

CHAPTER – 1

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY

Q. 1 Draw up a list of the different festivals celebrated in your locality. Which of these celebrations are shared by members of different regional and religious communities?

Answer:

India is a colourful country where people of all religious backgrounds live harmoniously. People of different religions celebrate their festivals throughout the year. Hindus all over the country celebrate Holi, Diwali and Dussehra. Jains celebrate Mahavir Jayanti, Buddhists celebrate Buddha Purnima. Sikhs celebrate Lohri, Baisakhi. Hindus in North India celebrate Makar Sankranti, while South Indians celebrate Pongal on the same day. In the northeast, people celebrate Bihu, which spreads the delight of spring while Sikhs celebrate the same days as Baisakhi. Republic Day, Independence Day, and Gandhi Jayanti: These are National festivals and hence, people of all communities celebrate them.

Q. 2 What do you think living in India with its rich heritage of diversity adds to your life?

Answer:

India is a country of many diversities. We speak **different languages**, have various types of food, celebrate **different festivals**, and practice **different religions**. We do many things that are similar except that we do them in different ways, for example; In north India Hindu New year is celebrated with the start of Navratri while, the Maharashtrians celebrate the same day as Gudi Padwa.

Q. 3 Do you think the term “unity in diversity” is an appropriate term to describe India? What do you think Nehru is trying to say about Indian unity in the sentence quoted above from his book 'The Discovery of India'?

Answer:

Yes, in my opinion, the term “unity in diversity” is appropriate to describe India. India’s **diversity** has always been recognized as its **strength**. During the freedom movements, people from different cultural, religious and regional backgrounds came together and started joint freedom movement to oppose the British rule. This strength of unity made it difficult for the Britishers to hold on power in India for a longer time. Also, the same national flag was used as a means of protest against Britishers everywhere.

In his book, ‘The Discovery of India’ Jawaharlal Nehru says that “Indian unity is not something imposed from the outside but rather it was something deeper and within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged”. Therefore, despite having geographical, language and cultural differences, people of India are living in peace with respect for each other’s traditions and with unity.

Q. 4 Underline the line in the poem sung after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, which according to you, reflects India’s essential unity.

Answer:

“The blood of Hindus and Muslims flows together today”. This line in the poem sung after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre reflects India’s essential unity.

Q. 5 Choose another region in 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?

Answer:

1. Region: Ladakh

Geographical Features: Ladakh is a desert in the mountains of the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir. Very little agriculture is possible here since this region does not receive any rain and is covered in snow for a large part of the year. There are a very few trees that can grow in this region. For drinking water, people depend on the melting snow during the summer months.

Historical Features: Ladakh was considered a good trade route as it had many passes through which caravans traveled to what is today called Tibet. These caravans carried textiles, spices, raw silk, and carpets. Buddhism reached Tibet via Ladakh. Ladakh is also called Little Tibet. The Islam was introduced in this region more than four hundred years ago. Ladakh has a very rich oral tradition of songs and poems.

2. Region: Kerala

Geographical Features: Situated in the south-west corner of India. It is surrounded by sea on one hand and hills on the other. It has a wet and maritime tropical climate influenced by the seasonal heavy rains. The western coastal belt is relatively flat compared to the eastern region and has many lakes and canals.

Historical Factors: Due to coastal areas, export and import were prevalent and thus there are people from many religions. Jewish and Arab traders were the first to come here. People of different religious backgrounds can be found in Kerala. Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Christianity are majorly found in Kerala. Festivals like

Onam, Eid, Christmas, etc. are celebrated. The fertile land and climate are suited to growing rice and the majority of people here eat rice, fish, and vegetables.

Though Ladakh and Kerala are located in extreme different locations and have different historical and geographical inferences altogether. But both the places have similar religious practices and people of different religions live peacefully.