

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

WHAT IS RACE? WHAT ARE THE BASIS FOR DIVISION OF VARIOUS RACES OF THE WORLD?

- Race is different from Ethnicity. Race is the division of people on the basis of physical characteristics whereas Ethnicity is often associated with cultural characteristics of the various racial groups.
- Definition of Race:
 - ✚ According to Vidal de la Blache: “a race is a great division of mankind, the members of which though individually vary, are characterized as a group by certain body characteristics as a group by certain body characteristics which are transmitted by nature & retained from one generation to another”.
- Race is thus, a group of people of common ancestry, distinguished from others by physical characteristics, such as head width, hair type, colour of eyes and skin, stature, etc.
- Race has its origin in 1490–1500.
- It is derived from the French/ Italian word Razza meaning uncertain origin.
- **BASES OF CLASSIFICATION OF RACES:**
 - **Cephalic Index**: It is also known as cranial index. It is the ratio of the maximum width of the head of an organism (human or animal) multiplied by 100 divided by its maximum length. It is first used by Swedish professor of anatomy Anders Retzius (1796–1860) in physical anthropology to classify ancient human remains found in Europe.

$$\text{C.I} = \frac{\text{Width of head}}{\text{Length of head}} \times 100$$

Cephalic Index can be of three types:

- ✚ **Dolico Cephalic** : These are long headed people with cephalic index of less than 74mm. Eg. Negrito, Negro.
 - ✚ **Meso Cephalic**: These are moderate headed people with cephalic index ranging from 75 to 80mm. eg. Australoid people, Nordic People, Mediterranean people, etc.
 - ✚ **Brachy Cephalic**: These are round headed people with cephalic index above 80 mm. Eg. Mongoloid people.
- **Nasal Index**: The nasal index is the ratio of nasal breadth to nasal length. It varies greatly among different anthropological groups and in different climate zones. **Nasal index** is mathematically expressed as follows:

$$\text{Nasal Index} = \frac{\text{Nasal width}}{\text{Nasal height}} \times 100.$$

- **Hair Index**: In racial classification, the characteristics of hair, viz., hair form, colour, texture and abundance have been most frequently observed. All these hair traits are well defined and classified by anthropologists. Hair curls/ cross section help to differentiate among various races across the world. According to this, hair types can be of three types:
 - ✚ Ulotrichi: Curly, wooly hair. Eg. Negro
 - ✚ Cymotrichi: Wavy hair. Eg. Caucasus
 - ✚ Leotrichi: Straight hair. Eg. Mongoloid.
- **Colour of the skin**: It is an important way to understand the different races of the world. Skin colour can be dark, chocolate, black, wheatish, white, spotted white to yellow. Griffith Taylor divided races on the basis of the above mentioned indices where skin colour plays a prominent role.
- **Height/ Stature**: different races of the world have different height depending on their evolution and adaptation process.
- **Forehead Index**: It is also known as latitudinal Index. It also helps in segregation of races.