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## Understanding Diversity

Our planet earth has an enormous variety of plants, animals, birds and insects. You must have visited a zoo and watched different kinds of birds and animals. They all are different in appearance, size, shape and other aspects. This is because mother nature has created diversity all around us in several forms. Diversity is the state of being different. It means different looks, opinions, beliefs, practices and means of expression. Diversity is natural, normal and inherent in life on earth. You must have looked around in your classroom, in a park, or say, a cinema hall. No two persons have the same look! Even the five fingers of your hand vary in size.

### ACTIVITY

Fill out the given information about yourself and exchange notes with your classmates.

Your favourite food

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Your favourite dress

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Your favourite teacher

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What do you find? Are there many similarities and differences (diversity) in the response?

All of us should tolerate and respect diversity. In our country people belong to different religions, castes and cultures. There are more than 1600 languages spoken in India. In food habits too, we are different. The people of Punjab prefer chapattis and dal whereas those of Bengal and Odisha prefer rice and fish; a South Indian would like to have dosa, vada or idli. A villager wears



There is an enormous variety of plants, animals, birds and insects on earth

dhoti and kurta whereas a town-dweller would like to dress in a pair of trousers and shirt.

### OUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

India has an ancient civilisation with a long history. The migration of people from various regions has been a vital factor in the development of cultural diversity. People from other cultures and civilisations brought with them their traditions, customs and lifestyles. Gradually these traditions got intermixed with the pre-existing traditions. Likewise, people from India have gone to different parts of the world and carried with them the Indian customs and traditions. Thus, in various fields such as art, music, dance, religion, language, etc., India has been influenced by the fusion of many cultures.

People following various religions, i.e., Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis, Jains etc., live in our country. India is



Temple



Church



Mosque



Gurudwara

a secular country. The Constitution of India guarantees to every citizen freedom to practise and propagate any religion and follow any mode of worship. Hindus pray in a Temple, Sikhs pray in a Gurudwara, Christians pray in a Church, Muslim offer Namaz in a Masjid (Mosque). People from different regions celebrate different festivals. Baisakhi is a popular festival in Punjab, Onam is celebrated in Kerala, whereas Holi, Diwali and Chhatha are celebrated with pomp and splendour in Bihar. The holy books of Hindus are the Ramayana, the Gita, the Vedas, Puranas etc. The holy book of Muslims is the Quran, that of the Sikhs is the Guru Granth Sahib. The holy book of Christians is the Bible. People belonging to various castes live in India. They are categorised into Upper Castes, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and OBCs (Other Backward Classes).

### WHAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY?

Historical and geographical factors influence the diversity of a region. The history of many places shows us how different cultural influences

#### RELIGIONS OF INDIA (%)

Hindus	- 80.44	Muslims	- 13.42
Christians	- 2.33	Sikhs	- 1.84
Buddhists	- 0.68	Jains	- 0.38
Others	- 0.65		

### Did you know?

Although Hindi is the official language, India is believed to have 1652 mother tongues, of which 33 are spoken by people numbering over a lakh.

have helped to shape life and culture there. Thus, regions became very diverse because of their unique histories. Diversity also comes into play when people adapt their lives to various climates. People living near the sea have different food habits, different ways of dressing from those living in plains or in mountainous regions. Bengaluru has a moderate climate; people hardly put on woollen dresses. Delhi has an extreme climate; people wear light cotton clothes in summer and woollen clothes in winter.

Let us try to understand this by comparing lives of people in different states. Punjab was the cradle of Harappan civilisation. The Aryans flourished there before moving to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Many races of people entered India from the north-west and settled in Punjab for good. They adopted the local culture and tradition. On the other hand, Bihar witnessed no such intermixing of people from different races and cultures.

Most of the Punjab gets moderate to little rainfall and soil is a mixture of sand and clay. Therefore, wheat is grown there on a large scale and the staple diet is chapatti and dal. On the other hand, most of Bihar gets moderate to heavy rainfall with floods during the monsoons. Soil has more clay content. Hence, paddy is grown there on a large scale and the staple diet is cooked rice.



Paddy field



## KERALA : A CASE STUDY

Kerala is a state in the South West corner of India. It is a narrow strip of land between the Arabian Sea and Western Ghats. Thousands of coconut trees and coconut palms cover the entire state. It is famous for its beautiful beaches.



Kerala has beautiful beaches

A number of spices like cloves, cardamoms and pepper are grown in the state. Its spices attracted the traders and the first to arrive were the Jews and the Arabs. Kerala was visited by St. Thomas, an apostle of Christ, 2000 years ago. He brought Christianity to Kerala.

Many Arab traders settled down in Kerala. Ibn Battuta visited Kerala seven hundred years ago and wrote a travelogue on Kerala. He described the lives of the Muslims and how well respected they were in the state. Vasco-Da-Gama, a Portuguese sailor, discovered the sea route to India from Europe and landed in Calicut in AD 1498.



Boat race in Kerala



Chinese fishing nets

In Kerala, the people of different religions live peacefully. The Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists have ethnic diversity, yet there is unity here. Onam is the main festival of Kerala celebrated by all. Christmas, Id and Vishu are other religious festivals. During Onam, the snake boat races are held in the backwaters of Alappuzha. They are a great tourist attraction.



Onam

Fishing is a flourishing industry and Chinese influence is also visible here. Fishing nets are called “Cheena-Vala” and a frypan a “Cheena Chatti”. **Cheena** means China.

People grow and eat rice, vegetables and, of course, fish. Rubber, tapioca, coffee are grown as cash crops.

Kathakali is a famous dance form of Kerala, famous all over the world. Mohiniattam is the classical dance form of Kerala. Kalaripayattu is a famous martial art form of Kerala.

The religious and cultural festivals of Kerala show the variety of life in the state.





A Kathakali dancer



A Mohiniattam dancer



Women of Kerala in traditional dress

### LADAKH : A CASE STUDY

Ladakh is a desert in the mountains in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir. It is divided into two districts – Leh and Kargil. It is surrounded by mountains : the Karakoram in the north, the Great Himalaya in the South, and by two other parallel chains, the Ladakh Range and the Zaskar range.



Ladakh has a beautiful landscape

It hardly receives any rain and is covered by snow for most part of the year. Agriculture is almost impossible. For drinking water people have to depend on melting of snows during summer.

People rear sheep. Sheep here are special as they produce **Pashmina** wool. This wool is very expensive. Ladakhis sell this wool to traders from Kashmir. Pashmina shawls are mostly made in Kashmir. The people eat meat and milk products like cheese and butter from the goats, cows, dzos (Yak-Cows) and sheep they rear.



People of Ladakh

Though Ladakh is a desert, it attracted traders because of its high passes. It was a resting point for travellers on the ancient trade routes to Central Asia and beyond. Caravans passed through Ladakh to Tibet carrying textiles, spices, raw silk and carpets.

Ladakh was also called Little Tibet. It is a Buddhist land and has great cultural affinity with Tibet. Buddhism reached Tibet through it. It is a land of monasteries (Gompas). The mural paintings in the monasteries decorate the wall with images of various aspects of Buddhism.

The main theme of Ladakh's traditional theatre is stories based on the life of Buddha. Some of the most famous fairs and festivals of Ladakh are : (i) **Losar** celebrated as their New Year ; (ii) **Shrey Shupla** is the harvest festival; (iii) Biggest summer festival is **Hemischeshu**; (iv) Local versions of the Tibetan national epic **Kesar Saga** are sung by both Muslims and Buddhists.



A monastery

It is an interesting fact that many of the annual festivals of Ladakh take place in winter. Lamas dressed in colourful dresses and wearing masks perform here. Long horns, cymbals, music and these colourful, musical performances attract people from far and near to see them.

### WHAT DOES DIVERSITY ADD TO OUR LIVES?

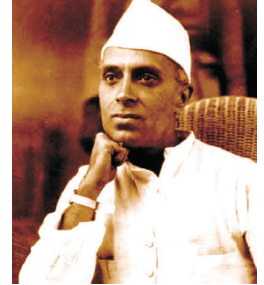
Diversity enriches our lives. It adds colour and spice to our existence. Imagine what life would have been without various kinds of animals, birds and flowers! We would not have so many delicious dishes, various fruits, vegetables and spices. We would not have had various kinds of music and dance forms. We Indians speak different languages, have various types of food, celebrate different festivals and wear several varieties of dress. Without diversity life would be boring, and less enjoyable. If all people followed a single profession, human life would not exist. Imagine, if all people were farmers, who would provide us with clothes, houses and medicine? Who would look after our health if there were no doctors? In the absence of barbers, who would give us a haircut! Therefore, diversity is also essential.

The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation) has played a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity concerns. UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was recently adopted by 192 member states. It emphasises that respect for cultural diversity and intellectual dialogue is the

best guarantee of lasting progress, peace and development.

### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The phrase "unity in diversity" was coined by our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. In his book, *The Discovery of India*, he emphasised that unity and integrity of India is inherent in its civilisation from the very ancient times. There is a cultural unity and continuity since the Harappan civilisation to the present age. He says, "*Indian unity is not something imposed from the outside but rather it was something deeper and within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.*"



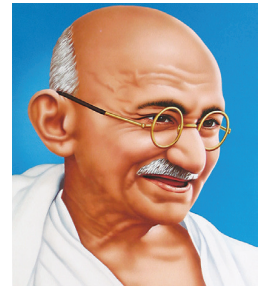
Pandit Nehru

### Did you know?

Two most famous books written by J.L. Nehru are :

- The Discovery of India
- The Glimpses of World History

During the freedom struggle, Indians from all walks of life joined hands to oppose the British rule. Citizens from all castes, religions and regions fought shoulder to shoulder under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to win freedom from the foreign rule. Even women came out on the streets.



Mahatma Gandhi

This unity was first seen during the Rebellion of 1857 which is rightly called 'The first war of national independence'. After the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar on 13 April, 1919, the whole of India stood as one nation to condemn the British atrocity. On that day, a large but unarmed crowd had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh, to protest against the arrest of some popular leaders. General Dyer, the military commander of Amritsar, ordered his

troops to open fire. Thousands were killed and wounded.

Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others fought unitedly against the British, sacrificed their lives and won freedom. Songs and symbols that emerged during the freedom struggle are reminders of our respect for diversity.

Thus, the freedom movement cemented Indian unity and integrity. Despite so many diversities, India is a shining example of unity in diversity. India is indeed like a garland containing flowers of various hues and colours.

### Did you know?

Our National Anthem was composed by Rabindranath Tagore while our National Song was composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay.

Our National Anthem is *Jana Gana Mana...*

Our National Song is *Vande Mataram...*

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

Rabindranath Tagore's song *Jana Gana Mana* was adopted by the Constituent Assembly as the National Anthem of India on 24th January, 1950. It was first sung on 27 December, 1911 at the Calcutta session of the Congress.

The anthem explains the diversity and unity of India.

*Jana-gana-mana-adhinayak jaya he  
Bharat-bhagya-vidhata.  
Punjab-Sindhu-Gujarat-Maratha  
Dravida-Utkala-Banga  
Vindhya-Himachal-Yamuna-Ganga  
Uchchala-jaladhi-taranga  
Tava subha name jage,  
Tava subha asisa mange,  
Gahe tava jaya-gatha,  
Jana-gana-mangal-dayaka, jaya he  
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.  
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,  
Jaya, jaya, jaya, jaya he!*

## Points to Remember

- Diversity means being different in look, dress, habits, lifestyle, habitat etc.
- India is a country of diversities – people of all castes, religions and races live here. The people respect and tolerate diversity.
- From diversity emerges unity. There is a kind of continuity and unity in our culture and tradition.
- Geographical factors like climate, soil type, topography, rainfall etc. promote diversity. Historical factors too contribute to diversity.
- Diversity makes our lives enjoyable and interesting.
- There is unity in diversity in India. This unity is eternal and inherent in our culture.
- The freedom struggle strengthened the unity as Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs; people from all walks of life fought together to free the nation.

## Glossary

<b>CIVILISATION</b>	: The society, culture, and way of life of people of a particular region.
<b>CLIMATE</b>	: Sum total of weather conditions of a place (temperature, rainfall etc) in a year.
<b>CULTURE</b>	: A collective word for lifestyle, behaviour, attitudes, food, dress, customs etc., of a group of people.
<b>DIVERSITY</b>	: The state of being different.
<b>DZO</b>	: Yak-cow
<b>INHERENT</b>	: Existing in something permanently.



## TIME TO LEARN

### A. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

- Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding diversity?
  - Diversity is the state of being different.
  - There is diversity all around us.
  - Diversity is natural, normal and inherent in the life on earth.
  - Diversity need not be tolerated or respected.
- Which of the following factors does not lead to diversity?
  - Migration of people from one region to another region.
  - People following various religions.
  - People having different nature and attitudes.
  - Historical and geographical factors.
- Which of the following statements concerning Kerala is incorrect?
  - It is located in the north-west of India.
  - It is famous for spices.
  - Ibn Battuta visited Kerala seven hundred years ago and wrote a travelogue on Kerala.
  - Kathakali and Mohiniattam are classical dances of Kerala.
- Which book is considered the national epic of Tibet?
  - Kesar Raga
  - Keser Saga
  - Losar
  - Shrey Shupla
- Choose the incorrect statement.
  - Diversity enriches our lives
  - Diversity adds colour and spice to our existence.
  - Diversity makes our life boring and monotonous.
  - Without diversity life would be boring and less enjoyable.
- Who coined the phrase 'unity in diversity'?
  - Mahatma Gandhi
  - Jawaharlal Nehru
  - Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
  - Vallabhbhai Patel
- Which UN Organisation has played a significant role in promoting cultural diversity?
  - ILO
  - UNESCO
  - UNICEF
  - FAO

### B. Match the following columns

Column A	Column B
1. Discovery of India	(a) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay
2. Baisakhi	(b) Sikhs
3. UNESCO	(c) Rabindranath Tagore
4. National Anthem	(d) An organ of the UN
5. National Song	(e) Jawaharlal Nehru

### C. Very short answer type questions

1. Define diversity.
2. What is the place of worship of Sikhs called?
3. Which is the most popular festival of the people of Kerala?
4. Who wrote our National Anthem?
5. When did the Jallianwala Bagh massacre take place?

### D. Short answer type questions

1. How does our diversity add colour to our life? [Value Based Question]
2. Describe the term 'unity in diversity' as coined by Jawaharlal Nehru. [HOTS]
3. Describe the geographical factors contributing to the diversified cultures of Ladakh and Kerala.
4. What happened in Amritsar on 13 April, 1919?
5. State two historical similarities between Ladakh and Kerala. How have they influenced the culture of both the regions?

### E. Long answer type questions

1. Explain the factors responsible for diversity.
2. Compare Kerala and Ladakh bringing out their social, economic and cultural diversities.
3. Describe the main reasons for diversity in India.
4. Who composed our National Anthem? How does it explain the diversity and unity of India?
5. Describe the positive and negative aspects of diversity.

### F. Project

Prepare a project report on India's diversity.

- Method :** (a) Describe regional diversity in food, dress, festivals, folk and classical dance forms.  
(b) Explain regional diversity in climate and physiography.  
(c) Explain how historical and geographical factors are responsible for India's diversity.  
(d) Explain views of various scholars on India's 'unity in diversity', particularly that of Jawaharlal Nehru.

### G. Activity

1. Make models of a church, gurudwara, temple and a mosque.  
**Hints :** Use clay/wood/thermocool sheets, cardboard, matchsticks, coloured papers etc.
2. Visit a temple, mosque, church and a gurudwara. Write a report on various modes of worship.

### LIFE SKILLS

- We should respect all religions as all of these are different paths leading to God and humanity. Make a list of teachings/principles which are common to all religions.
- Nature has created an enormous variety of plants, animals, birds and insects on earth. Do you think we should respect the diversity created by the nature? Explain how you will do it.