

ON A GENETICS-BASED STUDY OF THE INDIAN POPULATION COMPOSITION

Possible Implications of a Reconstruction of Indian Population History

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A reconstruction of the history of the Indian population, based on a study of entire genomes of individuals selected to represent the breadth of social, linguistic and geographical diversity of India, and employing some novel statistical methods, was recently published in "Nature". The present-day Indian population is of mixed descent, descended, in the main, from two distinct prehistoric entities, the Ancestral South Indians (ASI), and the Ancestral North Indians (ANI). The manner in which these two entities might have arisen through migrations in the prehistoric past is speculated on in this article even while adhering to the specifics of the genetics-based findings. The authors of the "Nature" article suggest that the origin of "caste" may be coeval with the in-migration of the ANI. We argue, however, that because the ANI-ASI admixture is both intensive and extensive, caste could have only a somewhat later origin than the original mixing events.
