

**Block 2**

**CLASSIFICATION OF  
HUMAN POPULATIONS**

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THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY



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## UNIT 5 ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN INDIAN POPULATION\*

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### Learning Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to:

- Understand the glimpse of Human Variation;
- Elucidate the concept of ethnicity and race;
- Enlighten about the ethnic elements of the Indian population; and
- Apprise the critical values of Ethnic Classification.

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## 5.0 INTRODUCTION

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No two individuals are alike. We differ from each other in terms of certain morphological, physiological, and genetic traits. Incidentally, certain traits and characters become an identity for a particular group of people. We could differentiate people based on certain physical traits, such as height, skin colour, hair form, etc. Population defined by their mating patterns have more or less similar morphological and genetic traits. One group varies from other group in terms of physical, physiological, genetic attributes. Apart from these, there will be intra population variation too. Such variations – both inter and intra population – could be attributed to various factors, mainly an interaction of genetics and environment and adaptive responses to varied environmental conditions. Anthropologists are very much interested to understand how such variations arise between human population groups. The present unit will not only talk about how such variation arises but will also discuss the extent of such variation in understanding the ethnicity of the Indian populations.

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**Fig. 5.1: Extent of Human Variation**

(Sources: [https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/Crowd-of-Diverse-People\\_800x528.jpg](https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/Crowd-of-Diverse-People_800x528.jpg))

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## 5.1 HISTORICAL VIEWS OF HUMAN VARIATION

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The history of human variation is as old as human civilization. However, it is believed that the ancient Egyptians as early as 1350 B.C. had attempted to classify humans based on skin colour, such as red for Egyptian, yellow for people to the east, white for those to the north, and black for sub-Saharan Africans. The period of exploration and colonization by the European countries in the sixteenth century has brought awareness of human diversity. It led to the European scholars describing and classifying human variations. It was Linnaeus who, for the first time, attempted to classify humans scientifically into four separate categories, but somehow it depicted the hierarchical classification with European being superior, as each group was being assigned with behavioral and intellectual qualities. Later, Blumenbach (1752-1840), a German anatomist, classified humans into five races based on skin colour: white, yellow, red, black, and brown. Apart from skin colour, he also took other characters into consideration in classification. He also suggested that there could be cases that did not fit in a particular category as there could be characters which do not belong to any group. Skin colour is one of the important characters that has been employed for human classification, besides other characters such as head shape, hair type, physique etc. Such classification of humans, based on skin colour, was often associated with behavioral and cognitive differences. It even resulted in dependence and other racial exploitation of dark-skinned individuals, considering they were at the bottom of the hierarchical classification. Overall, there is a notion of classifying the human population based on physical, physiological, and genetic traits into several different groups. Besides, human variation can also be explained in terms of cultural variation too.

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## 5.2 CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY

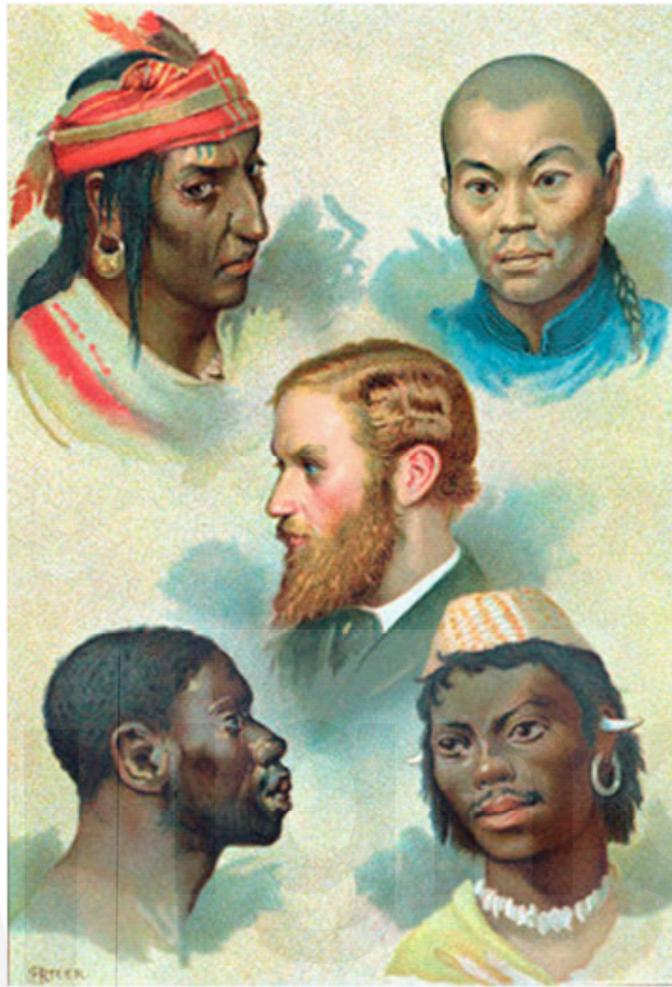
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When we talk about human variation, we often use race and ethnicity interchangeably. In general, ethnicity represents groups that share a common identity-based ancestry, language, or culture. It is also often based on religion, beliefs, and customs, as well as memories of migration or colonization (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007). The word ethnicity comes from Greek word *ethnikos*, which means national. Smith (1986) defined ethnicity as the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Gabbert (2006) defined as a specific form of social differentiation whereby people use cultural or phenotypic markers to distinguish themselves from others. Some scholars like Edward Shils (1957) and Clifford Geertz (1973) explain ethnicity as an expression of primordial attachments. Ethnic identity among the group is based on physical appearance, birthplace, name, language, history, religion, and nationality, all of which will normally be influenced, in some cases determined, by circumstances beyond the control of the individual (Gabbert, 2006). Cornell and Hartmann (2007) define ethnicity as a sense of common ancestry based on cultural attachments, past linguistic heritage, religious affiliations, claimed kinship, or some physical traits. In short, ethnicity can be summarised as it is socially constructed groups wherein the members have the common ancestor, and share common biological (physical, physiological, genetic) and cultural (language, customs, rituals, etc.) traits. Apart from these, an ethnic group is also usually characterized through a sense of community, a feeling of ethnocentrism, territoriality too.

### 5.2.1 Ethnicity and Race

There is a thin line of difference between ethnicity and race when we talk about human variation. Before we go for the differences, let us understand what is race first. Race, as defined by Hooton (1926), is a great division of mankind, the member of which though individually varying are characterized as a group by certain combinations of morphological, metrical features, principally non-adaptive, which have been derived from their common descent. In the population genetic concept, Dobzhansky (1970) has defined race as genetically distinct Mendelian populations, which differ genetically among themselves. Further, Montagu (1972) has defined race in genetical context as a population that differs in the frequency of some gene or genes, which exchange or capable of exchanging genes across boundaries and separate it from other populations of the species. In short, the race is an anthropologically constructed term to refer the human populations, who have primarily varied inheritable physical or morphological traits from others. The basis of racial classification is purely biological, in the sense that the differences between human population groups or races are developed based on physical or genetic characters such as skin colour, head shape, hair type, physique, blood groups, etc.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach theorized that humans could be divided into five groups based on geography and appearance: Mongolian: for most other inhabitants of Asia, including China and Japan, Malayan: for the Polynesians and Melanesians of the Pacific and for the aborigines of Australia, Ethiopian: for the dark-skinned people of Africa, American: for most native populations of the New World and Caucasian: light-skinned people of Europe and adjacent parts of Asia and Africa.



**Fig. 5.2: Blumenbach's classification of human population: (clockwise from top right) Mongolian, Malayan, Ethiopian, American and Caucasian (centre)**  
(Source: [https://resize.hswstatic.com/w\\_285/gif/race-vs-ethnicity1.jpg](https://resize.hswstatic.com/w_285/gif/race-vs-ethnicity1.jpg))

The differences between ethnicity and race lie in the concept that ethnicity is culturally determined while the race is biologically determined. Race mainly refers to biological variation, of which skin colour is one of the important determining characters to assign. On the other hand, ethnicity refers to a social group that has a common national and cultural tradition, though there are some aspects of biological variation too. The race is unitary in the sense that a person can belong to one race only. Although he belongs to just one race, he can still have multiple ethnic connections, thereby making an ethnicity not unitary. Race, unlike ethnicity, is still mostly a term that is assigned by other groups, which often leads to one claiming superiority over the other, though it is against humanity. In another sense, race is also a socially constructed concept like ethnicity though it is purely biological.

### 5.2.2 Racism and Society

It is accepted that humans are born with varied characteristics that give him/her an identity, and the race is assigned to these varied characteristics. However, these variations at certain points create the problem of varied preferences in society. People are often judged by his physical characters which lead to discrimination for his physical characters. These characters are purely biological in the sense that they are expressed as a result of his DNA constituents and environmental

interaction. The human society without understanding the complexity of biological basis put up the notion of racial superiority and inferiority. As an example, dark skin colour was considered as inferior, and as a result of that, the white skin coloured individuals often exploited and even used them as a slave. Such discrimination based on his/her physical looks, colour, behavior, etc. put forth the concept of racism. Racism involves the assertion that inequality is absolute and unconditional, i.e., that a race is inherently and by its very nature superior or inferior to others quite independently of the physical condition of its habitat and social factors (Comas, 1961). Thus, two different schools of thought came up in the first half of the 19th century, one of those who are against the discrimination of individuals based on physical characters and the other one racist who are in favor of discrimination. According to racist, racial discrimination was a part of the struggle for existence, as explained by Charles Darwin. According to them, the superior race provided a condition for the inferior race to survive in the harsh environment of discrimination, allowing them as a slave of the former group. Otherwise, the inferior race could have extinct. Racists were also against the racial admixture citing such an act would lower the quality of the superior race. Different scholars like Juan Comas came up against the racism claiming all human belongs to a single species, and variation is a part of environmental response to adaptation.

**Check Your Progress**

1) How is ethnicity different from race?

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2) What is racism?

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**5.3 INDIAN POPULATION: A BRIEF**

India is the second-largest populated country in the world with a population of 1.21 billion (*Census of India, 2011*), representing almost 17% of the total world population. Apart from being the second largest populated country, India is also diverse in terms of its population structure and culture. The country is the home to both tribal and non-tribal populations. Linguistically, the Indian population speaks languages and dialects that belong to four major language families: the Austro Asiatic, the Dravidian, the Indo European, the Tibeto-Burman. Few tribes mainly speak Austro-Asiatic languages of Central and Eastern India, Dravidian languages are confined to South India. The North eastern Indians speak languages that belong to Tibeto-Burman. Indo-European languages are spoken in almost all the parts of India, but mainly in North, West, East and Central India. These Indian populations also have varied religious views, such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, etc.

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## 5.4 ETHNIC ELEMENTS OF INDIAN POPULATION

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The classification of Indian population by different scholars is given below.

### 5.4.1 H.H. Risley's Classification

H.H. Risley, for the first time, tried to classify the Pan Indian population based on anthropometric measurements in 1901 when he was the operational head of the Census for India. He published the findings in 1915 under the title 'The People of India'. According to him, there are three principal racial types in India, i.e., The Dravidian, the Indo-Aryan, and the Mongoloid (*Risley, 1915*). Risley's Classification of Indian population is discussed as below:

- i) **The Dravidian Type:** This population is characterized by short or below medium stature, dark skin colour, even approaching to black, dark and plentiful hair with an occasional tendency to curl, dark eye, long head with a broad nose, sometimes depressed root. This Dravidian type is found distributing from Ceylon to the Ganges valley, including West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), Central India, and Chotanagpur. The Paniyans of Malabar (South India) and the Santals of the Chotanagpur are the true representative of this type. Risley believed these people could be autochthones of India who later influx with new arrivals: the Aryans, the Scythians, and the Mongoloids.
- ii) **The Indo-Aryan Type:** This type is characterized by dolichocephalic (longhead) and leptorrhine (narrow and long) nose, tall stature, fair skin colour, dark eyes, and abundant facial and body hair. The type is mainly found in Punjab, Rajasthan, and Kashmir; and represented by the Kashmiri Brahmins, Rajputs, Jats, and the Khatris. They are believed to represent the traditional Aryans who colonized India.
- iii) **The Mongoloid Type:** This type has characteristic features such as broad-head, dark complexion with yellowish eyes and thin facial and body hair, short or below medium stature, fine to broad nose, oblique, and epicanthic eyefold on the typically flat face. This type is concentrated along the Himalayan region, North-East India, including Nepal and Burma. The notable populations of this type are the Lepchas, the Limbus, the Murmis, the Gurungs, the Kanets, the Bodo etc.
- iv) **The Aryo-Dravidian Type (Hindustani Type):** This type has medium to long heads with more towards the medium, light brown to black skin colour, below-average stature, medium to broad nose with broader than the first type. It is believed that this type is formed due to the interbreeding of the Aryans and the Dravidians in varying extents, which are distributed in Uttar Pradesh, in some parts of Rajasthan and Bihar.
- v) **The Mongolo-Dravidian Type:** This type is also known as the Bengalian type characterized by broad and round heads with a tendency towards medium dark complexion and plenty body and facial hair, medium to broad nose, short to medium stature. The Bengali Brahmins and Kayasthas of Bengal and Orissa represent this type. Risley believed that this type arises

due to admixture of the Mongolians, the Dravidians, and also the Indo-Aryan type.

- vi) **The Scytho-Dravidian Type:** These people have low to medium stature, medium to broad head, light skin colour, small nose, thin hair on face and body. It is regarded that the intermixture of the Scythians and the Dravidians have brought up this type. The Maratha Brahmins of Western India, the Kunbis, and the Coorgs represent this type. It seems the Scythian elements are more in higher social groups, and the Dravidian features more among the lower groups.
- vii) **The Turko-Iranian Type:** This type is identified by broad heads, fine to medium, as well as long prominent nose, tall stature, dark eye colours with occasionally grey eyes, fair complexion, plenty hair on face and body. This type is evident among the inhabitants of the present Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and North-west Frontier Provinces (now in Pakistan). This type could have formed by intermingling the Turki and Persian elements with Turki elements being more (*Risley, 1915*).

#### 5.4.2 B.S. Guha's Classification

The racial classification of B. S. Guha came from the Census of India 1931 data, based on anthropometric measurements. Guha's racial classification was more systematic, standardized, and elaborate, consisting of anthropometric measurements on 38 characters and 63 coefficients of racial likeness (*Guha, 1935*). He classified the major Indian population into six major racial strains and nine sub-types:

- i) **The Negrito:** They are characterized by dark pigmy like skin colour, spirally curved hair, small to broad head with a bulbous forehead, flat or broad nose, and thick and everted lips. They are believed to be the original settlers of the Indian sub-continent. The Kadars, the Irulas, the Paniyans, etc., of the southern region, tribes of the Rajmahal hills represent this type. The Indian Negrito is closer to the Melanesian pygmies than those of Andamanese or African pygmies to the head and hair forms.
- ii) **The Proto-Australoid:** This type is probably the second oldest racial stocks in India, having features of short stature, dark brown to nearly black skin colour, dolichocephalic head, broad and flat nose depressed at the root, wavy or curly hair, and prominent supraorbital ridges. This type is evident more among the tribal populations of Deccan, central, southern, and western India. The notable representatives of this type in the Chota Nagpur region are the Oraons, the Santhals, the Mundas. In southern India, it is represented by the Chenchus, the Kurumbas, the Yeruvas, the Badagas, while the Bhils, and the Kolsin of the central and western India.
- iii) **The Mongoloid:** This type has scanty hair on face and body, oblique eyes with an upper eye epicanthic fold, flat face with prominent cheek bones, and straight hair as characteristic features. This group has two sub groups:
  - a) **Paleo-Mongoloid Group:** This type is considered to be primitive and further divided into long headed group having the characteristics of medium stature, dark to light brown skin colour, slanting eyes and

not much marked epicanthic fold with an important characteristic of long-headed features: medium to long head with prominent occipital protuberances, which can be further divided into long-headed groups represented by Sema Naga, Limbus of the sub-Himalayan region. The other broad headed group is characterized by dark complexion, rounded face, more marked epicanthic fold, represented by the hill tribes of Chittagong, e.g., the Chakmas and the Maghs, etc.

- b) **Tibeto-Mongoloid Group:** The group is characterized by tall stature, broad and massive head, light brown complexion, long and flat face, oblique eyes with an epicanthic fold, medium to long nose, scanty body hair, and represented by Tibetans of Bhutan and Sikkim.
- iv) **The Mediterranean:** This type was again sub-grouped into three groups:
- a) **Palaeo-Mediterranean:** This type, probably traced to Megalithic cultures of India, have long head, high vault, bulbous forehead and projected occiput, medium stature, broad nose, narrow face with pointed chin, less hair on the face and body, dark complexion. The Tamil Brahmans of Madura, the Nairs of Cochin, and the Telugu Brahmans are the best examples.
  - b) **Mediterranean:** This population, probably linked to the Indus Valley civilization, has long medium to tall stature, light complexion, head with arched forehead, narrow nose, well-developed chin; dark-coloured hair and eyes, brownish to dark facial hair, and thick body hair. This type is distributed in UP, Maharashtra, Bengal, Malabar, with the Nambudiri Brahmans of Cochin, Brahmins of Allahabad, and Bengali Brahmins being the ideal representation.
  - c) **Oriental:** This type has features similar to the Mediterranean except for the long and convex nose. The group is represented by the Punjabis, the Chattris, the Bania of Rajasthan and the Pathans.
- v) **The Western Brachycephals:** They were subdivided into three groups:
- a) **Alpinoid:** This group has medium stature, broad head with a rounded occiput, prominent nose, rounded face, abundant hair on face and body, light skin colour, and represented by Bania (Gujarat), the Kathi (Kathiawar) and the Kayasthas (Bengal).
  - b) **Dinaric:** This type can be linked with the Indus valley civilization, have typical traits of this group include broad head, rounded occiput, and high vault, long, thin and convex nose, long face, projected chin with thin lips, tall stature, dark colour skin and eyes. It is believed that both the Alpino and the Dinaric might have come India through Baluchistan, Sind, Gujarat and Maharashtra, Ceylon, Karnataka, Hyderabad, and Tirunelveli.
  - c) **Armenoid:** This group has features similar to Dinarics except to the flat occiput, high sloping forehead, everted lower lips, abundant body hair, and broad nose, truly represented by Parsis (Bombay), Vaidyas and Kayasthas (Bengal).

- vi) **The Nordics:** The characteristic features of this group include tall stature, long head, protruding occiput, and arched forehead, robust body build, straight and high bridged nose, strong jaws, blue or grey eye colour, fair complexion. They are found in different parts of the North India, especially Punjab and Rajasthan. Historically, the Nordics came from the north, probably from south-east Russia and south-west Siberia, and entered India through Central Asia (*Guha, 1935*).

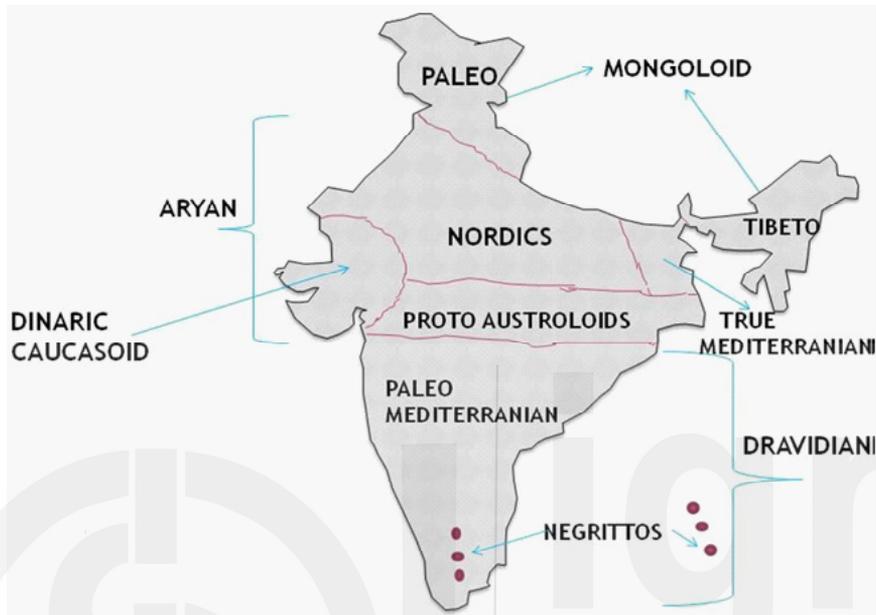


Fig. 5.3: Geographical distribution of racial types of the people of India (BS Guha, 1935).

### 5.4.3 S.S. Sarkar's Classification

S.S. Sarkar developed the racial classification of Indian populations based on the cephalic index. Sarkar identified dolichocephalic as the predominant type of Indian population, and mesocephalic and brachycephalic types restricted to some regional populations (*Sarkar 1961*). According to Sarkar's classification, there are three main racial types:

- i) **The Dolichocephals:** Sarkar identified three main groups under this type: Veddids, the Dravidians of South India, and the Indo-Aryans. Veddids were considered to be autochthonous of India, and most tribes of south India exhibit the Veddids traits, e.g., the Uralis, the Kannikars, the Muthuvans, the Kurumbas, the Irulas, the Chenchus, the Kadars. In the north, it is represented by the Male and the Pahir. The presence of hyper dolichocephalic skulls in Mohenjo-daro exhibits the Veddid feature. The other attributes of this type are short stature, dark complexion, platyrrhine nose, and wavy hair. The Dravidian could have evolved from Veddids in Peninsular India through various evolutionary forces, and most of the non-tribal populations of South India represent this ethnic type. Sarkar regarded the dolichocephalic of Indo-Aryans might have entered India around 1200 BC from the north-west and distributed at the plains of the Indus and the Ganges extending till Bengal border. This type became admixed with the autochthonous population and spread all over the subcontinent. In general, this type has features: tall stature, light skin and eye colours. The cranial capacity of Indo-Aryans is

high, and their physique is well built and robust (*Sarkar, 1961*). The Baltis of the Hindu Kush mountains represent this type.

**Mundari-speakers:** The Mundari-speakers are also of dolichocephalic type, with sturdy, short-statured, robust build. They have lighter skin colour than the Australoids and thick straight black hair kin to the Mongoloids. The Mundari-speakers are mainly concentrated in the river valleys and plateaus of eastern and central India, Chota Nagpur plateau, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh, where they show the highest concentration. The migration of Mundari-speakers from the east towards the north-eastern parts is still controversial.

- ii) **The Mesocephals:** Sarkar opined mesocephals influx owed to broad headed Irano-Scythians occurred after that of Indo Aryan. The Irano-Scythian racial type has medium stature, mesocephalic head different from those of Indo-Aryans, and found among populations of eastern Bihar, Bengal, and Assam. The Irano-Scythian type spread all over the country. Their distribution has been recorded up to the north of Mysore, the Deccan, and further moves to southwards.
- iii) **The Brachycephals:** Sarkar identified three zones of brachycephaly in India: Zone A comprising of NWFP, Punjab, Rajputana, and its southern extension, Zone B comprising of the Himalayan foot hills and Zone C comprising of the Chittagong Hill tracts, Bengal and Assam. According to Sarkar, brachycephaly in Gujarat, Maharashtra, etc., were the southward extension of Zone A that can be traced back to Pamirs. The notable representation of Zone A is Kakar of NWFP. Limbu of Nepal represents Zone B type that traced back to Mongoloids. The Mongoloid racial elements generally have yellowish skin colour, sparse facial and body hair, and epicanthic eye fold. Zone C traces back to South-east Asia (Malaya). Since pre-historical times, there had been cultural contacts and movements between the Indian sub-continent with those of South-east Asian countries, which has more impact in the eastern parts of Bangladesh through Burma. Sarkar describes this as a Malayan strain having brachycephalic head, short stature, dark skin colour, and slight obesity, which is found to be quite distinct from other racial elements (*Sarkar, 1961*). The frequencies of brachycephaly were diluted out from the center gradually in Zone A and C, while Zone B appeared to be somewhat confined in the center and behave differently from the other two zones as Sarkar observed.

#### **5.4.4 Balakrishnan's Classification**

V. Balakrishnan attempted to classify the Indian population based on the genetic distance constructed through two genetic markers: ABO and Rh complex blood system. He classified the Indian population into four:

- i) **Caucasoid (Aryan):** It consists of populations that of mainly castes belong to higher varna: Brahmins and others of North-west, North, and West India. It also includes Muslim and few tribes.
- ii) **Caucasoid (Dravidian):** It consists of populations of mainly castes belong to both higher and lower castes. It also includes semi tribal communities.

- iii) **Australoid:** This type consists of both tribal and non-tribal populations of mainly East and South India. They have Australoid content.
- iv) **Mongoloid:** This group consists of tribal and semi-tribal populations of North-east India with one tribal population of South India.

Balakrishnan recommended that populations with large numbers of small distances are likely to be those with a high common element or those who have contributed substantially to the composition of large number of populations. While populations with a large number of intermediate distances are likely to be those with small contributions from a large number of populations or those contributing small amounts to a large number of populations. Furthermore, populations with a large number of large distances are likely to be those with minimal common elements with most other populations. These are also likely to be the more primitive (*Balakrishnan, 1978*). The presence of Mongoloid was quite distinct from the other element(s).

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## 5.5 CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF CLASSIFICATION

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Risley's classification was criticized for small and inadequate sample size of 42 castes and tribes of the total 87 diverse castes and tribes. Risley used anthropometric measurement and somatoscopic observation for classification, but it was not clear the selection of individuals for the study. Caste as the basis of Risley classification of the Indian population has been criticized, as caste is more social category than biological given the caste mobility and caste tribal amalgamation along Hinduism (*Malhotra and Vasulu, 2019*). Classification based on anthropometric measurements has also been criticized, as these measurements show greater intra population diversity than intergroup, due to non-random mating existed among the populations. Risley did not give much importance to the varied environmental factors of India, such as climate, soil, food, etc. Risley's identification of the Indo-Aryan type in the northern areas was based on the historical aspects of the Aryan migration. He ignored other such movements (as an example: Iranian, Scythian, Hun, Mongol, Persian, etc.). Risley mistook Mon-Khmer populations spread over central India and extending to Assam as Dravidian that spread among the tribes of central India and northern plains (*Malhotra and Vasulu, 2019*). Risley's Dravidian is also a linguistic group, and three races have been constituted in this linguistic group. Risley thought Scythian to be Mongoloid, but later, researchers proved they belong to Caucasoid. There is hardly historical evidence to support his claim of Marathas, originally hailed from Scythians and migrated and intermingled in the south, being considered as Dravidian. Risley's conclusions were unclear and have been often questioned. His notion of India as inaccessible from other Asian countries and inhabited by savage tribes until the Aryan invasion c.1500 BC, has been proved to be wrong with the discovery of Mohenjo-daro' (*Hutton, 1933*). P.C. Mahalanobis has analyzed Risley's anthropometric data from Bengal and has found several more or less severe mistakes and non-uniformity in the calculation of average values and indices of records of individual measurements.

Like Risley, Guha considered racial and linguistic criterion for classification of Indian population; the identification of Negrito elements and attribution of

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foreign origin of Indian racial types has been criticized (Kalla, 1994). He has been appreciated for adopting standardized international protocol on anthropometric measurements for the classification of racial types. Though, he was criticized for smaller sample sizes as some of the populations have sample lesser than the average sample size of (64.4). The four main racial types of Guha’s classification came from 275 samples that belonged to four tribal groups also raised questions about the selection of the tribal groups and the number of individuals as well (Malhotra and Vasulu, 2019). Guha’s claim of Proto-Nordics being associated with the Indo-Aryan invasion also face criticism, as Indo Aryan invasion must have been constituted of other types such as Alpino-Dinarics. Besides, Guha’s identification of the brachycephalic Mongolid elements in West-Bengal, west coast, down south in Deccan, and of the Himalayan region has been opposed. Sarkar criticized brachycephalic form has restricted in some populations, as against the major racial type as viewed by Guha (Malhotra and Vasulu, 2019). Sarkar’s classification too faces criticism as he gave sole importance on the cephalic index, ignoring other traits. Similarly, Balakrishnan classification also covers only two classical genetic markers that have varied selection intensity.

**Check Your Progress**

3) Write short note on

a) Risley Classification

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b) Guha’s Classification

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c) Sarkar’s Classification

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d) Balakrishnan’s Classification

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## 5.6 SUMMARY

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Human variation is an outcome of the interaction of genetics and environmental factors. The extent of variation is so vast that the human population groups are often classified based on the varied physical characteristics, lead to the formation of race. The concept of race is often associated with superiority or inferiority socially, though there is no such, and all humans are equal despite his/her differences. Racism arises when people discriminate or abuse people of other characters, which they might think inferior to them, which is wrong, and so now a days, the term race has been hardly used. In terms of classifying people, ethnicity is also often used, but it is more of a culturally defined group. Eminent scholars like Riskey, Guha, Sarkar, Balakrishnan, etc., have tried to classify Indian population purely based on anthropometric and genetic traits. Based on varied characteristics, they have classified into different types, and at the same time, their classifications have criticism too.

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## **5.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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- 1) Race is classified purely on varied biological traits, while ethnicity is classified mainly on cultural traits along with biological traits.
- 2) Racism means discrimination and exploitation based on the concept of racial superiority and inferiority.
- 3) a) The Dravidian type; The Indo-Aryan type; The Mongoloid type; The Aryo-Dravidian type; The Mongolo-Dravidian type; The Scytho-Dravidian type; The Turko-Iranian type;  
b) The Negrito; The Proto-Australoid; The Mongoloid: Paleo-Mongoloid, Tibeto-Mongoloid; The Mediterranean: Palaeo-Mediterranean, Mediterranean, Orientals; The Western Brachycephals: Alpinoid, Dinaric, Armenoid; The Nordics.  
c) The Dolichocephals; The Mesocephals; The Brachycephals.  
d) Caucasoid (Aryan); Caucasoid (Dravidian); Australoid; Mongoloid.

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## UNIT 6 CLASSIFICATION OF RACIAL ELEMENTS IN INDIA\*

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- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Linguistic Classification of Indian Population
  - 6.1.1 The Indo-Aryan
  - 6.1.2 Dravidian
  - 6.1.3 Sino-Tibetan
  - 6.1.4 Austric
- 6.2 Language and Racial Variation
- 6.3 Pre and Proto Historic Racial Elements in India
  - 6.3.1 Palaeolithic Skeletal Remains
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  - 6.3.3 Neolithic Skeletal Remains
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- 6.5 Summary
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### Learning Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to:

- Explain the linguistics and racial classification of Indian population;
- Elucidate the skeletal materials and their racial types of prehistoric and protohistoric cultures; and
- Discuss modern methods applied for racial classification of Indian population.

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## 6.0 INTRODUCTION

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Human being of the present day is scientifically known as *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Although mankind belongs to the same species but there exists biological diversity in the form of physical features and genetic makeup. In the context of archaeological anthropology, the diversity in skeletal remains are studied for understanding migration, cultural contact and its diffusion (*Walimbe, 2002*). Prehistoric and protohistoric skeletal remains are not many. Prehistory is that period of human history where there was no writing. Protohistory is that period where scripts were devised by human kind but the scripts are not yet deciphered by anthropologists and archaeologists or by any other science. In India, prehistory began approximately 2 million years ago. Prehistory is divided

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\*Contributed by Prof. Ranjana Ray (Retd), Dept. of Anthropology, University of Calcutta, Kolkata.

into several chrono-cultural stages, namely, Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Indus valley civilization and Iron age Megalithic culture. These cultural stages have yielded skeletal remains in the form of fossils.

Fossil formation is rare in India. Fossil formation needs a special type of environmental situation. India is located in a tropical monsoonal zone. For fossil formation wet alkaline soil is needed. Fossils are mineralised bones. A fresh bone is made up of organic protein fibre known as Ossein, set in mineralised binding substances. These are salts of calcium, magnesium, and sodium in the form of hydroxylapatite, also known as bone mineral. A bone becomes fossilized when protein materials disappear and replaced by silica and mineral percolated from ground water. This replacement is done molecule by molecule, so that shape and size of the bone remains the same, only change is in chemical composition. Human fossils are found in small numbers. For this reason, stone age fossils are not many. With the onset of burial system, skeletal remains were preserved. Ancient skeletal remains are compared with modern skeletons and evolutionary schemes are built up on the basis of comparison of fossils coming from different chronological back ground.

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## **6.1 LINGUISTIC CLASSIFICATION OF INDIAN POPULATION**

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Sir George Abraham Grierson for the first time carried out survey of variation of Indian languages. The survey was carried out from 1891 to 1901. The report was entitled 'Linguistic Survey of India' (published, 1903-28). He identified 179 languages and 544 dialects. At present the figure varies. Anthropological Survey of India had carried out the People of India Project beginning in 1985. It reported 325 languages which are used for in-group communication by 5,633 Indian communities. Grierson classified Indian languages into three broad groups. They are, (1) Indo-Aryan, (2) Dravidian and (3) Dardic languages. Linguist survey was also carried out in independent India. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee (1963) languages in India may be classified into four distinct families. They are: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan and Austric.

### **6.1.1 The Indo-Aryan**

This language is spoken by about two third of the population of India. The speakers of this language family are distributed in central, northern, eastern and western parts of India. Much of the great works in philology is recorded in this branch of language. Initially three sub-branches were considered in this family; Iranian, Dardic and Indo-Aryan. Iranian language is at present beyond the geographical boundaries of the sub-continent. The Dardic branch of language is spoken by Shina of Dras and Kishenganga valleys of Jammu and Kashmir; and Kohistani in Northern Pakistan. Indo-Aryan group of language is farther classified into (i) outer, (ii) inner and (iii) mediate branches. (i) The outer group is divided into North-western, southern and eastern groups. The languages Lahnda and Sindhi belong to this group. At present this sub group of language is spoken in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Two of the major languages, Marathi and Konkani belong to southern subgroup. Assamese, Bengali, Bihari and Oriya languages belong to eastern group. Bihari has got three dialects; Bhojpuri,

Magadhi and Maithili, distributed in different localities of Bihar. The sub branch Mediate is known as Kosali or Eastern Hindi. It includes Awadhi, Bagheli and Chhattisgarhi. It is spoken in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Inner sub group is divided into two branches, Central and Pahari. The central group comprises languages like Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Rajasthani, and Gujarati. These languages are found in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, western Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In western and central India there are tribal groups who speak in Bhili and Khandeshi dialects. The Pahari group is divided into three geographical regions, namely, Western, Central, and Eastern. Sirmauri, Mandi, Bhadrawati, Gaddi, Chamba, Churahi and Jansauri from Himachal Pradesh belong to western language group. The Central Pahari language includes Kausani and Garhwali from the Himalayas. The Eastern side is represented by Nepali. This is the most important group of the Pahari languages. It is found in the districts of West Bengal, Assam and in other north-eastern states of India. Indo-Aryan group of language is a branch of Indo-European family. It has developed in India and given rise to the subfamilies discussed above.

### 6.1.2 Dravidian

The Dravidian family is represented by four languages of Deccan plateau region; Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. These are included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Dravidian group of language is farther divided into regional groups; the northern, central and southern. Languages of one tribal group in the plateau area belong to Dravidian family. These are Kota, Coorgi, Yerukala, Yerula, Yeruva, Kurumba, Tulu, Toda, Gondi, Khond, Koya, Kui, Parji, Kolami, Kanda, Kuruk and Maite.

### 6.1.3 Sino-Tibetan

The Sino-Tibetan languages are mostly spoken by the tribal groups residing in the geographical area extending from Ladakh to the North-eastern frontier regions of India. This family is divided into sub branches like Siamese-Chinese and Tibeto-Burman. The first group does not belong to India except for the Khamti speech. The Tibeto-Burman group is divided into three sub groups, Tibeto-Himalayan, North Assam and Assam-Burmese. Tibeto-Himalayan group is again divided into Tibetan or Bhotia and Himalayan groups. They are spread over the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal and Sikkim. Languages like Bhotia, Tibetan, Balti, Ladakhi and Lahul belong to Bhotia group. Himalayan group includes Chhambba, Limba and Lepcha. North Assam group includes Dafla, Miri, Mishmi and Mishing of Arunachal Pradesh. Assam-Burmese language is spoken by Bodo, Naga and Kuki-chin. Important languages of the area are Bodo, Garo, Tripuri, Reang, Kachari, Rabha and Dimasa. In Naga groups are Sema, Angami, Lotha, Tangkhul and Konyak. Other important languages of this group are Manipuri, Mizo, Thado, Hmar and Kuki.

### 6.1.4 Austric

This language is mostly spoken by the tribal people of India. Chatterjee (1963) considered this group to be the oldest language family in India. One

of its sub families Austro-Asiatic is only found in India. This group is divided into Munda and Mon-Khmer sub families Mon-Khmer is further divided into Khasi and Nicobarese. Languages of Munda group are Santali, Mundari, Ho, Bhumij, Korku, Kharia, and Savara. Munda speaking groups are distributed in areas from Vindhya hills to Northeast India. Major concentration is found in Chhotanagpur plateau region. It is found that Korku and Nihali are located in Vindhyan region. Mundari, Ho, Bhumij and Kharia are in the central part of the Chhotanagpur plateau. Santali is spoken in the eastern part of the plateau. In the southern part of the Chhotanagpur plateau are Savara and the Gadaba. Khasi are in the North-east and Nicobarese is restricted to Nicobar Islands, Asuri, Birjia, Turi and Muasi have some restricted distribution in the plateau area.

**Check Your Progress**

- 1) What are the different languages in India according to Linguist, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee? Explain briefly.

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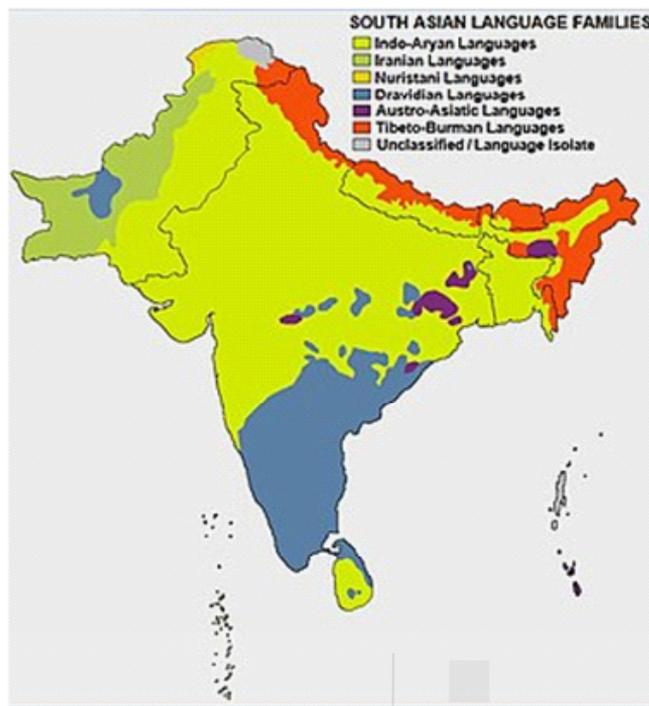
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## **6.2 LANGUAGE AND RACIAL VARIATION**

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Sir William Jones for the first time had seen similarity within Sanskrit, Persian, Latin, Greek, Celtic, Gothic and modern Germanic languages and had assumed that all these must have come from a single source (*Kennedy, 2014*). Jones' focus was on Sanskrit (*Jones, 1793*). He assumed that biological and cultural variation coexisted with the variation of language. He started with the term Indo-European language. The two branches of the Indo-European are, eastern, having Indian and Persian; and the other is western, the European languages. Max Mueller christened the language spoken by white skinned people and belonging to the eastern branch as Indo-Aryan while the Dravidian name was given to the language spoken by dark skinned people. He was responsible for introducing the racial theory in Indian Civilization. Present investigation in the genomic study and culture history suggest that the so called Indo-Aryan and Dravidian are intimately connected linguistically and culturally. Neither Aryan nor Dravidian could be considered as biologically separate races after the work that is done in the genomic level (*Singh, 2014*). Austro-Asiatic group, especially the Mundari speaking people are considered to be the earliest settlers in India (*Rao, 2014*).

Max Mueller christened the language spoken by white skinned people and belonging to the eastern branch as Indo-Aryan while the Dravidian name was given to the language spoken by dark skinned people.



**Fig. 6.1: Distribution of South Asian language families**

(Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sout\\_Asia-Language-Families.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sout_Asia-Language-Families.jpg))

### 6.3 PRE AND PROTO HISTORIC RACIAL ELEMENTS IN INDIA

As mentioned earlier excepting for some areas, India is in general in a non fossiliferous tropical zone. Fossil human remains are scanty. So far as the evidences go, India was peopled from Africa at a very early phase of time about 2 million years ago. These evidences are mainly in the form of skeletal remains, mostly fossilised. Studies of skeletal materials have developed a lot with development of techniques of genetic analysis. Earlier the skeletal materials were described and compared with the extant population of mankind, mainly on the basis of morphological features but at present the skeletal diversity is taken as a result of complex factors of genetic characters as well as adaptive mechanism to change of the environment. Walimbe (2002: 367-402) has made a study of the skeletal materials collected from the Indian sub-continent.

It is to be remembered that earlier scholars like B. S. Guha (1944) and S. S. Sarkar (1964) had done classification of racial element of the pre and protohistoric skeletal remains on the basis of craniometric analysis. This is reflected in Sarkar's classification of the Indian population on cephalic index. Earlier works are mainly restricted to excavated skeletal materials from North-western India. Prehistoric culture is divided into Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Iron stages. Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic cultures belong to Stone Age. Palaeolithic culture belongs to the geological time, Pleistocene. It stretched approximately from 2.5 million years to around 10,000 years before present (BP). The rest of the cultures belong to the recent times, geologically known as Holocene. Time scale is roughly from 10,000 years BP to present day. The Chalcolithic is the stage when men discovered metallurgy but still continued making and using stone tools. The culture that grew along the Indus valley is Chalcolithic but is designated as Protohistoric culture. Reason

for this nomenclature is that people of this culture had written scripts but unfortunately the scripts are not yet properly deciphered. Therefore, the culture cannot be considered as prehistoric or historic. For proper understanding of development of racial element in India skeletal remains from Megalithic culture and Iron age are taken into account in this study. Compared to skeletal remains of Palaeolithic, those from later cultural stages are more in number. Walimbe (2002) has discussed the pre and Protohistoric skeletal remains of the Indian sub-continent.

### **6.3.1 Palaeolithic Skeletal Remains**

A skull was discovered in 1985 by the Geologist Arun Sonakia near the village Hathnora on Narmada River valley, 40 km southeast of the town Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh. It is a completely right half of the skull cap with part of the left parietal attached to it. No facial bone was found. The skull cap or calvaria belonged to a fairly old individual. It had erect posture, robust built and fairly well developed brain. It has thick projecting supra-orbital torus and protruding occiput. Although it was considered first as belonging to the group *Homo erectus* or Archaic *Homo sapiens* but comparison of morphological traits with the fossil remains from Middle and Upper Pleistocene periods of Europe, Asia and Africa had placed Narmada man into *Homo sapiens* group (*Kennedy et al.* 1991).

#### **Check Your Progress**

2) What do you know about Narmada Man?

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### **6.3.2 Mesolithic Skeletal Remains**

Mesolithic is the culture which belongs to the early Holocene time. Human beings were *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the modern men. People were hunter-gatherers but they are considered to be living at a time when subsistence economy was changing over to farming. This is the time when people in India started living in areas beyond river valleys. Though some people still lived in river valleys but others occupied widely different environmental zones, such as plateau, sea coast, sand dunes, caves and rock shelters. Gangetic valley was occupied for the first time. Mesolithic sites are found all over the Indian sub continent, except for Kashmir region. People had adapted themselves culturally to the different ecological settings (*Ray*, 1985). Chronologically Mesolithic in India can be divided into early and late Mesolithic cultures.

Fossil remains of Mesolithic people are found from a number of sites in India. Morahna Pahar, Uttar Pradesh was first site for the discovery of Mesolithic skeletal remains. Skeletal remains from Sarai-Nahar-Rai and Mahadaha in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh in the Ganga Valley are the most ancient of Mesolithic remains. Radiocarbon dates of the associated materials place the skeletal remains around 10,000 to 12,000 BP. Late Mesolithic remains are found from Bagor, Bhilwara district Rajasthan (588 BP); Lekhahia, Mirzaput district, Uttar Pradesh (4,290 BP) and Langhnaj from Ahmedabad district, Gujrat (3,925

BP). The radiocarbon dates for the cultural remains are much later than the early Mesolithic phase. An evolutionary trend through time is observed among the skeletal remains of Mesolithic culture. Basically, these are with muscular tall stature, robust skull and large teeth characteristic of hunting gathering people. Sarai-Nahar-Rai people had robust body size. Paleoanthropologists have shown that through time there is a trend of reduction in body size and teeth among the Mesolithic population (*Kennedy, 1986*). This may be due to the fact that during this time Human being had spread to all kinds of environment and had developed better adaptive strategy to respective environment. People were selective hunter gatherers and were on the verge of developing agriculture as subsistence economy. The Mesolithic group of people are considered to belong to Austro-Asiatic speaking proto Australoid people in India.

### 6.3.3 Neolithic Skeletal Remains

Neolithic culture in India has got an average date of 8000 years BP but the skeletal remains that are recovered belong to a span of 3000 to 1000 BC., coinciding with the dates of Indus valley civilization. Basic features of Neolithic culture are food production and settled village life. It has to be remembered that simultaneous to the growth of urban culture in Indus-Saraswati system, in other parts of India Neolithic way of life continued for a long time. Neolithic skeletal materials are recovered from Burzahom in Kashmir valley and from the sites of Tekkalkota, Piklihal and T. Narasipur in Karnataka. Burzahom people have similarity with mature Harappan skeletal materials (*Basu and Pal, 1980*), though culturally the former belongs to Neolithic and the latter to urban culture. The Neolithic skeletal materials from southern part of India resemble those found from Mohenjo-daro, Nal, Sialkot and Lothal (*Malhotra, 1968*). The difference between Burzahom and South Indian skeletal remains are taken as a product of regional adaptation.

### 6.3.4 Chalcolithic Culture

People of this culture learnt smelting of copper but they still continued with the use of stone tools. Economy was agriculture and had a sedentary life style. This cultural phase is also known as chalco-neolithic because people lived in villages and were farmers and pastoralists. In South India, mainly in the plateau region, evidence of ceremonial burial is found. There is no evidence of separate cemetery but burials were associated with habitation site. Biological study of the cranial materials shows similarity in cranial and facial features among the skeletons recovered. There is no evidence of external trade, so the homogeneity is due to close knit communities and similarity in life style. The population in general possesses long, dolichocranial head; gracile features; receding to vertical forehead and faint supra-orbital torus; square to horizontal eye sockets; broad nose with flat root; medium to low facial height, moderate cheek bones and slight prognathism, mean stature for men was 172.46 cm and 167.13 cm for female population. Biologists have also found that compared to Mesolithic people Chalco-neolithic people not only had more gracile limbs but a rotation in the facial region in a position more inferior to cranium. There was slight increase in the height of the cranium. Dolichocranial element continued but brachy cranial people were also present (*Walimbe, 2002: 387 - 388*). Appearance of brachycrany was thought as advent of some other groups of people but it

is found that the change took place due to change in adaptive mechanism to changed economy and social system.

### **6.3.5 Protohistoric Culture of Indus-Saraswati Basin**

Indus valley or Harappan culture is the protohistoric culture in India. Main concentration of the culture was Indus-Saraswati basin. It had a wide distribution from Baluchistan on the west to areas beyond Delhi on the east and on the North from Punjab to Tapti basin in the south. The culture represented urban traits with the growth of cities, central authority, trade and writing. Uniformity of culture is noted in its town planning, tools, pottery types, seals, weights and measures and many other characteristic urban features. Date for the culture is approximately 3000 BC and it continued for about a thousand years. Besides the well known sites of Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Chanhudaro, other sites of mature Harappan culture are Rupar, Rakhigarhi, Kalibangan, and Lothal. The skeletal materials collected from excavation of sites had been studied by the Anthropologists from Anthropological Survey of India at various times (*Gupta et al.*, 1962). They found that the ancient population of each of sites had common element with the present day population of the areas. In most of the cases major focus of the study was on the theory of destruction of the civilization and the Aryan invasion. Reinvestigation of the biological materials points out that there was no such invasion by the so called Aryans. People of the cities of Indus civilization had a mixed population where dolichocrany dominated over brachycrany, though the latter was present in good number in the cities. There was a racial continuity from Neolithic and pre Harappan population to Harappan and later cultures.

### **6.3.6 The Iron Age Megalithic Culture**

Megalithic burials from Deccan yielded a number of skeletal remains. These belong to Iron Age because the culture is marked by iron implements and black and red pottery. Megalithic skeletal remains found from Adichanallur (Tamilnadu), Ramgarh (Jharkhand), Sanur (Tamilnadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), and Savanadurga (Karnataka) are with dolichocranial head. Specimens from Brahmagiri (Karnataka), Nagarjunkonda (Andhra Pradesh) and Yeleswaram (Andhra Pradesh) presented skull with brachycrany. It may be concluded that population of the time was made up of diverse morphological elements (*Walimbe*, 2002).

Diversity in racial element appeared from prehistoric to protohistoric period through evolution and subsequent adaptation to environmental and habitat change and cultural and technological development.

#### **Check Your Progress**

- 3) What are the different sites of Megalithic culture from where the skeletal remains were found?

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## 6.4 RACIAL ELEMENT IN INDIA AND GENOMIC STUDY

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As a result of genomic study, it is found that Anatomically Modern Humans evolved in Africa around 200,000 years ago. Population migration of the modern mankind took place from Africa to India by 60 to 70 thousand years BP. Anthropological Survey of India had carried out genomic survey of the people of India. Investigation on mtDNA lineages were carried out among populations practicing earliest form of subsistence pattern, namely, hunting gathering. Summary of the finding as given by Rao (2014) is given below.

The first settlers of anatomically modern men from Africa entered and settled in India. The Jarawa and Andaman Islanders are representative of the group. Geographical isolation had preserved the phenotypic element among them. Their entry into the Andaman Islands is estimated to be around 45 thousand years ago.

The modern representatives of earliest settlers of the mainland region of the sub-continent are the tribes of southern, eastern and Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic speakers of central India. This is established by the mt DNA M2 lineage analysis.

Indian-Australian phylogenetic link had been established by mtDNA lineage M42. This has also established that the out of Africa migration route was through South Asia.

The deep rooted lineages of macrohaplo group 'M' suggest in situ origin of these haplo groups after they entered India. Most of them are represented by ethnic and or linguistic groups in India. These are on the analysis of genetic foot prints in the Indian sub-continent,

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## 6.5 SUMMARY

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Classification of racial elements in India is a very complicated process. Study began with a lot of colonial ethno-centric bias of the British administration. There was lack of adequate technique for classification of mankind into racial groups. Anthropologists depended on the analysis of morphological diversity. Risley's classification is on the basis of external features. Sir William Jones put in the concept of language families on the basis of comparative philology. The discovery of skeletal remains of Indus Valley civilization added a new dimension to the classification. This gave rise to the idea of population migration and peopling of India from outside.

Diversity among mankind cannot be denied. At present Anthropologists are equipped with advanced methods of classification. In addition to phenotypic characters, genotypes as well as linguistic phenomena are taken into consideration. Early cultural phase of India is divided into prehistoric and protohistoric phases. Skeletal materials from Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Harappan and Iron Age Megalithic sites are studied and classified. Recent survey of Anthropological Survey of India and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology had conducted genomic survey of the people of India. It is found that there exists a basic commonness in the genetic level

among the people of India. India was peopled by the anatomically modern men who migrated from Africa and entered in the sub-continent approximately 70 thousand years ago. Jarawa and Andaman Islanders had retained the trait being geographically isolated. The Australoid element entered later. The Austric group, speaking Austro-Asiatic and Mundari languages belong to this group. The Mesolithic skeletal remains showed similar features to this group. There is evidence that through time there was evolution evident from later Mesolithic, Neolithic and later cultural stages giving rise to glacial features and change in cranial characters. Genomic study has pointed in situ development of later racial characters in India. The population migration both in prehistoric and historic times gave rise to the racial diversity in India over the omnipresent basic genetic base.

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## 6.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- 1) According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee (1963) languages in India may be classified into four distinct families. They are (i) Indo-Aryan (ii) Dravidian, (iii) Sino-Tibetan and (iv) Austric.
  - (i) The Indo-Aryan language is spoken by about two third of the population of India. The speakers of this language family are distributed in central, northern, eastern and western parts of India. (ii) Dravidian family is represented by four languages of Deccan plateau region; Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. (iii) Sino-Tibetan languages are mostly spoken by the tribal groups residing in the geographical area extending from Ladakh to the North-eastern frontier regions of India (iv) Austric language is mostly spoken by the tribal people of India.
- 2) Narmada Man, the only stone age fossil from India. Narmada Man or Narmada Human was discovered by Arun Sonakia is the earliest Homo species of Indian sub-continent. This fossil was found on the banks of Narmada River in Hathnora Village of Madhya Pradesh in 1982. Narmada Man used to live 2.5 Lakh years ago and belonged to Homo erectus species, which was first among the three Homo species (Homo habilis, Homo ergaster and Homo erectus) to acquire tool making skills. These three species predate Homo sapiens, to which we belong. The importance of Narmada man is that it is only authentic record of a Homo species fossil from Stone Age in India.
- 3) Megalithic burials from Deccan yielded a number of skeletal remains. These belong to Iron Age because the culture is marked by iron implements and black and red pottery. Megalithic skeletal remains found from Adichanallur, Ramgarh, Samur, Ranchi, Savanadurga and Pomparippu are with dolichocranial head. Specimens from Brahmagiri, Nagarjunkonda, Yelleswaram presented skull with brachycrany.

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## UNIT 7 MAJOR RACES OF MANKIND\*

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- 7.5 References
- 7.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

### Learning Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to:

- Understand the concept of race;
- Explain the biological basis of race;
- Discuss the salient features of major races of the world;
- Analyze the negative impact of Racism; and
- Appreciate the UNESCO Statement on Racial Discrimination.

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### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

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It is already accepted fact that there are no two completely identical humans in any form even among the twins. Variation has been an important feature of living species including humans. Understanding human variation is one of the important interests of anthropologists, biologists and geneticists. Gene-environment interaction could manifest in bringing the variation that exists between the human inter and intra population groups. These variations can be in terms of physical characters be like height, skin colour, hair form, eye colour, fold, etc., or physiological characters like body metabolism rate, blood pressure, etc., or in the extent of genetic polymorphisms like blood groups, nuclear and mtDNA variant, etc. Such variations enable humans to cope with the selective pressure, to adapt and undergo reproductive fitness, which is important for continuity of species. Moreover, the knowledge of human variation can be applied in different areas such as forensic, health assessment, etc. The present unit will not only focus on the applied aspect of human variation but will attempt to understand the human variation in the form of races.



**Fig. 7.1: Extent of Human Variation**

(Sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/18/opinion/race-america-trump.html>)

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## 7.1 CONCEPT OF RACE

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The concept of race has been extensively used in the 18th and 19th centuries, though it has been embedded in confusion and controversy. It is said that the earliest writing of race appeared in the 16th century. In the 17th century, the French phrase "especes-ou-races d'homme" was used to refer to "family" or "breed." The German word "Rasse," meaning something like "generation," was introduced in around 1700. But it was in 1775 that the term connotes its contemporary meaning when Kant used the phrase "races of mankind" to designate peoples, distinguished from others, according to their physical attributes (Rose, 1968).

Hooton (1926) defined 'race' as a great division of mankind, the member of which though individually varying are characterized as a group by certain combinations of morphological, metrical features, principally non-adaptive, which have been derived from their common descent. In the population genetics concept, Dobzhansky (1970) has defined race as genetically distinct Mendelian populations, which differ genetically among themselves. Further, Montagu (1972) has defined race in genetic context as a population that differs in the frequency of some gene or genes, which exchange or capable of exchanging genes across boundaries and separate it from other populations of the species.

It can be said that race is an anthropologically constructed term to refer the human diversity. The notion of humans, being classified into different races is attributed to certain physical characteristics, such as skin colour, eye shape, and hair form, or genetic traits, such as blood groups, biochemical parameters, DNA, etc. Such variations either in the physical or genetic traits can be multifactorial, especially interaction between genetics and the environment. Human possess certain varied characters as an adaptational response to environmental changes, which could relate to the genetic constitution of the individual. The theory of human races being classified has put forward the common belief that some races have intellectual and physical abilities that are superior to those of other races, which is false.

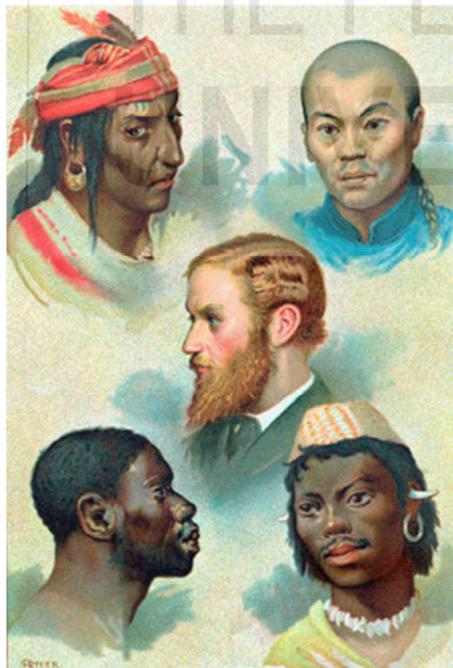
**Check Your Progress**

1) What is race in the genetical context?

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**7.1.1 Racial Classification**

Anthropologists earlier used other terms such as stocks, varieties to classify mankind based on physical attributes. While talking about the origin of human races, broadly there can be two schools of thought, i.e. monogenism and polygenism. Monogenists believed in the theory that all human varieties or races arise from a single stock, while polygenists are of the opinion that the human varieties or races are of different origin. The first systematic classification of humans was reported in the 17th century when Francois Bernier (1684), a naturalist, grouped humans into four stocks using facial and body forms. In his work, *Systematic Naturae*, Carol Von Linnaeus (1735), classified humans into four varieties: White, Red, Yellow, and Black based on skin colour and physiognomy in correlation with temperament or personality types. Buffon (1749) was a monogenist and introduced the term ‘race’ in natural history and classified humans into six race categories: Laplander, Tartar, South Asiatic, European, Ethiopian, American based on skin colour, stature, and bodily figure (Molnar, 2006). Later, Blumenbach (1775), the father of modern anthropology, classified humans into five races: Mongolian, Malayan, Ethiopian, American and Caucasian, on geography and appearance.



**Fig. 7.2: Blumenbach’s classification of human population: (clockwise from top right) Mongolian, Malayan, Ethiopian, American and Caucasian (center)**

(Source: [https://resize.hswstatic.com/w\\_285/gif/race-vs-ethnicity1.jpg](https://resize.hswstatic.com/w_285/gif/race-vs-ethnicity1.jpg))

Georges Cuvier (1828) identified three distinct human races: Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid based on skin colour. He believed Caucasian as the

original race of mankind, and the other two evolved later on. Charles Pickering in his *Races of Man and Their Geographical Distribution* (1848) has put forth eleven human races: Mongolian, Malay Polynesian, Australian, Papuan, Negrito, Hindu, Nubian, Hottentot, Abyssinian, and White. He believed that different races have been created separately. Thomas Henry Huxley mainly based on appearance and anatomical characteristics though proposed nine types of races in humans but described them under the rubric heads of Australoid, Negroid, Xanthocroic and Mongoloid. Joseph Denikar (1889) enumerated a number of twenty one races depending on the somatotypic characters such as hair form, nose form, skin colour etc. In 1931, American anthropologist, E.A. Hooton proposed four primary races and other composite races which are further formed by the blending of the primary races. Later in the year 1947, he modified the primary races into three: White (Caucasoid), Negroid and Mongoloid. The composite races, according to Hooton, can be classified into Predominantly White, Predominantly Mongoloid and Predominantly Negroid.



**Fig. 7.3: Geographical Distribution of Huxley's races**

(Source: <https://www.ck12.org/book/ck-12-human-biology/section/8.3/>)

Reuben Ottonberg was the first one who attempted to classify human races based on the distribution of the ABO blood group system. In his research article published in the *Journal of American Medical Association* (1925), he classified mankind into six groups, viz., Europeans, Intermediate, Hunan, Indo-manchurian, African South Asiatic and Pacific American. Later in the year 1926, Lawrence H. Snyder added Australian type to the Ottonberg's classification based on the distribution of ABO blood group systems. Wiener (1946, 1948) proposed another classification based on serological traits including ABO blood groups, MN Blood type, and Rh blood factor, into six groups, viz. Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid, Asiatic subgroup, Pacific Island and Australian, Amerindians and Eskimos. Later William C. Boyd (1963), based on the same genetic traits, modified his own concept of seven major races into thirteen races under four groups as: i) European Group – the Early European, the Lapps, the North-west Europeans, the Eastern and Central Europeans, the Mediterraneans; ii) African Group - the African races, excluding inhabitants of North Africa, which belong to European group, the Asian races, the Indo-Dravidian; iii) American Group – the American Indians; iv) Pacific Group – the Indonesian race, the Melanesian race, the Polynesian race, the Australian aborigines.

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## 7.2 MAJOR RACES OF THE WORLD

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Different scholars have attempted to classify the human population into different races based on certain parameters being considered. Of the various races, generally, there are three major races in the world. These three major races of the world are Caucasoid, Negroid and Mongoloid. The details of these major races shall be discussed here under.

### 7.2.1 Caucasoid

The Caucasoid is one of the major human races that have typical features such as tall stature; fairer skin colour ranging from white, olive, different shades of brown and sometimes dark brown; flat wavy light coloured hair with tendency towards curliness; fine to medium hair texture; moderate to abundant body and facial hair; head ranges from dolichocephalic to brachycephalic having long narrow to medium nose with high nasal bridge; face with high forehead, thin lip, pronounced chin and lighter eye colour. This major race includes a number of sub-groups having varied characteristics. Some of the important sub-races are given below:

- 1) **Mediterranean:** It is considered as one of the oldest sub-races. The term arises from their original habitat– the Mediterranean Shore, which later migrated to all directions. These people are distributed in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey and some parts of North-Africa. They are also found in Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Broadly, this sub-race can be again divided into three subtypes.
  - a) **Classical Mediterranean:** This subtype is found in Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, etc. Few of them are also distributed in Eastern, Central, and North-Western Europe. This type is represented by the Egyptians of North-Africa, the Berbers of Morocco and Arabia, the Jewish population of Palestine.
  - b) **Atlanto-Mediterranean (or Littoral):** This type is distributed in North-Africa, Palestine, Iraq, and the Eastern Balkans, few in the British Isles, Spain, and Portugal. This type is characterized by dark skin colour, deep nasal root, retreating forehead, more robust body than those of Classic.
  - c) **Indo-Afghan (or Irano-Afghan):** This type is scattered mostly in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, North-West India, and Pakistan. This type has features of the abundant body and facial hair with pointed nose tip, long and narrow face, medium stature.
- 2) **Nordic:** The origin of Nordic is debatable as some anthropologists relate them with ‘Aryans’ while few are opposing. This race has identifying features as pinkish or reddish-white skin colour; reddish-brown, very light brown, ash-brown, golden brown hair colour with wavy but rare curly; thin or medium body and facial hair; rounded mesocephalic head; straight and prominent, leptorrhine nose with high nasal root and bridge; long and narrow face with flat cheek bones; vertical forehead with moderate eye-brow ridges and prominent chin; bluish or grey eye colour; thin lip; tall stature. The Nordic racial type is well represented by the people of Scandinavia, and is well distributed in Scandinavia, Baltic region. Northern Germany, Northern

France, some parts of Netherlands and Belgium, and also in the British Isles.

- 3) **Alpine:** The Alpine race is found in Central and Eastern Europe especially in the region from France to the Urals. They are also found in Countries like Denmark, Balkan, Norway, Northern Italy, and in the mountains of Asia Minor. They have olive or brunette white, or bronze skin colour; medium brown to dark brown colour, wavy hair; abundant body and facial hair; brachycephalic head; leptorrhine or mesorrhine nose with straight or slightly convex profile; short, thick and fleshy nasal tip and high nasal root, moderate nasal bridge; broad and short face with oval outline; high forehead with prominent eyebrow ridges; prominent chin; straight eyes with dark to medium brown in colour; moderately thick lip; medium to short stature with strong built.

The Alpine admixture with Nordic, commonly known as the Beaker Folk is distributed in Central Spain towards Central Europe, England, and Scotland. This admixed type has physical features such as pinkish or reddish-white complexion, wavy and dark brown hair with brachycephalic head, long narrow nose, long narrow face with square chin, muscular built with tall stature.

- 4) **East Baltic:** The distribution of East Baltic is concentrated in North-Eastern Germany, Poland, Baltic States, Russia, Finland, etc. They have physical features including tawny white or creamy white skin colour; straight, sometimes wavy hair with medium to coarse texture; moderate facial hair with scanty body hair; brachycephalic head with flat occiput; mesorrhine nose with high and broad nasal bridge, broad nasal wings with snubbed tip; squared face with prominent cheek, high forehead; medium or thin lips; stature varying from short to medium.
- 5) **Dinaric (Adriatic or Illyrian):** The Dinaric race exhibits both the Nordic and the Armenoid physical features, such as lighter or brunette complexion; medium hair texture with abundance body and facial hair; brachycephalic head with flat occiput; leptorrhine nose with high nasal root and fleshy tip; long and narrow face with projecting chin than those of Armenoids; straight and sloping forehead; moderately full and thick lips; tall stature. This type is distributed mainly in the Dinaric Alps region, especially Yugoslavia, Albania and Austrian Tyrol and sporadically in Central Europe. In many cases, they share some racial elements from Alpine, Atlanto-Mediterranean and possibly Indo-Afghan, apart from Nordic and Armenoid.
- 6) **Armenoid:** The Armenoids consists of considerable amount of Classical Mediterranean, Alpine, Nordic and Indo-Afghan racial elements in them. The physical features include tawny white skin colour; wavy to curly hair with medium to coarse texture; plenty body and facial hair; brachycephalic head with vertical occiput, leptorrhine nose with high nasal root, depressed and fleshy tip; narrow and elongated face with well-developed cheek bones; sloping forehead with thick eye-brow ridges; medium and tall stature, well built with a tendency towards obesity. This race is spread in Turkey, Syria and Palestine, Iraq, Iran, and Balkan Countries, though Asia Minor may be assumed as the origin from where it might have been spread southward to

- Arabia and India. This race is represented by the Babylonians, Assyrians and Hittites.
- 7) **Keltic:** These types of people are found in Ireland, Scotland and Wales and also sporadically in England and many other parts of Western Europe. This race type has pale white skin colour, wavy or curly hair, mesocephalic head, leptorrhine nose with high nasal bridge, long and narrow face with compressed cheek bones and deep chin and tall stature.
  8. **Lapp:** The Lapps have greyish-yellow to yellowish-brown complexion, straight or slightly wavy hair with dark brown or black colour, sparse body and facial hair, brachycephalic head, mesorrhine nose with concave profile and snubbed tip, broad and short face with prominent cheek bones, narrow forehead with faint eyebrow ridges, no prognathism, epicanthic fold is occasionally present and short stature. This race type is found in Northern Scandinavia, Northern Finland, Sweden, Norway and North-western region of Russia. This type shows an admixture of various people, e.g. Russians, Fins, Swedes, Norwegians, etc., but they hold some distinct features also, by which they have been identified as a separate ethnic group. Though some of the Lapps are found to be classified with the Mongoloids, the people bear more similarities with the Caucasoids than the Mongoloids.
  - 9) **Indo-Dravidian (Dravidian):** The Indo-Dravidian people are distributed in South and Central India. They are predominantly Caucasoid. An admixture of Classical Mediterranean and Australoid (Veddoid) is found among these people. Indo Dravidian race has the physical features with light brown to dark brown skin colour, plenty and slightly wavy hair with tendency to curly, thin to medium body and facial hair, dolichocephalic head, mesorrhine nose with depressed nasal root, high nasal bridge, and thick tip, narrow and medium face with little prognathism, rounded forehead, moderately developed eyebrow ridges, and medium stature.
  - 10) **Polynesian:** The Polynesians have identifying features including light brown to yellow-brown skin colour, wavy or straight hair, thin body and facial hair, predominantly brachycephalic with flat occiput, mesorrhine nose with slightly depressed root, high and broad nasal bridge, thick tip with broad nasal wings, long and broad face with prominent cheekbones, high forehead with slightly sloping and narrow, rare presence of epicanthic fold, moderately thick lips and tall stature. The Polynesians are a composite race as they originated as white but later have mixed with Mongoloid and Negroid race. They are mainly found in the Polynesian Islands of the Pacific Ocean namely New Zealand, Friendly Islands, Samoa, Marquesas, and Hawaii.
  - 11) **Ainu:** The Ainu is an ancient racial stock of Japan that also possess Mongoloid elements, besides basically being Caucasoid. They also have a resemblance to Australian aborigines, as of which they are categorized under the Archaic Caucasoid group. Mainly concentrating in Northern Japan, South Sakhalin and Yezo, the Ainu have light brown to brownish-white skin colour, wavy hair with dark brown to black colour, abundance body and facial hair, mesocephalic head with rare dolichocephalic, mesorrhine or platyrrhine nose with slightly depressed root and moderately

high bridge, mesoprosopic and orthognathic face, no epicanthic fold, thin lip, medium to short stature.

12) **Archaic Caucasoid (Australoid):** This race has mainly Australoid features that resemble Caucasoid, thereby it is considered as a subdivision of Caucasoid. This race can be further divided into two subtypes:

- a) **Australian Aborigines:** The Australian Aborigines have medium to dark chocolate brown, curly hair sometimes wavy and medium brown to black colour, abundance body and facial hair, dolichocephalic head with extremely large browridge, receding forehead, platyrrhine nose with depressed root and thick tip, short face with medium to pronounced prognathism and receding chin, full lips and average stature. They are mainly confined to Australia and believed to be an admixture of Classic Caucasoid with Negroid; elements of Oceanic admixture are also noticed.
- b) **Pre-Dravidian (Australoid or Veddoid):** This type is mainly distributed in South and Central India. The Kadir, Kurumba, Panyan, Irula, Bhil, Gond, Khond, Oraon, etc., represent this type. The Veddas of Ceylon and the Sakai or Senoi of Malay Peninsula also belong to this race type. The identifying features include dark brown to almost black skin colour, wavy or curly hair, dolichocephalic head with sloping forehead and prominent browridges, platyrrhine nose with depressed at root, short and narrow face with moderate prognathism, receding chin with thick lip and short stature.

### 7.2.2 Negroid

In general, the Negroid race have skin colour varying from dark brown to black, woolly or frizzly hair in black colour, very little body hair and thin facial hair, dolichocephalic head with protruding occiput region, platyrrhine nose with low nasal root and broad bridge, rounded forehead with small eyebrow ridges and marked facial prognathism, rounded and receding chin, short and wide ear with rolled helix and little or no lobe, thick and everted lips. This racial group is mainly divided into two types— African Negro (*Ulotrichi Africani* as designated by Haddon), and Oceanic Negro (*Ulotrichi Orientalis* as designated by Haddon).

- 1) **African Negro:** This Negroid sub-race is further classified into five subtypes - True Negroes, Nilotic Negro or Nilote, Bantu-speaking Negroes or 'Bantu', Bushman-Hottentot, and Negrillo.
  - (a) **True Negroes:** This subtype has the features of woolly hair, dolichocephalic head, platyrrhine nose, prognathous face with bulging forehead, tall stature with short legs and long arms. They are mainly distributed in West Africa and in Guinea coast. The typical Forest Negroes inhabiting in the region extending from the Senegal River in the West to Sudan, Uganda and Northern Rhodesia also belong to this subtype; that has shown slightly different physical characters from the former in being shorter and having coarse features in face and body such as very broad nose with low root and flat bridge, prominent cheekbones, marked facial prognathism, retreating chin and marked everted lips.

- (b) **Nilotic Negro or Nilotes:** This subtype has unique features of being having lesser platyrrhine nose than those of True Negroes, broad and short face with less facial prognathism, less everted lips, tall and slim with long legs. They are mainly distributed in the regions of Upper Nile Valley and Eastern Sudan.
- (c) **Bantu-Speaking Negroid or 'Bantu':** This subtype includes a large number of Bantu-speaking peoples of Central and Southern Africa; different ethnic elements that constitute this group have not yet been clearly defined. There is wide variation in the physical attributes of this subtype, but in general, they have dark chocolate skin colour varying from yellowish-brown to black, dolichocephalic head with few mesocephalic, marked prognathism which is less marked in mesocephalic group with flatter forehead, medium or above-average stature with mesocephalic group having shorter stature.
- (d) **Bushman-Hottentot:** The Bushman and the Hottentot have more or less similar physical features though they are different cultural group. The Hottentots are known as the Khoikhoi and the Bushmen, the Khuaior San. The Bushmen are mainly confined to the Kalahari Desert, though previously they occupied a greater part of South Africa. The Hottentots are distributed in South-West Africa. This subtype has light to brownish-yellow skin colour in Bushmen and light reddish-yellow in Hottentot, pepper-corn hair, thin body and facial hair, dolichocephalic head in the Bushmen and mesocephalic in the Hottentots, concave nasal profile, short squared and orthognathous in the Bushmen and triangular elongated and somewhat prognathous in the Hottentots, slanting eyes, the Hottentots being slightly taller than the Bushmen, more pronounced Steatopygia (immense deposit of fat in the buttocks in the Hottentot women).
- (e) **Negrillo (African pygmy):** This subtype is represented by Akka, Batwa, Bambute, etc. who live in Equatorial forests of the Congo region. Their physical features include yellowish light brown to reddish-brown skin colour, woolly or pepper-corn hair, mesocephalic head, platyrrhine nose with flaring wings, prognathic face with full but not everted lips, very short stature with long arms and short trunk and legs, occasionally steatopygia among women. This very short stature commonly known as the pygmies are found in the Congo region of Equatorial Africa, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Andaman Islands, Philippines, New Guinea, etc. They are known as African pygmy or Negrillo, Oceanic pygmy and Asiatic pygmy with respect to their geographical affiliation; the latter two are generally grouped as Negrito.
- 2) **Oceanic Negro:** This sub-race is mainly concentrated in New Guinea and neighbouring Islands. They have medium to dark brown skin colour, frizzly, rarely curly hair, scanty body, and facial hair, dolichocephalic but sometimes brachycephalic head. This subrace can be further subdivided into:
- (a) **Negrito:** This subtype is represented by Andamanese, Semang, Aeta, and Tapiro (the Oceanic pygmy while the first three represents the Asiatic pygmy). The Tapiro is considered as the Oceanic pygmy. Andamanese

lives in Andaman Islands having the feature of sooty black skin colour, black woolly hair with a reddish tinge, scanty or almost no body and facial hair, brachycephalic head, straight nose and sunken at the root, broad malar region, full lips but not everted, very short stature. The Semang who lives in the Central region of the Malay Peninsula and East Sumatra, have dark chocolate brown skin colour, mesocephalic head, round face with slightly projecting upper jaw and thin lip. Aeta of the Philippine Islands has sooty brown skin colour, frizzly hair with abundant body and facial hair, brachycephalic head. Tapiro representing the Oceanic Pygmy inhabits in New Guinea and have yellowish-brown skin colour, woolly hair with abundant body and facial hair, mesocephalic head, deep and convex upper lip. Some anthropologists suggest a common genetic substratum of all pygmies of different parts across the globe claiming it as an old racial stock probably spread across the globe. But recent studies argue the racial status of pygmy as the concept of a particular race or common stock is invalid, and several environmental factors would be behind this unique physical type.

(b) **Papuans & Melanesians:** Papuans are distributed in New Guinea and other Islands of Melanesia, while Melanesians live in the coastal plains of New Guinea and the neighbouring Islands in Fiji, Admiralty Island, New Caledonia, etc. Papuans have either dark chocolate brown or sooty brown skin colour, frizzly hair, abundance facial hair ranging dark brown to reddish-brown in colour, dolichocephalic head, broad nose with depressed root and convex profile with thick tip, high and narrow prognathic face with retreating forehead and heavy and continuous eyebrow ridges, thin lips, variable stature with mostly medium. Melanesians differ from the former as they have curly or even wavy hair in addition to frizzly form. They have scanty body and facial hair; have mesocephalic and brachycephalic head too. Nasal convex is concave, forehead is rounded, wider and longer than the Papuan; but the eyebrow ridges are less developed in comparison to Papuans.

3) **The American Negroes:** This race type is a result of interbreeding between the African Negroes, the American Indians and the Caucasoid in the first half of the 19th century AD. This admixed group has olive to dark brown skin colour; woolly hair, dolichocephalic head, nose having intermediate features with narrower at the root and bridge, long face with no or slight prognathism.

### 7.2.3 Mongoloid

It is believed that the Mongoloid race has originated in the land of Central Asia, from which it has spread in different directions. The Mongoloids have yellow or yellow-brown skin colour, straight coarse hair, thin body and facial hair, brachycephalic head, broad face with prominent cheekbones, oblique eye with narrow slit-like opening, internal or complete epicanthic fold. The Mongoloids can be divided into four main subdivisions on the basis of their geographical distribution.

1) **The Classical or Central Mongoloid:** The Classical Mongoloid also has mesocephalic and dolichocephalic heads, besides brachycephalic with a

projected occiput region in all forms. They have low and medium nasal bridge, no depressed root, straight or concave profile with moderately spread wing, broad face with squared jaws, rounded medium. They are mainly distributed in Siberia and Amur River district, and sporadically in Northern China, Mongolia, and Tibet. The typical representative includes Buriat, Koryak, Goldi, Gilyak, the Tibetans and some other Northern Chinese etc.

- 2) **The Arctic or Eskimoid:** These people are found in Northern Asia, the Arctic coast of North America, Greenland, Labrador, and Western Alaska. The Eskimos, Chukchis, Kamtchadales, Yakuts, Samoyedes, etc., represent this sub-race. They have mesocephalic to brachycephalic head, narrow but prominent nose, complete epicanthic fold, small hands and feet, large trunks and relatively short legs.
- 3) **Indonesian-Malay Mongoloid:** This sub-race has a considerable admixture of Caucasoid and Negroid elements. Such people are distributed throughout Southern Asia. This type is further divided into two groups— Malay type and Indonesian type.
  - (a) **Malay type:** These people are found in Southern China, Indo-China, Burma, Thailand, Malay Peninsula, Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Japan, etc. The Mongoloid features appear to be stronger in the Malay type than in the Indonesian type.
  - (b) **Indonesian type or Nesiot:** This type is found in Southern China, Indo-China, Burma, Thailand, etc. The physical features include red-brown to medium brown skin colour, wavy hair, mesorrhine nose but having narrow high and long features. Face is narrower, longer and more oval than the Malay type. The internal epicanthic fold which is common in the Malay type is less frequent.
- 4) **The American Indian or The Amerindian:** The American Indians are distributed in different areas of North, Middle and South America. Besides the Mongoloid features, racial elements from Caucasoid, Australoid and Negroid people are also present among them. The unique identifying features include yellow-brown to red-brown skin colour, straight to wavy hair form and sparsely distribution of body and facial hair, dolicho-mesocephalic or brachycephalic head, mesorrhine long nose with high bridge and convex profile, typical Mongoloid cheekbones with broad face, elevated eye-brow ridges and glabella, shovel-shaped incisors, medium prognathism, either internal or external epicanthic fold and thin lips.
  - (a) **Palaeo-Amerind:** This is an archaic South American race. They have been identified as Lagoa Santa type of Brazil, Ecuador, Orinoco, Botocudo, Buru, etc. They also live in the Eastern United States and Canada. They have reddish-brown skin colour, dolichocephalic head, long and narrow face and wavy hair.
  - (b) **Northern Amerind:** The North American Indians and the people of the Northern and Eastern Woodlands belong to this group.
  - (c) **Neo-Amerind:** This type is distributed in South America, Central America, and North American Plateau.

- (d) **Tehuelche:** This type lives in Patagonia, and probably the Onas of Tierra del Fuego constitute a branch of Tehuelche.
- (e) **North-West Coast Amerind:** They have lighter skin colour than any other Amerinds. They live in the North-West coast of North America and can be further distinguished into two sub-types: Northern type and Southern type: The Northern type is taller than the Southern type. Moreover, the Northern type has concave or straight nose while the Southern type has convex and high nose.

**Check Your Progress**

2) What are the three major races of the world?

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**7.2.4 A Comparative Account of Three Major Races**

Character	Caucasoid	Negroid	Mongoloid
1) Skin colour	Light reddish, white to olive-brown, some are brown	Brown to brown-black, some are yellow-brown	Light yellow to yellow-brown, some are reddish-brown
2) Head hair	Light blond to dark brown in colour, fine to medium in texture, straight to wavy in form	Brown-black in colour, coarse in texture, curly to frizzly or wooly in form	Brown to brown-black in colour, coarse in texture, straight in form
3) Body Hair	Moderate to abundance	Slight	Scanty distributed
4) Head form	Dolichocephalic to brachycephalic, height is medium to very high	Predominantly dolichocephalic, height is low to medium	Predominantly brachycephalic, height is medium
5) Face	Narrow to medium broad	Medium broad to narrow, prognathism is often present	Medium broad to very broad, cheekbones are high and flat.
6) Nose	Leptorrhine to mesorrhine, usually bridge is high	Platyrrhine, usually bridge is low	Mesorrhine to platyrrhine, usually bridge is low to medium
7) Epicanthic fold	Absence	Absence	Presence (internal, external or complete)

8) Stature	Medium to tall	Very short to tall	Medium to short
9) ABO blood group	Relatively high incidence of A <sub>2</sub>	Relatively high incidence of A <sub>2</sub> and B	Relatively high incidence of A <sub>1</sub> , very low frequency of A <sub>2</sub>
10) Rh factor	Highest frequency of Rh <sup>-ve</sup>	Moderate frequency of Rh <sup>-ve</sup>	Rh <sup>-ve</sup> is rare

### **7.3 UNESCO STATEMENT ON RACE**

It is accepted that race is classified on the basis of biological variations. These variations are purely biological in the sense that they are expressed as a result of his DNA constituents and environmental interaction. But sometimes people are often judged for being different and lead to discrimination for his appearance or characters. The human society without understanding the complexity of biological basis put up the notion of racial superiority and inferiority. As an example, dark skin colour was considered as inferior, and as a result of that, the white skin coloured individual often exploited and even used them as a slave. Such discrimination based on his/her physical looks, colour, behavior, etc. put forth the concept of racism. Racism involves the assertion that inequality is absolute and unconditional, i.e., that a race is inherently and by its very nature superior or inferior to others quite independently of the physical condition of its habitat and social factors (Comas, 1961). Such racism often creates chaos challenging the equality of being humans.

In this regard, UNESCO, in its general meeting of experts came up with the 'Statement on Race' and agreed that all races were mixed having both inter and intra racial variability. It is agreed that race is formed through evolutionary forces wherein genetic similarity or variation became an identity of each diverse group. These variations arise because of random mutation and the isolating factors bringing about racial differentiation by preventing intermingling of groups with different mutations, chiefly geographical for the main groups such as African, European, and Asiatic (UNESCO, 1953). The convention addressed that races are classified based on variation through the scientifically recognizable and measurable traits. The convention recommended using the word race for only anthropological classification of human variations, not to remark with the racial abuse or misuse. The convention put forth the followings statements to justify the views of racial discrimination:

- i) All humans living today belong to a single species, Homo sapiens, and are derived from a common stock. The concept of race is a completely anthropological term to classify human variation.
- ii) Human variation in the physical characters is an interplay of genetic and environmental factors. The evolutionary forces control population variation within the sapiens species.
- iii) Racial classification has nothing to do with national, religious, geographical, linguistic, and cultural groups, and the cultural traits of such groups have no demonstrated connection with racial traits.

- iv) There is no racial superiority or inferiority to the extent of human variation. The intra-racial variation is higher than the inter-racial variation.
- v) Most anthropologists do not include mental characteristics such as intelligence in their classification of human races. Such characters can be learned or acquired, for example, people of different races exposing to the same environment can acquire the intelligence and mental characteristics.
- vi) Genetic differences between races are of little significance in determining the social and cultural differences between different groups of men.
- vii) There is no existence of so-called 'pure' races. Race mixture is one of the processes of race formation, and race extinction or absorption is through intermingling between races.
- viii) Equality of opportunity and equality in law apply to all races.

**Check Your Progress**

3) How the races are classified?

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4) What is the UNESCO Statement on Race?

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**7.4 SUMMARY**

Race is a great division of mankind classified based on the varied morphological or physical characters. Since earlier times, anthropologists and other eminent scholars had tried to understand the extent of human variation based on somatoscopic characters like skin colour, hair form, etc. Even some scholars had used serological and genetic traits to classify the human races. In general, the human population has been divided into three major races: Caucasoid, Negroid and Mongoloid. Each major race has unique identifying characters to identify and have spread all over the world. According to the UNESCO Statement of Race, there is no superiority or inferiority race, all humans are equal. These varied characters employed for racial classification is completely biological in the sense that these are the result of an inter play of genetic and environmental factors, wherein certain evolutionary forces act on it.

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**7.5 REFERENCES**

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## **7.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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- 1) Race in genetic context is a population that differs in the frequency of some gene or genes, which exchange or capable of exchanging genes across boundaries and separate it from other populations of the species.
- 2) a) **Caucasoid:** Characterised by light reddish white to olive-brown skin colour, moderate or abundance body hair, dolichocephalic to brachycephalic head, leptorrhine to mesorrhine noses, medium to tall stature, relatively high incidence of A<sub>2</sub> and Rh-ve blood groups.  
b) **Negroid:** Characterised by brown to brown-black skin colour, curly to frizzly or woolly hair form, predominantly dolichocephalic head, prognathism, platyrrhine nose, very short to tall stature, relatively high incidence of A<sub>2</sub> and B blood groups and moderate frequency of Rh-ve blood group.  
c) **Mongoloid:** Characterised by light yellow to yellow-brown skin colour, straight hair, scanty body hair, predominantly brachycephalic head, face broad with prominent cheekbones, mesorrhine to platyrrhine nose, epicanthic eye fold, medium to short stature, relatively high incidence of A1 blood group and Rh-ve blood group is rare.
- 3) Races are classified purely on the basis of biological variation. Those having more or less similar characters are grouped together. These variations are because of the interaction of genetics and environment in which the evolutionary forces act on it.
- 4) All humans living today belong to a single species, Homo sapiens, and the variation among them is because of evolutionary forces. There is no racial superiority and inferiority; hence, all humans have equal rights and opportunities.