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DIVERSITY OF INDIA

Definition: Diversity refers to the collective differences among people, whether biological, religious, linguistic, etc.

Importance:

- India's diversity is a key asset in its global development and economic growth.
- India is home to over **100 languages**, **700 different tribes**, and **every major religion in the world**.
- By 2025, India's diversity is expected to help propel the country's GDP beyond **\$5 trillion**.

Models of Accommodation for Diversity

1. **Salad Bowl Model:** Different cultures coexist without losing their distinct qualities, like ingredients in a salad.
 - **Example:** The UK, where regions like Scotland and Northern Ireland maintain distinct identities.
2. **Melting Pot Model:** Different cultures blend together into one homogeneous society.
 - **Example:** The United States, often referred to as a "melting pot," where immigrants have assimilated and blended into the larger society.
3. **Mosaic Model:** Different cultures coexist but maintain their identities. This model focuses on integration without the loss of identity.
 - **Example:** In India, cultures such as Bengali, Kashmiri, and Punjabi coexist while maintaining their Indian identity.

Basis of Diversity and Its Distribution

1. Language

- **Statistics:**
 - India has over **1600 languages**, according to the 1961 census.
 - **22** languages are recognized as official languages under the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.
 - Approximately **197** languages are endangered.
 - India ranks second globally in the number of spoken languages, after Papua New Guinea.
- **Classification:**
 - **Indo-Aryan Language Family:** Includes languages like Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, and Marathi. Spoken mainly in North India.

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- **Dravidian Language Family:** Includes languages like Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu. Primarily spoken in South India.
- **Austroasiatic Language Family:** Predominantly tribal languages such as Khasi, Santhali, and Munda, spoken in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha.
- **Sino-Tibetan Language Family:** Includes languages from the northeastern regions of India, such as Assamese, Manipuri, and Bodo.
- **Others:** Includes endangered languages like Andamanese and Sentinelese, spoken by a small number of people.

2. Race in India

India is home to representatives of all three major racial groups of the world: **Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid.**

Classification of Races in India:

- **Negrito:** Found in the tribes of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- **Proto-Australoid:** Mostly found in the hilly and forested tracts of **central and southern India.**
- **Mongoloids:** Located in the hilly regions of **Northeast India, Sikkim, and Ladakh.**
- **Aryans:** Predominantly occupy the **northern states** of India.
- **Dravidians:** Predominantly found in the **southern states.**

3. Religion

- **Religious Diversity:** India is a land of multiple religions, with significant diversity even within each religion.

Distribution of Indian Population by Religion (2011 Census):

- **Hinduism:** 79.8%
- **Islam:** 14.2%
- **Christianity:** 2.3%
- **Sikhism:** 1.7%
- **Buddhism:** 0.7%
- **Jainism:** 0.4%
- **Other Religions:** 0.7%
- **Religion Not Stated:** 0.2%
- **Diversity within Religions:**

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- **Hindus:** Divided into various sects like Vaishnavas, Shaivites, Shaktas, Smartas, etc.
- **Muslims:** Divided into sects such as Shias, Sunnis, Ahmadis, etc.

4. Geography

- **Geographic Diversity:** India spans an area of **3.28 million square kilometers** and is marked by immense diversity in physical geography. Physical features include deserts, evergreen forests, mountains, perennial and non-perennial rivers, long coastlines, and fertile plains.
- **Climate Classification:** India is divided into **5 major climatic zones**, based on factors like moisture and temperature:
 - **Hot & Dry:** Areas with very low precipitation, high temperatures.
 - **Hot & Humid:** High temperatures combined with high humidity and rainfall.
 - **Cold:** Low temperatures, particularly in mountainous regions.
 - **Moderate:** Regions with moderate temperatures and rainfall.
 - **Composite:** Areas that experience a mix of climatic conditions, such as hot summers followed by a humid monsoon season.

5. Caste

- **Varna System:** The Hindu society in India is traditionally divided into the **Varna system**, which classifies people based on occupation and duty.
- **Jati:** Refers to a hereditary, endogamous status group practicing a specific traditional occupation. There are over **3,000 jatis** in India, and there is no single system of ranking them. The caste system has evolved, and mobility is present, with jatis changing their status over time.
- **Source of Division:** The caste system has been a source of separation within the Hindu religion, leading to cultural diversity. Different caste groups often have distinct deities, festivals, and practices.
- **Endogamy:** Caste is sustained through **endogamy**, where individuals marry within their own caste, helping to preserve the caste structure.

6. Culture

- **Reflect Regional Variation:** Cultural patterns vary based on regional differences, with immense variety in Indian culture as it reflects the blend of various communities.
- **Cultural Variation:** Different religions, castes, and regions follow their own traditions, leading to diverse forms of art, architecture, music, and theater.

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Reasons for Diversity in India

1. Historical Reasons:

- **Invasions:** Foreign invaders like the Mughals settled in India, bringing their cultures.
- **Trade:** Routes like the Silk Road passing through Ladakh facilitated the exchange of cultures.
- **Pilgrimage:** India has many important religious sites that have attracted pilgrims from different parts of the world.
- **Travelers:** Famous travelers like Ibn Battuta and Hiuen Tsang shared their cultural influences with India.

2. Geographical Divisions:

- **Mountains:** Ranges like the Vindhya and Satpura in the west and the Himalayas in the north limited movement, helping distinct cultural groups form and develop without mixing.
 - **Example:** The Aryan-Dravidian cultural divide.
- **Forests:** Dense forests in isolated regions helped preserve **tribal cultures**, keeping them distinct from mainstream society.

3. Linguistic Divisions: India has been divided into various **small kingdoms**, each with its own language, leading to the development of unique cultural identities.

- **Examples:**
 - Malayan under the Cheras.
 - Bengali under the Palas.

4. Birth of Religion: India is the birthplace of religions such as **Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism**. Over centuries, people from around the world migrated and settled in India, bringing with them religions like **Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam**.

Advantages of Diversity

1. **National Unity:** Diversity strengthens love, tolerance, and unity by fostering openness to different perspectives and views.
2. **National Identity:** India's identity on the international stage has long been associated with its diverse culture, which translates into a diversity of ideas and innovations.
3. **Tourism Potential:** India's rich heritage and culture have made it a major tourist destination, creating significant employment opportunities.
4. **Geographical Diversity:** India's varied landscapes offer a rich reserve of **flora and fauna**, benefiting the environment, tourism, and sectors like pharmaceuticals.

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5. **Celebrating Diversity:** India's festivals and traditions highlight the diversity among communities, providing platforms for cultural interaction.
6. **Cultural Integration:** While the **"melting pot" model** of cultural integration applies to some extent, India is better understood as a **"salad bowl" model**, where components remain distinct but contribute to the whole.
7. **Domestic Social Stability:** India's history demonstrates that embracing multiple religious and cultural identities is not just a choice but a necessity for development.
8. **India's Soft Power:** India's inclusive, democratic, and secular socialist model enhances its soft power, creating strong international ties with countries such as the US, Europe, Japan, and many in the Middle East.

Factors Leading to Unity Amidst Diversity in India

1. Political Factors:

- **Constitutional Identity and Principles:** The same **Constitution and Parliament** govern all of India, providing a unifying framework. The Constitution guarantees **fundamental rights** to all citizens, contributing to unity:
 - **Equality** (against exploitation, ensuring freedom of religion, culture, and education).
 - **Directive Principles:** Protect the rights of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and promote socio-economic justice.
 - **Fundamental Duties:** Protect sovereignty, unity, and integrity, while promoting harmony and the spirit of brotherhood.
- **Inter-state Mobility:** The Constitution guarantees freedom to move and reside anywhere in India, promoting unity and fostering a sense of national brotherhood.
- **Government Interventions:** **Schemes like Standup India, Padho Pardesh, Nai Manzil** help minorities and oppressed communities. **Cultural initiatives like "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat"** celebrate unity in diversity.
- **Independent Judiciary:** India's judiciary has played a critical role in reining in divisive tendencies.
 - **Example:** The Supreme Court upheld the validity of President's rule in Uttar Pradesh in the 1990s due to communal unrest.
- **Legal Protection for Diversity:** Laws such as the **Prevention of Atrocities Act, Protection of Civil Rights Act**, and the **Forest Rights Act** aim to protect vulnerable communities and ensure political and economic justice. Additionally, **reservation policies** safeguard opportunities for marginalized groups.

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2. Social Factors Promoting Unity in India:

- **Religious Co-existence:** India's Constitution guarantees **freedom of religion and religious practice**, which promotes religious coexistence. Despite the presence of different faiths, peaceful coexistence remains a defining feature of Indian society.
- **Modernization and Urbanization:** The process of urbanization and modernization, especially through industrialization, provides employment opportunities and bridges gaps between different communities.
- **Fairs and Festivals:** India's rich cultural heritage is expressed through its festivals, which are celebrated across the country.
 - **Example:** Festivals like **Diwali, Eid, and Christmas** are celebrated with equal spirit and joy by all, fostering unity and harmony among diverse communities.

3. Other Factors Contributing to Unity

- **Freedom Movement:** The **Indian National Congress (INC)** united India politically, while the development of the railway and postal systems during the British era laid the foundation for economic unity.
- **Sports and Cinema:** These are followed by millions across the country, creating a common cultural experience that binds Indians together.
- **Economic Integration:** The Indian Constitution ensures freedom of trade and commerce across the country. **GST (Goods and Services Tax)** has further promoted "**one nation, one market**", facilitating economic unity.
- **Climatic Integration via Monsoon:** The **monsoon** is integral to Indian life, influencing agriculture, festivals, and cultural practices, helping to unite different regions.

Threats to Diversity in India

1. **Communalism:** Rising majoritarian ideologies like the push for a "**Hindu Rashtra**", **cow vigilantism**, and claims of **love jihad** against inter-religion marriages challenge India's secular fabric and threaten religious harmony.
2. **Regionalism:** There are ongoing demands for new states and even secession based on language (e.g., **Gorkhaland, Dravida Nadu**), religion (**Khalistan**), and ethnicity (**Greater Nagalim**), which disrupt national unity.
3. **Linguism:** Concerns about preserving local languages have led to movements like **Gorkhaland** and **Bodoland**, as well as the **Dravidian movement**, which fights for linguistic and cultural identity.
4. **Casteism:** Caste-based identities are becoming more prominent, particularly as economic reforms and educational opportunities increase.
 - **Example:** Movements like **Bhima-Koregaon** use caste identity to challenge oppression, while groups like **Jats, Patidars, and Marathas** use caste identity to demand reservations.

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5. **Racism:** Discrimination against **northeastern** people, **southern** people in the north, and vice versa, threatens the social fabric and creates divisions within the country.
6. **Separatist Movements:** Ongoing separatist movements in **Jammu and Kashmir** and the **Northeast**, along with **Naxalism**, continue to pose significant challenges to India's unity and stability.
7. **Immigration:** Issues of **social cohesion**, border security, and strained resources have made immigration a major topic. Immigration has deeply divided populations, and the acceptance of diversity has been impacted by this global phenomenon.
8. **Divisive Politics: Political manipulation** can fuel communal riots, mistrust, and social disintegration by projecting one religion or community as superior to others.
 - **Example:** The movement for a **Hindu Rashtra** and **Hindutva ideology**.
9. **Development Deficit:** Inadequate economic policies and regional disparities can lead to **underdevelopment**, further threatening the unity of the nation.
10. **Ethnic Differentiation and Nativism:** Ethnic conflicts often involve **gross human rights violations** and can cause severe economic decline, state failure, or refugee crises.
 - **Example:** Clashes between **Bodos** and **Bengali-speaking Muslims** in Assam.
11. **Geographical Isolation:** India's diverse geography has led to **regional isolation** and consciousness, with certain regions remaining cut off from the rest of the country.
 - **Example:** The **Northeast** of India, isolated by the **Siliguri Corridor** (or "Chicken's Neck"), often experiences conflict due to this isolation.
12. **Inter-Religious Conflicts:** Conflicts between religious communities not only hinder secularism but also spread **mistrust and fear**.
 - **Example:** **Sikh-Hindu conflict** in Punjab, the **Babri Masjid riots**, and **Gujarat riots**.
13. **Inter-State Conflicts:** Regional disputes between states can exacerbate feelings of regionalism and hamper trade and communication.
 - **Example:** The **Cauvery River dispute** between **Karnataka** and **Tamil Nadu**.
14. **Foreign Extremism:** External actors and foreign extremist organizations can exacerbate violence and sow separatist tendencies.
 - **Example:** The **Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)** in Pakistan has been accused of supporting militants in **Jammu and Kashmir** to fuel separatist movements.

Key Principles in Support of Diversity and Inclusion (By the Prime Minister):

- **One Nation, Many Peoples:** "Nation is one. We will not work for Hindus or Muslims; we will work for the people of India."

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- **Diversity an Advantage:** India's variety of **dialects, dress styles, food habits, and beliefs** is a strength. Despite this diversity, Indians have learned from their traditions to remain united for the country's welfare.
- **Acceptance of Differences:** Every Indian can take pride in the fact that India embraces every **culture, religion, and ideology**. This diversity is celebrated.
- **Peaceful Co-existence:** The peaceful co-existence of 130 crore Indians is a manifestation of India's commitment to **unity and peaceful coexistence**.
- **Non-alignment:** The government should not allow any religious group, whether majority or minority, to **incite hatred or violence**, either overtly or covertly.
- **Non-violence:** Debate and dissent are essential in a democracy, but they must not damage public property or disturb normal life. Non-violence is a core principle of India's ethos.
- **Unity:** "Unity in diversity" is India's strength. Every region and community in India reflects this unity, and it binds the country together.
- **Opportunity:** The youth should not be constrained by limitations. India's future lies in providing them with opportunities for growth, hope, and progress.
- **Meritocracy:** Good governance ensures opportunities for all. The government's role is to provide governance for everyone, but it is up to individuals to take advantage of opportunities.
- **Harmony:** Unity between **Hindus and Muslims** should focus on fighting poverty, not each other. Peace and goodwill are essential to India's progress.
- **Personal Security:** Everyone must understand the importance of safety and security in society. Safety is ensured when individuals are conscious of their own responsibilities and the values of the community.
- **Fairness for All:** All religions and communities have the same rights, and the government's role is to ensure their protection. There should be no discrimination based on **caste, creed, or religion**.

Ways Forward

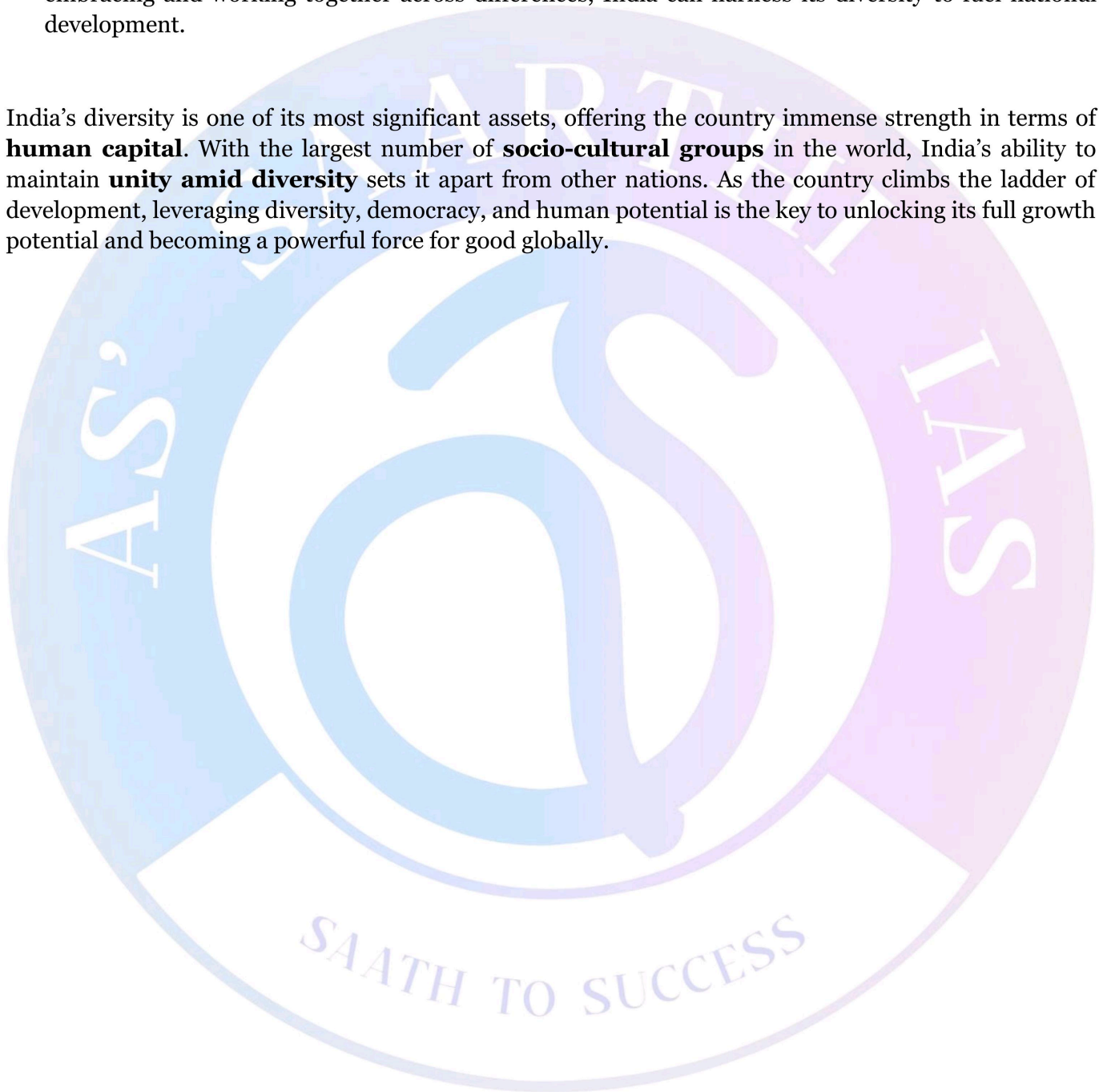
- **Implement Directive Principles in Spirit:** Investments in the social sector, such as health and education, are crucial. Electoral reforms should prevent divisive tendencies, while development should focus on marginalized communities like tribal and Dalit groups. Equitable urbanization and curbing majoritarian tendencies through appropriate legal measures are essential to maintain a united India.
- **Use Diversity as an Advantage:** India's rich diversity in dialects, clothing, and food can be leveraged for national welfare. This diversity has been a source of strength and innovation.
- **Acceptance of Differences:** Every Indian can be proud of the fact that India embraces every culture, religion, and ideology. This inclusivity is one of India's key strengths.
- **Peaceful Co-existence:** The peace and calm maintained by **130 crore Indians** reflects the country's commitment to peaceful coexistence, which is central to India's unity.

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- **Non-alignment:** The government should not allow any religious group, whether majority or minority, to incite hatred or violence against others.
- **Fairness for All:** Ensuring that all religions and communities enjoy the same rights is the government's responsibility. Discrimination based on **caste, creed, or religion** will not be tolerated.
- **Exploring the Diversity Dividend:** A peaceful and energized population can maximize growth. By embracing and working together across differences, India can harness its diversity to fuel national development.

India's diversity is one of its most significant assets, offering the country immense strength in terms of **human capital**. With the largest number of **socio-cultural groups** in the world, India's ability to maintain **unity amid diversity** sets it apart from other nations. As the country climbs the ladder of development, leveraging diversity, democracy, and human potential is the key to unlocking its full growth potential and becoming a powerful force for good globally.



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