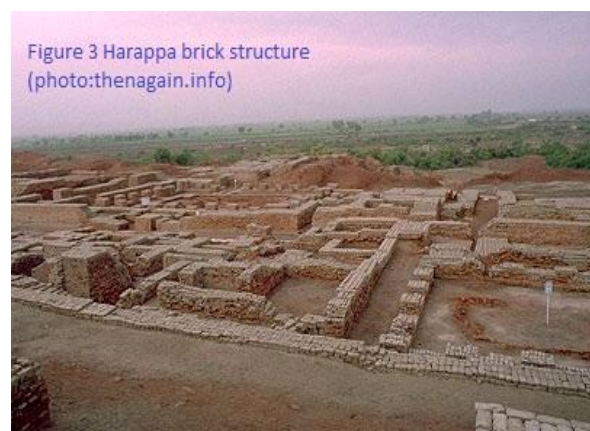
² Ibid., p. 24

were built of bricks that were made of clay and straw and allowed to dry in the sun.

These bricks were the standard in building elaborate Indian homes.³ Absent from the structures are individual, ornate buildings, indicating a palace or house of worship. This indicates “the absence of kingdoms or powerful principals” during this time period.⁴

(Figure 3)

Many types of crops and livestock were kept by the Harappan people. This civilization maintained crops of wheat, rice, and barley. They raised water buffalo, cattle, sheep, and goats, and used both cotton and wool to make cloth. In addition to the handmade items for household use and jewelry to wear or trade, the Harappan people also created tools to make physical work easier and items used to defend themselves. Pottery created in brick kilns was chipped at to create knives and spear heads for hunting.



³ Cornelia Spencer, *Made In India: The Story of India's People*. (Canada. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1946), p. 3

⁴ D.R. SarDesai, *India: The Definitive History*. (Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2008), p. 22

The Harappan civilization began to decline in 2000 B.C.E. and no sound theory has been accepted as fact to explain why. The architecture of the civilization showed an advanced understanding in sanitation and plumbing represented by a well-preserved public bathhouse that still stands today.⁵ This bathhouse is proof that the decline in civilization was not due to poor infrastructure within their community. (see figure 4) Historian Cornelia Spencer pointed out in her book, "Not until the nineteenth century did Europe have any sanitation which could match this which existed in India, five thousand years ago."⁶ A plausible answer to the decline of this civilization may have been the arrival of the Vedic Aryans that entered India from Persia.



⁵ D.R. SarDesai, *India: The Definitive History*. (Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2008), p. 23

⁶ Cornelia Spencer, *Made In India: The Story of India's People*. (Canada. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1946), p. 3

The Vedic Aryans were fair-skinned and arrived in India with the intent of staying. The Harappan civilization opposed the foreigners and the discontent turned into battles for the land, destroying the outposts and fortifications of the civilization. The Aryans disliked the Harappas' religious practices which focused on pleasing the gods of many facets of nature. Religious practices in India will be explored in a future essay. In time, the percentage of Arayan people became larger than that of the Harappans.⁷ Regardless of their distain for the other, they remained in that area of the Indus Valley until both civilizations came to an abrupt halt.

Archeologists and historians have come to a consensus that the end of Harappan civilization was caused by natural disaster. This sudden ending of civilization can be understood by the tsunami that occurred in 2001 on



Republic Day. (see figure 4.5) This is a national holiday and held every January 26th to celebrate The *Declaration of India Independence*, passed in 1930.⁸ On Republic Day, the tsunami was created by a massive, 7.6 magnitude earthquake in the Kutch District of India. The tsunami took the lives of over 20,000 people, injured an additional 167,000 people and destroyed 400,000 homes.⁹ This type of earthquake and resulting tsunami could easily wipe-out an ancient civilization. The huddled bodies of the Harappan people were found buried under suet and

⁷ K.M. Panikkar, *A Survey of Indian History*. (New York. P.S. Jayasinghe Asia Printing House Inc. 1963), p. 6

⁸ D.R. SarDesai, *India: The Definitive History*. (Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2008), p. 26

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001_Gujarat_earthquake

water, preserving the last moment of their lives until the accidental discovery and unearthing in 1920.

Indian Civilization in the 20th Century

The Harappan civilization came to an end, but those unaffected by the tsunami continued to flourish. The people of Ladakh, India make for a good comparison to the ancient Harappan. The Ladakh region is bordered by Pakistan and China and is situated just beneath the Himalayan Mountains. (see figure 5) The states of Jammu and Kashmir are within Ladakh, and that land is still under conflict of ownership among India, Pakistan and China.



Ladakh had continued in the same method that their ancestors began. Ninety percent of the people of Ladakh own their land that has been passed down through generations to continue the farming tradition. The fields of Ladakh are irrigated by the Himalayas through hand-built channels that stretch for miles. The people of this land lived for centuries, nearly self-sustaining, and absent of crime or pollution, practicing the religion of Buddhism. Approximately two million people of India continue to practice Buddhism, the majority located in Ladakh.¹⁰ The Ladakh region has changed significantly since ancient times. Still, ninety percent of land is owned by small village farmers that have been passed down through generations. An elderly man of Ladakh stated, “Seven generations live in this house.

¹⁰ D.R. SarDesai, *India: The Definitive History*. (Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2008), p. 52

Grandparents and grandchildren live and work together.”¹¹ The families work side by side in the fields and gardens to produce enough food to support the family and sell or trade any excess.

Like the Harappan civilization before, the Ladakh grow grain crops, gardens and tend fruit-bearing orchards. Work and leisure are combined to make the chores seem less like labor and more as time to enjoy others’ company. All work in the Ladakh region had been shared through-out the community, pitching in to help others with moving herds of sheep and goats, shearing, weaving, planting, harvesting, and spinning wool. The community shared in making large meals to feed all the workers. House building is done in Ladakh just as it was done centuries ago. The mud and straw bricks are used to build large, elaborate homes with hand-broken stones as the foundation.

The changes in Ladakh are due to the development of the capital city of Leh. Basic supplies of sugar and flour are accompanied by consumer goods and trucked haphazardly into Leh and this road has become a dumping ground. (see figure 6) Helena Norberg-Hodge stated the changes in India are due to “psychological pressure to modernize” to Western thought.¹² The Ladakh have become dependent on imported goods that would



¹¹ Helena Novberg-Hodge, *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, DVD, John Page(1993; Berkely CA: ISEC, 1993.), Medium.

¹² Ibid. np.

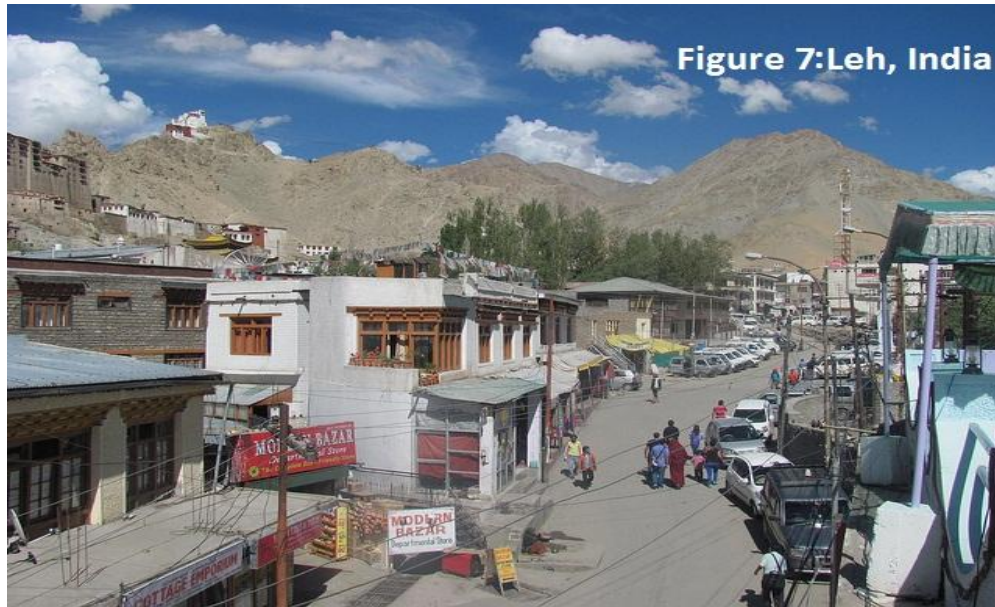
traditionally be produced within their community. They have also become dependent on kerosene which has created a shortage in the region. This shortage has initiated governmental involvement. The Indian government that has developed has become heavily involved in the lives of citizens since ancient time.

The citizens of Ladakh are concerned for the future, with good reason. It is impossible for them to compete with the goods trucked into India and function with the younger generation haven chosen to move away from traditional farming lifestyle. Indian's have lost the relationship they have developed for centuries with their land. The development and modernization have brought short-term benefits to India and produced long-term misery. Individuals have no ties to the community they live in and have difficulties finding employment in the capital city of Leh. (see figure 7) Aptly stated by Novberg-Hodge, "the development and modernization of India is treated as an evolution rather than globalization. India suffers the loss of [peoples'] relationships with their land and community."¹³ The actions of individuals no longer seem important or to have an impact on the community.

Another significant change to Ladakh was the opening of the borders to tourism in 1973. There have been 100,179 visitors to the region through August of 2013.¹⁴ This may seem as a plus for the Indian economy, but in fact, the influx of travelers creates more problematic situations. The demand for hotels with Western plumbing, excessive pollution to the air and land, and the exposure to Western thought, does not progress the Indian nation.

¹³ Helena Novberg-Hodge, *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, DVD, John Page (1993; Berkely CA: ISEC, 1993.), Medium.

¹⁴ Athar Parvaiz . *Ladakh Invites New Scarcities*, (India: Inter Press Service, 2013) np



Conclusion

India has struggled through many changes over the centuries. Conflict over land and religion lends to the long history of India. Globalization and Western thought have seeped into this land affecting the citizen's of India. The pressure to conform, to make money, and to have a home in a city is great to the younger generation of Indian people. This pressure may take India to new heights in its economy, driving them to become a future super power globally or it may stretch the nation's natural resources and citizenship thin, causing an economic fall. Regardless of India's future, its' past is one of hardship and tradition, upheld by people that believe in supporting their neighbor as their family.

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