

A large group of diverse school children, mostly boys, are smiling and posing closely together. They are wearing light blue school uniforms. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the children in the foreground.

CLASS VI

CHAPTER 1

**UNDERSTANDING  
DIVERSITY NCERT**

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# CLASS VI CH 1 UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY NCERT

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- Making friends
- Let's look around us
- What does diversity add to our lives?
- Diversity in India
- How do we explain Diversity ?
  - ✓ Ladakh
  - ✓ Kerala
- Unity in Diversity





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*I had meant it as a joke. A joke made up for a small ragged boy who sold newspapers at the Janpat crossing at the busy intersection. Every time I cycled past he would run after me, holding out the English paper and screaming out the evening's headlines in a mixture of Hindi and English words. This time, I stopped by the pavement and asked for the Hindi paper. His mouth fell open.*



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*"You mean you know Hindi?" he asked.*

*"Of course," I said as I paid for the paper.*

*"Why? What did you think?"*

*He paused. "But you look so...so angrez," he said. "You mean you can even read Hindi?"*

*"Of course I can," I said, this time a little impatiently. "I can speak, read and write Hindi. Hindi is one of the subjects I study in school."*



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*"Subjects?" he asked. How could I explain what a subject was to someone who had never been to school? "Well, it is something..." I began, but the lights changed, and the honking behind me grew a hundredfold and I let myself be pushed along with the rest of the traffic.*

*The next day he was there again, smiling at me and holding out a Hindi paper. "Bhaiyya," he said, "aap ka akhbaar. Ab Bathaaiye yeh subject kya cheez hai?" the English word sounded strange on his tongue.*





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*It sounded like its other meaning in English – to be ruled by someone else. "Where is your mother now?" I asked, but then the lights changed and I was off. I heard him yell from somewhere behind me, "She's in Meerut with..." The rest was drowned out.*

*"My name is Samir," he said the next day. And very shyly he asked, "What's yours?" It was incredible. My bicycle wobbled. "My name is Samir too," I said. "What?" His eyes lit up. "Yes,"*



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*I grinned at him. "It's another name for Hanuman's father, you know." "So now you are Samir Ek and I'm Samir Do," he said triumphantly. "Something like that," I answered and then I held out my hand. "Haath milao, Samir Do!" His hand nestled in mine like a little bird. I could still feel its warmth as I cycled away. The next day, he did not have his usual smile for me. "There is trouble in Meerut," he said. "Many people are being killed there in the riots."*



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*I looked at the headlines. Communal Riots, it blazed. "But Samir..." I began. "I'm a Muslim Samir," he said in answer. "And all my people are in Meerut." His eyes filled with tears and when I touched his shoulder, he would not look up. He was not at the crossing the day after. Neither the day after nor ever again. And no newspaper, in English or Hindi, can tell me where my Samir D o has gone.*

*(The Lights Changed by Poile Sengupta)*





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➤ Let's look around us



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## ➤ Let's look around us

- It is seen that some people may not have enough to eat or wear and sometimes not even a place to live.
- This is not just about differences but can be called an inequality.
- Inequality arises when a person does not have the resources and opportunities that are otherwise available to other persons.

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- The caste system is another main example of inequality.
- Society is divided into different groups based on the work that people do, and they were supposed to remain in those groups.
  - For example, children of potters had to continue as potters.



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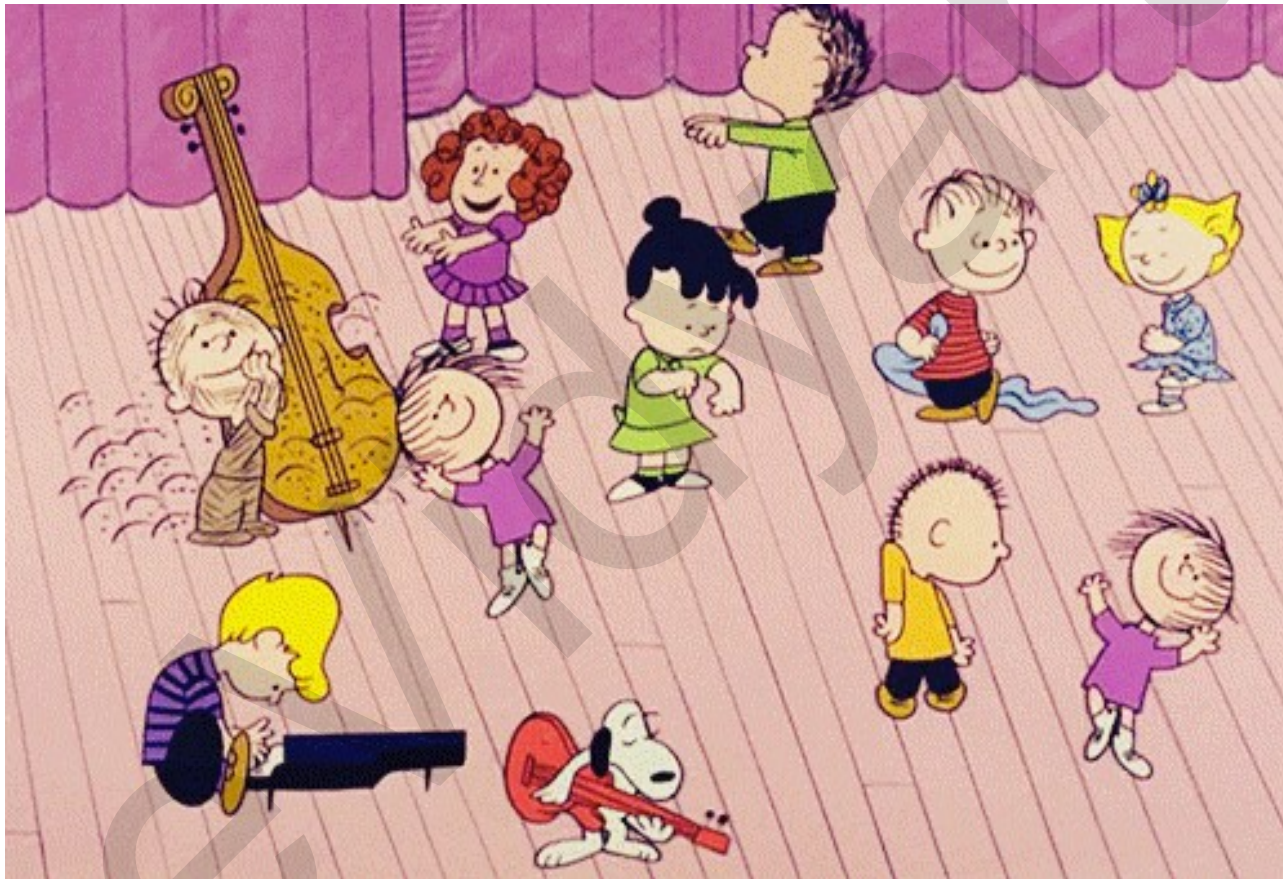
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- This was irreversible and for this reason, it was not considered necessary for the people to know anything more than was required for their profession.
- This encouraged inequality.

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❑ What does diversity add to our lives?



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## ❑ What does diversity add to our lives?

Imagine a world, where everything was the same. Other than the same two colours red and white, same food (maybe potatoes!), the same two animals, for example, the deer and the cat, and snakes and ladders, the same game, there was nothing different.





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There would be no diversity and it would be dull. Even the story writers will not have anything to write about, as most depend on ideas drawn from their experiences and real-life encounters to make stories more interesting and fun.



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## ❖ Diversity in India

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## ❖ Diversity in India

- India is a country of many diversity.
- People speak different languages, have various types of food, celebrate different festivals, practice different religions.

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❖ How do we explain Diversity ?

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## ❖ How do we explain Diversity ?

- Sometime before 200 years ago, people used to travel by ships, on horses, on camels or on foot.
- They travelled in search of new places to settle in or people to trade with.
- At times, they stayed back at a place for a long time. Some others left their homes because of the scarcity of food caused by droughts and famine.



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- Some made their home at the new places and gave rise to a mix of the old and new in their food, language, music, religion and so forth.
- Various cultural influences help to shape life and culture in some regions that become very diverse because of their unique histories.

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## Factors Influencing Diversity:

Historical and geographical factors are the two factors that influence the diversity of a region. Life of people near the sea is different from the people in a mountainous area.

- We can understand this diversity better through case study of Ladakh and Kerala

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❖ Ladakh



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## ❖ Ladakh

- Ladakh is a desert in the mountains in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Very little agriculture is possible here since this region is covered in snow for a large part of the year.
- People here keep sheep and goats.



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- The people in Ladakh carefully collect the wool of the goats and sell this to traders from Kashmir
- The people in Ladakh sell pashmina wool to traders from Kashmir. Pashmina shawls are chiefly woven in Kashmir.
- The people eat meat and milk products like cheese and butter. Each family owns some goats, cows and dzos (yak-cows).



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- It was considered a good trade route as it had many passes through which caravans travelled to what is today called Tibet.
- These caravans carried textiles and spices, raw silk and carpets.
- Buddhism reached Tibet via Ladakh.
- Islam was introduced in this region more than four hundred years ago and there is a significant Muslim population here.

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- Local versions of the Tibetan national epic the Kesar Saga are performed and sung by both Muslims and Buddhists.



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❖ Kerala



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## ❖ Kerala

- Kerala is a state in the southwest corner of India.
- It is surrounded by the sea on one side and hills on the other.
- A number of spices like pepper, cloves and cardamoms are grown on the hills.

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- Jewish and Arab traders were the first to come here.
- The Apostle of Christ, St. Thomas is believed to have come here nearly 2000 years ago and he is credited with bringing Christianity to India.
- Many Arab traders also came and settled down here.

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- Ibn Battuta, who travelled here a little less than seven hundred years ago, wrote a travelogue in which he describes the lives of Muslims and says that they were a highly respected community.
- The Portuguese discovered the sea route to India from Europe when Vasco da Gama landed with his ship here.
- People in Kerala practice different religions such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.

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- The fertile land and climate are suited to growing rice.
- The fishing nets used here look exactly like the Chinese fishing nets and are called cheena-vala.
- Even the utensil used for frying is called the cheenachatti, and it is believed that the word cheen could have come from China.
- The fertile land and climate are suited to growing rice and a majority of people here eat rice, fish and vegetables.



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## ❖ Kerala and Ladakh

- Kerala and Ladakh are quite different in terms of their geographical features, the history of both regions has seen similar cultural influences.
- Both regions were influenced by Chinese and Arab traders.

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- It was the geography of Kerala which allowed for the cultivation of spices and the special geographical location of Ladakh and its wool that drew traders to these regions.
- Thus history and geography are often tied in the cultural life of a region.

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## ❖ Unity in Diversity



UNITY  
IN  
DIVERSITY

## ❖ Unity in Diversity

- India's diversity has always been recognized as a source of its strength.
- When the British ruled India, women and men from different cultural, religious and regional backgrounds came together to oppose them.



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- Interestingly the British thought they could divide Indians because they were so different, and then continue to rule them.
- But the people showed how they could be different and yet be united in their battle against the British

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*Don't forget the days of blood,  
O friend In the midst of your happiness remember to  
shed a tear for us  
The hunter has torn away every single flower  
Do plant a flower in the desert garden  
dear friend Having  
fallen to bullets we slept in Jallianwala Bagh  
Do light a lamp on this lonely grave  
O friend  
The blood of Hindus and Muslims flows together today  
Do soak your robe in this river of blood  
dear friend  
Some rot in jails while others lie in their graves Do shed a  
few tears for them O friend.*

*Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA)*

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- Songs and symbols that emerged during the freedom struggle serve as a constant reminder of our country's rich tradition of respect for diversity.
- The Indian flag was used as a symbol of protest against the British by people everywhere

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- 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 practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged"*

- It was Nehru, who coined the phrase, "unity in diversity" to describe the count