



UPSC CSE



PRE & MAINS

Union Public Service Commission

GS PAPER - 2

VOLUME - 3

Society, Social Justice and Governance

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Previous Year Questions

Society

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.

Previous Year Questions

Social Justice

Year	Question
2025	Inequality in the ownership pattern of resources is one of the major causes of poverty. Discuss in the context of 'paradox of poverty'.
2025	How do you account for the growing fast food industries given that there are increased health concerns in modern society? Illustrate your answer with the Indian experience.
2025	Women's social capital complements in advancing empowerment and gender equity. Explain.
2024	Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle?
2024	In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system the Indian State should play a vital role to contain the adverse impact of marketisation of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level.
2023	The crucial aspect of the development process has been the inadequate attention paid to Human Resource Development in India. Suggest measures that can address this inadequacy.
2023	Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India.
2023	Why did human development fail to keep pace with economic development in India?
2023	"Development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable, by its nature, are discriminatory in approach." Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.
2023	Skill development programmes have succeeded in increasing human resources supply to various sectors. In the context of the statement analyse the linkages between education, skill and employment.
2022	Besides the welfare schemes, India needs deft management of inflation and unemployment to serve the poor and the underprivileged sections of society. Discuss.
2022	Given the diversities among tribal communities in India, in which specific contexts should they be considered as a single category?
2022	The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 remains only a legal document without intense sensitisation of government functionaries and citizens regarding disability. Comment.
2022	The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 remains inadequate in promoting an incentive-based system for children's education without generating awareness about the importance of schooling. Analyse
2022	Reforming the government delivery system through the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme is a progressive step, but it has its limitations too. Comment.
2021	Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and the feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu?
2021	Examine the uniqueness of tribal knowledge systems when compared with mainstream knowledge and cultural systems.
2021	Has digital illiteracy, particularly in rural areas, coupled with lack of Information and Communication Technology(ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification.
2021	'Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment.
2021	"Besides being a moral imperative of the Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development." Analyze.

Previous Year Questions

Governance

Year	Question
2025	E-governance projects have a built-in bias towards technology and back-end integration than user-centric designs. Examine
2025	Civil Society Organisations are often perceived as being anti-state actors than non-state actors. Do you agree? Justify.
2025	What are environmental pressure groups? Discuss their role in raising awareness, influencing policies and advocating for environmental protection in India.
2025	“In contemporary development models, decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities are not located close to the source of information and execution, defeating the objectives of development.” Critically evaluate.
2024	Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India’s development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment.
2024	The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss.
2024	The Citizens’ charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them.
2024	e-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in the service delivery process. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context evaluate the role of the ‘Interactive Service Model’ of e-governance.
2023	e-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features?
2022	To what extent, in your opinion, as the decentralisation of power in India changed the governance landscape at the grassroots?
2021	“Pressure groups play a vital role in influencing public policy in making in India.” Explain how the business associations contribute to public policies.
2021	Can civil society and Non-Government Organisations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative method.
2020	“Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance”. In this context suggest reforms in the Civil Service for strengthening democracy.
2020	“The emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of the government”. Discuss.
2019	What are the methods used by the farmer’s organizations to influence the policy-makers in India and how effective are these methods?
2019	Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based projects/programmes usually suffers in terms of certain vital factors. Identify these factors and suggest measures for their effective implementation.

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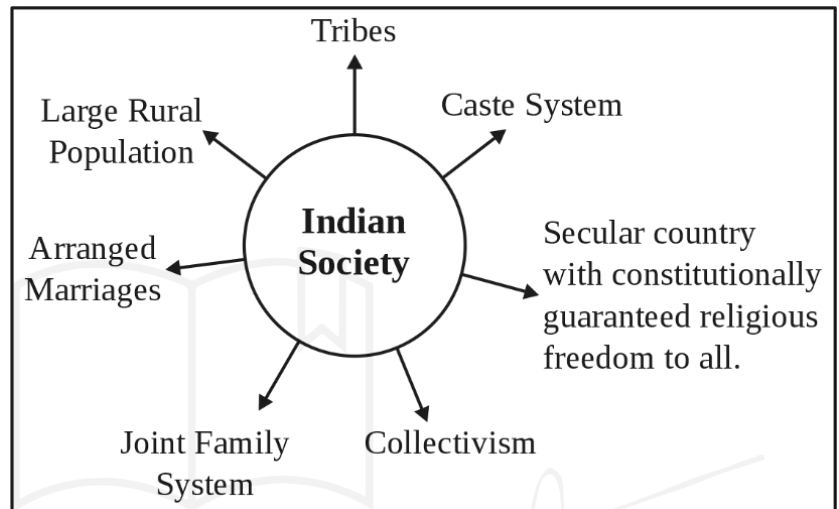
CHAPTER

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.

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.

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.

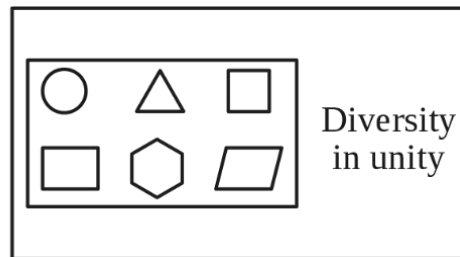
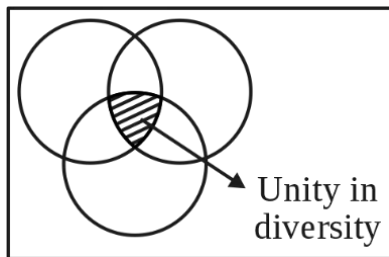
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CHAPTER

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.

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.

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.