Genetics of Castes and Tribes of India: Somatometry

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ABSTACT The discipline of human population biology incorporates study of biology and environmental factors, as well as the forces of micro-evolution leading to macro-evolution which ultimately influence the biological structure of human populations. The unit of study in understanding variations in man is a 'breeding population' some times also referred to as 'Mendelian population'. India is inhabited by people of great diversity, different creeds and customs forming what may be designated as multiple (or plural) society. There are about 3000 castes in India, some have genesis in tribal stock while others are occupational, linguistic, religious and territorial entities. Each caste is a social unit or what may be called 'monopolistic guild' in itself. All these groups are not entirely independent; usually people belong to two or more of such groups at the same time. India is a country with distinct geographical entity and is marked off from rest of Asia by both mountains and sea. Indian sub-continent may be divided into four natural regions: (1) The Himalayan Mountain Complex, (2) The Indus-Ganga-Brahmaputra Plains, (3) The Peninsular Plateau and (4) The Islands. The climate of India has many regional variations determined by locations, altitude, distance from the sea or the mountains and the general relief. India is divided into eight climatic regions based on the monthly value of temperature and precipitation. India is a Union comprising 25 States and 7 Union Territories and these may be categorised into six zones (North, West, East, Central, South India and Islands). Himalayan region may be divided into three divisions (Western, Central and Eastern Himalayan Regions). The present paper aims at investigating first the variation in the people of India in *regional* (Natural Regions of India, Climatic Regions of India, Political Divisions of India), *ethnic* (castes, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, communities), *traditional occupational* and *linguistic groups* and *families* with the help somatometry measurement and indices. Second, to study the variation with the help of biostatistics methods in the region, ethnic groups and linguistic groups. The basic data were collected from the literature and it was categorized in regional, ethnic, occupational and linguistic groups and coded accordingly for the analysis on computer.