

Racial Classification of Indian People: A Review

Sunil Kumar

PGT Geography at GSSS Atta Barota Distt.

NUH Haryana

Abstract

The present population of the Indian subcontinent has been divided into four racial groups- the Negritos, the Proto-Australoids, the Proto-Australoids, the Mongoloids, and the Mediterraneans. The Negritos were the first of the racial groups that came to India. Proto-Australoid race came here just after the Negritos and their sources are Australian aborigines. The Mongoloids came to India through the passes of northern and eastern mountain ranges. The Mediterraneans came to India from the south-west Asia.

Key words: Indian, Negritos, racial etc.

Introduction

Ethnic diversity is one of the social complexities found in most contemporary societies. Historically it is the legacy of conquests that brought diverse peoples under the rule of a dominant group. Ethnicity refers to the differentiation of groups of people who have shared cultural meanings, memories, and descent produced through social interaction. Ethnicity is considered to be shared characteristics such as culture, language, religion, and traditions, which contribute to a person or group's identity

Definition of Ethnicity:

❖ An ethnic group, or an ethnicity, is a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities such as common ancestry, language, society, culture or nation.

❖ Ethnicity is usually an inherited status based on the society in which one lives.

Racial classification of Indian People by different Anthropologist:

✓ India's present day population is a conglomeration of people belonging to different racial groups with different ethnic backgrounds.

- ✓ The people entered India from different parts of the world at different time periods adopting themselves.
- ✓ India has been a meeting point of different races and tribes from times immemorial.
- ✓ Almost all the major races of the world are found in India.
- ✓ As a result, India has a varied population and diversified ethnic composition.
- ✓ Different Anthropologists classify racial composition of Indian people based on their works. Some of the notable classification are Sir Herbert Hope Risley (1915), B.S. Guha (1937), Giufrida-Ruggeri (1921), A.C. Haddon (1924), Eickstedt (1934), S.S. Sarkar (1961) etc.

Classification of Sir Herbert Hope Risley (1915)

1. The Dravidian type:

The stature of these people is short or below medium. The complexion is dark, approaching to black. The hair is similarly dark and plentiful with an occasional tendency to curl. The eye colour is also dark. The head is long and the nose is very broad, sometimes depressed at the root. The people of Dravidian type are distributed in the region from Ceylon to the valley of the Ganges covering the southern part of India, which especially includes the Western Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), Central India and Chotanagpur.

2. The Indo-Aryan type:

This type is the most close to the traditional Aryans who colonized India. The people are tall statured with fair complexion, dark eyes, and plentiful hair on face and body. They also possess predominant longhead, narrow and long nose. The type is confined to Punjab, Rajasthan and Kashmir where the members are known as the Kashmiri Brahmins, Rajputs, Jats and the Khatris

3. The Mongoloid type:

The most important characteristic features of this type are broad-head, dark complexion with yellowish eyes and scanty hair on face and body. The stature is

usually short or below medium. The nose shows a wide range of variation, from fine to broad. The face is typically flat where the eyes are oblique with epicanthic fold. The people of this type are found along the Himalayan region, especially in the regions namely North East Frontier, Nepal and Burma.

4. The Aryo-Dravidian type:

This type is known as the Hindustani type. Generally the heads of the people are long with a tendency towards medium. The complexion varies from light brown to black. The nose is usually medium, although the broad nose is not uncommon. But in this case, the broad nose is always broader than the nose of Indo-Aryans. In stature, the people are shorter than the Indo-Aryans who usually show a below average height; i.e. the height ranges from 159cm to 166cm. Thus, the Aryo- Dravidians is differentiated from the Indo-Aryans.

5. The Mongolo-Dravidian type:

This type is known as the Bengali an type characterized by broad and round heads with a tendency towards medium dark complexion and plentiful hair on face. The nose is usually medium with a tendency towards flatness. The stature is also medium but sometimes short. Such people are found in Bengal and Orissa. The notable representatives of this type are the Bengali Brahmins and Bengali Kayasthas.

6. The Scytho-Dravidian type:

The people of this type possess medium to broad head, low to medium stature, fair complexion, and a moderately fine nose, which is not conspicuously long. The hair is scanty on face and body. It is held that the type has been evolved by the intermixture of two distinct racial strains—the Scythians and the Dravidians. Typical example of this type is found in Western India comprising the Maratha Brahmins, the Kunbis and the Coorgs, who are distributed in the tracts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra-Gujarat border region up to the Coorg.

7. The Turku-Iranian type:

This type is characterized by broad heads and fine to medium nose, which is long and prominent. The stature is fairly tall and the average height of the males varies from

162cm to 172cm. Although the eyes are dark in colour, grey eyes are not uncommon. Complexion of the people is generally fair; plentiful hair is found on face and body. The type includes the inhabitants of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Provinces (now in Pakistan) who are represented by the Balochis, Brahai, Afghans and some other people of NWFP. In the view of Risley, this type has been formed probably by the fusion of Turki and Persian elements in which the former's features predominate.

Conclusion

India with about 1000 million people has the second largest population in the world and it is one of the world's top twelve mega diversity countries and has vast diversity of human beings, fauna, flora and environmental regimes. Its present population includes stone-age food-gatherers, hunters, fisher-folk, shifting cultivators, peasant communities, subsistence agriculturists, nomadic herders, entertainers, as well as those engaged in mechanized and chemicalised agriculture, mechanized fishing, tapping offshore oil and natural gas, running atomic power plants and producing computer software. India has been peopled by human groups carrying a diversity of genes and cultural traits.

References:

- [1] Chandana, R.C (2015): Geography of Populations, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, pp. 99-109.
- [2] Chattopadhyaya, A (2010): Orthonaitik Bhugol O Sampad Sastrer Parichay, T D Publications, Kolkata, pp. 676-679.
- [3] Khullar, D.R (2014): India: A Comprehensive Geography, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, pp. 369-371.
- [4] Ethnicity and ethnic groups – an explanation of these terms viewed at <http://www.intercultural.ie/content/ethnicity-and-ethnic-groups-%E2%80%93-explanation-these-terms> (accessed on 1st May, 2019)

- [5] Ethnicity viewed at <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-and-social-reform/sociology-general-terms-and-concepts/ethnicity> (accessed on 22nd March, 2019)
- [6] GUHA'S (1931) RACIAL CLASSIFICATION OF INDIAN TRIBES viewed at <http://cms.gegl1.ac.in/attachments/article/210/TRIBES%20racial%20classification.pdf> (accessed on 24th April, 2019)
- [7] Population of Major Racial Groups in India <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/population/population-of-major-racial-groups-in-india/19834> (accessed on 25th April, 2019)
- [8] Racial Classification of Indian People (by Different Anthropologist) viewed at <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/anthropology/racial-classification-of-indian-people-by-different-anthropologist/41839> (accessed on 25th April, 2019)
- [9] Racial Classification of Indian Population viewed at <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/population/racial-classification-of-indian-population/47345> (accessed on 4th April, 2019)
- [10] Racial Groups of India viewed at <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/racial-groups-of-india-1448688039-1> (accessed on 20th April, 2019)