



CLASS: VI
SUBJECT: SOCIAL SCIENCE
CHAPTER: 8 UNITY IN DIVERSITY, OR 'MANY IN THE ONE'
BOOK: EXPLORING SOCIETY: INDIA AND BEYOND

The Big Questions?



What is meant by ‘unity in diversity’ in the Indian scenario?



What aspects of India’s diversity are the most striking?



How do we make out the unity underlying the diversity?

A Rich Diversity

- Traveling by train in India offers a view of diverse landscapes.
- You will see various types of dresses and food along the way.
- Different languages, both familiar and unfamiliar, are spoken.
- Various scripts are visible during the journey.
- People from different regions of India, with unique customs and traditions, are often encountered.
- India's rich diversity is usually the first impression for visitors.



Diversity in India

01

India has over 1.4 billion inhabitants, making up about 18% of the world's population, which contributes to its diversity.

02

In the late 20th century, the Anthropological Survey of India conducted the 'People of India project' survey across 4,635 communities.

03

The survey documented 325 languages and 25 scripts used in the country.

04

It also found that many Indians are migrants, living away from their birthplace or original community.

Unity in Diversity



While diversity is indeed beautiful, making sense of it is not so easy. Over a century ago, the British historian Vincent Smith wondered,



“How, in the face of such bewildering diversity, can a history of India be written? ... The answer to the query is found in the fact that India offers unity in diversity.”

Let's Discuss



What is meant by 'unity in diversity'?



How shall we perceive and express this unity, or the 'Many in the One'?



To answer this question, we will explore a few dimensions of Indian life.

Food for All

India offers a vast variety of food, with thousands of different dishes from different regions.



However, certain food grains are common across the country, including cereals like rice, barley, and wheat.

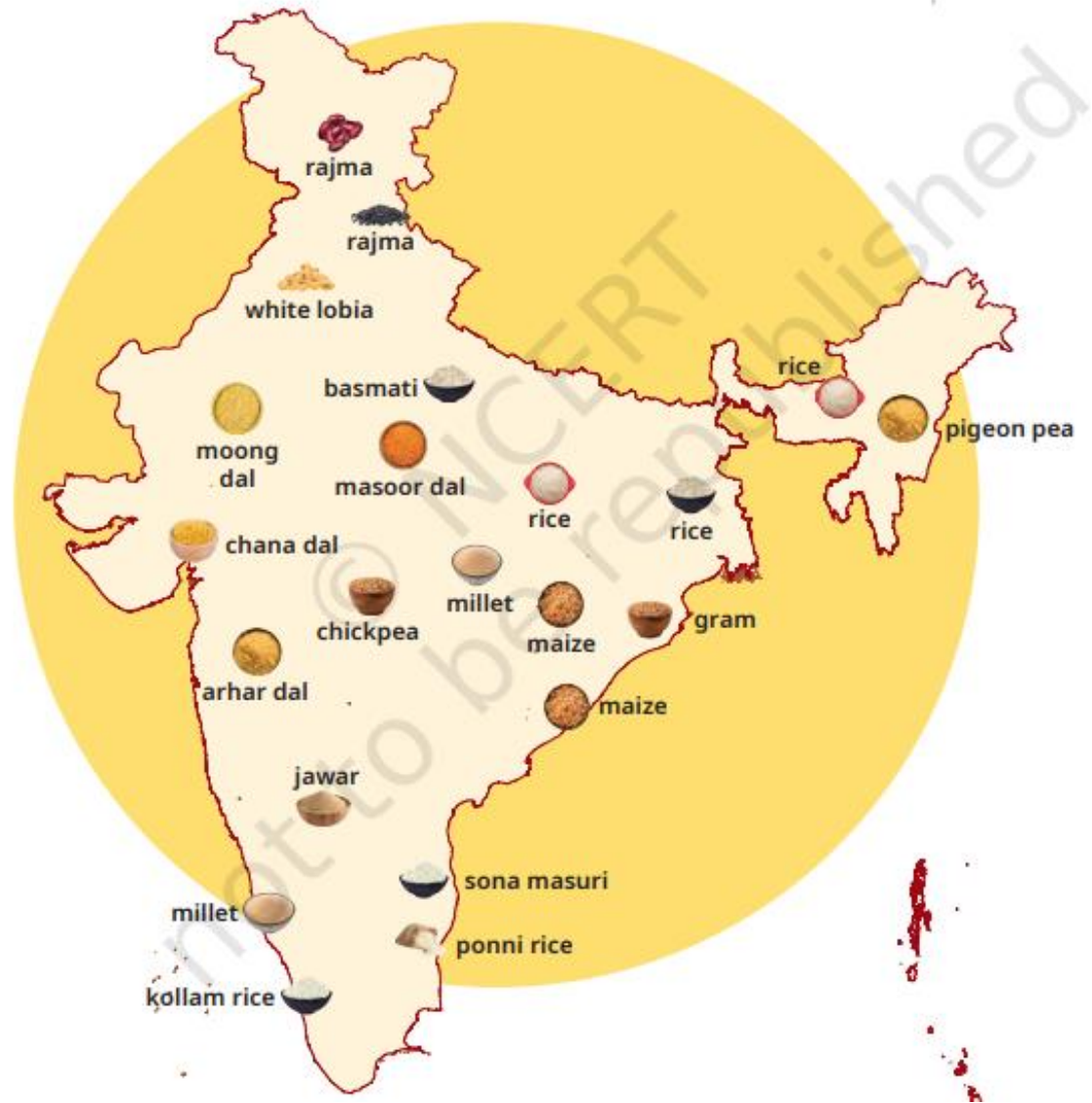


Millets such as pearl millet (bajra), sorghum (jowar), and finger millet (ragi) are widely consumed.



Pulses, including various kinds of dals, are also staple foods in many parts of India.

A few examples of
cereals and pulses
from different
regions of India



Staple Grains



The grains mentioned (rice, barley, wheat, millets, and pulses) are called 'staple grains' because they form the basic food for most Indians.



Common spices like turmeric, cumin, cardamom, and ginger are widely used across the country.



Other common ingredients include vegetables and oils that are used in various regional dishes.



The same ingredients (unity) can be combined in different ways (diversity) to create a wide variety of dishes.

Textiles and Clothing

Every region and community in India has its own unique styles of clothing.

Despite the regional variations, some traditional dresses, like the sari, are commonly worn across India.

The sari is a long, unstitched piece of cloth, typically made from cotton, silk, or synthetic fabrics.

Famous types of silk saris include Banarasi, Kanjivaram, Paithani, Patan Patola, Muga, and Mysore.

There are also many varieties of cotton saris, making it a versatile and widely worn traditional garment in India.

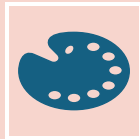
Saris



Saris are produced using various methods of weaving and designing.



Some designs are woven directly into the fabric, while others are printed after weaving.



There are countless color variations in saris, created from different pigments.



The sari has a long history, with a stone relief from Vaiśhali (modern-day Bihar) dating back to a few centuries BCE, depicting its ancient roots.

A few
specimens of
colourful
traditional
Indian textiles.



DON'T MISS OUT

- For centuries, India produced the finest cotton in the world, and its textiles were exported globally, including to Europe.
- One popular type of printed cotton, called 'chintz,' became highly popular in 17th-century Europe.
- The demand for chintz was so high that it led to a decline in sales of European-made dresses.
- To protect their own textile industries, England and France eventually banned the import of chintz from India.



Sari

- The sari can be worn in many different ways, with variations across regions and communities in India.
- New draping styles are still being invented, but it remains a single type of dress.
- In past centuries, travelers to India admired the sari for its simplicity, economy, and diverse ways of wearing it.
- Besides being worn as a dress, women use the sari creatively for various other purposes, as illustrated in the six pictures in Fig.



Festivals Galore

- India has a vast variety of festivals, many of which are celebrated across the country at similar times but with different names.
- One example is **Makara Sankrānti**, which marks the beginning of the harvest season in many parts of India around January 14.
- Although the festival is celebrated around the same time, it is known by different names in various regions of India.



Different names
of similar
festivals across
India about the
same date



An Epic Spread

Indian literature is diverse but shares common themes.



The **Pañchatantra**, a 2,200-year-old collection of animal stories, is a key example.

Originally in Sanskrit, it has been adapted into many Indian languages and over 200 versions worldwide, including in Southeast Asia, the Arab world, and Europe.

This highlights how one story collection has inspired many, reflecting both unity and diversity in literature.

A painting depicting a major episode from the Rāmāyaṇa (18th century, Himachal Pradesh)



Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana

The **Mahābhārata** and **Rāmāyana** have been translated and adapted into regional literatures in India and beyond for over two millennia.

There are numerous folk versions of these epics.

A survey in Tamil Nadu counted about 100 versions of the **Mahābhārata** in folklore alone.

The total number of versions across all of India is likely to be much higher, reflecting the vast diversity of adaptations.

Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana

Many tribal communities in India have their own versions of the **Rāmāyana** and **Mahābhārata**, often linking the epics to their history.

Tribes like the Bhils, Gonds, Mundas, and those from the northeast and Himalayan regions, including Kashmir, have unique adaptations.

These versions are passed down orally, with legends about epic heroes like the **Pāṇḍavas**, **Draupadī**, and **Duryodhana** visiting their regions.

‘Pañcha Pāṇḍavar’, a carved stone in a forest of the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, depicting the five Pāṇḍava brothers. The shrine containing this stone is maintained by Irula tribals to commemorate the Pāṇḍavas’ passing through the area.



Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana

- The anthropologist K.S. Singh, who directed the ‘**People of India**’ project, noted that, according to folklore, the **Mahābhārata** heroes, like the **Pāṇḍavas**, visited almost every part of India.
- The same is true for the **Rāmāyaṇa**.
- Over the centuries, these two epics have fostered a dense web of cultural interactions across India and parts of Asia.
- This serves as another example of **unity in diversity**.



Diversity and Unity



Indian classical arts, including architecture, also reflect both **diversity** and **unity**.

The diversity in Indian culture is celebrated as an enrichment, but it always retains an underlying unity that nourishes and connects that diversity.

This balance between unity and diversity is a central theme of Indian culture.

THANK
YOU

