

## **Role of “Unity in Diversity” in National Integration**

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### **Abstract:**

National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation.

Unity in our country does not mean the kind of oneness that comes from racial and cultural similarity. It is unity in spite of great differences, in other words, unity in diversity. An important historical event in which this unity was displayed was the freedom movement when all the Indians united against the British rule. Tolerance is the key factor of all religion, which is the essence of India

A nation is said to be born when a group of people living in a particular territory develop a political form with a sense of unity and determine their political future. The people of India decide their political fortune through elections. The concept of nation arises when national consciousness emerges among individuals. Nation state is a political association. It has certain features.

1. Definite boundary
2. Membership
3. Set of rules
4. Citizenship

Nation includes people, territory and government.

Nation as a community. Each nation has its own boundary and set of rules. Therefore, a nation can be treated as a community. Nation constitutes the largest community among all the groups of man.

### **India as a state:**

On 15th August 1947, India became a free state. India remains as a multicultural state consisting of different languages, religions, races and castes. This caused the rise of different cultures within India.

### **Culture:**

Each group of people follows its own culture. Culture is meant the sum total of behavior which exists in a society with regard to dress, language, customs, practices and beliefs. The essence of Indian culture is “unity in diversity”

### **Language:**

In the schedule of the Indian constitution twenty one approved languages are included. But there are several other languages and about two thousand dialects in India. The languages recognized by the Indian constitution, those which are not and the variety of dialects can be categorized as Indo Aryan, Dravidian and Munda languages.<sup>5N</sup>

### **INTEGRATION**

In the north Indian regions there existed Prakrit with local variations. In south India there exists regional languages belonging to the Dravidian family. India's continuous relations with west Asia brought Arabic and Persian languages. As a result of this relation there originated a new language called Urdu.

There are about three thousand castes and sub castes among the Hindus. Similar kinds of divisions can be seen within other religions also. The castes like divisions among the Muslims of Laccadives are the Koya, Melecheri and Malmi.

**Races:**

The social scientists consider India as an ethnological museum. Several races like Negrito, Mongloid, Mediterranean etc had inhabited in our country. The western limit of the migration of the Mongloid race which inhabited the far East and South East Asia was India. Those who migrated from the west include the Aryan language speaking people and the Mediterranean races. Present-day Indians are the descendents of those who have migrated from different parts of the world and also the earliest inhabitants of India. It is very difficult to identify as to who descended from which race or group.

**Religions:**

**Demographic statistics based on religion**

80.5% Hindus  
13.4% Muslims  
2.3% Christians  
3.8% Others

*(Census Report, 2011)*

**The Spirit of India- Unity in Diversity:**

A unique feature of our country is that all the major religions of the world are practiced here like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. There are also great varieties in costume, food habits, and social customs. Geographically our land is diverse and there are amazing differences in climate. Despite all these differences India is a political entity, every part of which is governed under the same Constitution. We have to co-exist with each other peacefully, respect the culture and religion of our fellow Indians. Indian nationalism is different from that of other countries. Indian nationalism developed not on the basis of religion, caste, regionalism or race. It came into being as a result of the peculiar circumstances of the 19th century. Several factors have contributed to it. Indian society which is filled with diversities is unified by certain emotional forces. This is the process of national integration. The main objective of national integration is to encounter all fissiparous forces. National integration is a complex concept. It has social, political, religious, regional and economic dimensions.

**The three basic factors of national integration**

**Structural Equality :**

Equal opportunity must be provided for all especially those who are socially and economically backward.

**Cultural Unity:**

Caste discriminations like untouchability and inapproachability should be eradicated.

**Ideological Unity:**

Awareness about 'national objectives' should be created among the people who hold divergent views on political and religious and similar other fields.

National integration is the creation of a feeling of oneness where the diversities are recognized and respected by imbibing a sense of nationhood. Certain questions may come up when we think of national integration. Can we achieve national integration by attaining economic equality? Aren't there antinational feelings among economically well off people? Can socio-economic changes and national integration be achieved through right planning alone? Can it be achieved only by propagating the ideas of religious cooperation and harmony? When these factors are taken into consideration, it can be seen that national integration is a complex problem and

political integration is only one part of it. At the same time socio-economic and cultural differences are to be avoided also.

**Challenges of Indian National Integration:**

Certain factors stand against the all round integration of our nation.

There are many forces that come in the way of our national integration. Often people have very strong feelings about their own religion and language and oppose those of others. Such feelings lead to clashes between different sects. Such occurrences damage our unity and prove to be a hindrance to our progress.

**Regionalism** gives more importance to one's own region than to one's nation. When regionalism is linked with language and religion it creates regional interests rather than national interests. This creates parochialism among the people.

**Casteism** is a divisive force. One section considers another section as inferior. They are exploited. Positions and opportunities are monopolized by a particular section. It creates enmity among the other castes. Caste organizations interfere in politics. They function as pressure groups and obtain benefits undeservedly. These factors prevent national integration.

**Communalism** is not believing in any particular religion or observing its rites. Excessive affinity to one's own religion transforms into hatred towards other religions. Thus religious fanaticism arises. When religion, caste and race are used to make social and political gains, it is called communalism. The real cause of communalism lies in political and economic factors. The partition of India is an instance for the intervention of religion in politics. Communalism is one factor that poses a great danger to our unity. The formation of the State of Pakistan in 1947 led to terrible communal riots. A very large number of people lost their lives and their homes and had to undergo a lot of suffering to resettle. The British had encouraged communalism because a division between Hindus and Muslims made it easier for them to control our country. Unfortunately, even with the passage of time these communal feelings have not ended. More than fifty years after independence communal feelings still exist and riots flare-up even now in different parts of the country. It is the result of narrow-mindedness, prejudice, and lack of knowledge of other religions.

**Linguistic claims:**

The Indian constitution recognizes 22 languages. Hindi is the official language and English is the link language. About 2000 languages are spoken by the various sections of the Indian people. When India became free the decision to make Hindi the national language was opposed by people of many other languages. There was an anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu. Another problem faced by India was the linguistic reorganization of the states. In 1956 the states were reorganized on linguistic basis. Agitations are going on in many parts of India demanding state reorganization. Linguistic jingoism has become an important factor which hinders national integration.

Linguistic differences also create problems. Our Constitution has given recognition to eighteen languages. This is something important in a country such as ours. One's mother tongue is dear each and everyone. It is also essential to impart education in the mother tongue for quick and easy learning for the convenience of the people of a State it is also necessary to carry on official work in it. This also helps a language to develop and grow. Hindi and English act as link languages between states in our country.

**Extremism** is the act of spreading fear by threatening the people through illegal means to obtain selfish interests. It ignores human values. The feeling that they do not get what they deserved, unemployment, lack of proper education and inadequate means of livelihood lead to extremism. National integration fosters nationalism. It is opposed to communalism, linguistic jingoism, regionalism and similar fissiparous forces.

**Social Disparity** among the people of different communities, castes and sometime within the community and caste causes tension and imbalance among the people. Social disparity poses great challenge to national integration.

**Economic Inequalities** Economic standard of people in a state depends on the fertility of land, resources available and manpower management. All the states are not equal in the above matter which leads to economic backwardness of the people. Even in a state distribution of wealth is not properly done. Day by day poor becoming poorer and rich become richest this causes tension and conflict. It is a problem for national integration.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation. Unity in our country does not mean the kind of oneness that comes from racial and cultural similarity. It is unity in spite of great differences, in other words, unity in diversity. An important historical event in which this unity was displayed was the freedom movement when all the Indians united against the British rule. National Integration is a positive aspect it reduces socio-cultural and economic differences and inequality and strengthens national unity and solidarity which is not imposed by any authority. People share ideas, values and emotional bonds. It is feelings of unity within diversity. National identity is supreme. Cultural unity, constitutional and territorial continuity, common economic problems, art, literature, national festivals, national flag national anthem and national emblem promote National integration. A unique feature of our country is that all the major religions of the world are practiced here like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. There are also great varieties in costume, food habits, and social customs. Geographically our land is diverse and there are amazing differences in climate. Despite all these differences India is a political entity, every part of which is governed under the same Constitution. We have to co-exist with each other peacefully, respect the culture and religion of our fellow Indians.

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