

Diversity of Indian Society

Unity in Diversity

The phrase “Unity in Diversity” refers to harmony and peace. It is employed among various groups to ensure that tolerance is uniform. Caste, creed, race, and nationality are all examples of diversity. Physical, cultural, linguistic, and political differences are also included in unity in diversity.

It educates all humans and living beings to unify and find methods to bond with one another despite their differences. This will create an environment in which individuals can coexist harmoniously. “Unity in Diversity” is a long-standing concept that may be traced back to Western and Eastern traditions.

Unity in Diversity in India

The existence of oneness despite numerous distinctions is the meaning of unity in variety. India is one of the excellent examples one can learn to understand the concept of Unity in diversity. We can clearly observe that people of all religions, creeds, castes, dialects, cultures, lifestyles, dressing sense, faith in God, rituals of worship, and so on coexist peacefully under one roof, i.e. in one country of India. We can never forget the liberation movements led by Indians of all faiths, religions and castes to establish India as an independent country. In India, the struggle for freedom is a magnificent example of unity in diversity.

India is the world’s largest and most populous country, home to people of various religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Christianity, and Parsees, all of which believe in the same Dharma and Karma doctrine. Indian society is god-fearing by nature, believing in soul purification, reincarnation, salvation, heaven’s luxury, and hell’s punishments. People here celebrate their religious holidays (Holi, Diwali, Eid, Christmas, Good Friday, Mahavir Jayanti, Buddha Jayanti, Ganesh Chaturthi and so on) in a very peaceful manner, without causing harm to other religious people.

In India, Hindi is the mother tongue, but many other dialects and languages are spoken by people of various religions and regions (such as English, Urdu, Sanskrit, Bhojpuri, Bihari, Punjabi, Marathi, Bengali, Odiya, Gujarati, Malayali, Kashmiri, and so on); however, everyone is proud to be a citizen of great India.

The story of India's unity amid variety is remarkable because it conveys a clear message that the country is more powerful than any religion or community in particular. Around 1.3 billion people live in harmony and contentment. With the world's second-largest population of numerous ethnic and religious groupings, India is now the most important secular country, with a distinct character of unity in diversity.

MEANING OF DIVERSITY

The term diversity is the opposite of uniformity. Uniformity means similarity of some sort that characterizes a people. 'Uni' refers to one; 'form' refers to the common ways. So when there is something common to all the people, we say they show uniformity. When students of a school, members of the police or the army wear the same type of dress, we say they are in 'uniform'. Like diversity, uniformity is also a collective concept. When a group of people share a similar characteristic, be it language or religion or anything else, it shows uniformity in that respect. But when we have groups of people hailing from different races, religions and cultures, they represent diversity. D.N. Majumdar wrote a book titled, Races and Cultures of India. Mark the words in the plural: Races (not Race); Cultures (not Culture). Thus, diversity means variety. For all practical purposes, it means a variety of groups and cultures. We have such a variety in abundance in India. We have here a variety of races, religions, languages, castes and cultures. For the same reason, India is known for its sociocultural diversity.

MEANING OF UNITY

Unity means integration. It is a social psychological condition. It connotes a sense of one-ness, a sense of we-ness. It stands for the bonds which hold the members of a society together. There is a difference between unity and uniformity. Uniformity presupposes similarity, unity does not. Thus, unity may or may not be based on uniformity. Unity may be born out of uniformity. Durkheim calls this type of unity mechanical solidarity. We find this type of unity in tribal societies and traditional societies. However, unity may as well be based on differences. It is such a unity which

Durkheim describes as organic solidarity. This type of unity characterizes modern societies.

The point to note is that unity does not have to be based on uniformity. Unity, as we noted earlier, implies integration. Integration does not mean an absence of differences. Indeed, it stands for the ties that bind diverse groups with one another.

DIVERSITY OF INDIAN SOCIETY

India is a vast country and represents a blend of different castes, regions, religions, cultures, people and traditions. People have different tastes, eating habits, languages, dresses and dialects across the country yet share common sentiments of being Indian. The feeling of patriotism and nationalism are common feelings which exist irrespective of any differences. Diversity can be witnessed in almost all spheres of the country.

Some of the forms of Diversity in India are discussed below –

Geographical Diversity:

The physical features of India consist of numerous beautiful rivers, dry deserts, evergreen forests, fertile plains, long coastal lines and lofty mountains. Some regions of the country are considered to be the most fertile regions in the whole world, whereas some regions are so unproductive that you can hardly grow anything on them.

India is basically divided into four regions, namely the Himalayan region or the northern mountains that include regions like Kashmir, Sikkim, Bhutan, Kangra and much more. The second region is the northern plain that consists of major river systems of the country like the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and their tributaries. This region is the most fertile and productive region in the whole country. The third region consists of the plateaus of Central India and Deccan, and the fourth region lies between the Arabian

Sea and the Western Ghats. With these four regions, India is known for having one-fifth of the total population of the whole world and the statistics are hiking day by day.

Climatic Diversity:

You can see diversity from the point of climate as well because some regions face blazing heat and some places enjoy tropical climates all around the year. Also, the monsoons are not uniform across the country because places like Meghalaya receive the highest amount of rainfall, whereas places like Rajasthan get hardly any rainfall. Pilfering winter is felt in the Kashmir region for more than six months, whereas places like Kerala never experience such cold at any time. Due to this diversity in the climate of India, you can see a variety of flora and fauna in the country.

For example, Ladakh in the Eastern part of Jammu Kashmir remains covered with snow throughout the year therefore, very less vegetation is possible here, whereas places like Kerala are responsible for the cultivation of a host of spices like pepper, cloves etc.

Racial Diversity:

Other than the physical diversity, the presence of a variety of human beings makes India a beautiful place to live in. Beginning from the Neolithic and Paleolithic men who inhabited India since the remote past to the mongoloid type people that are found in places like Bhutan and Sikkim. The southern part of the country comprises Dravidians. The tall and fair complexion group called Indo-Aryans lives in the North Western part of the country and these races are becoming closer to each other day by day.

Apart from these, they were many other religions, like Persian, Greek, Muslims, Arabs etc., who came to India and settled here, leaving their pinch of culture and beliefs in the country.

Linguistic Diversity:

India has been called “a tower of veritable languages” or a “Museum of languages”. As people belonging to different religions and tribes are living in India, therefore there is a huge diversity in their languages also. More than 200 dialects and languages are used in this vast country but the main languages of India include Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Sanskrit and Kannada.

The Dravidian group speaks languages like Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada, whereas the Indo-Aryans speak languages like Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi, Gujarati and Punjabi etc. Sanskrit is considered to be the sacred language by all the sections in the entire country irrespective of race, rank, and creed because it is considered to be the original source of various languages like Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali etc. India’s schools teach approx. 58 different languages.

Religious Diversity:

You can find the entire world in a single country as people belonging to different religions are living in India. Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and Christianity are the main creeds found in India. These religions have their subdivisions like the Hindu religion is split up into Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Puranic Hinduism, etc. Religions such as Persian and Zoroastrianism are also spread across India.

Diversity in Worshipping

Lord Vishnu and Shiva are worshipped in the north, whereas the people in the south are more attracted towards the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The stories of Ram and Krishna are sung with great devotion and respect in the southern regions of India.

The Vedas, the Gita, the cow and the Puranas are respected equally across the whole country.

Also, the rivers such as Saraswati, Narmada, Kaveri, Ganga and Yamuna are also considered to be sacred.

This shows that there is religious unity among the people and no religion is considered to be inferior here.

Social and Cultural Diversity:

India is known for its civilization and culture all over the world. There is diversity in literary ideas, philosophies, conventions, and literature all over India. Another important aspect that shows the beautiful diversity of India is the different social and cultural beliefs that people carry. The people have different social habits in terms of their dresses, food habits, manners, dance forms and customs and celebrate different festivals in different parts of the country.

Cultural diversity can be seen in the form of religious beliefs, festivals, and modes of life. North, South, East and West parts of the country have carved their own cultural niches. The years of foreign rule and religious movements have gifted the ancient land of India with a rich culture of festivals, customs and social habits. Let's take a look at some of these:

Festivals – Some festivals are meant for particular communities, whereas some are celebrated and enjoyed all over India. The celebration of these hosts of festivals in India is a perfect glimpse of seeing Indian culture at its best. In a multicultural, multidimensional society like India, almost every day is a festival. People share and experience the distinctiveness of every festival and celebrate the spirit of oneness.

Food – Even Indian cuisine is very diverse and classified into various categories. There are various multi-cuisines and cooking styles that vary from region to region. People all over the world appreciate Indian food. Every region of India has its own forms of food. The cuisine of India can be divided into four categories: North Indian, South Indian, East Indian and Western Indian food.

Dance Forms – Diverse dance forms are being performed throughout the country, depicting religious beliefs and celebrations. Indian dance forms are broadly categorized into two major forms, namely, Classical dances and folk dances. Usually, Classical dances are related to spiritual content, whereas folk dances are performed during celebrations and happy events. The best thing about the diversity of dance forms is that they represent the culture and beliefs of a specific region.

Every state has its own native dance form and music. The most popular classical dance styles of India are Bharatnatyam of Tamil Nadu, Kathakali and Mohiniattam of Kerala, Odissi of Orissa, Kathak of Uttar Pradesh, Kuchipudi of Andhra Pradesh and Manipuri of Manipur.

In the end, it can be safely said that the rich diversity of India enriches our life and brings along harmony and prosperity to the nation. India reflects unity that expresses diversities of colour, language, culture, dress, and blood. Unity and Diversity in India go hand in hand. People live in harmony and peace in spite of having differences on the basis of language, colour and region etc. Therefore no matter if it's about festivals or music, India has got enormous diversity patterns. Apart from the diversity, India is a perfect example of the doctrine of one in many.