

# NCERT Solutions Class 6 Social Science (Exploring Society India and Beyond) Chapter 8 Unity in Diversity, or 'Many in the One'

## The Big Questions (Page 125)

### Question 1. What is meant by 'unity in diversity' in the Indian scenario?

**Answer:** "Unity in diversity" is a phrase that captures the essence of India's societal fabric. In the Indian context, it signifies the coexistence of a vast array of cultures, languages, religions, and traditions, harmoniously living together within a single nation. This concept is fundamental to understanding India's identity and social dynamics.

### Question 2. What aspects of India's diversity are the most striking?

**Answer:** India's diversity is striking in many aspects, reflecting its rich cultural, religious, linguistic, and geographical tapestry.

Here are some of the most notable aspects:

#### 1. Linguistic Diversity

- **Languages:** India has 22 officially recognised languages and 325 languages using 25 scripts as per survey by Anthropological Survey of India and hundreds of dialects. Each state often has its own language, such as Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Bengali in West Bengal, and Marathi in Maharashtra.
- **Scripts:** Multiple scripts are used for writing these languages, adding another layer of diversity.

#### 2. Religious Diversity

- **Major Religions:** India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. It also has significant populations of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and others.
- **Places of Worship:** From the Varanasi ghats and the Golden Temple in Amritsar to the Jama Masjid in Delhi and the Churches of Goa, India's religious architecture is incredibly diverse and historic.

#### 3. Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

- **Ethnic Groups:** India is home to various ethnic groups, including Indo-Aryans, Dravidians, Mongoloids, and others. Each group has distinct traditions, clothing, and customs.



- **Festivals:** Major festivals like Diwali, Christmas, Navratri, Pongal, and Baisakhi are celebrated with great fervor, each showcasing unique cultural practices.

#### 4. Culinary Diversity

- **Regional Cuisines:** Indian cuisine varies greatly by region. North Indian food often includes wheat-based breads and rich gravies, while South Indian cuisine is known for its rice dishes and coconut-based preparations.
- **Ingredients and Spices:** The diversity in ingredients and spices, such as saffron in Kashmir, coconut in Kerala, and mustard in Bengal, creates a wide array of flavors and cooking techniques.

#### 5. Geographical Diversity

- **Landscapes:** From the snowcapped Himalayas in the north to the tropical beaches of the south, India's landscapes are incredibly varied. The Thar Desert, the Western and Eastern Ghats, and the fertile plains of the Ganges are other examples.
- **Climate:** The country's climate ranges from the arid desert climate of Rajasthan to the tropical monsoon climate of Kerala and the alpine climate of the Himalayas.

#### 6. Art and Architecture

- **Traditional Arts:** India has a rich tradition of classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi, as well as music forms like Carnatic and Hindustani classical music.
- **Architectural Styles:** Indian architecture includes ancient temples, Mughal monuments like the Taj Mahal, colonial-era buildings, and modern skyscrapers, each representing different historical periods and styles.

#### 7. Traditional Clothing

**Varied Attire:** Traditional clothing varies widely across regions. Examples include sarees and dhotis in the south, salwar kameez in the north, and lehengas in the west.

#### 8. Customs and Traditions

- **Marriage Rituals:** Wedding customs differ significantly among various communities, from the elaborate Hindu ceremonies to the solemn Nikah in Islam and the Anand Karaj in Sikhism.
- **Local Traditions:** Each region has its own customs, such as the practice of Durga Puja in Bengal, Onam in Kerala, and Lohri in Punjab.

These aspects of diversity make India a unique and vibrant nation, where different ways of life coexist, contributing to the country's rich cultural mosaic.

**Question 3. How do we make out the unity underlying the diversity?**



**Answer:** The unity underlying India's diversity can be understood through several key factors and characteristics that bind the nation together despite its multifaceted nature:

### 1. Constitutional Framework:

- **Constitution of India:** The Indian Constitution is a unifying document that guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to all citizens, promoting equality and justice regardless of language, religion, or ethnicity.
- **Federal Structure:** India's federal structure allows for regional autonomy while maintaining national unity. This balance helps accommodate diverse regional aspirations within a united framework.

### 2. National Symbols

- **Flag and Anthem:** The Indian flag, national anthem ("Jana Gana Mana"), and national symbols like the national bird (peacock) and animal (tiger) are respected and celebrated across the country, fostering a sense of national pride.
- **Emblems and Mottos:** Symbols like the Ashoka Chakra and the national motto "Satyameva Jayate" (Truth Alone Triumphs) are important unifying elements.

### 3. Cultural Interactions

- **Festivals:** Festivals often transcend regional and religious boundaries, with people of different backgrounds participating in celebrations like Diwali, Christmas, and Holi.
- **Cultural Exchanges:** Migration and inter-regional marriages contribute to cultural exchanges, blending customs and traditions from different parts of the country.

### 4. Economic Interdependence

- **Trade and Commerce:** Economic activities create interdependence among regions. For instance, agricultural produce, manufactured goods, and services are exchanged across state borders, fostering mutual reliance.
- **National Markets:** Common markets and economic policies help integrate diverse regions into a cohesive economic entity.

### 5. Media and Entertainment

- **Cinema and Television:** Bollywood films, as well as regional cinema and television, are widely consumed across different states, promoting cultural understanding and unity.
- **Sports:** National sports events, especially cricket, create a sense of unity and collective enthusiasm among Indians, transcending regional and cultural differences.

### 6. Shared Historical Heritage



- **Freedom Struggle:** The collective memory of the struggle for independence and the shared respect for freedom fighters and national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and others create a unifying historical narrative.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Shared historical monuments, ancient traditions, and cultural practices, such as yoga and Ayurveda, contribute to a collective national identity.

## 7. Legal and Social Frameworks

- **Legal Protections:** Anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action policies help protect minority rights and promote social cohesion.
- **Civil Society:** Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups work across different regions to address common issues such as poverty, education, and health, fostering a sense of solidarity.

## 8. Common Challenges and Aspirations

- **National Issues:** Challenges such as poverty, development, and security are shared concerns that require collective action, fostering a sense of unity.
- **Aspirations for Progress:** The collective aspiration for economic growth, technological advancement, and improved living standards unites people across diverse backgrounds.

In summary, despite its immense diversity, India's unity is maintained through a combination of constitutional principles, national symbols, cultural exchanges, economic interdependence, political structures, and shared values and aspirations. These elements create a strong sense of national identity and cohesion.

### Let's Explore:

**Question 1. Take any one vegetable and think of the number of different dishes you can prepare with it. (Page 128)**

**Answer:** Do it yourself.

**Question 2. Explain how the example of the sari reflects both unity and diversity (in 100-150 words). (Page 129)**

**Answer:** The sari exemplifies unity through its presence as a single dress worn across India, despite the diverse ways of draping it in different regions and communities. It showcases diversity through the various styles of weaving, designing, and colours used in its creation. The sari's long history and adaptability reflect both unity in its essence as a single garment and diversity in the multitude of ways it can be worn and styled, making it a symbol of India's rich cultural heritage.



**Question 3. In the pictures, can you recognise what a sari has been used for? (Page 130)**

**Picture 1:**



**Picture 2:**



**Picture 3:**



**Picture 4:**





**Picture 5:**



**Picture 6:**



**Answer:** In the pictures, a sari has been used for various creative purposes beyond just being worn as a dress. The six pictures illustrate some of these innovative uses of the sari, showcasing its versatility and adaptability in different contexts.

- Picture 1. Sari can be used as a swing for kids when their mother works in fields.
- Picture 2. Sari can be used for fishing purpose to catch fishes.
- Picture 3. Some women makes a small bundle from sari to carry water pots on their head.
- Picture 4. Sari can be used as a cloth bag to carry grainy fruits or vegetables.
- Picture 5. Some women use sari as a shed from protection the sunlight/dust etc.
- Picture 6. Some uses sari as a pillow cover or a bed sheet for sleeping in Park etc.

**Question 4. Are you aware of, or can you imagine, more uses for the sari? (Page 130)**

**Answer:** Possible Uses for the Sari:

- The sari can be used as a head covering for protection from the sun or dust.
- It can be repurposed as a makeshift bag to carry items while on the go.
- The sari can also be used as a blanket or shawl for warmth in cooler weather.
- These are just a few examples of the versatile ways in which a sari can be utilized beyond its traditional role as a dress.

**Question 5. Following the example of the sari, make a list of different styles you have seen for the dhoti — both as regards the fabric and the uses the dhoti can be put to.**

### **What conclusion can you draw? (Page 131)**

**Answer:** Dhoti is a long cloth mostly made of cotton, silk or synthetic yarn and traditionally worn all over Bharat.

The dhoti, a traditional garment worn by men in India, varies significantly in style, fabric, and usage across different regions. Dhoti is worn in most of the states in Bharat with different styles for casual daily use wear. It is also worn on festivals and during traditional dances, specially in southern states of Bharat.

Few different names are Lungi, Dhoti or Dhuti, in Northern part of Bharat. Other names/styles are Dhotar in Maharashtra, Mekhela in Assam, Mundu in Kerala and Veshti in South India.

In conclusion, the dhoti, like the sari, is a versatile and culturally significant garment in India. It is adaptable to various occasions, from daily wear to formal events and religious ceremonies. The choice of fabric (cotton, silk) and the style of wearing the dhoti differ across regions, reflecting local customs, climate, and cultural preferences. This diversity highlights the rich cultural tapestry of India, where traditional attire continues to play a vital role in everyday life and special occasions.

### **Question 6. During October-November, many major festivals take place in India. Make a list of the few main ones and their various names in different parts of the country. (Page 133)**

**Answer:** October-November is a vibrant period in India, marked by several major festivals celebrated across the country. Here are a few main ones and their various names in different regions:

#### **1. Diwali (Deepavali):**

- North India: Diwali
- South India: Deepavali
- West India (Maharashtra): Divali
- East India (Bengal): Kali Puja/Shyama Puja

#### **2. Dussehra (Vijayadashami):**

- North India: Dussehra
- South India (Karnataka): Dasara
- West Bengal: Durga Puja
- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana: Vijaya Dashami
- Maharashtra: Dasara



### 3. Navratri:

- North India: Navratri
- West Bengal: Durga Puja
- Gujarat: Navratri/Garba/ Dandiya
- South India: Bommai Golu/ Gombe Habba

### 4. Bhai Dooj (Bhaiya Dooj):

- North India: Bhai Dooj / Bhaiya Dooj
- West Bengal: Bhai Phonta
- Maharashtra: Bhau Beej
- Gujarat: Bhai Beej

### 5. Chhath Puja:

- Bihar and Jharkhand: Chhath Puja
- Uttar Pradesh: Surya Shashti
- Other parts of India:

Celebrated mainly in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh with growing popularity in other regions.

### 6. Govardhan Puja:

- North India: Govardhan Puja
- Maharashtra: Annakut
- Gujarat: Annakut

In conclusion, the festival season in India during October- November showcases the country's rich cultural diversity. Each festival has its unique customs, rituals, and regional variations. Despite these differences, the essence of joy, devotion, and community bonding remains a unifying thread across the celebrations. Again showing our unity in diversity.

### Questions, Activities and Projects (Page 136):

**Question 1. Conduct a class discussion on the two quotations at the start of the chapter.**

**Answer:** Students do it yourself with the help of teacher.

**Question 2. Read the National Anthem and its translation in the preliminary pages of this textbook. Where do you see the diversity? And where the unity? Write two or three paragraphs on this.**

**Answer:** The national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana," beautifully embodies the spirit of "unity





in diversity” that defines India. While the lyrics themselves are written in Bengali, their translation captures the essence of a nation brimming with cultural richness, yet bound by a common thread of patriotism.

**Celebrating Diversity:** The anthem doesn’t shy away from showcasing India’s vibrant tapestry. Phrases like “Punjab Sindh Gujarat Maratha” and “Dravida Utkal Banga” paint a picture of a land where diverse regions and languages coexist. It mentions the majestic Himalayas, the life-giving rivers like the Ganga and the Yamuna, and the bountiful Indian Ocean, highlighting the geographical vastness and varied landscapes. This celebration of diversity fosters a sense of shared identity amongst all Indians, regardless of their background.

**Unifying Threads:** Despite the multitude of cultures and languages, the anthem emphasizes a sense of national unity. Words like “sindhu-sagar” (sea of Sindhu) and “Himachal-dravida” (Himalayas and Dravidian lands) create a sense of geographical and cultural integration.

The anthem addresses India as “bharat bhumi” (land of Bharat), a unifying term for the nation. Phrases like “jaya he” (victory to thee) and “jan-gana-mangal” (welfare of the whole people) evoke a collective spirit of patriotism and a shared aspiration for the nation’s progress.

In conclusion, the national anthem serves as a powerful symbol of India’s “unity in diversity.” It celebrates the rich tapestry of cultures and regions while simultaneously invoking a strong sense of belonging to one nation. The anthem serves as a reminder that India’s diversity is not a weakness, but a beautiful melody that creates a symphony of unity and national pride.

**Question 3. Select a few stories from the Panchatantra and discuss how their message is still valid today. Do you know of any similar stories from your region?**

**Answer: Story 1:** The Monkey and the Crocodile Message: Trust and betrayal. Even today, this story teaches the importance of being cautious about whom we trust and the consequences of deceit.

**Story 2:** The Tortoise and the Geese

Message: The value of silence and the dangers of unnecessary talk. This is relevant in the modern context where discretion is often a virtue.

**Similar Stories:** In my region, there is a story of a clever rabbit outwitting a lion, similar to the Panchatantra’s tales of wit and intelligence. These stories teach moral lessons that are applicable across time and cultures.



#### **Question 4. Collect a few folk tales from your region and discuss their message.**

**Answer:** About folktales relevant to your location, here we have taken a few folk tales from Maharashtra with their messages:

##### **1. The Greedy Weaver (Vidarbha Region):**

- **Story:** This tale from the Vidarbha region tells the story of a weaver who gets progressively greedier. Initially happy with his simple life, he wishes for more wealth. As his wishes are granted, he becomes increasingly dissatisfied, ultimately losing everything due to his greed. ,
- **Message:** This folk tale warns against the dangers of greed and the importance of appreciating what you have. It encourages contentment and living within your means.

##### **2. Savitri and Satyavan (Satara District):**

- **Story:** This folk tale, popular in the Satara district, revolves around Savitri, a woman renowned for her devotion to her husband Satyavan. When Yama, the god of death, comes to claim Satyavan's life, Savitri follows him, pleading for her husband's return. Impressed by her love and courage, Yama grants Satyavan's life back.
- **Message:** This story celebrates true love, devotion, and the power of unwavering determination. It highlights the importance of fighting for what you believe in.

**Note:** Similarly students can find folk tales from their region, read them and understand the moral of the story.

#### **Question 5. Is there any ancient story that you have seen being depicted through a form of art? It could be a sculpture, a painting, a dance performance, a motif... Discuss with your classmates.**

**Answer:** The Panchatantra stories have been a rich source of inspiration for artists for centuries. Here's an example:

- **Story:** The Lion and the Mouse
- **Art Form:** Sculpture
- **Description:** One famous depiction of this story is the sculpture "The Lion and the Mouse" by Antonio Canova (1798). This sculpture shows a powerful lion with its paw resting gently on a tiny, frightened-looking mouse. The contrast in size highlights the story's theme of unexpected help coming from someone weak.  
**Paintings:** Many artists have portrayed this story in paintings. Popular examples include works by Etienne Delacroix (1842) and Ruth Gerson (1950s). These paintings often use dramatic lighting and contrasting sizes to convey the story's essence.
- **Dance Performances:** The story's themes of power dynamics and unexpected assistance can be interpreted through dance. Modern dance or mime performances



could use body language and movements to depict the lion's initial anger and the mouse's fear, culminating in a moment of understanding and cooperation. There are countless examples of fables and stories being depicted in art across different cultures.

**Question 6. Discuss in class the following quotation by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, when he travelled to many parts of India before Independence: Everywhere I found a cultural background which had exerted a powerful influence on their lives. ... The old epics of India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and other books, in popular translations and paraphrases, were widely known among the masses, and every incident and story and moral in them was engraved on the popular mind and gave a richness and content to it. Illiterate villagers would know hundreds of verses by heart and their conversation would be full of references to them or to some story with a moral, enshrined in some old classic."**

**Answer:** This quote comes from his travels across India before independence and highlights a crucial facet of Indian society- the deep impact of its cultural heritage.

- **Key Points: Widespread Cultural Impact:** Nehru emphasizes that India's cultural background significantly influenced the lives of people across the nation. This influence transcended social classes and locations.
- **Epics as Guiding Lights:** He specifically mentions the Ramayana and Mahabharata, highlighting their popularity even in "illiterate villages." These epics weren't just stories; they were moral compasses with lessons deeply ingrained in people's minds.
- **Enriched Lives:** Nehru suggests that these epics provided "richness and content" to people's lives, shaping their values and sense of identity.
- **Oral Traditions:** He mentions the practice of memorizing verses and referencing them in everyday conversations. This highlights the importance of oral traditions in preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge.

In conclusion, Jawaharlal Nehru's insightful observation offers a glimpse into the enduring power of India's cultural heritage. Epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, along with oral traditions, have profoundly shaped the values and identities of generations. By discussing this quote, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of Indian culture and how it continues to influence the lives of people today.

