



# UPSC

# Mains

**Union Public Service Commission**

**Volume - 2**

**Indian Society & Social Justice**

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## Previous Year Questions

Year	Question
2025	How does smart city in India, address the issues of urban poverty and distributive justice?
2025	Does tribal development in India centre around two axes, those of displacement and of rehabilitation ? Give your opinion.
2025	Achieving sustainable growth with emphasis on environmental protection could come into conflict with poor people's needs in a country like India - Comment.
2025	Do you think that globalization results in only an aggressive consumer culture? Justify your answer.
2024	Why do large cities tend to attract more migrants than smaller towns? Discuss in the light of conditions in developing countries.
2024	Distinguish between gender equality, gender equity and women's empowerment. Why is it important to take gender concerns into account in programme design and implementation?
2024	Intercaste marriages between castes which have socio-economic parity have increased, to some extent, but this is less true of interreligious marriages. Discuss.
2024	What is regional disparity? How does it differ from diversity? How serious is the issue of regional disparity in India?
2024	Globalization has increased urban migration by skilled, young, unmarried women from various classes. How has this trend impacted upon their personal freedom and relationship with family?
2024	Critically analyse the proposition that there is a high correlation between India's cultural diversities and socio-economic marginalities.
2023	Does urbanization lead to more segregation and/or marginalization of the poor in Indian metropolises?
2023	Why is caste identity in India both fluid and static?
2023	Child cuddling is now being replaced by mobile phones. Discuss its impact on the socialization of children.
2023	What are the main features of Vedic society and religion? Do you think some of the features are still prevailing in Indian society?
2023	Explain why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society.
2023	Do you think marriage as a sacrament is losing its value in Modern India?
2022	Analyse the salience of 'sect' in Indian society vis-a-vis caste, region and religion.
2022	Are tolerance, assimilation, and pluralism the key elements in the making of an Indian form of secularism? Justify your answer.
2022	Explore and evaluate the impact of 'Work From Home' on family relationships.
2022	Why do large cities tend to attract more migrants than smaller towns? Discuss in the light of conditions in developing countries.
2022	Elucidate the relationship between globalization and new technology in a world of scarce resources, with special reference to India.
2021	How does Indian Society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it.

2021	Examine the uniqueness of tribal knowledge systems when compared with mainstream knowledge and cultural systems.
2021	Examine the role of 'Gig Economy' in the process of empowerment of women in India.
2021	What is Cryptocurrency? How does it affect global society? Has it been affecting Indian society also?
2021	Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail.
2020	Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian Society? Elaborate your answer with illustrations.
2020	Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation? Justify your answer.
2020	COVID-19 pandemic accelerated class inequalities and poverty in India. Comment.
2020	Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness? Argue.
2020	How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate your answer.
2020	Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree?
2019	What makes Indian society unique in sustaining its culture? Discuss.
2019	Do we have cultural pockets of small India all over the nation? Elaborate with examples.
2019	What are the challenges to our cultural practices in the name of secularism?
2018	The caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, the caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment
2018	How is the Indian concept of secularism different from the western model of secularism? Discuss.
2018	Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation. Argue by giving suitable illustrations.
2018	The women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata.' Substantiate your view.
2017	The spirit of tolerance and love is not only an interesting feature of Indian society from very early times, but it is also playing an important part at the present. Elaborate.
2017	Distinguish between religiousness/religiosity and communalism giving one example of how the former has transformed into the latter in independent India.
2017	In the context of diversity of India, can it be said that the regions form cultural units rather than the States? Give reasons with examples for your viewpoint.
2016	Has the formation of linguistic States strengthened the cause of Indian Unity?
2016	To what extent globalisation has influenced the core of cultural diversity in India? Explain.
2016	What is the basis of regionalism? Is it that unequal distribution of benefits of development on a regional basis eventually promotes regionalism? Substantiate your answer.
2015	Discuss the changes in the trends of labour migration within and outside India in the last four decades.
2015	Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, despite having divergent approaches and strategies, had a common goal of amelioration of the downtrodden. Elucidate.
2015	Describe any four cultural elements of diversity in India and rate their relative significance in building a national identity.

2015	Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India.
2015	Debate the issue of whether and how contemporary movements for assertion of Dalit identity work towards annihilation of caste.
2014	Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments.
2014	How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle class working woman in India?
2014	The life cycle of a joint family depends on economic factors rather than social values.
2014	How do the Indian debates on secularism differ from the debates in the West?
2013	Discuss the various social problems which originated out of the speedy process of Urbanization in India.
2013	“Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women’s organisations free from gender bias.” Comment.
2013	The growing feeling of regionalism is an important factor in the generation of demand for a separate state. Discuss.
2013	Critically examine the effect of globalization on the aged population in India.



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# 1

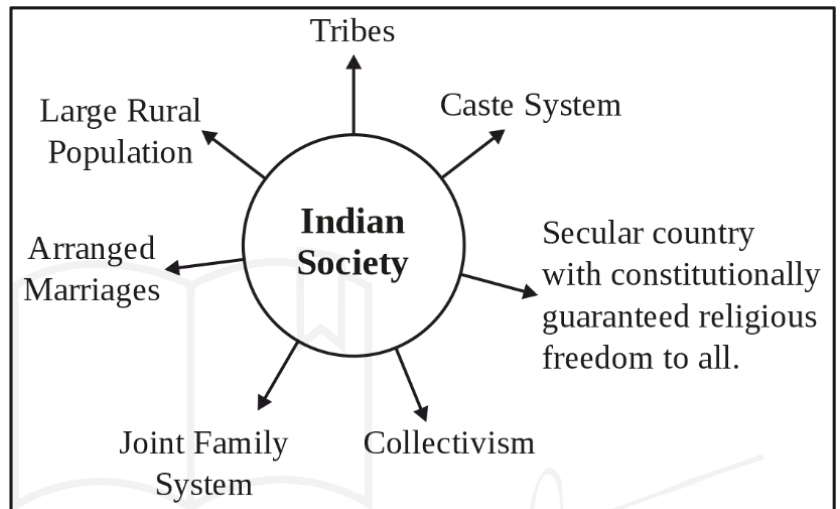
## CHAPTER

# Salient Features of Indian Society

Society refers to an organized group of individuals who live within a defined geographical area and share common elements such as culture, language, religion, values, and norms. These individuals interact with one another through established social institutions and relationships that guide behavior and maintain social order.

## Indian Society

Indian society is diverse, complex, and multi-layered, shaped by its long history, varied cultures, and social structures. It is characterized by pluralism in religion, language, and ethnicity, a strong emphasis on family and community bonds, and a hierarchical social organization influenced by traditions such as caste and kinship. At the same time, it exhibits unity in diversity, democratic values, and a capacity to adapt to social, economic, and technological changes.



## General Traits of Indian Society

- **Diversity:** India shows vast diversity in language, religion, culture, ethnicity, and geography. This diversity is deeply institutionalized and shapes everyday social life.
- **Family-Centric Nature:** Family is the central social institution in Indian society. It provides emotional support, economic security, and socialization, with family obligations often prioritized over individual choices.
- **Hierarchy:** Indian society has historically been hierarchical in nature. Social status was traditionally determined by birth, caste, and gender, leading to privilege for some and exclusion for others.
- **Respect for Elders:** Indian society places high value on age-based hierarchy. Elders are accorded respect, authority, and decision-making power, while disrespect is socially discouraged.
- **Cultural Syncretism:** Interaction among diverse cultures and religions has led to syncretic traditions. Shared rituals and practices, such as Bhakti–Sufi traditions, reflect cultural blending.
- **Centrality of Religion:** Religion strongly influences daily life, including routines, food habits, clothing, and festivals. It serves as both an identity marker and a moral framework across major religions in India.
- **Hospitality:** Hospitality is an important cultural value in Indian society. Guests are treated with warmth and generosity, reflecting collectivism and moral responsibility.
- **Secularism:** India follows the principle of secularism as a constitutional value. The state ensures freedom of religion, equal respect for all faiths, and maintains a principled distance from religious institutions.

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## **Key Features of Indian Society**

Indian society is characterized by unity in diversity, shaped by a rich blend of cultures, religions, languages, traditions, and social structures. Key features include:

- **Multi-Ethnic Composition** - It means a society made up of various ethnic groups with unique racial, cultural, and linguistic traits. This mix, like Indo-Aryans, Dravidians, Mongoloids, Tribals, and Europeans, boosts cultural richness but adds social complexity.
- **Linguistic Diversity** - It refers to the coexistence and everyday use of many languages within a society. In India, for example, there are 22 scheduled and 99 non-scheduled languages, which play a crucial role in shaping cultural identity, enabling political mobilization, and guiding the reorganization of states.
- **Religious Pluralism** - Religious diversity refers to the presence of multiple religions that shape a society's social life. In India, major religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism reflect a long tradition of pluralism and peaceful coexistence.
- **Caste System** - It is a hereditary social stratification system that organises society by regulating occupation, marriage, and social interactions. It resulted in a hierarchical structure, granting privileges to some while causing social exclusion for others.
- **Family, Marriage & Kinship** - Family in India is typically patriarchal and hierarchical, with marriage viewed as a sacred institution that is mostly arranged and endogamous. Strong kinship and lineage ties play a central role in guiding social relationships.
- **Tribal Identity** - Tribal communities are socially organized groups of indigenous people sharing a common territory, practicing endogamy, and maintaining a distinct culture and identity. They play a vital role in preserving traditional lifestyles and fostering collective unity.
- **Tradition and Modernity** - Indian society balances old customs with modern values, driven by colonial influence and LPG reforms, resulting in gradual social change without breaking cultural continuity.
- **Art and Cultural Heritage** - Rich traditions across music, dance, architecture, handicrafts, festivals, and performing arts—varying regionally but tied by shared civilisational motifs.
- **Individualism vs Collectivism** - Individualism emphasizes personal freedom and rights, while collectivism values group harmony and social responsibility. Urban areas tend to be more individualistic, whereas rural areas largely remain collectivist.
- **Metaphysical vs Mundane** - Spiritualism in India emphasizes yoga, meditation, devotion, and ethical living, while materialism focuses on economic growth and entrepreneurship. Indian philosophy often views them as complementary, promoting a balanced life.

### **Cultural Pockets of Small India all over the nation**

India is a land of immense cultural diversity. Due to migration, trade, historical movements, and social interactions, people from one region often settle in another, creating “miniature cultural pockets” where their language, customs, festivals, and cuisine are preserved. These pockets reflect the idea of India within India, maintaining regional identity while coexisting with local culture.

#### **Examples of Cultural Pockets Across India:**

- **North-Eastern Communities in Metropolitan Cities:** Tribals and ethnic groups from the North-East maintain their festivals, attire, and cuisine in cities like Delhi, Bangalore, and Pune. Example: Bihu festivals celebrated in Bangalore; Manipuri communities performing traditional dances in Delhi.

- **Punjabi Culture in Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata:** Migrants from Punjab keep alive Baisakhi, Lohri, and Punjabi cuisine. Example: Gurudwaras in South Delhi act as centers for Punjabi cultural events.
- **South Indian Communities in Metro Cities:** People from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka celebrate Onam, Pongal, and regional language festivals. Example: Tamil Sangams in Mumbai organize traditional dances and music programs.
- **Gujarati and Rajasthani Communities:** Traders and migrants preserve festivals, folk music, and cuisine. Example: Navratri Garba celebrations in cities like Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Vadodara.
- **Bengali Culture Across India:** West Bengal communities maintain Durga Puja, language clubs, and literary traditions. Example: Durga Puja in Delhi and Mumbai draws large Bengali and non-Bengali audiences.
- **Sindhi and Marwari Communities:** Business communities retain traditional rituals, cuisine, and religious practices even outside their native regions.
- **Diaspora Communities in Small Towns:** Migration for employment creates pockets of cultural preservation even in non-metropolitan areas. Example: Telugu-speaking communities in Odisha or Karnataka celebrating Ugadi festival.

India has cultural pockets of “small India” across the nation, where communities preserve their language, festivals, cuisine, art forms, and social practices. These pockets enrich the social fabric, promote multiculturalism, and reflect India’s unity in diversity, where regional identities coexist harmoniously within the broader national identity.

## Spirit of Tolerance and Love in Indian Society

Tolerance and love have been defining characteristics of Indian society since ancient times. India’s pluralistic culture, reflected in its acceptance of diverse religions, languages, and philosophies, fostered coexistence despite diversity. These values, rooted in civilizational ethos, continue to influence contemporary social cohesion and national unity.

### Historical basis of tolerance and love:

- **Religious pluralism:** Ancient India accommodated Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Sikhism, fostering mutual respect.
- **Philosophical traditions:** Concepts like *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (“the world is one family”) emphasized universal brotherhood.
- **Cultural synthesis:** Practices like Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb illustrate centuries of Hindu-Muslim cultural blending.
- **Trade and migration:** Openness to traders, scholars, and travelers encouraged acceptance of new ideas and communities.
- **Patronage of arts and literature:** Kings and emperors supported diverse art forms, languages, and literature, promoting inter-cultural exchange.
- **Syncretic festivals and rituals:** Shared celebrations, like Diwali and Eid in some regions, fostered social cohesion.
- **Integration of immigrant communities:** Foreign communities like Parsis, Jews, and Armenians were assimilated while preserving their identity.

- 
- **Tolerance in governance:** Mauryan and Mughal rulers, like Ashoka and Akbar, promoted policies of religious tolerance and non-discrimination.
  - **Philosophical debates and dialogues:** Ancient universities like Nalanda and Takshashila encouraged debates across religions and philosophies, fostering intellectual tolerance.
  - **Non-violence and ethical traditions:** Teachings of Ahimsa and compassion (Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism) cultivated respect for all life forms and human dignity.

### **Contemporary significance:**

- **National integration:** Tolerance underpins India's secular framework, allowing multiple religions and languages to coexist.
- **Social harmony:** Festivals, rituals, and local customs continue to foster inter-community bonds.
- **Global image:** India's pluralistic values contribute to its soft power and international respect.
- **Conflict resolution:** Cultural tolerance helps mediate disputes and reduce communal tensions.
- **Inclusive democracy:** Respect for diversity strengthens citizen participation and trust in democratic institutions.

### **Challenges to Tolerance and Love in Indian Society**

- **Rise of intolerance:** Increasing incidents of communal violence, hate crimes, and social exclusion threaten inter-community harmony.
- **Communalism:** Religious polarization and rigid identity politics deepen societal divides and erode trust among communities.
- **Caste-based discrimination:** Persistent social hierarchies marginalize lower-caste groups, undermining equality and social cohesion.
- **Polarizing politics:** Political parties often exploit linguistic, religious, or regional differences to consolidate vote banks, challenging national unity.
- **Regionalism and separatist tendencies:** Excessive regional assertion sometimes fosters exclusion of outsiders, straining social bonds.
- **Economic inequality:** Unequal access to resources can create resentment among communities, indirectly weakening tolerance.
- **Gender-based discrimination:** Patriarchal norms limit women's social participation and reinforce societal inequalities.
- **Misinformation and social media influence:** Fake news, rumors, and online propaganda amplify social tensions and intolerance.
- **Decline of inter-community interactions:** Urbanization and ghettoization reduce day-to-day exposure to diversity, weakening empathy and understanding.
- **Weak enforcement of laws:** Inadequate legal action against hate crimes and discrimination perpetuates fear and injustice.

### **Factors Threatening Peace and Harmony in Indian Society**

- **Poverty and Social Stress:** Results in low morale and reduced self-confidence for those facing severe hardship. It causes stress and frustration, which can harm relationships and weaken social bonds. It may also lead to social tensions and conflicts over scarce resources.
- **Economic Inequality:** The large wealth gap between rich and poor in India leads to social resentment, marginalization, and tension among economic groups. It can undermine social stability and contribute to higher crime rates.

- **Communal and Religious Conflicts:** Disputes between communities due to religious differences often result in violence, riots, and communal tension. They create fear and insecurity, disrupting social harmony and national development.
- **Juvenile Delinquency:** Crimes committed by minors affect children, their families, and society, creating insecurity, tension, and social instability.
- **Gender Inequality at Workplace:** Limits women's participation in professional and social life, wastes talent, slows societal progress, and reinforces patriarchal norms, lowering women's status.
- **Other Emerging Threats**
  - ✓ **Caste-based discrimination:** Persistent social hierarchy causing exclusion and tension. Hinders social mobility and equality, slowing overall societal progress.
  - ✓ **Regionalism and linguistic conflicts:** Can create disputes over resources and political power. Threatens national integration and social harmony by fostering a sense of "us vs. them."
  - ✓ **Corruption and political instability:** Reduces public trust and societal cohesion. Political instability leads to inefficient decision-making, policy paralysis, and delays in development.

### **Vedic Society and Religion: Key Features and Their Persistence in Contemporary Indian Society**

Vedic Society and Religion were shaped during the early Vedic period (1500–500 BCE) in ancient India. Society was organized around varna (social classes) and patriarchal family structures, while religion focused on nature-based deities, rituals, and sacrifices (yajnas). Education, moral conduct (dharma), and respect for teachers were central, forming the foundation of social, religious, and cultural life.

#### **1. Social Structure**

- ✓ **Varna System:** Society was divided into four main groups — Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders), and Shudras (servants).
- ✓ **Patriarchal System:** Society was male-dominated; lineage and inheritance followed the male line.
- ✓ **Family and Clan Importance:** Joint families were common, with strong emphasis on kinship and clan duties.

#### **2. Economic Features**

- ✓ **Pastoral Economy:** Early Vedic period focused on cattle rearing, while later Vedic period shifted to agriculture and trade.
- ✓ **Role of Surplus:** Wealth accumulation, especially cattle and land, determined social status and power.

#### **3. Religion and Rituals**

- ✓ **Polytheism:** Worship of nature-based deities like Indra (rain), Agni (fire), Varuna (cosmic order).
- ✓ **Sacrificial Rituals:** Importance of Yajnas (fire sacrifices) conducted by priests to maintain cosmic and social order.
- ✓ **Rigidity in Religious Duties:** Religious duties were linked to varna and stage of life (Ashramas).
- ✓ **Oral Tradition:** Knowledge and hymns preserved in Vedas passed orally for generations.

#### 4. Education and Knowledge

- ✓ **Gurukul System:** Students lived with teachers, learning Vedas, philosophy, arts, and martial skills.
- ✓ **Emphasis on Dharma and Ethics:** Moral codes guided both social conduct and religious practices.

#### 5. Political Organization

- ✓ **Tribal and Monarchical Rule:** Early Vedic society was tribal; later, kingdoms and assemblies emerged.
- ✓ **Kings as Protectors of Dharma:** Rulers had religious & administrative authority.

#### Features Still Prevailing in Indian Society

- **Social Hierarchies and Caste Influence:** Though constitutionally abolished, caste-based distinctions and social stratification persist in many areas.
- **Patriarchy:** Male dominance in inheritance, family decision-making, and social norms continues.
- **Rituals and Festivals:** Vedic emphasis on sacred rituals, fire ceremonies, and festivals survives in modern Hindu practices (weddings, religious ceremonies, yajnas).
- **Respect for Teachers and Knowledge:** Gurukul-like reverence for teachers and education continues in Indian culture.
- **Religious Plurality and Devotion:** Worship of multiple deities, ritual practices, and importance of spirituality remain central in daily life.

### Indian Society: Continuity and Change

Indian society is a vibrant blend of tradition and modernity, where age-old customs, social norms, and cultural values coexist with emerging ideas and lifestyles. While family systems, festivals, and moral codes ensure continuity, urbanization, education, technology, and social reforms drive change. This dynamic interplay between the old and the new defines India's unique social fabric.

#### Continuity in Traditional Social Values

- **Family System:** Joint and extended families continue to emphasize loyalty, respect for elders, and collective decision-making. Example: Festivals, marriages, and rituals often involve the whole family.
- **Religious Practices and Rituals:** Daily prayers, festivals, and ceremonies preserve spiritual and moral values across generations. Example: Diwali, Eid, Pongal, and Durga Puja celebrated annually maintain cultural continuity.
- **Respect for Hierarchies and Elders:** Social norms emphasizing respect for elders, teachers, and community leaders continue to guide behavior.
- **Community and Cultural Traditions:** Folk arts, regional music, dances, and local customs preserve cultural identity. Example: Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Rajasthani folk music.
- **Moral and Ethical Values:** Principles like truthfulness, honesty, and hospitality are passed down through family, religion, and literature.

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## **Changes Taking Place in Indian Society**

- **Nuclear Family and Urbanization:** Migration to cities and jobs lead to nuclear families replacing joint families.
- **Modern Education and Employment:** Increased literacy, higher education, and jobs in urban sectors reduce dependence on traditional occupations.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Women are increasingly participating in education, workforce, and decision-making.
- **Decline in Caste-Based Practices:** Legal reforms and social awareness have reduced rigid caste restrictions, especially in urban areas.
- **Inter-Caste and Inter-Religious Marriages:** Increased social mobility and modern values encourage marriages beyond traditional caste or religious boundaries.
- **Influence of Media and Technology:** Social media, internet, and television expose people to global ideas, promoting liberal values and questioning traditions.
- **Changing Attitudes Toward Religion:** People increasingly view religion as personal rather than strictly community-based.
- **Shift in Social Norms:** Practices like dowry, child marriage, and rigid gender roles are being challenged by awareness and laws.

### **Cryptocurrency and its Impact on Global and Indian Society**

Cryptocurrency is a digital or virtual currency that uses cryptography for security and operates on decentralized systems like blockchain, independent of traditional banks or governments. Examples include Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Ripple.

#### **Impact on Global Society**

- **Financial Inclusion:** Provides access to banking and digital payments for unbanked populations, especially in developing countries.
- **Decentralization of Finance:** Reduces reliance on banks and central authorities, allowing peer-to-peer transactions globally.
- **Investment and Speculation:** Creates new investment opportunities but also leads to high volatility and financial risks.
- **Innovation in Technology:** Promotes blockchain, smart contracts, and fintech solutions.
- **Global Transactions:** Enables cross-border payments with lower fees.

#### **Impact on Indian Society**

- **Rising Popularity:** India has seen increasing adoption of cryptocurrencies among investors and tech-savvy youth.
- **Investment Opportunities:** Cryptos provide alternative avenues for wealth creation, though highly speculative.
- **Regulatory Concerns:** Volatility and fraud risks have led the Indian government to issue warnings and propose regulation. Taxes on crypto gains have been introduced to monitor transactions.
- **Financial Awareness:** Encourages digital literacy and financial experimentation, but also exposes users to scams and losses.

Indian society is rooted in diversity, hierarchy, and strong community networks like caste and joint families, which ensured social order and cultural continuity. Constitutional democracy, education, urbanization, and globalization have challenged traditional hierarchies, promoting equality, mobility, and new social opportunities. Today, India balances its rich traditions with modern values, making it a pluralistic, adaptive, and resilient society.

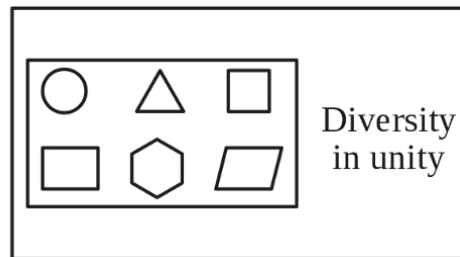
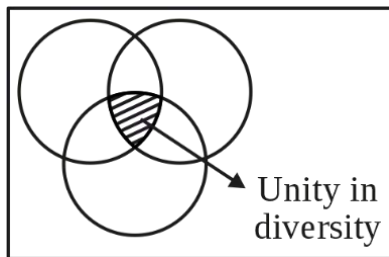
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## CHAPTER

# Unity in Diversity

Unity in Diversity refers to the coexistence of multiple cultures, languages, religions, and traditions within India, which, despite their differences, maintain a shared sense of national identity. This characteristic strengthens India's social fabric, fostering inclusivity, mutual respect, and resilience.

**Quote** – The essence of our culture is that we have always respected differences - **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.**



### Factors responsible for Unity in diversity

India is a plural society marked by immense diversity in religion, language, culture, ethnicity, and geography. Despite these differences, the country has maintained remarkable social cohesion and national integration. These factors include:

- **Political structure:** The Indian Constitution ensures single citizenship and a strong central government. It promotes uniformity in rights and responsibilities, integrating diverse regions and communities.
- **Economic integration:** Article 302 guarantees freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse across states. Encourages interdependence, reducing regional economic isolation and fostering unity.
- **Secularism** → Sarva Dharma Sambhava (equal respect to all religions) and Dharmnirpekshata (religious neutrality) strengthen social cohesion.
- **Religious festivals** → Celebrations like Diwali, Eid, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti are observed nationwide.
- **Government schemes** → Programs like Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat and initiatives connecting Kaveri & Ganga regions promote cultural exchange.
- **Cultural syncretism** → Traditions like Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb reflect Hindu-Muslim unity and intermingling of cultural practices.
- **National symbols** → Symbols such as the Tricolor flag and Jan Gan Man (national anthem) unify people across castes, religions, and regions.
- **Education & Youth** → Schools and colleges act as shared spaces where students from different backgrounds interact.
- **Technology & media** → Popular culture, Bollywood films and IPL cricket, enjoys cross-regional appeal.
- **Geographical unity** → Natural features like the Himalayas, rivers, and plains provide a shared landscape that connects regions.
- **Philosophical traditions** → Thoughts like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ("the world is one family") emphasize universal brotherhood.

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## Unity amidst diversity - instances

- **Geographical unity** → Despite varied landscapes – Himalayas, deserts, plains, and coasts – India functions as a single geographical entity.
- **Historical unity** → Figures like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and movements for Swaraj symbolize a united struggle for independence.
- **Cultural unity** → India has diverse dances, songs, music, and art forms across regions.
- **Ideological unity** → Philosophical concepts like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (“the world is one family”) emphasize harmony and tolerance.
- **Religious unity** → Every religion in India promotes tolerance, compassion, and love.
- **Linguistic unity** → Multiple languages exist, yet English and Hindi often serve as link languages connecting people across states.
- **Sports** → Sports nationalism – cricket, hockey, football – brings people from different regions together.
- **Political** → India’s Parliament includes MPs from all corners of the country, representing regional and linguistic diversity.
- **One India, many identities** → Diversity in attire, cuisine, festivals, and traditions – turbans in Punjab, mundus in Kerala, coexist with national identity.

### Linguistic States and Strengthening of Indian unity

The creation of linguistic states in India represents a successful model of democratic accommodation of diversity, where the recognition of regional languages and cultural identities strengthened faith in the Union. This approach demonstrates that unity and diversity can coexist, promoting national integration without compromising regional identities.

- **Democratic accommodation of diversity:** Recognizing linguistic identities reduced alienation & strengthened faith in the Indian Union by respecting people’s cultural aspirations.
- **Administrative efficiency:** Governance in the people’s own language improved communication, participation, and delivery of public services.
- **Reduction of separatist tendencies:** Addressing linguistic demands constitutionally prevented violent agitations, as seen in Andhra Pradesh and later reorganizations.
- **Cultural preservation within unity:** Linguistic states enabled promotion of regional languages and cultures without threatening national integrity.
- **Political integration:** Regional leaders and parties became stakeholders in the Union rather than opponents of it.
- **Strengthening federalism:** Linguistic states deepened cooperative federalism by giving states a strong cultural basis within a unified constitutional framework.
- **Enhanced political participation:** People could engage more effectively in democratic processes when administration and politics operated in their mother tongue.
- **Containment of ethnic nationalism:** By recognizing linguistic identity at the state level, the Union prevented escalation into ethnic or secessionist nationalism.
- **Promotion of national integration through diversity:** Linguistic pride coexisted with loyalty to the nation, reinforcing the idea of unity without uniformity.
- **Institutional conflict resolution:** Linguistic grievances were resolved through parliamentary and constitutional means rather than extra-constitutional movements.

- **Strengthening emotional integration:** Cultural recognition fostered emotional attachment to the Indian state, reducing feelings of neglect or domination.
- **Model for plural democracy:** India's success with linguistic states became a global example of managing diversity through democratic accommodation rather than suppression.

### Challenges to unity in diversity

- **Geography as source of conflict** → Certain regions, like the North-East, face relative deprivation due to isolation and poor connectivity. Geographic isolation leads to feelings of neglect and fosters regional tensions.
- **Ideological conflicts** → Conflicts arise from divergent belief systems and communal ideologies. Competing ideological narratives can polarize communities and disrupt social harmony.
- **Religious conflicts** → Occur due to religious exclusivism and fundamentalism. Example: Riots in Delhi 2020 showed how religious antagonism can escalate into violence. Undermines national integration and mutual trust among communities.
- **Linguistic differences** → Language can become a source of regional tension, e.g., conflict between Hindi-speaking northern states and southern states. Disputes over official language use and cultural recognition can create friction.
- **Caste system & racism** → Persistent discrimination based on caste and ethnicity leads to social exclusion. Example: People from the North-East facing racial discrimination in Delhi.
- **Developmental deficit** → Unequal growth among states leads to regional disparities. Example: Bihar vs Maharashtra – poorer states feel left behind, causing frustration and inter-state tensions.
- **Separatist movements** → Movements demanding separate statehood challenge national unity. Examples: Khalistan movement, insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir.
- **Divisive politics** → Political parties sometimes exploit caste or religion to build vote banks. Example: Caste- and religion-based politics in UP elections 2024.
- **Failure of inclusive education** → Lack of equitable and quality education weakens a shared sense of national identity. Limits social mobility and awareness of collective civic responsibilities.
- **Intolerance & moral policing** → Enforcement of rigid moral or cultural norms undermines personal freedoms. Creates social fear and restricts diversity of thought and expression.
- **Ethnic & tribal alienation** → Erosion of cultural and land rights among tribal and ethnic groups fuels resentment. Leads to unrest and challenges in integrating these communities into the mainstream.
- **Migration related xenophobia** → Migrant workers often face hostility and discrimination in receiving states. Example: Biharis facing discrimination in Maharashtra.

### Models for accommodation of diversity

1. **Salad bowl model:** Emphasizes coexistence without blending, where multiple cultures live together while retaining their distinct identities. In this model, diversity is celebrated rather than assimilated, similar to the multicultural society of the **United Kingdom**, where communities like Indians, Pakistanis, and Caribbeans maintain their languages, traditions, and festivals.
2. **Melting pot model:** Focuses on integration, where individuals from diverse backgrounds merge into a single, homogenous culture. This approach often leads to the reduction of original cultural traits in favor of a shared national identity, as seen in the United States of America, where immigrants adopt American customs and values.

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3. **Mosaic model:** Exemplified by India, strikes a balance between unity and diversity. Here, different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups coexist, contributing to a collective national identity while preserving their unique traditions, languages, and customs. Just like a mosaic made of differently colored stones, each piece retains its individuality but together forms a harmonious whole, reflecting India's ethos of "unity in diversity."

### **Way forward for Strengthening Unity in Diversity:**

- **Introduce value-based education:** Incorporate curricula that teach pluralism, tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity. Encourage critical thinking and awareness of different social, religious, and cultural practices to nurture inclusive citizens.
- **Celebrate regional festivals and languages in schools:** Promote inter-cultural learning by organizing events on local festivals, folk arts, and languages. This builds pride in one's heritage while fostering respect for other communities.
- **Strengthen awareness of constitutional duties:** Educate citizens about their obligations under the Constitution, emphasizing fraternity, equality, and dignity of all, to create a responsible and cohesive society.
- **Encourage interfaith and intercultural dialogue:** Facilitate platforms at community and youth levels where people from different religions, castes, and regions can share experiences, resolve misunderstandings, and promote mutual understanding.
- **Promote inclusive media representation and curb hate speech:** Ensure media portrays all communities fairly, highlighting success stories of cooperation. Actively monitor and counter misinformation, fake news, and divisive content that can incite tension.
- **Empower local governance institutions:** Strengthen Panchayats, municipalities, and local bodies to represent diverse community interests and address local grievances effectively, thereby reducing alienation.
- **Protect migrant workers and promote inter-regional harmony:** Implement policies to safeguard migrant workers' rights, prevent discrimination, and encourage social integration in urban centers.
- **Use digital platforms for cultural storytelling and countering divisive narratives:** Leverage social media, apps, and online campaigns to share stories of unity, celebrate diversity, and challenge stereotypes or communal prejudices.
- **Organize unity-themed national youth festivals:** Conduct events that bring together youth from different states, religions, and communities to build emotional integration and foster lifelong networks across regions.
- **Promote inter-caste, inter-religious, and inter-regional initiatives in governance:** Encourage policies, committees, and programs where people from diverse backgrounds collaborate in decision-making, enhancing inclusiveness and trust in institutions.
- **Encourage mixed housing and inclusive urban planning:** Plan residential areas and cities to include people from various communities, preventing social ghettos and promoting everyday interaction and understanding.
- **Foster unity through national symbols, sports, and common public celebrations:** Use flags, anthems, national holidays, and sports events as instruments of collective identity, creating shared experiences and pride across different groups.

### **Approaches to Reinforce Multiculturalism in India**

- **Constitutional and Legal Measures:** Upholding equality, secularism, and fraternity ensures unity in diversity. Enforcement of Articles 14, 15, and 25–30 protects cultural, religious, and linguistic rights, while anti-discrimination laws prevent social exclusion and marginalization.
- **Inclusive Education System:** Implementing multicultural curricula showcases India's diverse histories, languages, and cultures. Promoting mother-tongue education alongside national and global languages strengthens learning and cultural identity. Teaching constitutional morality, tolerance, and respect for diversity fosters social harmony and inclusivity.
- **Cultural Recognition and Promotion:** State support for regional languages, folk arts, indigenous traditions, and minority cultures preserves India's rich heritage. Encouraging inter-cultural festivals, exchanges, and heritage programs fosters mutual understanding. Protecting endangered languages and tribal knowledge ensures the survival of diverse cultural identities.
- **Strengthening Secularism:** Ensuring state neutrality toward all religions maintains fairness and equality. Preventing communalization of politics and public institutions safeguards social harmony. Promoting interfaith dialogue and harmony initiatives fosters mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.
- **Inclusive Governance and Representation:** Ensuring fair political representation for minorities, women, and marginalized groups strengthens democracy. Decentralized governance, such as in Sixth Schedule areas, allows cultural autonomy. Participatory decision-making involving diverse communities promotes inclusivity and equitable development.
- **Economic Inclusion and Social Justice:** Reducing inequalities through targeted welfare and affirmative action ensures equitable opportunities. Inclusive development prevents cultural marginalization, while support for minority entrepreneurship and livelihoods promotes economic empowerment and social participation.

### **High Correlation between India's cultural diversities and socio-economic marginalities**

India is characterized by immense cultural diversity, religion, caste, language, ethnicity and regional identities co-exist in a complex social mosaic. At the same time, socio-economic marginalities such as poverty, limited access to education, healthcare disparities and social exclusion are widespread. The proposition suggests that cultural diversity in India is closely linked with socio-economic marginalization, which warrants a nuanced analysis.

#### **Evidence of correlation includes:**

##### **1. Caste-based marginalization:**

- ✓ Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes face historical social exclusion, restricting land ownership, education, and formal employment.
- ✓ Many lower-caste groups are confined to informal or traditional occupations (manual labor, sanitation work) with low pay.
- ✓ Practices such as untouchability, though legally abolished, still affect access to resources in rural areas.

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## 2. Tribal and indigenous marginalization:

- ✓ Tribes often live in remote forests or hilly regions with limited infrastructure, education, and healthcare.
- ✓ Tribal communities have high poverty & dependence on subsistence agriculture.
- ✓ Development projects and displacement disproportionately affect tribal populations, worsening marginality.

## 3. Religious minorities:

- ✓ Many regions report low literacy and workforce participation rates, along with limited access to formal employment.
- ✓ Christians, Parsis, and smaller groups may face regional marginalization, particularly in areas where they are socially or politically weak.

## 4. Linguistic and regional disparities:

- ✓ Non-dominant language speakers may face difficulties in accessing education, government jobs, and economic opportunities.
- ✓ States with culturally distinct populations (like North-East India or parts of Central India) often lag in human development indicators.

## 5. Gender intersectionality within cultural groups:

- ✓ Women from marginalized castes, tribes, or minority religions face double disadvantage, including low literacy, poor health, and limited economic participation.
- ✓ Gender norms combined with cultural identity often reinforce socio-economic marginality.

## 6. Urban-rural cultural divides:

- ✓ Certain culturally distinct rural communities are trapped in cycles of poverty due to limited access to urban markets, education, and jobs.
- ✓ Migration to cities sometimes reduces marginality, but informal urban settlements still replicate cultural hierarchies and economic exclusion.

### **Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism**

Customs and traditions are the backbone of any society, preserving its culture, moral values, and social cohesion. However, when followed blindly without questioning, they can suppress reason and rational thinking, leading to obscurantism, a state where ignorance and superstition dominate over knowledge and progress.

- **Superstition and Ritualism:** Blind faith in rituals or omens discourages logical thinking. Example: Belief in evil spirits or astrology influencing major life decisions without evidence.
- **Gender-Based Discrimination:** Traditional customs often limit women's freedom and choices. Example: Practices like child marriage or restriction on women attending schools or temples.
- **Caste-Based Oppression:** Social hierarchy justified by tradition restricts mobility and merit. Example: Dalits historically barred from temples and public resources.
- **Obstruction to Scientific Temper:** Customs discouraging inquiry or experimentation can hinder technological and intellectual progress. Example: Resistance to vaccination or modern medical treatment due to traditional beliefs.
- **Economic Exploitation:** Certain customs legitimize exploitation of weaker sections. Example: Bonded labor or hereditary occupations restricting social mobility.

- **Preservation of Outdated Norms:** Some traditions persist despite being irrelevant or harmful in modern society. Example: Dowry system, rigid dress codes, or restrictions on remarriage.
- **Resistance to Legal Reforms:** Communities sometimes ignore rational legal reforms due to traditional beliefs. Example: Delayed acceptance of laws abolishing untouchability or child marriage.
- **Fear of Social Ostracism:** People follow irrational customs to avoid ridicule or exclusion. Example: Women adhering to menstrual taboos, even when scientifically unnecessary.
- **Reluctance to Question Authority:** Traditions often reinforce unquestioned authority of elders, priests, or leaders. Example: Decisions in village councils (panchayats) guided by age-old norms rather than logic.
- **Hindrance to Personal Freedom:** Blind adherence to tradition suppresses individual reasoning and choice. Example: Restrictions on inter-caste marriages or career choices based on family customs.

## Regional Disparity and Diversity

Regional disparity refers to unequal development across different geographic areas, resulting in variations in income, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. It highlights inequalities between regions, whereas diversity refers to variety and differences in language, culture, religion, ethnicity, and traditions.

### Difference between Regional Disparity and Diversity

Aspect	Regional Disparity	Diversity
<b>Definition</b>	Unequal socio-economic development across regions	Co-existence of different languages, religions, cultures, and lifestyles
<b>Focus</b>	Economic and social indicators	Cultural, linguistic, and social differences
<b>Implication</b>	Indicates underdevelopment, poverty, and inequality	Reflects pluralism and richness of society
<b>Nature</b>	Undesirable and problematic	Natural and neutral; often celebrated
<b>Example in India</b>	Poor infrastructure in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh vs. developed Maharashtra, Karnataka	Co-existence of Hindi, Tamil, Bengali languages; Hindu, Muslim, Sikh communities

### Seriousness of Regional Disparity in India

1. **Economic inequalities:** Western and southern States (Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu) have higher per capita income than eastern and northern States (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand).
2. **Infrastructure and industrial gaps:** Poor connectivity, limited industries, and inadequate electricity in backward regions hamper growth.
3. **Human development disparities:** States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab score high in literacy, health, and life expectancy, whereas Bihar, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh lag behind.
4. **Urban-rural divide within regions:** Even in relatively developed States, rural areas face limited access to education, healthcare, and employment.
5. **Social and political implications:** Regional disparity fuels migration, social unrest, and demands for special economic packages or autonomous development policies (e.g., demands for backward region funds, Telangana creation).
6. **Policy concerns:** Government schemes like Backward Regions Grant Fund, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and regional industrial corridors aim to reduce disparities, but challenges persist.

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## **Regions as Cultural Units in India: Beyond State Boundaries**

India's vast cultural diversity in language, religion, customs, food, dress, and festivals often transcends state boundaries. While states are political and administrative units, cultural identity is more closely aligned with regions, which may represent the true cultural units of the country.

### **Examples:**

- **Shared Language and Dialects Across States:** Linguistic identity often transcends state boundaries. Example: Bhojpuri-speaking population is spread across eastern Uttar Pradesh, western Bihar, and parts of Jharkhand.
- **Common Cultural Practices and Traditions:** Certain cultural traditions or festivals are shared across regions, ignoring state lines. Example: The Garba dance is prevalent in Gujarat but also in parts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Historical and Geographical Continuity:** Historical regions often formed cultural units before the creation of modern states. Example: The Marathwada region (Maharashtra) and Vidarbha have distinct cultural identities from western Maharashtra despite being in the same state.
- **Cuisine and Dress Patterns:** Food habits and traditional clothing often reflect regional identity rather than administrative boundaries. Example: Biryani is popular in Hyderabad (Telangana) and parts of Karnataka, showing regional culinary identity beyond states.
- **Religious and Folk Traditions:** Folk art, music, and religious rituals are region-specific rather than state-specific. Example: Kathakali in Kerala, Chhau dance in Odisha, and Sufi traditions in Punjab and Haryana.

India exemplifies unity in diversity, where multiple languages, religions, and cultures coexist within a shared national identity. While states are administrative units, cultural identities often align with regions. Constitutional safeguards, secularism, linguistic states, and national symbols have strengthened unity despite challenges like regional disparities and communal tensions. India remains a harmonious mosaic, celebrating differences while fostering national integration.

