

Diversity in Our Society

In the earlier chapters we saw how the land on which we live is so varied and that the life of people is so diverse. Diversity is present not only between different places but within your own class room and locality!

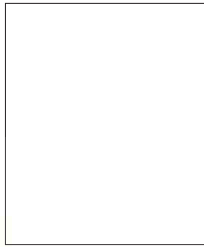
Diversity in our neighbourhood

Look around you in the classroom: Do you see anyone who looks exactly like you? In this chapter you will learn that people are different from each other in many ways. Not only do they look different but they might also belong to different regional, cultural or religious backgrounds. These differences enrich our lives in many ways and also make them more fun!

All these different people, who come from all kinds of backgrounds, and belong to all kinds of religions and cultures help to make India so interesting and so diverse. What does diversity add to our lives? How

did India become like this? Are all kinds of differences a part of diversity? Read this chapter to find some answers.

Look at these pictures. Three children of your age have drawn these figures. Use the empty space to draw a human figure.



vegetable Suman to play with them. Vegetable Suman was a very good fielder. He would joke that he practiced by not letting the vegetables fall or roll on the ground!

Some weeks later when student Suman met vegetable Suman he found the shopkeeper very upset. 'What happened?' he asked. 'The municipality people are asking us to vacate this place saying that this is an encroachment. They are asking us to go to the big market. We are too poor to pay the high rents there. I don't know where we will go now!' said vegetable Suman. Student Suman went back home worried. He wondered how he could help his friend. Two days later when he went to the place to buy vegetables he did not find the shop there. He was told that the municipality had cleared the place of all encroachments. Student Suman felt very sad.

Both Suman's have many differences between them in terms of their mother tongue, the states they come from, the work they do and the opportunities they have. Yet they could become friends.

- Can you list the differences between the two?
- Find out about the festivals people of Bihar (or another state) celebrate and the kind of food they eat.
- What festivals do you observe and what kind of food would student Suman eat?

- What kind of a house would they be living in?
- You would have noticed that there are other kind of differences between the two. Vegetable Suman did not go to school and sold vegetables. Why do you think he was not able to go to school?
- If he wanted to go to school what problems would he have faced?

Vegetable Suman did not have the opportunity to attend school. Perhaps you've noticed that there are several people in the area where you live who are poor and who don't have enough to eat or wear and sometimes not even a place to live. This difference is not the same as the one we have seen earlier. Here, we're talking not of difference but of inequality. Inequality comes about when a person does not have the resources and opportunities that are available to other persons. Some people are denied opportunities like education and good health because of poverty.

Diversity in India

We live in a country in which people of different abilities, languages, cultures, religions etc live together. Such diversity makes life richer and varied. There are 28 states in India, each with its own language, culture, food, etc. Even within one state we can see people speaking many different languages, following different religions, eating different kinds of food, observing different kinds of festivals, and wearing different kinds of dresses. The interesting

is your drawing similar to any of the others? The chances are that your drawing is quite different from the other three. This is because each one of us is unique and also has one's own drawing style.

- Fill up the following information about yourself:**
1. When I go out I like wearing.....
 2. At home I speak in language.
 3. My favourite sport is
 4. I like reading books.

Now, with the help of your teacher, check how many of you have similar answers. Is there any one whose list matches yours exactly? Probably, not. But many of you may have similar answers. Discuss in your class based on this information. For example, how many like reading the same kind of books? How many languages are spoken in your neighbourhood? etc. With this you might have recognized the many ways in which you are quite like some of your class mates and other ways in which you are different from them.

Making friends

Do you think it would be easy for you to make friends with someone who is very different from you? Read the following story:

Suman's mother runs a vegetable shop in the busy crossing in Madanapalle. Suman assists his mother in the shop and is called 'Vegetable Suman' by everyone.

One day a boy of the same age came riding a cycle and stopped at the shop. Vegetable Suman asked 'Kya chahiye?' The boy who was in school uniform said 'Lady's fingers half kg.' 'Boleto bhendi adha kilo?' Vegetable Suman said. The boy nodded. He took the vegetables, paid money and went away on his cycle.



Fig: 15.1 Suman at vegetable shop

The next day again the school boy came to the vegetable shop. Vegetable Suman smiled at him and said, 'Bhayya kya chahiye?' The schoolboy smiled in reply and asked 'What vegetables do you have?' 'Kaddu, Turai, Bhendi, Tamatar, Alu, pyaz..' said Vegetable Suman. The schoolboy asked him, 'Don't you know Telugu? Where are you from?' 'Hum Bihar ke hain. Mere ghar mae Hindi boltae haina. I know Telugu thoda, thoda,' replied the boy. The schoolboy asked him 'What is your name?' Vegetable Suman said, 'My name is Suman. They call me Vegetable Suman!' 'Oh! My name is also Suman', said the schoolboy and shook Suman's hand. Both of them became friends after this. On Sundays when the boys would play cricket, student Suman would invite

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thing is that slowly people adopt each others' dresses, food, festivals, language and even religious ideas. This makes everyone's life richer and more diverse. You could probably give many examples of this from your own neighbourhood.

- List all the food etc. that you enjoy today but your grandparents wouldn't have had tried out.

Items	Where did they come from?
Food:	
Dress:	
Games:	
Festivals:	

Now we will see how this kind of diversity comes about with examples from distant states.

How does diversity come about?

People of all times went about in search of new lands and settled at new places. Sometimes they went to trade; sometimes they left their homes due to floods or drought or epidemics; some others travelled because of wars and conflicts. They brought their languages, religions, and cultures to the new place and tried to follow them in the new place also. Gradually they mixed with the people of those areas, adopted many of their things and also taught many of their own things to them. In the following section we will see how the life of people in different places evolves with diversity.

- Look at a map of India showing states and union territories in chapter 12. Identify the states of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Sikkim.

Thar Desert

Thar Desert is situated on the border of India and Pakistan. A large part of it is in Marwar region of Rajasthan state. This place receives very little rain and there are no large rivers flowing. As a result very few trees grow here and very few crops can be grown. Only grass grows here. People here mainly depend upon grazing sheep, goats and camels. They take great care to store rain water for drinking for the animals and human beings and also for some agriculture. The shepherds usually travel across many states (Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat) with their herds and usually come back before the rainy season to Thar. They make a living by selling goats and wool of the sheep.



Fig: 15.2 Thar desert



Fig: 15.3 Jaisalmer Fort

Many traders coming from Iran and Afghanistan or going to those countries pass through this desert. They stop over at convenient places to rest. Slowly these places grew into important towns and cities like Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur. Many pilgrims going to Dwarka in Gujarat or to Mecca and Madina in Arabia or to Ajmer and Pushkar lake would pass through this area along with the traders. Thus over centuries people of many religions like Bohra Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Jains, Shaivas, Vaishnavas and Sikhs settled down in these towns and cities. Similarly, many Marwari traders from these parts went all over India and settled in several places. Some fifty years ago a large canal was built from the Punjab rivers to bring water to the Northern part of Thar desert. Along the canals came up new and prosperous villages – many people from Punjab and Haryana came and settled down in these new villages.

Earlier people mainly ate rotis made of bajra with green gram or black gram and

ate vegetables that grew on some trees (*Sangri*) and thorny bushes. These were dried and eaten throughout the year. Today however, you can get all kinds of food from idly-sambar to pizza and ice-creams.

The cattle of this region give very good milk and the Marwari traders who went to Bengal learnt to make delicious sweets from there. Now these sweets are made in the desert region, especially in Bikaner which is very famous for both its sweets and savouries.

All the people who came to Thar brought new crafts and new styles of dressing and also new kinds of food. Today thousands of tourists from all over the world come to enjoy this diversity of the Thar Desert.

Sikkim

Sikkim is a small state situated in the eastern parts of the Himalayan Mountains. Kanchenjunga, one of the highest peaks of the Himalayas is in Sikkim. In this region there are valleys, mountains, lakes with snow and thick forests. It remains cold throughout the year and the place is covered

with snow in winter. It also rains heavily in monsoon and many rivers flow through the valleys. People grow crops like maize, paddy, wheat, cardamom, ginger, etc. on stepped terraces cut on hill slopes. They also have tea and orange gardens. People also rear sheep and an animal called yak which gives meat, fur and milk.



Fig: 15.4 Kanchenjunga

Sikkim is on the boundary between India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet (China). That is why people from all these areas have settled down here. Some are Nepalese, some are Tibetans and Bhutanese. As many as eleven languages are spoken by the people of Sikkim! They have close relation with Tibetan Lamas who brought Buddhism to this area. They established many beautiful monasteries in Sikkim.

Sikkim was an independent country till 1975 ruled by kings called Chogyals. In that year Sikkim became part of India and a democratic government was established.



Fig: 15.5 Rumtek Monastery

Both Thar and Sikkim are in India. Thar is in the desert region, whereas Sikkim is in the Himalayas. The influence of diverse cultures is not merely a thing of the past. Our present lives are about moving from place to place for work. With each move our cultural traditions and way of life slowly becomes part of the new place we are in. Similarly, in our neighborhoods we live among people from several communities. Our daily lives are about the ways in which we do things together and customs and traditions become part of our life process.

Unity in diversity

How is it that people so diverse have come together to form one country? This unity of Indian people was formed through our common struggle against British Colonial government. This struggle is also called the National Movement.

Britishers ruled India. Women and men from different cultures, religions and regional backgrounds came together to oppose them. Chirala-Perala movement in Andhra Pradesh is an example for such unity.

Read about the incident of Chirala-Perala movement and discuss in the classroom.

Chirala-Perala Movement

Chirala and Perala are two villages which are now in Prakasam district. These were merged and formed into a municipality in 1920 by the British government. Due to this merger the inhabitants had to pay forty thousand rupees as tax. Earlier, they were paying only four thousand rupees when they were in the Chirala union. The people belonging to different sections of society such as weavers, farmers, artisans represented to the government to restore the previous status. But their plea was put to a deaf ear by the government. The local leader Duggirala Gopala Krishnayya started a non-cooperation movement and urged the people not to pay the tax. He established a voluntary organization called *Rama Dandu*. He invited Gandhiji to visit Chirala. Accepting this invitation Gandhiji visited Chirala and advocated that there would be no municipality when the people vacate their houses. Consequently all the people of these two villages vacated their houses and settled on the outskirts and built a town and named it as *Ramnagar*. They suffered a lot under the scorching heat and heavy rains but they remained in unity.

Sing the following patriotic song with melody and grasp the meaning of it after discussion in the class. Though India has multiple diversities it continues with unity.

*"Bhasahalanni vaeriena bhavamokkatae,
Rashtralu vaeriena Rajyamokkatae.
Mathalanni vaeriena manushulokkatae,
Thathavalu vaeriena Dharmamokkatae."
"Ee sema la seemalenni Laechina Theeriena Ma thalli Deshamokkatae."
"Veshalu, Bhedalu VeluThochina Varu, Veeranthanu Bharatiyulae."
"Nadulatho, Girulatho Nindiyunnadi Papalu Kadigaeti Punya Bhoomidi."
"Dharma dharmamulanni Telisyunnadi Nee desha Kyatyhulanu Nilupu sodara"*

Key words

Diversity
Colonial
Culture

Lama
Patriotic

Improve your learning

- Mention any two examples that reveal diversity in your neighbourhood.
- Prepare a table which consists of similar items of different religions which depicts unity.
- How do you say that national sports meet develops unity in diversity?
- Prepare a list of festivals that are celebrated in your locality. Which of these celebrations are shared by members of different regional and religious communities?
- In what ways living in India with its rich heritage of diversity adds to your life?
- Choose another region of India and do a similar study of the historical and geographical factors that influence the diversity found there. Are these historical and geographical factors connected to each other? How? Describe.
- Collect pictures and contributions of freedom fighters of different regions and prepare a book containing their biographies.
- Design a pamphlet giving illustrations that depict unique feature of India's Unity in diversity.
- Fill up the following table:

S.No	Item	Myself	Friend (Male)	Friend (Female)
1	Food			
2	Dress			
3	House			
4	Mother Tongue			
5	Religion			
6	Festivals			
7	Any other			

Do you consider differences above items as obstacles to continue your friendship? Justify.