

# CIVICS

## Chapter 1: Understanding Diversity



## Understanding Diversity

### Diversity

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#### Meaning of Diversity

When people follow different religions, cultures, practices and speak different languages while living together peacefully, they present an example of unity in diversity. Each one of us differs from one another in one way or the other. Some people speak different languages, some eat different foods, and some follow distinct social and religious practices. Therefore, diversity refers to the religious, cultural, regional, linguistic and geographical differences which exist among the people. It also means that in spite of all these differences, people live together and respect the distinct identities of each other.



India presents an example of unity in diversity

Diversity adds colour and variety to our lives. It helps us to learn those customs, practices and languages which are not followed by us. It also gives us an opportunity to enjoy food from different regions in the country.

People became different from each other as they settled in different places. Sometimes they spread their culture and practices among the local people or assimilated the local culture and habits. Diversity can be explained in following ways:

- Many years ago, people travelled from one part of the world to the other parts by ships, or on camels, horsebacks or on foot.
- They often travelled in search of new lands where they could either trade or settle down.
- Since travelling in the olden days was difficult (as planes, trains and cars were not known) people settled into the new places. Sometimes people also travelled due to famines or droughts in their own lands.
- At the new places, people began to construct houses and began to adopt the ways of

the local people while still following their old habits.

- Thus, their food, culture, traditions and the languages became a fusion of the old and new practices. As a result, new and different customs, practices, foods, dresses and languages emerged.
- Due to these reasons, many regions in the world have become diverse because of their unique histories.
- Geographical diversity also affects the lives of the people. For example, the life and activities of people living in the coastal regions is different from the activities of the people living in the desert regions.
- The occupation of the people therefore, also differs from region to region.

### Diversity and Inequality In India

#### The Story of Sameer Ek and Sameer Do

- The book tells a painful story of two Sameers.
- One is a school-going student and the other is a newspaper seller. Every morning, the school-going Sameer is urged by the newspaper seller Sameer to buy his newspaper. A few days later they became friends.
- The newspaper seller Sameer has not been in the school ever. He does not know what a "subject" is. He proudly proclaims that he has been working since he was a little child. Yet he has not lost his smile. When he learns that the name of the school going boy is Sameer too, he finally says that the school goer is Sameer Ek and he is Sameer Do.
- However, a few days later riots erupted in his hometown Meerut. He looks visibly sad and reveals that he is a Muslim Sameer, and all his family members live in Meerut.
- Next day, Sameer Do was not there to greet Sameer Ek. Sameer Ek never saw his namesake ever again from that day forth.

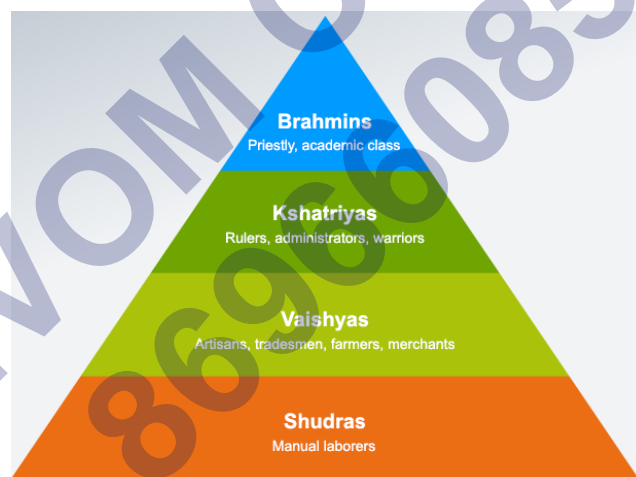


#### The Difference Between Sameer Ek and Sameer Do

- The story of Sameer Ek and Sameer Do is a story of hope as well as sadness.
- Sameer Do is a newspaper seller who is a poor fellow who was not fortunate enough to enroll in the school. Sameer Ek goes to school and knows English as well.
- Sameer Ek is a Hindu whereas Sameer Do is a Muslim.
- Sameer Ek was a native of Delhi whereas Sameer Do had his family in Meerut.

### Caste System in India

- In India, different people belong to different castes.
- According to the caste system, each caste is assigned a certain job. In ancient times, it had been mandated that people of a caste have to go on performing the work assigned to them. They can't perform the work of another caste.
- This system creates inequality because the so-called "lower" caste people have to go on performing low paid jobs.
- So it was considered not necessary for a sweeper to learn rocket science because according to the caste system he has to go on sweeping.



### Diversity & Inequality

- Diversity is good and we praised it, but the story of Sameer's shows that differences can be really bad at times. So why did we praise diversity then? That's because there is a difference between diversity and inequality.
- Diversity is the differences in culture, language, religion, caste, tastes, clothing style, eating habits etc. But inequality is the differences in the resources that people have.
- Some people have enough resources to lead a comfortable life. But some people might not have enough resources like money, house etc to live a life of comfort.

- These differences in resources are unwelcome. In class VII, you will read how sometimes diversity is related to inequality. But we should know this, diversity in itself is not bad.

## India- A Land of Diversity

India is a multi-religious, multicultural and multilingual plural country. People of India speak different languages, follow different religions, eat various kinds of food and celebrate many festivals like Holi, Diwali, Id, Christmas, Onam, Lohri etc. together.

**Factors Influencing Diversity:** Historical and geographical factors are the two factors that influence the diversity of a region. Life of people near the sea is different from the people in a mountainous area.

In India, geographical and historical factors have influenced the diversity of various regions. This can be explained by taking examples of two distinct regions in India- Ladakh and Kerala.



### Ladakh

- Ladakh is a cold desert in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir.
- As it is covered with snow for almost the entire year, hardly any major crop is grown here.
- The main occupation of people is the rearing of sheep and other animals.
- The world famous pashmina shawls are made from the pashmina wool which is obtained from the sheep of this region. After the wool is collected from the sheep, it is sold to the traders in Kashmir. Pashmina shawls are mainly woven in Kashmir.
- People eat meat and milk products like butter and cheese. Almost each family owns a few cows, yaks and goats.
- Though, Ladakh is a cold desert, traders still visit this place. In the ancient times, many travellers and traders passed through Ladakh in order to reach Tibet. Spices, silk and carpets were main items of trade in this region.



Ladakh is a cold desert.

## Kerala

- Kerala lies in south western part of the country and is surrounded by the sea and hills.



Kerala is known for its lagoons and backwaters.

- During the medieval period, the state attracted traders due to various spices which were grown here like cloves and cardamoms.



The state of Kerala is famous for spices.

- Jewish and Arab traders were the first to visit this state. The Apostle of Christ, Saint Thomas is believed to have come here about 2000 years ago and is supposed to have brought Christianity to India.
- Ibn Battuta, while visiting the state mentioned that Muslims were greatly respected in the region.

- It was the Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama who discovered the sea route from Europe to India and landed with his ships here.
- Due to these various historical and religious influences, the people of Kerala practice religions like Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.
- Fishermen here use nets called cheena vala which are similar to Chinese nets.
- Kerala is a fertile land and rice is the chief crop grown here. People consume rice, vegetables and fish.

The above description of the two states of Ladakh and Kerala show that while both the states have different geographical features, their culture was influenced by the Chinese and Arab travellers and traders. Their history and geography have played a significant part in shaping the present religious and cultural lives of the people.

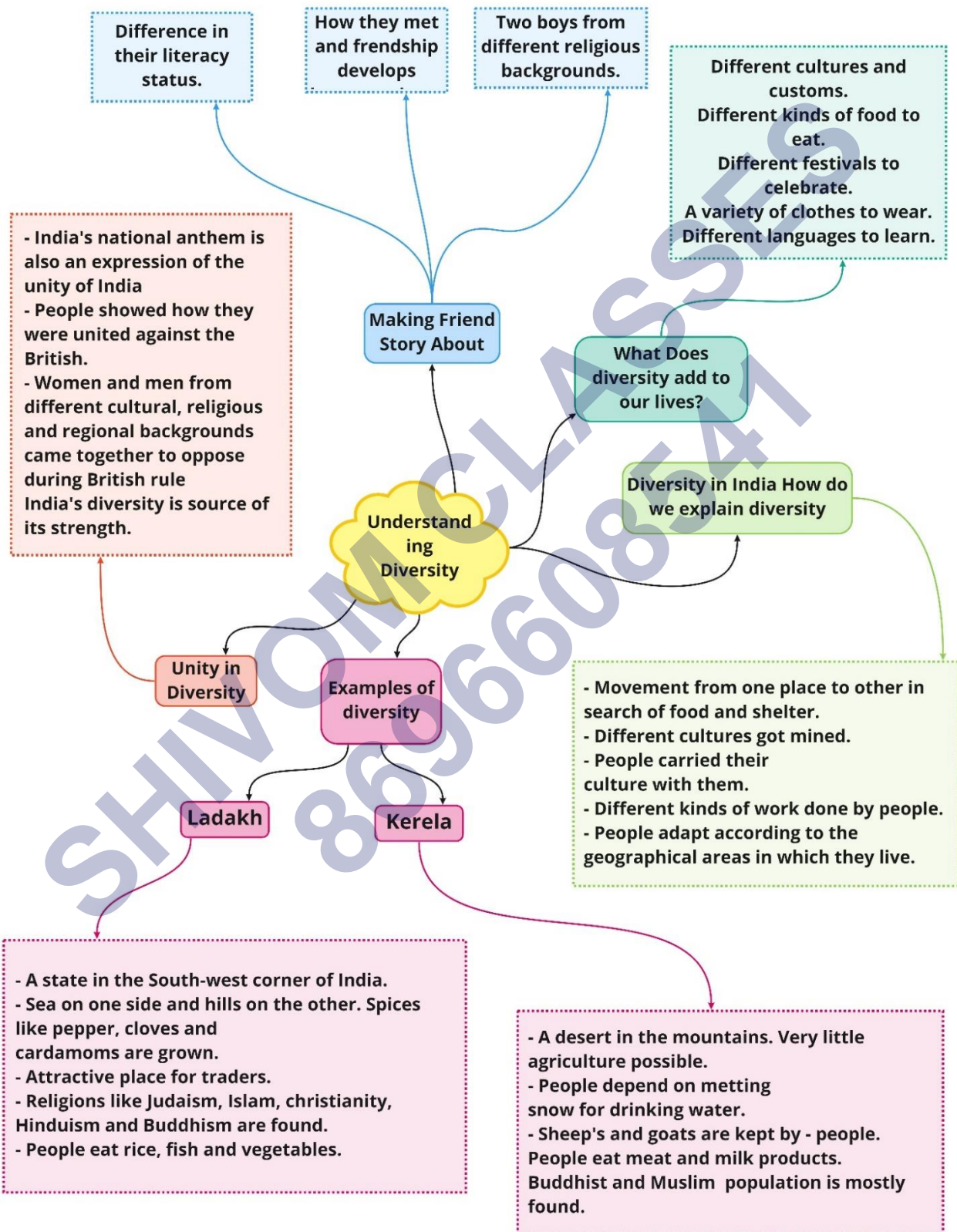
### Unity in Diversity

India being a land of diversities has taught and inspired the people to intermingle and live with each other amicably. Since ancient times, people belonging to different religions and cultures came and settled in India. They exchanged their cultures, ideas, foods, habits and philosophies which enriched the culture of our country. The unity of the people of India is the source of its strength. During the British rule, people belonging to different religions and regions participated in the national movement. The British planned to create a rift among the Indians on the basis of religious and regional differences, but the people fought against them with unity and forced them to leave the country. It was our unity which led to the freedom of the country. Jawaharlal Nehru in his book, 'Discovery of India' has described the diversity of the Indian culture. He was the first person in India who coined the term 'unity in diversity'.



India during the freedom struggle

Class : 6th Social Studies (Political Science)  
Chapter - 1 : Understanding Diversity





## Important Questions

### ➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. Pashmina is famous product of:

- (a) Ladakh
- (b) Kerala
- (c) UP

Question 2. What made Kerala an attractive place for trade?

- (a) Pashmina
- (b) Sheep meat
- (c) Spices

Question 3. Jallianwala Bagh is situated in:

- (a) Amritsar
- (b) Lucknow
- (c) Dehradun

Question 4. Kerala and Ladakh is similar in:

- (a) Both regions were influenced by Chinese and Arab traders.
- (b) Both regions are producer of Pashmina
- (c) Both regions having same climate.

Question 5. The Apostle of Christ came in Kerala about:

- (a) 1000 years ago
- (b) 1500 years ago
- (c) 2000 years ago

Question 6. 'The discovery of India' book was written by .....

- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (b) Subhash Chandra Bose
- (c) Mahatma Gandhi

Question 7. A country's customs, religions, arts and history constitute its .....

- (a) Constitution
- (b) Culture
- (c) Diversity

Question 8. Ladakh is also known as .....

- (a) Little Tibet
- (b) Tibet
- (c) Tibet's desert

Question 9. Who composed India's national anthem?

- (a) Mahatma Gandhi
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Rabindranath Tagore

Question 10. Who commented 'unity in diversity'?

- (a) Mahatma Gandhi
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Rabindranath Tagore

Question 11. People in Ladakh keep

- (a) Bull
- (b) Sheep
- (c) Cow
- (d) Dog

Question 12. Respect and safeguard is the matter of

- (a) Revenge
- (b) Safety
- (c) Respectful
- (d) Priority

Question 13. Difference among the people on cultural basis is known as

- (a) Climate Diversity
- (b) Cultural Diversity
- (c) Racial Diversity
- (d) Religion Diversity

Question 14. Which one of the given product is cultivated in Ladakh

- (a) Wool
- (b) Maize

(c) Cotton

(d) Spices

Question 15. The utensils used for frying cheenavala are called

(a) Cheenapatti

(b) Cheenatawa

(c) Cheenachatti

(d) Cheenapan

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. Samir Do's family lived in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Ladakh is a desert in the mountains in the eastern part of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The caste system is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Both Kerala and Ladakh regions were influenced by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Ladakh is also called \_\_\_\_\_.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. History and geography are often tied in the cultural life of a region.
2. In Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Haryana, a British general opened fire on a large group of unarmed people.
3. The Discovery of India is written by Jawaharlal Nehru.
4. Gandhiji coined the phrase, "unity in diversity" to describe the country.

➤ **Very Short Questions :**

1. Where is Onam celebrated?
2. Who composed the national anthem?
3. What is cheenachatti?
4. Write an example of Unity of Diversity among India.
5. Write one point of difference between Ladakh and Kerala.
6. List the different religions that are practiced in Kerala.
7. How was Indian flag used against the British by the people?
8. Who discovered the sea route to India?
9. When equality occurs?

10. Why people travelled from one part of the world to another?

➤ **Short Questions :**

1. Who wrote a travelogue that describes the lives of Muslims?
2. Make a list of the food that you have eaten from different parts of India.
3. Make a list of the languages besides your mother tongue that you can speak at least one or two words of.
4. While Kerala and Ladakh are quite different in terms of their geographical features, the history of both regions has seen similar cultural influences. Why?
5. What do you think living in India with its rich heritage of diversity adds to your life?

➤ **Long Questions :**

1. India's diversity has always been recognised as a source of its strength. How?
2. Describe how did caste system create an inequality in the society?
3. India's national anthem is another expression of the unity of India. In what way does the national anthem describe this unity?
4. Write a short note on Jallianwalla Bagh massacre.
5. Why Kerala is called as the 'land of coconuts'? What products are made out of coir in Kerala?

**ANSWER KEY –**

➤ **Multiple Choice Answer :**

1. (a) Ladakh
2. (c) Spices
3. (a) Amritsar
4. (a) Both regions were influenced by Chinese and Arab traders.
5. (c) 2000 years ago
6. (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
7. (b) Culture
8. (a) Little Tibet
9. (c) Rabindranath Tagore
10. (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
11. (b) Sheep

12. (d) Priority
13. (b) Cultural Diversity
14. (a) Wool
15. (c) Cheenachatti

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. Merrut
2. Jammu and Kashmir
3. inequality
4. Chinese and Arab traders
5. Little Tibet.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False

➤ **Very Short Answer :**

1. Onam festival is celebrated in Kerala.
2. India's national anthem was composed by Rabindranath Tagore.
3. Utensil used for frying is called the cheenachatti.
4. All Indian celebrates national festivals with great zeal.
5. Kerala is famous for spices whereas Ladakh is famous for pashmina wool.
6. People in Kerala practise different religions such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.
7. It was used as a symbol of protest against the British by people everywhere.
8. The Portuguese discovered the sea route to India from Europe when Vasco da Gama landed with his ship here.
9. Inequality comes about when a person does not have the resources and opportunities that are available to other persons.
10. People travelled from one part of the world to another in search of new lands, or new places to settle in, or for people to trade with.

### ➤ Short Answer :

1. Ibn Battuta, who travelled here a little less than seven hundred years ago, wrote a travelogue in which he describes the lives of Muslims.
2. Curry-chawal, Gatte ki Khichdi, chhole-bhature, Rajasthani Kadi, Dal Bati Churma, Idli-sambhar, Dosa, makke-ki-roti and Saraso ka saag, chicken, biriyani, etc.
3. My mother tongue is Hindi. Besides Hindi, I can also speak a few other languages such as English, Punjabi, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Marathi and Maithili. But I am not as much fluent in these languages as in Hindi.
4. The history of both regions has seen similar cultural influences because both regions were influenced by Chinese and Arab traders.
5. India is a country of diversities. We speak different languages, have various types of food, celebrate different festivals, practise different religions. However, despite all this, we unite together as India.

### ➤ Long Answer :

1. When the British ruled India, women and men from different cultural, religious and regional backgrounds came together to oppose them. India's freedom movement had thousands of people of different backgrounds in it. They worked together to decide joint actions, they went to jail together, and they found different ways to oppose the British. Interestingly the British thought they could divide Indians because they were so different, and then continue to rule them. But the people showed how they could be different and yet be united in their battle against the British.
2. According to caste system, society was divided into different groups depending upon the work that people did and they were supposed to remain in those groups. This system was considered irreversible. And because you were not supposed to change your profession, it was not considered necessary for you to know anything more than what you needed in your profession. This created a situation of inequality.
3. **Indian National anthem is surely an expression of national unity in the following ways:**
  - It inculcates a sense of nationalism and love for one's country.
  - Composed by Rabindranath Tagore, our national anthem reflects the diversity of the country in terms of religions, languages, regions and how such a diversity forms our Motherland India.
  - Though we have diversity but the geography and history binds us together.
  - It is our national anthem where people from varied backgrounds, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or sex stand up and sing in unison, paying respect and

gratitude to the country.

- It captures the very essence of our country.
4. On the afternoon of April 13, a crowd of at least 10,000 men, women, and children gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh, which was nearly completely enclosed by walls and had only one exit. People had gathered in a peaceful protest defying the orders on public meetings and some had come to the city from the surrounding region to celebrate Baisakhi, a spring festival. The British Army officer Dyer and his soldiers arrived and sealed off the exit. Without warning, the troops opened fire on the crowd, reportedly shooting hundreds of rounds until they ran out of ammunition. The Bagh, enclosed from all four sides with buildings, had only one main entrance that was blocked by Dyer's troops. Other smaller gates were locked and people fleeing from the firing were shot. Many of them jumped to their death in a well inside the garden. After they ceased firing, the troops immediately withdrew from the place, leaving behind the dead and wounded.
  5. The State Kerala derives its name from the Malayalam word 'Kera' meaning the coconut palm and 'Alam' meaning the place. Coconut forms a part of their daily diet. Coir is an important eco-friendly material and is obtained from the coconut husk. Kerala is considered to be the largest producer of coir. Products such as flooring, mats, carpets, wall hangings and bags are made from coir fiber.