

# Unity in diversity essay



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Unity and diversity are both qualities to be desired within society. Both, when balanced with one another, provide for the strongest form of society in which all are unified under some ideas, but differences are tolerated and accepted. One of the strongest factors of determining the present status of unity and diversity is the current state of affairs within a community. The current state of affairs can be altered by a number of issues, some planned and recurring, such as elections years, and some unexpected altogether, such as natural disasters.

Within the global community, the current state of a variety of affairs greatly affects the balance of unity and diversity amongst the global community along racial, socioeconomic, gender, age, or political lines. Recent history provides many examples of unity and diversity shifting and changing in balance between Unity in diversity is a slogan celebrating co-operation between different groups of people in a single society and socio-ecological philosophy that describes a sense of oneness despite physical or psychological barriers. United we stand, divided we fall. This adage has been with us since generations.

As boundaries diffuse in this ever-shrinking world, unity becomes even more necessary. Only when we unite in spirit, can we truly cope with the challenges we face. Here are some famous unity quotes that entreat us to unite in the true spirit of humankind. Humans are intensely social beings and thus have a great need for affiliation with other humans. It is easiest to trust and feel safe among like minded people. So many people turn to siblings or other family members to achieve that need for affiliation. Most people are

more like their siblings than they are like anyone else - you've got that shared history and that shared genetics.

But people are not always close to their families, so friends and groups are a good substitute. The alternative to unity is a sense of isolation. Most people want to feel that they belong, that they are not so different from others. A sense of unity, all belonging to the same church for example, or all belonging to the same fraternity or sorority, provides for that. The culture of India has been shaped by the long history of India, its unique geography and the absorption of customs, traditions and ideas from some of its neighbours as well as by preserving its ancient heritages, which were formed during the Indus Valley Civilization and evolved further during the Vedic age, rise and decline of Buddhism, Golden age, Muslim conquests and European colonization. India does not have a strong uniform national culture. India's great diversity of cultural practices, languages, customs, and traditions are examples of this unique co-mingling over the past five millennium. The various religions and traditions of India that were created by these amalgamations have influenced other parts of the world too. Most Indians emphasize the country's cultural diversity, tolerance of difference, and receptiveness to foreign influences.

Religion: India is the birth place of Dharmic religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Dharmic religions, also known as Indian religions, is a major form of world religions next to the Abrahamic ones. Today, Hinduism and Buddhism are the world's third- and fourth-largest religions respectively, with around 1.4 billion followers altogether. India is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, with some of the

most deeply religious societies and cultures. Religion still plays a central and definitive role in the life of most of its people.

The religion of more than 80.4% of the people is Hinduism. Islam is practiced by around 13.4% of all Indians. Sikhism, Jainism and especially Buddhism are influential not only in India but across the world. Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and the Baha'i Faith are also influential but their numbers are smaller. Despite the strong role of religion in Indian life, atheism and agnostics also have visible influence along with a self-ascribed tolerance to other faiths. Society: According to Eugene M. Makar, the traditional Indian culture is defined by relatively strict social hierarchy.

He also mentions that from an early age, children are reminded of their roles and places in society. This is reinforced by the fact that many believe gods and spirits have integral and functional role in determining their life. Several differences such as religion divide culture. However, far more powerful division is the traditional Hindu bifurcation into non-polluting and polluting occupations. Strict social taboos have governed these groups for thousands of years. In recent years, particularly in cities, some of these lines have blurred and sometimes even disappeared.

Nuclear family is becoming central to Indian culture. Important family relations extend to as far as gotra, the mainly patrilinear lineage or clan assigned to a Hindu at birth. In rural areas it is common that three or four generations of the family live under the same roof. Patriarch often resolves family issues. Among developing countries, India has low levels of occupational and geographic mobility. People choose same occupations as

their parents and rarely move geographically in the society. Family: India for ages has had a prevailing tradition of the joint family system.

It's a system under which even extended members of a family like one's parents, children, the children's spouses and their offspring, etc. live together. The elder-most, usually the male member is the head in the joint Indian family system who makes all important decisions and rules, whereas other family members abide by it. The average nuclear family is relatively small, with only one or two children. Toddlers receive much parental attention. Many children are cared for primarily by their parents in the parental home. Arranged marriages have the tradition in Indian society for centuries.

Even today, overwhelming majority of Indians have their marriages planned by their parents and other respected family-members, with the consent of the bride and groom. Arranged matches were made after taking into account factors such as age, height, personal values and tastes, the backgrounds of their families (wealth, social standing) and their castes and the astrological compatibility of the couples' horoscopes. Monogamy is the only marriage form allowed. In India, the marriage is thought to be for life and the divorce rate is extremely low — 1.1% compared with about 50% in the United States.

The arranged marriages generally have a much lower divorce rate. The divorce rates have risen significantly in recent years: “Opinion is divided over what the phenomenon means: for traditionalists the rising numbers portend the breakdown of society while, for some modernists, they speak of

a healthy new empowerment for women. " Although child marriage was outlawed in 1860, it is continued to be practiced in some rural parts of India. According to UNICEF's " State of the World's Children-2009" report, 47% of India's women aged 20-24 were married before the legal age of 18, with 56% in rural areas.

The report also showed that 40% of the world's child marriages occur in India. Indian names are based on a variety of systems and naming conventions, which vary from region to region. Names are also influenced by religion and caste and may come from religion or epics. India's population speaks a wide variety of languages. Although women and men are equal before the law and the trend toward gender equality has been noticeable, women and men still occupy distinct functions in Indian society. Woman's role in the society is often to perform household works and pro bono community work.

This low rate of participation has ideological and historical reasons. Women and women's issues appear only 7-14% of the time in news programs. In most Indian families, women do not own any property in their own names, and do not get a share of parental property. Due to weak enforcement of laws protecting them, women continue to have little access to land and property. In many families, especially rural ones, the girls and women face nutritional discrimination within the family, and are anaemic and malnourished. They still lag behind men in terms of income and job status.

Customs:

Namaste, Namaskar or Namaskaram is a common spoken greeting or salutation in the Indian subcontinent. Namaskar is considered a slightly more formal version than namaste but both express deep respect. It is commonly used in India and Nepal by Hindus, Jains and Buddhists, and many continue to use this outside the Indian subcontinent. In Indian and Nepali culture, the word is spoken at the beginning of written or verbal communication.

However, the same hands folded gesture is made wordlessly upon departure. In yoga, namaste is said to mean “ The light in me honors the light in you,” as spoken by both the yoga instructor and yoga students.

Taken literally, it means “ I bow to you”. The word is derived from Sanskrit (namas): to bow, obeisance, reverential salutation, and respectand (te): “ to you”. When spoken to another person, it is commonly accompanied by a slight bow made with hands pressed together, palms touching and fingers pointed upwards, in front of the chest. The gesture can also be performed wordlessly and carry the same meaning. Festivals: India, being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions.

The three national holidays in India, the Independence Day, the Republic Day and the Gandhi Jayanti, are celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm across India. In addition, many states and regions have local festivals depending on prevalent religious and linguistic demographics. Popular religious festivals include the Hindu festivals of Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Durga puja, Holi, Rakshabandhan and Dussehra. Several harvest festivals, such as Sankranti, Pongal and Onam, are also fairly popular. Certain festivals in India are celebrated by multiple religions.

Notable examples include Diwali which celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains and Buddh Purnima which is celebrated by Buddhists and Hindus. Islamic festivals, such Eid ul-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Ramadan, are celebrated by Muslims across India. Adding colours to the culture of India, the Dree Festival is one of the tribal festivals of India celebrated by the Apatanis of the Ziro valley of Arunachal Pradesh, which is the easternmost state of this country. Cuisine: The multiple families of Indian cuisine are characterized by their sophisticated and subtle use of many spices and herbs.

Each family of this cuisine is characterized by a wide assortment of dishes and cooking techniques. Though a significant portion of Indian food is vegetarian, many traditional Indian dishes also include chicken, goat, lamb, fish, and other meats. Food is an important part of Indian culture, playing a role in everyday life as well as in festivals. Indian cuisine varies from region to region, reflecting the varied demographics of the ethnically diverse subcontinent. Generally, Indian cuisine can be split into five categories: North, South, East, West Indian and North-eastern India .

Despite this diversity, some unifying threads emerge. Varied uses of spices are an integral part of food preparation, and are used to enhance the flavor of a dish and create unique flavors and aromas. Cuisine across India has also been influenced by various cultural groups that entered India throughout history, such as the Persians, Mughals, and European colonists. Though the tandoor originated in Central Asia, Indian tandoori dishes, such as chicken tikka made with Indian ingredients, enjoy widespread popularity. Indian cuisine is one of the most popular cuisines across the globe.



Historically, Indian spices and herbs were one of the most sought after trade commodities. The spice trade between India and Europe led to the rise and dominance of Arab traders to such an extent that European explorers, such as Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus, set out to find new trade routes with India leading to the Age of Discovery. The popularity of curry, which originated in India, across Asia has often led to the dish being labeled as the “ pan-Asian” dish. Clothing: Traditional Indian clothing for women are the saris and also Ghaghra Cholis (Lehengas).

For men, traditional clothes are the Dhoti, pancha/ veshti or Kurta. Bombay, also known as Mumbai, is one of India’s fashion capitals. In some village parts of India, traditional clothing mostly will be worn. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Pune are all places for people who like to shop. In southern India the men wear long, white sheets of cloth called dhoti in English and in Tamil. Over the dhoti, men wear shirts, t-shirts, or anything else. Women wear a sari, a long sheet of colourful cloth with patterns. This is draped over a simple or fancy blouse.

This is worn by young ladies and woman. Little girls wear a pavada. A pavada is a long skirt worn under a blouse. Both are often gaily patterned. Bindi is part of the women’s make-up. Traditionally, the red bindi (or sindhur) was worn only by the married Hindu women, but now it has become a part of women’s fashion. Indo-western clothing is the fusion of Western and Subcontinental fashion. Churidar, Dupatta, Gamchha, Kurta, Mundum Neriyathum, Sherwani, uttariya are among other clothes. Literature: The earliest works of Indian literature were orally transmitted.

Sanskrit literature begins with the Rig Veda a collection of sacred hymns dating to the period 1500–1200 BCE. The Sanskrit epics Ramayana and Mahabharata appeared towards the end of the first millennium BCE. Classical Sanskrit literature flourished in the first few centuries of the first millennium CE, as did the Tamil Sangam literature. In the medieval period, literature in Kannada and Telugu appears in the 9th and 11th centuries respectively, followed by the first Malayalam works in the 12th century. During this time, literature in the Bengali, Marathi, and various dialects of Hindi, Persian and Urdu began to appear as well.

Some of the most important authors from India are Rabindranath Tagore, Ramdhari Singh ' Dinkar', Subramania Barathi, Kuvempu, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Munshi Premchand, Muhammad Iqbal, Devaki Nandan Khatri became well known. In contemporary India, among the writers who have received critical acclaim are: Girish Karnad, Agyeya, Nirmal Verma, Kamleshwar, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Indira Goswami, Mahasweta Devi, Amrita Pritam, Maasti Venkatesh Ayengar, Qurratulain Hyder and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai and others have received critical acclaim.

In contemporary Indian literature, there are two major literary awards; these are the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship and the Jnanpith Award. Seven Jnanpith awards each have been awarded in Kannada, six in Hindi, five in Bengali, four in Malayalam, three each in and Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu and Oriya.

Poetry: India has strong traditions of poetry ever since the Rigveda, as well as prose compositions. Poetry is often closely related to musical traditions, and much of poetry can be attributed to religious movements.

Writers and philosophers were often also skilled poets. In modern times, poetry has served as an important non-violent tool of nationalism during the Indian freedom movement. A famous modern example of this tradition can be found in such figures as Rabindranath Tagore and K. S. Narasimhaswamy in modern times and poets such as Basava (vachanas) , Kabir and Purandaradasa (padas and devaranamas) in medieval times, as well as the epics of ancient times.

Two examples of poetry from Tagore's Gitanjali serve as the national anthems of both India and Bangladesh. Epics: The Ramayana and Mahabharata are the oldest preserved and still well-known epics of India; some of their versions have been adopted as the epics of Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. In addition, there are five epics in the classical Tamil language -they being Silappadhikaram, Manimegalai, Seevaga-chintamani, Valayaapathi, Kundalakesi.

Other regional variations of them as well as unrelated epics include the Tamil Kamba Ramayanam, in Kannada, the Pampa Bharata by Adikavi Pampa, Torave Ramayana by Kumara Valmiki and Karnata Bharata KathaManjari by Kumaravyasa, Hindi Ramacharitamanasa, Malayalam Adhyathmaramayanam. Music and Dance: The music of India includes multiples varieties of religious, folk, popular, pop, and classical music. The oldest preserved examples of Indian music are the melodies of the Samaveda that are still sung in certain Vedic ? rauta sacrifices.

India's classical music tradition is heavily influenced by Hindu texts. It includes two distinct styles: Carnatic and Hindustani music. It is noted for the

use of several Raga, melodic modes. it has a history spanning millennia and it was developed over several eras. It remains instrumental to the religious inspiration, cultural expression and pure entertainment. Purandaradasa is considered the “ father of carnatic music” (Karnataka sangeeta pitamaha). He concluded his songs with a salutation to Lord Purandara Vittala and is believed to have composed as many as 475, 000songs in the Kannada language.

However, only about 1000 are known today. Indian dance too has diverse folk and classical forms. Among the well-known folk dances are the bhangra of the Punjab, the bihu of Assam, the chhau of Jharkhand and Orissa, the ghoomar of Rajasthan, the dandiya and garba of Gujarat, the Yakshagana of Karnataka and lavani of Maharashtra and Dekhnni of Goa. Eight dance forms, many with narrative forms and mythological elements, have been accorded classical dance status by India’s National Academy of Music, Dance, and Drama.

These are: bharatanatyam of the state of Tamil Nadu, kathak of Uttar Pradesh, kathakali and mohiniattam of Kerala, kuchipudi of Andhra Pradesh, manipuri of Manipur, odissi of the state of Orissa and the sattriya of Assam. Kalaripayattu or Kalari for short is considered one of the world’s oldest martial art. It is preserved in texts such as the Mallapurana. Kalari and other later formed martial arts have been assumed by some to have traveled to China, like Buddhism, and eventually developing into Kung-fu.

Other later martial arts are Gatka, Pehlwani, and Malla-yuddha. There have been many great practitioners of Indian martial Arts including Bodhidharma

who supposedly brought Indian martial arts to China. Paintings: The earliest Indian paintings were the rock paintings of pre-historic times, the petroglyphs as found in places like Bhimbetka, some of which go back to the Stone Age. Ancient texts outline theories of darragh and anecdotal accounts suggesting that it was common for households to paint their doorways or indoor rooms where guests resided.

Cave paintings from Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora and Sittanavasal and temple paintings testify to a love of naturalism. Most early and medieval art in India is Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. A freshly made coloured flour design (Rangoli) is still a common sight outside the doorstep of many (mostly South Indian) Indian homes. Madhubani painting, Mysore painting, Rajput painting, Tanjore painting, Mughal painting are some notable Genres of Indian Art; while Raja Ravi Varma, Nandalal Bose, Geeta Vadhera, Jamini Roy and B. Venkatappa are some modern painters.

Among the present day artists, Atul Dodiya, Bose Krishnamacnahri, Devajyoti Ray and Shibu Natesan represent a new era of Indian art where global art shows direct amalgamation with Indian classical styles. These recent artists have acquired international recognition. Devajyoti Ray's paintings have been acquired by the National Fine Arts Museum in Cuba and so have been the works of some of the new generation artists. Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, Mysore Palace has on display several good Indian paintings. Sculptures:

The first sculptures in India date back to the Indus Valley civilization, where stone and bronze figures have been discovered. Later, as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism developed further, India produced some extremely

intricate bronzes as well as temple carvings. Some huge shrines, such as the one at Ellora were not constructed by using blocks but carved out of solid rock. Sculptures produced in the northwest, in stucco, schist, or clay, display a very strong blend of Indian and Classical Hellenistic or possibly even Greco-Roman influence. The pink sandstone sculptures of Mathura evolved almost simultaneously. During the Gupta period (4th to 6th century) sculpture reached a very high standard in execution and delicacy in modeling. These styles and others elsewhere in India evolved leading to classical Indian art that contributed to Buddhist and Hindu sculpture throughout Southeast Central and East Asia. Architecture: Indian architecture encompasses a multitude of expressions over space and time, constantly absorbing new ideas.

The result is an evolving range of architectural production that nonetheless retains a certain amount of continuity across history. Some of its earliest production are found in the Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 BCE) which is characterised by well planned cities and houses. Religion and kingship do not seem to have played an important role in the planning and layout of these towns. During the period of the Maurya and Gupta empires and their successors, several Buddhist architectural complexes, such as the caves of Ajanta and Ellora and the monumental Sanchi Stupa were built.

Later on, South India produced several Hindu temples like Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura, Brihadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur, the Sun Temple, Konark, Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple at Srirangam, and the Buddha stupa (Chinna Lanja dibba and Vikramarka kota dibba) at

Bhattiprolu. Angkor Wat, Borobudur and other Buddhist and Hindu temples indicate strong Indian influence on South East Asian architecture, as they are built in styles almost identical to traditional Indian religious buildings.

The traditional system of Vaastu Shastra serves as India's version of Feng Shui, influencing town planning, architecture, and ergonomics. It is unclear which system is older, but they contain certain similarities. Feng Shui is more commonly used throughout the world. Though Vastu is conceptually similar to Feng Shui in that it also tries to harmonize the flow of energy, (also called life-force or Prana in Sanskrit and Chi/Ki in Chinese/Japanese), through the house, it differs in the details, such as the exact directions in which various objects, rooms, materials, etc. are to be placed.

With the advent of Islamic influence from the west, Indian architecture was adapted to allow the traditions of the new religion. Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Gol Gumbaz, Qutub Minar, Red Fort of Delhi are creations of this era, and are often used as the stereotypical symbols of India. The colonial rule of the British Empire saw the development of Indo-Saracenic style, and mixing of several other styles, such as European Gothic. The Victoria Memorial or the Victoria Terminus are notable examples. Indian architecture has influenced eastern and southeastern Asia, due to the spread of Buddhism.

A number of Indian architectural features such as the temple mound or stupa, temple spire or sikhara, temple tower or pagoda and temple gate or torana, have become famous symbols of Asian culture, used extensively in East Asia and South East Asia. The central spire is also sometimes called a vimanam. The southern temple gate, or gopuram is noted for its intricacy

and majesty. Contemporary Indian architecture is more cosmopolitan. Cities are extremely compact and densely populated. Mumbai's Nariman Point is famous for its Art Deco buildings.

Recent creations such as the Lotus Temple, and the various modern urban developments of India like Chandigarh, are notable. Recreation and Sports: In the area of recreation and sports India had evolved a number of games. The modern eastern martial arts originated as ancient games and martial arts in India, and it is believed by some that these games were transmitted to foreign countries, where they were further adapted and modernized. Traditional indigenous sports include kabaddi and gilli-danda, which are played in most parts of the country.

A few games introduced during the British Raj have grown quite popular in India: field hockey, football (soccer) and especially cricket. Although field hockey is India's official national sport, cricket is by far the most popular sport not only in India, but the entire subcontinent, thriving recreationally and professionally. Cricket has even been used recently as a forum for diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan. The two nations' cricket teams face off annually and such contests are quite impassioned on both sides.

Polo is also popular. Indoor and outdoor games like Chess, Snakes and Ladders, Playing cards, Carrom, Badminton are popular. Chess was invented in India. Games of strength and speed flourished in India. In ancient India stones were used for weights, marbles, and dice. Ancient Indians competed



in chariot racing, archery, horsemanship, military tactics, wrestling, weight lifting, hunting, swimming and running races.

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