

The village council performed a variety of tasks, including the maintenance of law and order, settling of disputes, celebrations of festivals and construction of roads, bridges, and tanks.

The village community consisted of hierarchical groups, each with its own rights, duties and privileges. The castes at the top had power and privileges which were denied to the lower castes. The lower castes were tenants, servants, landless labourers, doctors, and clients of the higher castes. There was competition among the former to be clients of the rich and powerful patrons while the latter wanted to have as many clients as possible. The patron had duties towards clients and *vice versa*. The caste system together with the inequalities of landownership produced a deeply stratified society, but that did not prevent the village from functioning as a community. Conflict and cooperation went together. In recent years the lower castes have shown an increasing desire to free themselves from the control of the locally dominant caste. This has been assisted by political forces operating from higher levels. The Una-Movement (Gujarat) of the scheduled caste is quite significant from the social point of view which may affect the state and national politics.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN INDIA

The physical characteristics of the Indian population vary from region to region. The population of India consists of several racial strains varying from the Negrito to the Nordic (Caucasoids). Some of the anthropologists like H. de Terra, A.C. Haddon, and P. Mitra regard India as the cradle land of humanity on the evidence of fossils. But most of the anthropologists agree that, in India, there had been the arrival of people in successive waves from the regions of Mediterranean, Central Asia, Mongolia, China, Tibet, and the South East Asia; Malaysia and Thailand (Fig. 13.2). Consequently, there are hardly any pure races; but rather a racial admixture in India. It is only in some remote areas where there are tribes that have maintained their aboriginal features that purity of race is visible. In the opinion of Prof. Ajjazuddin Ahmad, "Those who managed to drift into the isolated and remote parts of the subcontinent could preserve their original ethnic traits which remained by and large unaffected by the fresh waves of incursions witnessed along the main corridor of movement connecting the Kabul Valley with the North Indian Plain". The Indian population has been classified by a number of scholars. Some of the important classifications are as follows:

Risley's Classification of Indian Races

Sir Herbert Risley, the Census Superintendent of India, 1901, made a pioneering effort and classified the Indian races into seven groups as follows:

1. Indo-Aryans

The Indo-Aryan tribes migrated into India from Central Asia. They are presently found in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan. Their main physical traits are tall stature, fair complexion, long arms, broad shoulders, and heavy to slim bodies. Their representative communities are the Rajputs, Khatri, and the Jats of northern India.

2. Dravidians

They are found particularly in South India (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu), Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, southern Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and southern Rajasthan. Their representatives are the Santhals of Chotanagpur Plateau, the Todas of Nilgiri, the Juangs of Odisha, the Gonds of Bastar, and the Bhils of Rajasthan. They were probably the ancient people of India,

but have been influenced by the admixture of Aryans, the Scythians (Ukrainians) and Mongoloid people. They are characterised by short stature, dark complexion, hairy bodies, curly hair, long heads, and broad nose.

3. The Mongoloids

They are found in the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan regions stretching from Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir) to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and the Hill states of North East India. They are of short stature, yellow in complexion, have medium broad nose, flat face, and oblique eyes with an epicanthic fold. Their representatives are the Kinnets of Lahul-Spiti and Kullu, the Lepchas, and Bhutias of Sikkim, and the Tharus of the Tarai region of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

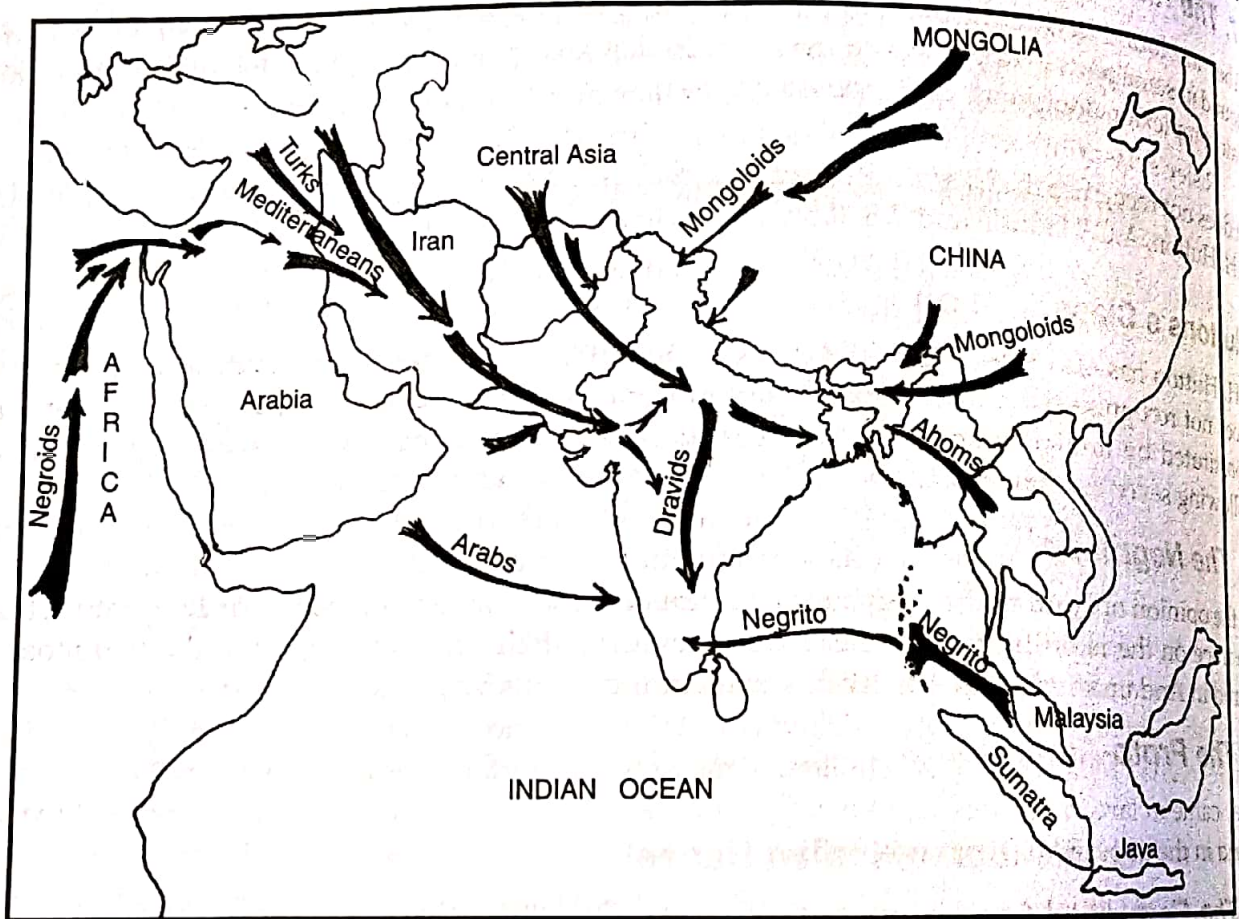


Fig. 13.2 Arrival of Various Racial and Ethnic Groups in India

4. Aryo-Dravidian

It is an amalgamation of the Aryans and the Dravidians. This group is found in parts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. Their elements are present in both the lower and the upper castes of Brahmins and the scheduled castes. Their complexion varies from light brown to black and they have long head, short stature, and medium to broad nose.

5. The Mongolo-Dravidians

They are an intermixture of the Mongoloids and the Dravidians. They are mostly found in West Bengal and Odisha (Brahmins and Kayastha). Their characteristics include broad head, dark complexion, flat nose, short to medium stature, and plentiful hair on face.

6. *The Scytho-Dravidians*

They are an admixture of the Scythians and the Dravidians. Some of the anthropologists hold that the Sakas belong to the Scythian race which came to India from Central Asia. They settled in the Sind Province of Pakistan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The Scythian features are pronounced in higher castes, while the Dravidian features are associated with the lower strata of society. The Marathas are considered to be the representatives of the Scythian-Dravidian race. Their main features are low stature, long head, moderate nose, light brown to fair complexion, and scanty body hair.

7. *The Turko-Iranian*

They are found in Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Their representatives are the Pathans who are found in some parts of north-west India as a minority group. They are well built, tall statured, with fair complexion, long head, and moderate to narrow nose.

Risley's classification of Indian races is largely based on languages rather than on physical traits. It does not recognise the Negrito element in Indian population which has been duly recognised by J.H. Hutton, A.C. Haddon and B.S. Guha.

Hutton's Classification

J.H. Hutton has also based his racial classification of India on the Census findings. However, he does not recognise India as the cradle land of humanity and holds that all the races of India are constituted by foreign immigrants. On the basis of chronological order, he has recognised the following seven races in India:

1. *The Negritoes*

In the opinion of Hutton, the Negritoes were the oldest inhabitants of India, but have left virtually no trace on the main land of the subcontinent. Some of the representatives of the Negritoes are found in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and among some of the Nagas.

2. *The Proto-Australoids*

They came in large numbers and spread in different parts of the country. Their representatives are found in the aboriginal peoples of India.

3. *The Early Mediterraneans*

The Early Mediterraneans reached South India where their representatives are still found in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. They are also found in the tribal belt stretching from Gujarat to West Bengal. They have medium stature, brown to black complexion, and slight built.

4. *The Advanced Mediterranean*

They are the early Dravidian people who were associated with the Indus Valley Civilisation. They were the Pre-Aryan people who mingled with the Aryans. They were taller and fairer than the Early Mediterraneans. They spread over Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

5. *The Alpines or the Pre-Vedic Aryans*

The Pre-Vedic Aryans are found in both Gujarat and West Bengal.

6. The Nordics or the Vedic Aryans

They came to India during the second millennium BC. Their elements are found in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and western Uttar Pradesh among the higher castes. Their main physical traits are fair complexion, tall stature, and sharp nose.

7. The Mongoloids

The Mongoloids are mainly found in the Himalayan and Sub-Himalayan belts. They have modified Mongoloid features like light yellow colour, oblique eyes, short stature, and flat face.

Guha's Classification

Dr. B.S. Guha, the Ex-Director of the Anthropological Survey of India, has based his racial classification of India on physical measurements carried out by him during the Census operation of 1931. His classification of Indian races is considered as the most authentic. He has recognised the following six racial groups in India (Fig. 13.3):

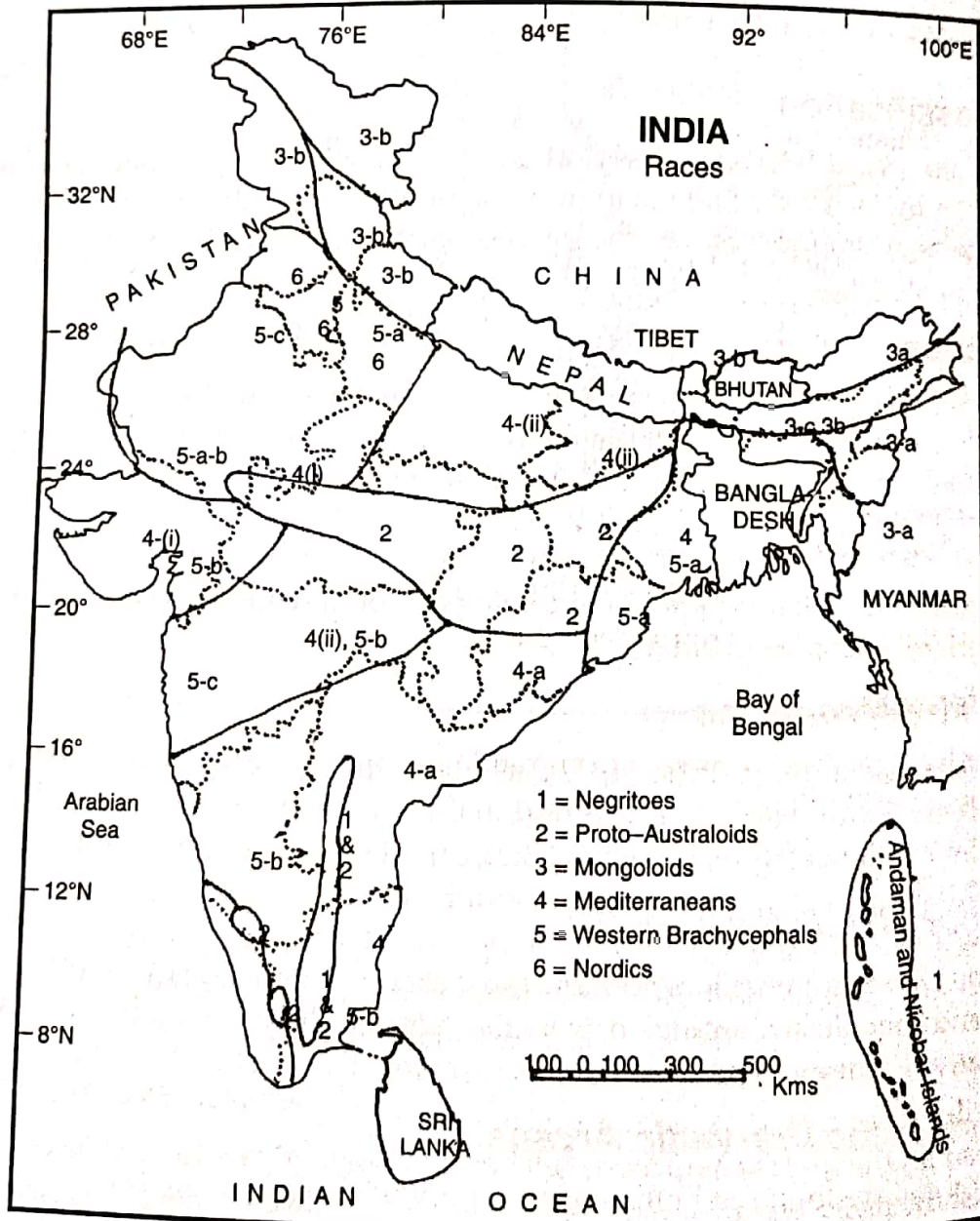


Fig. 13.3 Major Races

1. The Negritos

Most probably, the Negritos were the earliest arrivals in India. These are characterised by short stature (150 cm), frizzy-hair, bulbous forehead, flat nose, slightly protruding jaws, small chin, black skin colour, weak hands, and long arms. Their representatives are the Andamanese, Nicobaris, and the Irulas, Kadars, Kanikkars, Muthaiwans, Paniyans, Puliyaans, Uralis living in the hills of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. The Angami-Nagas have also been considered as having some of the traits of the Negritos. Their arrival in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Jarawa, Ongs, Sentinelese, Shompen, etc.) is believed to be from the Peninsula of Malaysia. In appearance, culture, and traditions, they are very close to the Semangs and Sakais tribes of Malaysian Peninsula.

2. Proto-Australoids

After the Negritos, the Proto-Australoids entered the Subcontinent of India, most probably from Australia. Their representatives are found among the Bhils, Chenchus, Hos, Kurumbas, Mundas, Santhals, and Yeruvas. Their common physical traits are dark brown to black-brown complexion, broad nose, wavy to curly hair, short stature, and thick everted lips.

3. Mongoloids

The Mongoloids reached India from China, Mongolia, Tibet, Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar in about the first millennium BC. They occupied the Ladakh Division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan belts, and the North Eastern states of India.

Dr. B.S. Guha has recognised two sub-groups of Mongoloids: (a) Palaeo-Mongoloid and (b) Tibeto-Mongoloid. The Palaeo-Mongoloid are the most primitive type which have long heads, medium stature, light brown colour, medium nose, oblique eyes, and scanty hair on body. Their representatives are found in the sub-Himalayan region, particularly Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Indo-Myanmar (Burma) border districts. Their representatives are Daflas, Garos, Kacharis, Khasis, Kuki-Nagas, Lalung, Machi, Miris, and Tipperas.

The Tibeto-Mongoloids are found in Bhutan, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand. Their typical features are long stature, light yellow colour, hairy body, oblique eyes, long nose, and flat face. The Bhutias, the Gorkhas, the Ladakhis, the Kinnauris are the representatives of the Tibeto-Mongoloid racial group.

4. The Mediterraneans

They came to India in successive waves from the Mediterranean region. Dr. Guha has identified three sub-groups of the Mediterraneans, namely, (i) Palaeo-Mediterranean, (ii) Mediterranean, and (iii) Oriental Type.

- (i) **Palaeo-Mediterraneans** The oldest group is the Palaeo-Mediterranean. They are characterized by medium stature, long and narrow head, long face, short and medium nose, and brown complexion. Perhaps they entered the subcontinent during the Neolithic Period and were pushed into the area south of the Vindhyan Mountains in areas of isolation and relative isolation.
- (ii) **The Mediterraneans** The Mediterraneans have medium stature, olive brown complexion, long head and long-broad open eyes. They are found in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Kerala.

- (iii) **The Oriental Mediterraneans** The Oriental Mediterraneans were one of the last to enter India. Most of their physical traits are common, but they are distinguished by long and convex nose and fair complexion. They are limited to Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, and southern parts of Uttarakhand (district Hardwar and Udham Singh Nagar).

5. The Western Brachycephals

Dr. Guha has classified them into three sub-groups:

- (a) **Alpinoid (the Pre-Vedic Aryans)** They entered the Indus Valley and spread in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Later on, they entered the Gangetic Valley and reached up to West Bengal and Odisha. They are characterised by medium stature, round face, prominent nose, straight long hair, and fair complexion.
- (b) **Dinarics** The Dinarics followed the Alpinoids and reached Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They are characterised by long stature, brown complexion, long face, and sharp nose. They have mixed with Alpinoids. Their main representatives are the people of Kathiawar and Kurg (Karnataka).
- (c) **The Armenoids** The Armenoids came to India from Armenia. They are characterised by medium stature, broad head, long nose, and hairy body. Their main representatives are the Parsis of Mumbai and Gujarat.

6. The Nordics

The Nordics or the Vedic Aryans were the last to reach the subcontinent of India from the north-west about the second millennium BC. They overpowered the Dravidians and established their stronghold in the Northern Indian Plain (Aryavarat or Madhydesa). Later on, they reached South India and founded their great kingdoms. Their main physical traits are tall stature, long head, long face, blue or black eyes, and blond hair. Their representatives are found in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, western Uttar Pradesh, and Southern Uttarakhand among the upper castes of Rajputs and Brahmins. They have locally intermixed with other races and ethnic groups in West Bengal and Maharashtra.

Although Guha's classification of Indian races and ethnic groups is considered as the most reliable one, in the contemporary world there has been too much intermingling of blood. The areas of isolation and relative isolation have been connected by roads with the national and state highways which have resulted in more intimate interaction of the people of different races, religions and castes. Under the changed cultural milieu of the 21st century, there are hardly any isolated groups which are the true and typical representatives of their races and ethnic groups. The division of people in the racial, ethnic and caste groups, leads to sub-nationalism which may go against the national interest and may retard the process of national integration.