

Unity in Diversity in India

India, a country of many ethnic groups, is a land of myriad languages, a veritable babel of tongues and numerous modes of apparel. For the most part, the continental dimensions of the country account for these variations and diversities. Besides, there are several religions, sects and beliefs. But there are certain common links and uniting bonds that people have sought to develop in order to achieve the eminently desirable goal of unity amidst diversity.

It is true that superficial observers are likely to be bewildered by the astonishing variety of Indian life. They fail to discover the one in many, the individual in the aggregate; the simple in the composite. With them the whole is lost in its parts. What is needed is the superior interpretation, synthesis of the power of the mind that can give rise to a vision of the whole.



A keen penetrating insight will not fail to recognise the fundamental unity beneath the manifold variety in India. The diversity itself, far from being a damaging cause of disunity and weakness, is a fertile source of strength and wealth. Sir Herbert Risely has rightly observed: "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social types, languages, customs and religions which strike the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."

From his long and first-hand experience in India, Vincent A. Smith says that the civilisation of India "has many features which differentiate it from that of the other regions



of the world, while they are common to the whole country in degree sufficient to justify its treatment as a unity in the history of human, social and intellectual development."

Even the early Indian history unmistakably shows that the political consciousness of the people has from the very early times, grasped the whole of India as a unit and assimilated the entire area as the theatre of its activities. India is not a mere geographical expression, nor is it a mere collection of separate people, traditions and conventions. India is much more than this. The best proof lies in the fact that Indian history has quickened into life.

India has many races, castes, sub-castes, nationalities and communities, but the heart of India is one. We are all heirs to a common and rich culture. Our cultural heritage consists of our art and literature as they flourished centuries ago. Our cultural heritage serves as a bond of unity between people of different faiths and creeds.

The streams of different cultures have flowed into our subcontinent to make us what we are and what we will be. There were Dravidians in India before the coming of the Aryans and Hinduism is a blend of the cultures of the North and the South.

India has one hundred and fifty dialects, and twenty two recognised regional languages, but Hindi, like English, has come to stay as the lingua franca of our nation. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Mumbai to Nagaland, Hindi is now understood and is recognised as the national language of India.



India has a rich cultural heritage. We are inheritors of several grand treasures in the fields of music, fine arts, dance, drama, theatre and sculpture. Our sages and seers have left behind a tradition of piety, penance, spiritual greatness, conquest of passion, etc. Our scriptures are the storehouses of spiritual wisdom. Our saints aspired to

the realisation of the infinite. We have inherited great spiritual values contrasted with which the materialistic progress of the West appears insignificant.

The West has to learn a lot from India, and it has now been realised when people in the United States and Europe are turning to the Indian way of life. Indian yogis and maharishis, musicians and spiritual leaders have all attracted them in a big way.

A significant move to project India's cultural unity has been the holding of Festivals of India in various parts of the world. The West is fast inclining towards our spiritual values which include meditation and contemplation, charity and love, universal brotherhood and fear of God, piety and unselfishness, control of passions and peace of mind.



Our cultural unity is further exemplified by the temples of the South and of Khajuraho, the caves of Ajanta and Ellora, which are shining examples of India's proficiency in sculpture and architecture. Our music has come to enjoy worldwide popularity.

Indian classical music, like the Indian dances, is built on the concept of ragas and talas. Each raga is regarded appropriate to a certain time of the day or the night. There are believed to be about 250 ragas in common use in the North as well as in the South. In the modern

times, people like Ravi Shankar have taken Indian music to the West and thus bridged the gap between the music of the East and the West.

Other significant features of India's cultural unity are the variety, colour and the emotional richness of its dances. The country abounds in tribal dances, old-dances as well as classical dances of great virtuosity. Throughout India, dance is regarded not merely as an accompaniment to social intercourse, but also as a mode of aesthetic expression and spiritual realization.



The great symbol of dance is Shiva, the Cosmic Dancer, depicted in sculpture and poetry as Nataraja. Similarly, the classical theatre in India has a history of more than two thousand years. It was performed in palaces and in temples. The classical plays combined music and dance. Tragedy was, and is, still discouraged otherwise; the range of themes covered is wide.

It is this strand of cultural unity running through the country that we are heir to, and to which people in the West are increasingly turning now. It is up to the younger generation to uphold this torch of cultural unity for the rest of the world to see, follow and emulate, and not get dazed by the superficial prosperity and material achievement of the West, where man has set foot on the Moon in his quest for space travel, but finds himself isolated in his own society and community.

Glossary

ethnic (<i>adj</i>)	:	connected with / belonging to a nation, race or people that shares a cultural tradition
myriad (<i>adj</i>)	:	an extremely large number of
babel (<i>n</i>)	:	the sound of many voices talking at a time
penetrate (<i>v</i>)	:	go into / through
discern (<i>v</i>)	:	to know / recognize or understand

convention (<i>n</i>)	:	the way in which most people do
blend (<i>v</i>)	:	to mix two or more substances together
dialects (<i>n</i>)	:	the forms of a language that are spoken in one area
sages (<i>n</i>)	:	wise people
seers (<i>n</i>)	:	people who claim that they can see what is going to happen in the future
piety (<i>n</i>)	:	showing a deep respect for (esp: for god / religion)
penance (<i>n</i>)	:	voluntary self-punishment for wrongdoing
contemplation (<i>n</i>)	:	the act of thinking deeply

Comprehension

I. Answer the following questions.

1. What do you understand by the expression 'Unity in diversity'?
2. Which aspect is Smith commenting on?
3. Pick out the factors that contribute to Unity in Diversity?
4. Why did the writer use the statement 'It is a mere collection of separate people'. Give reasons.
5. 'Hindi is now understood and recognised as the national language of India'. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Give reasons.

Vocabulary

I. Read the following words / phrases and find the words/ phrases from the text which convey the same meaning.

1. myriad _____
2. synthesis _____
3. diversity _____

4. dialects _____
5. saints _____

II. Read the phrases and find the suitable words equivalent to them from the text.

- a) a part of country _____
- b) try to do _____
- c) develop quickly _____
- d) behave in a particular way _____
- e) a very sad event _____

Writing

I. Fill in the table with the most appropriate dance form related to each state and the occasion on which it is performed.

Sl. No	Name of the State	Dance form
1.	Telangana	_____
2.	Andhra Pradesh	_____
3.	Punjab	_____
4.	Karnataka	_____
5.	Kerala	_____
6.	Orissa	_____
7.	Tamil Nadu	_____

II. Develop a write up on any one of the dance forms of India.

Remember to focus on the following points.

1. The area it belongs to
2. Its importance
3. Description of the dance

Project Work

Collect the data from different families in your area about the festivals they celebrate . You may use the following table to collect the information.

Sl. No	Name of the head of the family	Festivals they celebrate		Why they celebrate	Special food they eat on the occasion	Special clothes they wear on the occasion
		belonging to their religion	belonging to other religion			

Discuss in groups how the data in the Table given above supports the concept of unity in diversity. You may also discuss if there are some other ways that too may help strengthen this unity. Write a report and present it before the class.

Self Assessment



How well have I understood this unit?

Read and tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
Reading: I read and comprehended the text:			
A. My Childhood			
B. A Plea for India			
C. Unity and Diversity in India			
Vocabulary: I was able to			
• fill in the blanks with suitable words (words often confused)			
• identify the appropriate meaning of the underlined word.			
• identify the words and phrases having the same meaning.			
• find the suitable words from the text.			
Grammar: I was able to			
• identify the linkers used in a paragraph.			
• classify the linkers depending on their functions.			
• choose the appropriate linker in different sentences.			
• use suitable linkers and fill in the blanks in a paragraph.			
• join pairs of sentences using given linkers.			
• observe sentences in passive without agent.			

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pick out some more passive constructions without agent from the text. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> edit the paragraph in the areas like punctuation, spelling, tense, etc. 			
Writing: I was able to			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write a diary entry. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give a reply to the letter of Moses. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collect data and prepare a write up on a dance form. 			
Listening and Speaking:			
I listened to a speech given by Kalam and answer the questions.			
I was able to create appropriate dialogues and role play.			
I was able to participate in a group discussion on national festivals.			
Study Skills:			
I was able to write a paragraph comparing the female-male sex ratio.			
Project Work:			
I was able to collect the data from different families in my area about the festivals and talk about the concept of unity in diversity in our festivals.			