

Diversity In India



Key Terms

discrimination : to make an unjust distinction in the treatment of different categories of people

diversity : a variety
lifestyle : the way of living

monasteries : communities of monks living under religious vows

staple : main or important

tradition : a long-established custom or belief passed on from one generation to another

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We are similar in some ways and quite different from each other in some other ways. Age, physical abilities, gender differences, beliefs, religions and languages make us distinct and unique from each other.



DIVERSITY

✓ Diversity is the range of many people or things very different from each other.



✓ Differences help us to learn from one another and similarities help to share. India is an example of diverse cultures and traditions. Even though India shows diversity, we Indians are united.

✓ Both similarities and differences bring an interesting variety into our lives. Diversity is nature's way of grooming us to adjust, learn and co-exist.

REASONS BEHIND DIVERSITY

The reason behind the diverse nature of our country is its **geography**. India has mountains, rivers, thick forests and oceans. In olden times, the means of transport or communication were almost absent. Travelling from place to place was never easy.

✓ People took days or months to travel on horse back or camels and many times on foot. As a result, the people settled in a region and stayed on there for a long period of time. They developed their language, culture and traditions. This is how every region was rich in its art, literature and culture. Food habits were developed on the basis of food grown and spices used. For example, people living on the coasts were either fishermen or traders as the sea offered fish and business through waterways. So, fish became their staple diet along with rice, tapioca, coconuts and bananas.

This gave rise to a diverse culture of people of different states or regions. **The history of a place is the story of such generations that settled down in different places and enriched the culture and traditions.**

✓ Similarly, the climate of a place also gives rise to diversity. Climate influences clothing, food, dances, music and other aspects of human cultural life.

ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

✓ Economic differences between people mean the **differences in amount of money or wealth they have.**

People are rich if they have lots of money. People are poor if they have little money, which is not enough to give them food and a decent living.

The differences in the amount of money are visible in differences in clothes, lifestyle and even food habits. Economic differences lead to inequality, making some people rich and many poor.

SOCIAL DIFFERENCES

Caste system and gender bias are two major social

differences. They create inequality in the society. Caste system in India became an evil, when the society was divided into castes during ancient times. For instance, a person born into a cleaner's family could not rise to the position of a teacher.

✓ After independence, our government made laws to show that all human beings are born equal and they should enjoy equal opportunities. But, even today in many villages and towns the evil of caste system is followed.

There is another evil in Indian society - **discrimination against the girl child**. A girl child is treated like a burden. Even today, in villages and also in some towns, the birth of a girl child is not welcomed.

This is called gender bias. Now, the government has made laws to protect the girl child and stop gender discrimination.

Multiple Choice Questions (Quick Revision)

Tick (✓) the correct options.

1. Diversity is nature's way of grooming us to adjust, learn and
- (a) co-exist (b) co-educate
- (c) co-operate
2. The geography of our country is an important factor behind our
- (a) unity (b) diversity
- (c) tradition

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

How?



Why?



Rise In Mixed Influences

Unity amongst people living in different regions or states came along slowly. To begin with, **natural disasters** like **droughts** or even **wars**, **forced people to leave their homes and settle down in new places**. A new place gave them a new lifestyle and challenges. But, they adjusted well by learning and teaching. This gave rise to a mixed bag of new cultures.

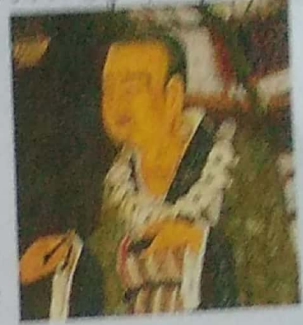
Influence Of Foreigners

History is the story of the past. **Indian history** tells us about **foreign influences** that added to our diversity.

India was visited by foreign students like **Hieun Tsang** and many others. These foreigners brought their own culture and tradition with them. **They influenced our culture and we influenced theirs**. Their **religions, languages and dresses** were introduced in our land. Urdu language was born

from the blend of Hindi and Persian languages.

Food and architecture showed the same influence. **Mughlai food** and the **architectural wonders** like the **Taj Mahal** are proofs of **Persian influences**.

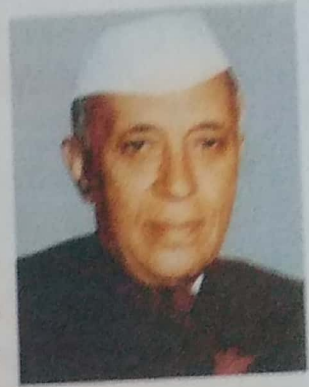


Hieun Tsang

Freedom Struggle

India's freedom struggle is the best example of unity in diversity.

In fact, **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru** was the one who gave the slogan **Unity In Diversity** which describes India most beautifully. Our **National Flag**, **National Anthem**, **National Bird** and **National Flower** are all symbols of this unity.



Pt Jawaharlal Nehru

The British thought that because Indians were from diverse backgrounds they could be divided easily. **(Indians showed that diversity was not a weakness, but a source of their strength)** Despite different cultural, religious and regional backgrounds, Indian men and women came together in large numbers to fight for freedom. **(They marched and struggled together against the British rule.)**

Globalisation

The 20th century has shown a great deal of **progress in communication, technology and transport**. This has made it possible for us to overcome **geographical boundaries** and change our lifestyle. A global network has been formed that links **economies, societies and cultures**. Information and ideas are being spread across the world as a result of globalisation.

Kerala : A Case Study

Kerala is a narrow coastal state. It lies between the **Arabian Sea** and **Western Ghats** on the West

Multiple Choice Questions (Quick Revision)

Tick (✓) the correct options.

- India was visited by foreign students like
(a) Marco Polo (b) Hieun Tsang
(c) Pablo Picasso
- Information and ideas are being spread as a result of
(a) globalisation
(b) nationalisation
(c) industrialisation

Coast of India. This state is known for its wide range of vegetation. Rice, coconut and a variety of spices grow here. In fact, spices like clove, pepper and cardamom, have made this state an attractive place for traders since ancient times.

Jewish and Arab traders regularly came down to Kerala to trade in spices. Apart from this, cash crops such as tea, coffee, rubber and tapioca are also grown here. Cash crops are exported to other countries. They earn a good income for the state.

Fishing is also an important occupation and it supports a large part of the population. The fishing nets used here are called *cheena-vala*



Fishing In Kerala

(Cheen refers to China) as they look similar to the ones used by the Chinese. Even the frying vessel is called *cheenachatti*.

Kerala is an example of foreign influence. When we study the history of this state, we come to know that **Jews, Europeans and Arabs** came here to have trade relations. Slowly, they settled down and started spreading the teachings of their religions. Over a period of time, this added to the ethnic diversity of the state. St Thomas brought **Christianity** to Kerala. **Vasco-da-Gama, a Portuguese sailor**, also landed on the Kerala coast. He opened the doors to **spice trade between India and the Western world**. **Batuta, a Muslim Moroccan traveller**, has also written about Muslims living in Kerala. It is because of all these influences that people of Kerala practise a variety of religions.



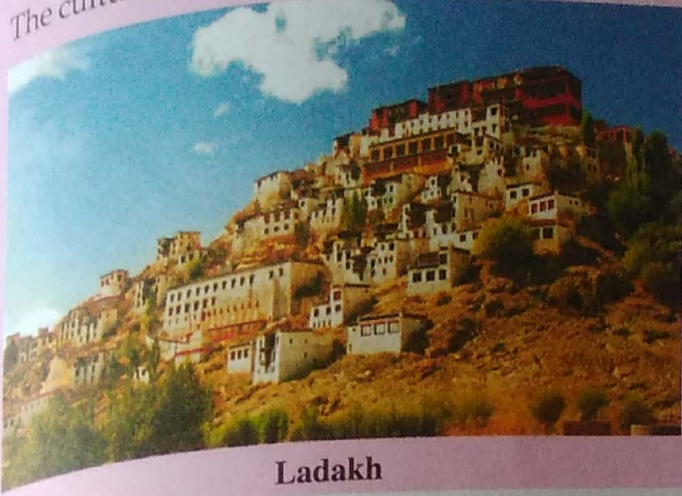
Scenic Beauty Of Kerala

Ladakh: A Case Study

Ladakh is a cold desert. It lies in the mountains in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir. There is no rainfall. Such desert conditions do not allow agriculture, though a few trees are able to grow in this cold desert. People depend on the melting snow during the summer months for drinking water.

The life of the people is difficult. **Wheat and barley** are the main crops grown here. **Apricots** are also grown and exported. People mainly depend on **sheep, goat, cow and yak** rearing. The sheep in this region are special because they produce **pashmina wool**. This wool is very costly. Pashmina shawls are made from it.

The wool from the sheep is collected by the people and sold to the Kashmiri traders. The Ladakh region has many passes through which caravans travel to Tibet. These caravans carry textiles, spices, raw silk and carpets. The culture of Ladakh is a mix of both Indian as



Ladakh

well as Tibetan tradition. Tibetan influence is visible in food, music and architecture. Therefore, 'Little Tibet' is another name for Ladakh.

Buddhism is the chief religion of the state. It is an interesting fact that Buddhism reached Tibet via Ladakh. It has a number of Gompas or Buddhist monasteries. Ladakh has a very rich oral tradition of songs and poems. The Tibetan national epic 'The Kesar Saga' is performed and sung by both Muslims and Buddhists.

Result Of Diversity

Diversity in India has given us a rich taste of life. Our languages, monuments, dresses and way of life clearly show a mixture of influences.

Points To Remember

- Diversity is the range of many people or things that are very different from each other.
- Diversity is nature's way of grooming us to adjust, learn and co-exist.
- Economic difference leads to inequality, making some people rich and many poor.
- The diverse nature of our country is due to its geography.
- Information and ideas are being spread as a result of globalisation.
- Diversity in India has given us a rich taste of life.

Exercise

[Use **Cordova Smart Class Software** on the **smart board** in class to do these exercises.]

Quick Revision

A. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) – Tick (✓) the correct options.

1. India is an example of
 - (a) a country unaffected by globalisation
 - (b) diverse cultures and traditions
 - (c) all of these
2. Economic difference leads to
 - (a) inequality, making some people rich and many poor
 - (b) inequality, making some people tall and many short
 - (c) none of these

B. Write (T) for true and (F) for false statements.

1. Caste system and gender bias create equality in the society.
2. Climate of a place gives rise to diversity.
3. India's freedom struggle is the best example of unity in diversity.
4. Persian language is born from the blend of Hindi and Arabic.

Answer The Following

A. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) – Tick (✓) the correct options.

1. The reasons for diversity are

(a) geography, history and climate

(b) history and climate

(c) climate and geography

2. Foreign influences added to our

(a) struggle

(b) diversity

(c) none of these

B. Short Answer Questions

1. What is diversity?
2. List four things that make us unique from others.
3. How did the government tackle the evils of caste system?
4. What is gender bias?

C. Long Answer Questions

1. What are the two factors that create differences in the society (with special reference to India)? How do these two factors create differences? Explain with examples.
2. What are the reasons behind India being a country with diversity?
3. How do the influence of foreigners contribute towards the diversity of a country?
4. What are the effects of globalisation on today's world?

D. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Question

Explain how the slogan 'unity in diversity' describes India beautifully.

E. Value Corner

Write about any social difference you have seen around you. How can you, as a student, attempt to reduce such differences?





Activity

- ◆ You must be having a best friend or a very close friend. Think about him or her and fill the following information along with your own.

	Self	Your Friend
Name		
Physical Appearance		
Favourite Food		
Favourite Festival		
Favourite Hobby		
Favourite Game		

Now, do you think both of you are similar or different?

- Make a chart comparing four states of India - one each from the north, south, east and west. Write how, despite their differences, the people of these states are similar. You may get some ideas from the following.

States	Location	Physical	Dressing Features	Food Style	Language	Festivals	Occupation
 Jammu & Kashmir	North						
 Kerala	South						
 Assam	East						
 Gujarat	West						

Surfing is Interesting

To know more about the diverse cultures of India, visit

http://india.gov.in/knowindia/culture_heritage.php

Life Skill

Imagine a place where everyone plays the same game, may be football, eats the same dish for every meal, uses the same colour for all their dresses, sings and hears the same song and even ties their hair in the same fashion. Write a story about a little princess who lives in such an environment.