

Part II

Characteristics of diversity

Social Diversity

Social diversity can be seen in almost every social institution in our country. Let's take smallest unit of social institutions which is family. There are different types of families. Some families are small or nuclear families in which only parents and their children live together. Such families are mostly found in cities. Then we have joint families in which parents, their children, grandparents and other close relatives live together. Such families are mostly found in village. The caste system has created several unequal divisions in society. There are hundreds of castes and sub-castes in India today. People are identified according to the caste to which they belong.

Linguistic Diversity

In India, we have a diverse list of spoken languages. Of these, 22 languages are officially recognized. They are: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu.

Religious Diversity

India's oldest religion is Hinduism. India has also given birth to other religions like Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. Some religious customs are observed by the followers of various religions. For example, Hindu festivals like Holi and Diwali are celebrated by followers of various other religions also. Hindus go to temples, Muslims go to mosques, Christians go to churches and Sikhs go to gurudwaras to offer prayers. Hence, all these people do the same thing in different places.

Thus, we can say that the diversity in religion is about doing things differently and not doing different things

Economic Diversity

The geographical and climatic conditions generally determine the economic activities of a region. Different crops are grown in different regions depending upon the climate and soil of that region. This is the reason why the states lying in the northern plains grow mainly wheat where as southern states mainly grow rice. In the coastal states Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra, etc fishing is an important economic activity. Some regions are rich in minerals and ores.

Cultural Diversity

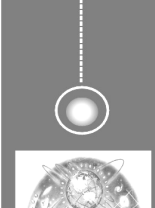
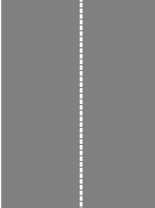
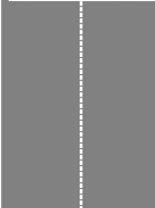
The environment and history of a place influences the beliefs and the way of life of its people. Almost every Indian state celebrates its harvest festival depending on the time of harvesting the crops in that region. Baisakhi in Punjab Onm in Kerala, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Makar Sankranti in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and Bihu in Assam are some such harvest festivals which are celebrated at different times but with the same purpose.

Regional Diversities

People in different regions dress differently like people living in cold regions wear woolen clothes whereas people living in coastal region wear light cotton clothes. The saree is commonly worn by women over India, but it is worn differently in various communities. A loose robe called phiran is worn by both men and women in Kashmir.

Unity in diversity:

India's diversity has always been recognized as a source of its strength. When the British ruled India women and men from different cultural religious and regional backgrounds came together to oppose them. India's freedom movement had thousands of people of different





backgrounds in it. They worked together to decide joint actions, they went to jail together, and they found different ways to oppose the British. Interestingly the British thought they could divide Indians because they were so different and then continue to rule them but the people showed how they could be different and yet be united in their battle against the British.

This song was sung after the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar** in which a British general opened fire on a large group of unarmed, peaceful people killing many and wounding even more. Men and women, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, rich and poor had gathered to protest against the British. This song was composed and sung to honor the memory of those brave people.

Songs and symbols that emerged during the freedom struggle serve as a constant reminder of our country's rich tradition of respect for diversity. It was used as a symbol of protest against the British by people everywhere. In this book the discovery of India Jawaharlal Nehru says that 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 practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged." It was Nehru, who coined the phrase, "unity in diversity" to describe the country.

Effects of Diversity

Today, each region of India has a distinct culture. These varied cultures have led to the growth of a common culture called Indian culture. No region of India is economically self-sufficient. Each region has to depend on others to fulfill its needs. In such a Scenario, a natural calamity like drought, flood or earthquake is less likely to affect the country as a whole because if the affected area faces scarcity of anything, it can easily secure its supply from the other states. Thus diversity makes our live easier and more comfortable.

