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NCERT Notes for Class 6 Social Science (2026-27 Syllabus)

Chapter 8: Unity in Diversity, or 'Many in the One'

Unity in Diversity, or 'Many in the One' class 6 social science notes

These notes explain Class 6 Social Science Chapter 8 for the 2026-27 NCERT textbook. The chapter shows how India has immense diversity in food, clothing, festivals, literature and customs, while still sharing a deep cultural unity.

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#)

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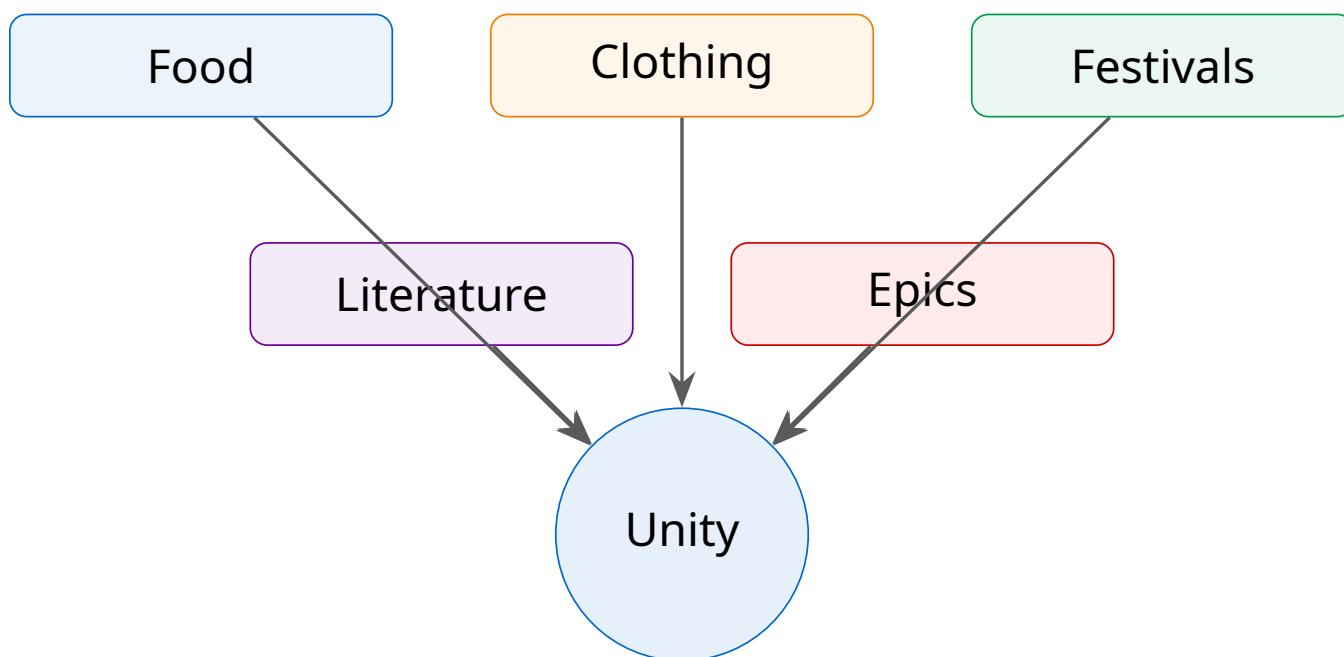
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1 Chapter at a Glance

Unity in Diversity, or 'Many in the One' introduces one of the main ideas of Indian culture. India has many landscapes, languages, scripts, food habits, clothes, festivals and stories. Yet these different forms often share common roots, common values and common patterns.



1.1 Big questions

- What does unity in diversity mean in India?
- Which forms of diversity are most visible in daily life?
- How can common patterns be seen beneath many different forms?
- Why does diversity enrich Indian culture instead of dividing it?

1.2 Fast revision frame

- India has over 1.4 billion people and many communities, languages and scripts.
- Staple grains, spices and common ingredients connect Indian food habits.
- The sari shows one dress form with hundreds of regional styles.
- Makara Sankranti shows one seasonal festival with many regional names.
- The Panchatantra, Ramayana and Mahabharata show shared stories in many languages.

Memory Hook

Use F-C-F-L-E: Food, Clothing, Festivals, Literature and Epics. These five examples explain the chapter.

2 Meaning of Unity in Diversity

The phrase unity in diversity means that many forms can exist within a shared frame. India does not have one single language, dress, dish or festival. Instead, it has many forms that often grow from similar needs, values and cultural memory.

2.1 The idea of 'Many in the One'

- The chapter uses the phrase 'Many in the One' to describe India.
- The 'many' are visible differences, such as food, dress, language and customs.
- The 'one' is the shared cultural connection that links these differences.
- This connection is not forced sameness. It is a pattern of shared belonging.

Core Idea

Unity in diversity does not mean everyone is the same. It means differences can remain strong while people still share a larger identity.

2.2 Why diversity is easy to notice

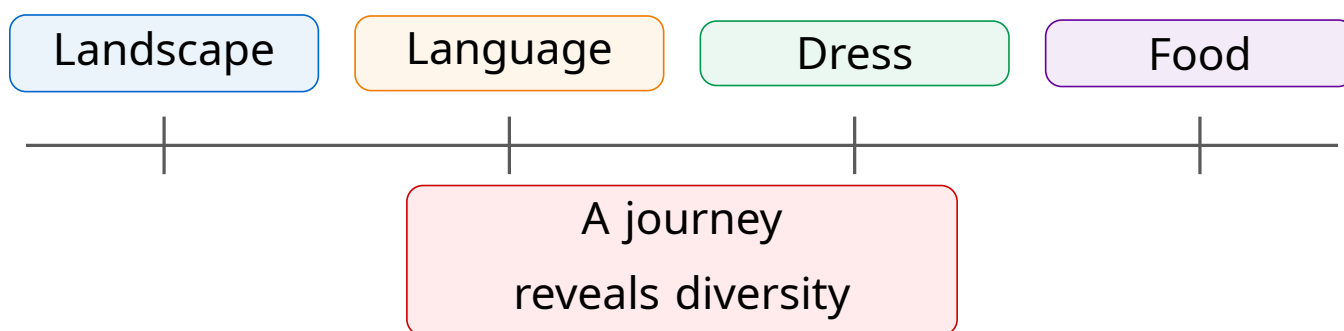
- A train journey across India shows changing landscapes, clothes and food.
- Different languages and scripts appear from region to region.
- Even one city may include people from many parts of India.
- Visitors often notice diversity before they understand the unity behind it.

Exam Cue

For a short answer, define unity in diversity and then give two examples: food grains and festivals.

3 India's Rich Diversity

The chapter begins with travel. A person moving through India sees many kinds of people, landscapes, customs and traditions. This variety is natural in a country with a very large population and a long history of movement.



3.1 People of India project

- The Anthropological Survey of India conducted the People of India project.
- It studied 4,635 communities across all States.
- It counted 325 languages using 25 scripts.
- It observed that many Indians live away from their birthplace or original community.

Key Figures

Detail

Population

World share

Communities surveyed

Languages counted

Chapter fact

Over 1.4 billion people

About 18 percent of the world's population

4,635 communities

325 languages using 25 scripts

3.2 Migration and mixing

- Migration means people moving from one place to another.
- Many Indians live far from the place where they were born.
- This movement brings customs, languages and food habits into new regions.
- Diversity therefore appears in classrooms, markets, workplaces and neighbourhoods.

Classroom Link

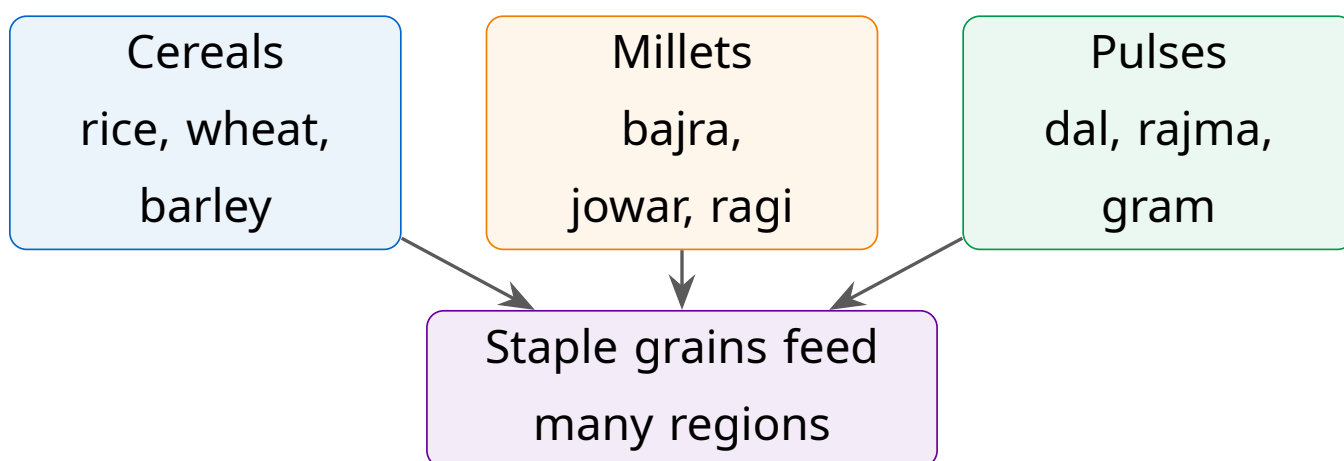
A class list of birthplaces and mother tongues can show diversity within one room. This is the chapter's first activity.

4 Food for All

Food is one of the clearest examples of unity and diversity. Indian dishes vary widely, but many regions use similar grains, pulses, spices, vegetables and oils.

4.1 Staple grains

- Cereals such as rice, wheat and barley are widely used.
- Millets such as bajra, jowar and ragi are important in many regions.
- Pulses such as dals, rajma, chana and gram are common protein sources.
- These grains are called staple grains because they form basic food.



4.2 Same ingredients, many dishes

- The same vegetable can become many dishes in different kitchens.
- Spices such as turmeric, cumin, cardamom and ginger are common.
- Regional methods of cooking create variety from shared ingredients.
- Food therefore shows unity in materials and diversity in preparation.

Revision Cue

Write one sentence each for unity and diversity: common grains show unity, regional dishes show diversity.

Common Mistake

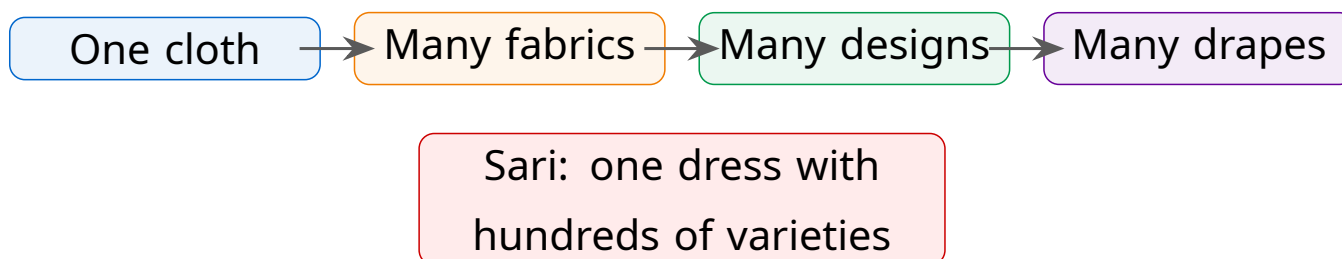
Do not write that every Indian eats the same food. The chapter says common ingredients are used in many different ways.

5 Textiles and Clothing

Every region and community in India has developed its own clothing styles. The chapter uses the sari to show how one dress form can have many materials, designs, colours and draping styles.

5.1 The sari as one form

- A sari is a plain length of cloth worn in many parts of India.
- It may be made of cotton, silk or synthetic fabric.
- Famous silk saris include Banarasi, Kanjivaram, Paithani, Patan Patola, Muga and Mysore.
- The sari has a long history, as shown by an old stone relief from Vaishali.



5.2 Textile variety

- Cloth may be woven by different methods.
- Some designs are part of the woven cloth.
- Some designs are printed after weaving.
- Colours come from many kinds of pigments.
- Indian cotton textiles were once exported as far as Europe.

Textile Link

The history of chintz shows how Indian textiles influenced fashion beyond India. Its popularity in Europe was so high that some countries restricted imports.

5.3 Uses beyond dress

- The sari may be used in daily work beyond clothing.
- The chapter shows women using it creatively in south India.
- This teaches that culture includes practical skill, not only decoration.

Sari Formula

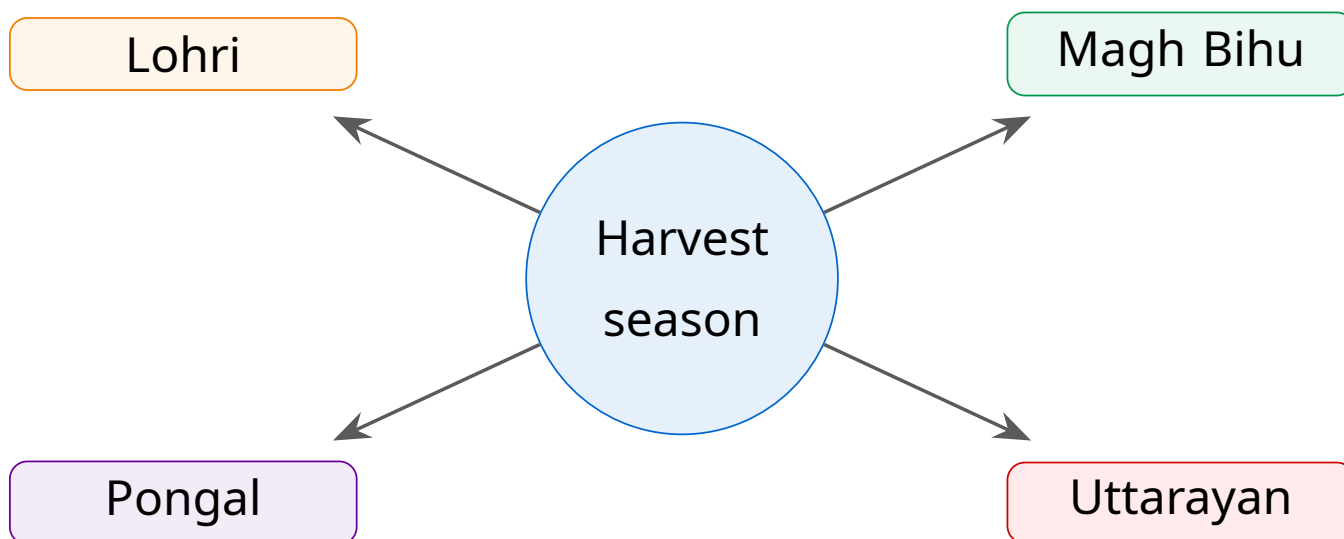
Remember cloth plus fabric plus design plus drape. One garment becomes many local styles.

6 Festivals Galore

India has a great variety of festivals. Some festivals are celebrated across India around the same time, but they have different regional names and customs.

6.1 Makara Sankranti example

- Makara Sankranti marks the beginning of the harvest season in many parts of India.
- It is celebrated on or around January 14.
- Regional names include Lohri, Magh Bihu, Uttarayan, Pongal and Poush Songkranti.
- The same season of gratitude appears through many local forms.



6.2 What the example proves

- Festivals can share a seasonal base while keeping local names.
- Food, songs, rituals and clothing may differ across regions.
- The shared calendar gives unity, while local celebration gives diversity.
- October and November also include several major festivals with regional forms.

Map Cue

If a question mentions the festival map in the chapter, write that similar harvest festivals have different regional names.

Common Mistake

Do not treat every festival name as a separate unrelated event. The chapter's point is that several names may express a similar seasonal celebration.

7 Literature and Shared Stories

Literature offers another strong example of unity in diversity. Indian literatures are written in many languages and styles, but they often share themes, stories and values.

7.1 Panchatantra

- The Panchatantra is a collection of stories with animals as main characters.
- It teaches life skills through simple and memorable tales.
- The original Sanskrit text is at least 2,200 years old.
- Its stories have been adapted in almost every Indian language.
- It travelled to Southeast Asia, the Arab world and Europe.

Panchatantra Facts

Point	Detail
Main form	Animal stories with lessons
Old source	Sanskrit text
Age	At least 2,200 years old
Spread	More than 50 languages
Adaptations	About 200 known adaptations

7.2 One story, many forms

- One story may be retold in many languages.
- A region may add local examples, names or teaching styles.
- The main lesson can remain recognisable across versions.
- This is why literature is a strong example of 'Many in the One'.

Reading Link

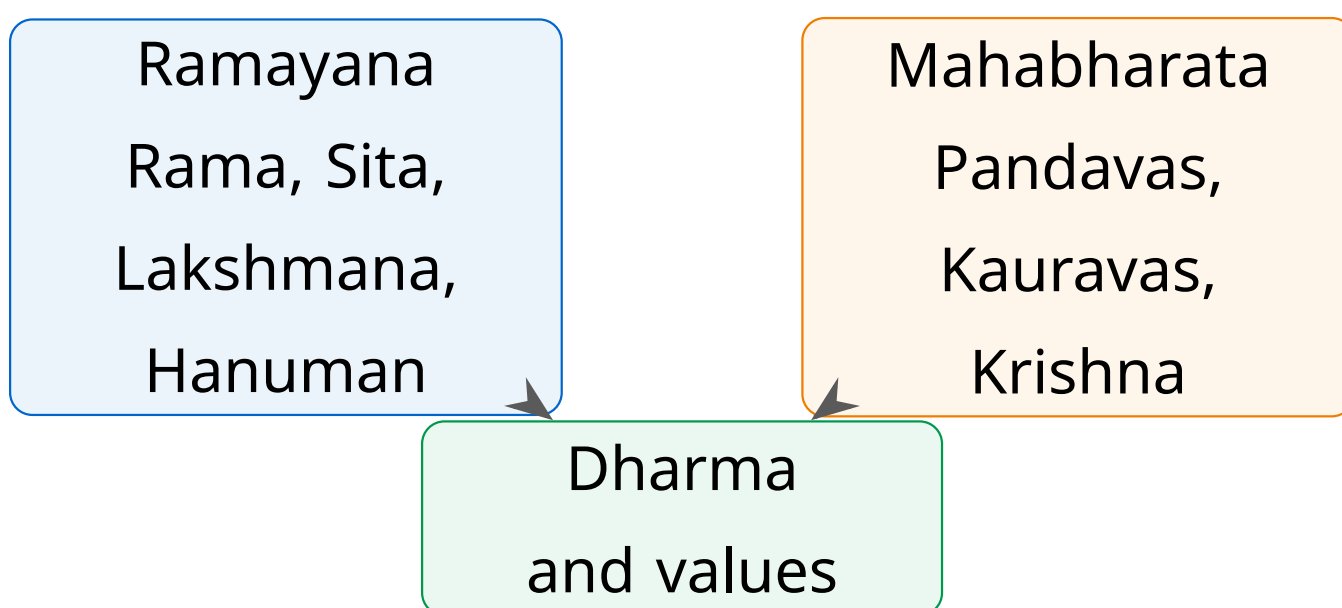
When a familiar story appears in another language or region, compare the message first. The form may change, but the lesson may remain close.

8 The Two Great Epics

The chapter calls the Ramayana and the Mahabharata the most striking examples of shared cultural spread. These Sanskrit epics have been translated, adapted and retold for more than two millennia.

8.1 Mahabharata and Ramayana

- The Mahabharata tells how the Pandavas, with Krishna's help, fight the Kauravas to regain their kingdom.
- The Ramayana tells how Rama, helped by Lakshmana and Hanuman, defeats Ravana and rescues Sita.
- Both epics ask questions about dharma, right action and moral choice.
- They contain many shorter stories that focus on values.



8.2 Regional and folk versions

- These epics have been translated into regional literatures.
- Countless folk versions exist across India.
- A survey in Tamil Nadu counted about a hundred folklore forms of the Mahabharata.
- Many communities connect their own local history with epic heroes.

Long Answer Cue

For an answer on literature, mention Panchatantra first, then the Ramayana and Mahabharata as wider examples.

9 Tribal and Local Connections

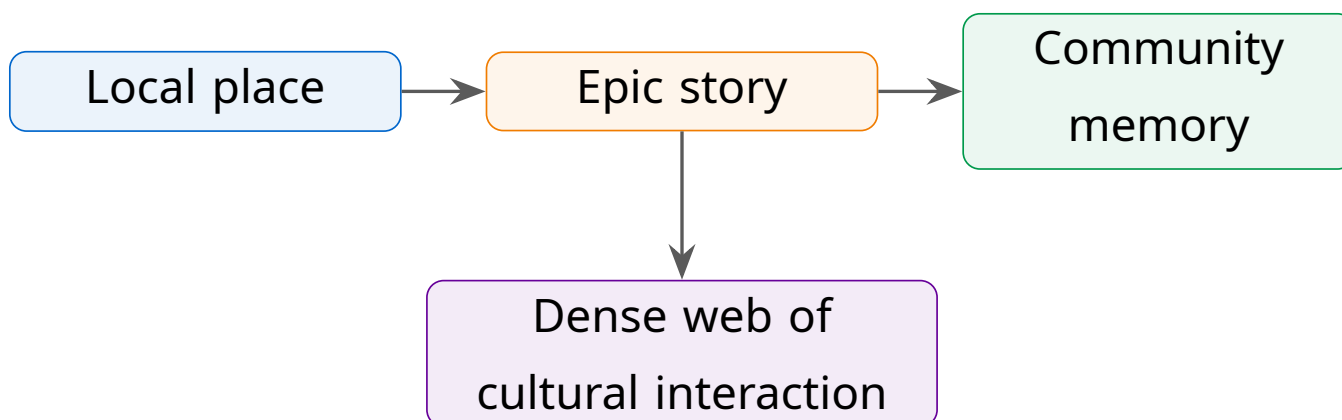
The chapter gives special attention to how tribal and local communities preserve links with the epics. Their versions are often transmitted orally and connected with local places.

9.1 Epic heroes in local memory

- Bhils, Gonds, Mundas and several other communities have epic traditions.
- Many tribes of northeast India and Himalayan regions also preserve such versions.
- Local legends may describe visits by the Pandavas, Draupadi, Rama or other figures.
- These traditions connect local landscapes with wider Indian stories.

9.2 Nilgiris example

- The chapter shows a carved stone called Pancha Pandavar in the Nilgiris.
- It depicts the five Pandava brothers.
- Irula tribals maintain the shrine connected with this stone.
- It commemorates the belief that the Pandavas passed through the area.



Culture Link

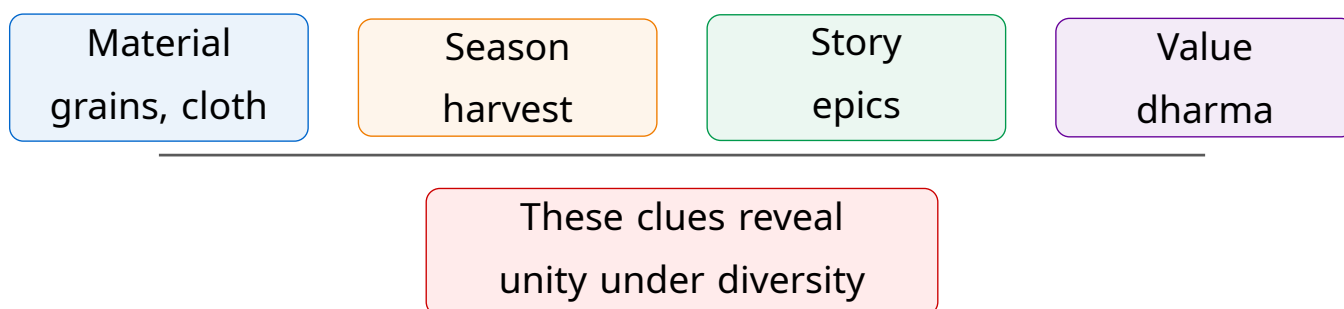
Local versions of epics show that unity grows through sharing and retelling. A story can belong to many communities at once.

10 How to Recognise Unity

The chapter teaches students to look beyond surface variety. Unity is not always visible at first, but it can be recognised through shared materials, shared seasons, shared stories and shared values.

10.1 Four ways to identify unity

- Look for common ingredients behind different dishes.
- Look for one garment form behind many regional textile styles.
- Look for a shared season behind different festival names.
- Look for shared themes behind stories in many languages.



10.2 Why diversity enriches

- Diversity gives many forms to shared cultural ideas.
- It allows regions and communities to express their own creativity.
- It keeps traditions alive through adaptation.
- It turns one idea into many living practices.

Common Mistake

Do not confuse unity with uniformity. Uniformity means sameness. Unity means connection.

11 Key Terms and Examples

This chapter has fewer technical terms than some earlier chapters, but its examples are very important for answers. Learn each example as a pair: what is different, and what connects it.

11.1 Important terms

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Unity in diversity	Shared connection among many different forms
Migration	Movement of people from one place to another
Staple grains	Basic grains used as regular food
Relief	A design that stands out from a surface
Epic	A long poem narrating heroic adventures and great figures
Dharma	Right conduct, duty and moral order

11.2 Example bank

- Food: rice, wheat, millets, pulses and spices used in different dishes.
- Clothing: sari as one dress form with many materials and draping styles.
- Festivals: Makara Sankranti celebrated under many regional names.
- Literature: Panchatantra adapted in many languages.
- Epics: Ramayana and Mahabharata retold by many communities.

Answer Writing

In every answer, pair one example with one explanation. Example alone is not enough.

12 Quick Reference Summary

Unity in Diversity, or 'Many in the One' ends with a clear message. India offers immense diversity in landscapes, people, languages, dresses, foods, festivals and customs. Beneath this diversity, shared patterns and values create unity.

12.1 One-page recap

- India has diversity in language, script, region, food, clothing and custom.
- The People of India project shows the scale of this diversity.
- Food shows unity through common grains and diversity through dishes.
- The sari shows unity through one dress form and diversity through fabrics, designs and drapes.
- Festivals show unity through shared seasons and diversity through regional names.
- Literature shows unity through common stories and diversity through languages.
- Epics show unity through shared cultural memory and diversity through regional versions.

Final Memory Hook

Remember one sentence: India keeps many forms, but many forms keep India connected.

12.2 Before the exam

- Revise the five main examples: food, sari, Makara Sankranti, Panchatantra and epics.
- Learn the figures from the People of India project.
- Practise explaining the difference between unity and uniformity.
- Prepare one answer on how stories create cultural links.

Final Link

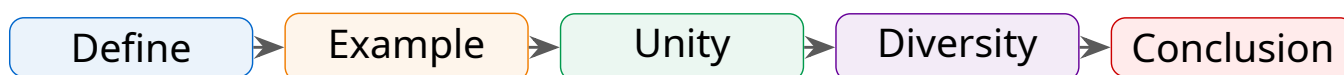
The chapter is useful beyond exams. It helps students respect difference while recognising shared belonging.

13 Answer Writing Practice

This chapter is often tested through explanation-based questions. A good answer must not only list examples. It must show how each example proves unity and diversity at the same time.

13.1 How to structure a three-mark answer

- Start with a direct definition of unity in diversity.
- Give one clear example from the chapter.
- Explain the unity in that example.
- Explain the diversity in that example.
- End with one sentence on why diversity enriches India.



13.2 Model answer: food

India's food habits show unity in diversity. The diversity is seen in the large number of regional dishes, cooking methods and tastes. The unity is seen in common ingredients such as rice, wheat, millets, pulses and spices. The same basic grains and spices can be combined in many ways. Thus food habits show that India can have many local forms while sharing common foundations.

13.3 Model answer: sari

The sari is a strong example of unity in diversity. The unity is that it is one basic dress form, a plain length of cloth. The diversity is seen in fabric, weaving, design, colour and draping style. Banarasi, Kanjivaram, Paithani, Patan Patola, Muga and Mysore saris all belong to one broad form but have different regional identities. This shows how one cultural object can become many living traditions.

13.4 Model answer: festivals

Makara Sankranti shows unity in diversity because the harvest season is celebrated across many regions around January 14. Its regional names and customs differ. Some regions call it Lohri, some Magh Bihu, some Uttarayan and some Pongal. The unity is the seasonal meaning of gratitude and harvest. The diversity is the local way of celebrating it.

Answer Checklist

Question type

Meaning of unity in diversity

Regional names of a festival

Shared stories

Large-scale diversity

Local versions of epics

Best chapter example

Food or sari

Makara Sankranti map

Panchatantra, Ramayana, Mahabharata

People of India project

Tribal and folk traditions

14 Comparison Tables for Revision

Comparison tables help students revise this chapter quickly. They also make answers more exact because each example is linked with both unity and diversity.

14.1 Unity and diversity examples

- Read each row as a pair: one shared link and one set of regional forms.
- Use the same pair method while writing exam answers.
- This table is the fastest way to revise the chapter's main argument.

Example	Unity	Diversity
Food	Shared staple grains, pulses and spices	Regional dishes, cooking styles and tastes
Sari	One unstitched dress form	Different fabrics, designs and drapes
Festivals	Shared harvest season or calendar time	Different names, rituals and foods

Panchatantra	Common story lessons	Adaptations in many languages
Epics	Shared themes of dharma and values	Regional, folk and tribal versions

14.2 Source-based facts

Source detail	Why it matters
Rabindranath Tagore's opening quote	It highlights the joy of the one within the many.
Sri Aurobindo's quotation	It presents unity in diversity as India's natural course.
People of India project	It gives factual evidence of communities, languages and scripts.
Chapter diagram on grains and pulses	It shows common food materials across regions.
Chapter map on festival names	It shows a similar celebration with many regional names.
Nilgiris Pancha Pandavar stone	It links local memory with epic traditions.

14.3 Do and do not

Do	Do not
Explain both unity and diversity in each example.	Only list names without explanation.
Use chapter examples such as sari, grains and epics.	Use unrelated examples from outside the chapter.
Mention shared foundations and regional forms.	Say that unity means everyone is identical.
Use simple terms such as common ingredients and many dishes.	Make the answer too abstract.

End with the idea that diversity enriches India.

Write that diversity weakens unity.

15 Quick Practice Questions

Use these practice prompts after revising the chapter. They are designed to test understanding, not memorisation alone.

15.1 Short answer prompts

1. What is meant by unity in diversity?
2. How does food show unity in diversity?
3. Why is the sari a good example of one form and many styles?
4. Name four regional forms or names linked with Makara Sankranti.
5. What does the Panchatantra example teach us?
6. How do the Ramayana and Mahabharata create cultural links?
7. Why are tribal versions of epics important?

15.2 Long answer prompt

Explain the phrase 'Many in the One' with examples from food, clothing, festivals and literature.

Answer frame:

1. Begin with the meaning of 'Many in the One'.
2. Use food to show shared ingredients and regional dishes.
3. Use the sari to show one dress form and many styles.
4. Use Makara Sankranti to show a shared season with many names.
5. Use literature and epics to show stories retold in many languages.
6. Conclude that diversity enriches India's unity.

15.3 Five-minute final revision

- Say aloud the meaning of unity in diversity.
- Revise the People of India project figures.
- Memorise the food, sari, festival, Panchatantra and epic examples.
- Practise one answer that explains unity and diversity together.
- Check that you can define staple grains, relief and epic.

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