

2. Diversity in Society

2.1 Diversity is our strength.

2.2 The principle of secularism

2.3 The contribution of society to our development

2.4 Regulation of society

There are many languages, religions, cultures, customs and traditions in Indian society. This diversity is a mark of our rich cultural heritage. We live among people who speak different languages such as Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu. They celebrate their festivals and cultural events in different ways. Their modes of worship are also different. Our country consists of regions with different historical legacies where this diversity is shared and celebrated! As all these different communities in our country have lived together for many many years, a feeling of oneness has developed among them. This feeling of oneness leads to unity in Indian society.

2.1 Diversity is our strength.

To live with different groups is to experience co-existence. Co-existence helps to increase the level of understanding among the people. It acquaints us with each other's traditions, customs and ways of life. We learn to respect each others' way of life. We even adopt certain traditions from others. This helps to increase the feeling of unity in the society. This social unity helps us to face many natural and social calamities together.

2.2 The principle of secularism

Indian society consists of people following different religions. Our Constitution has made important provisions to ensure that all religious

communities will have the freedom to worship according to their faith and to help develop a feeling of mutual understanding.

India is an important secular nation of the world. We have great linguistic and religious diversity in our country. In order to preserve this diversity in a sound and healthy manner, we have accepted the principle of secularism. Accordingly,

- No religion is recognized as the religion of our country.

- Every person has the freedom of worship as per their religion or the religion of their choice.

- There can be no discrimination among people on the basis of their religion. The people of all religions are treated equally by the State.

- Opportunities for education, means of livelihood and government jobs are made available to all. There is no discrimination on the basis of religion.

- There are special provisions in the Constitution for the protection of religious and linguistic minorities. Minorities are free to protect and preserve their linguistic and cultural identities. They are also free to bring about the development of their own communities through education.

- The principle of secularism has helped to maintain religious harmony in Indian society.

2.3 The contribution of society to our development

What do we learn by living in a society? What values, qualities do we imbibe? Let us see how society helps to develop our personality.

Cooperation : All societies are based on mutual cooperation between individuals and the community. The very existence

of the society depends on the cooperation between individuals. Cooperation is the process of sharing and helping each other in solving problems and removing difficulties. A family cannot remain together without an attitude of cooperation among its members. The same is true of society. Lack of cooperation hampers our progress. Day-to-day life will also not run smoothly. Cooperation makes interdependence in society healthier and allows inclusion of everybody in the society. It is a process of inclusion and of moving ahead taking along all sections of society.



Let's discuss.

We must cooperate with efforts aimed at the education and development of girls and the weaker and deprived sections of our society. For this purpose, obtain information about the relevant government schemes. Discuss in class what you can do for the development of these sections of our society. Share the important points from your discussion with students of other classes.

Tolerance and understanding : Just as there is cooperation in the society, so also at times there can be differences of opinion, disputes and conflicts. Disputes and conflicts arise when there is lack of agreement in the opinions, ideas and views of the people. Prejudices or misconceptions about each other can also lead to conflicts. However, it is in nobody's interest to keep a conflict going for a long time. People find a way to resolve conflicts through compromise and understanding. Thus, conflicts can end if people make efforts to understand each other and show a spirit of tolerance.

An understanding attitude leads to a lot of new learning. We accept new ideas. This helps to further enrich our social life. We become more tolerant. Society provides us an opportunity to learn this simple method of maintaining well-being and peace in society.



Can you do it?

You, too, may have made some compromises. Some such experiences are given below. Add more experiences of your own.

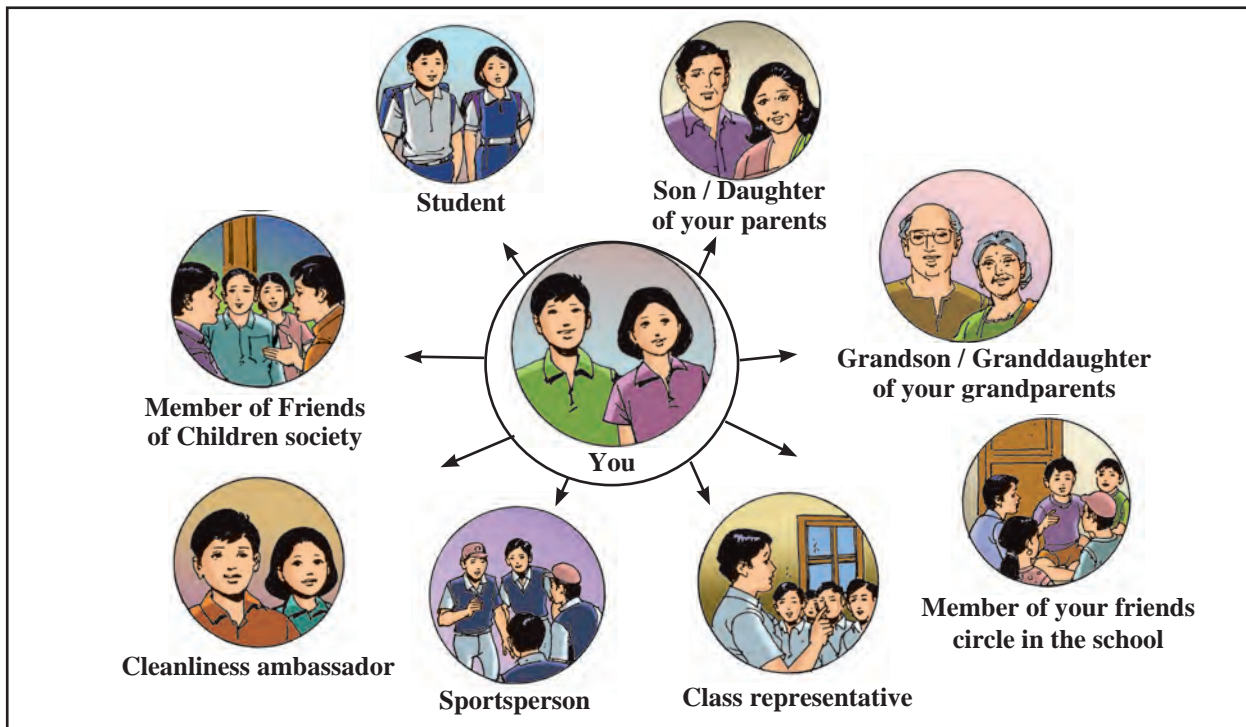
- (a) The hall is packed full of students. You see a person standing. You move over a little on your bench, to make room for the person.
- (b) You want a cycle with gears. But your parents have to pay your sister's school fees. You give up your demand.
- (c) Your family was able to sort out a dispute with the neighbours over the boundary of the field, without going to the court. Your neighbour Sopan is now a good friend of yours.

An opportunity to perform different roles : In society, we play different roles. Each individual has several roles and the responsibilities and duties of every role are well-defined. While playing these roles at home and outside, we form bonds with many people. However, changes may occur in the parts we play.



Try this.

Look at the picture on the next page. Spot the picture that clearly defines your role today. Discuss the new roles that you will have to carry out after twenty years.



2.4 Regulation of society

In order that society functions smoothly, some rules are required. In ancient times, society was mostly regulated with the help of traditions. But in modern times, along with traditions, laws are needed. Law is different from traditions and customs. The regulation of

society through laws and traditions is carried out by different organizations and institutions. The government bodies at the local level also play an important role in the process of regulation of society.



Exercise

1. Fill in the blanks.

- (1) To live among a variety of communities is to experience..... .
- (2) India is an important nation of the world.
- (3) Cooperation makes in society healthier.

2. Answer each of the following questions in one sentence.

- (1) What is meant by cooperation?
- (2) Why have we accepted the principle of secularism?

3. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

- (1) What is it that shows the unity in Indian society?

- (2) When do conflicts arise in society?
- (3) What are the advantages of cooperation?
- (4) You see two children quarrelling. What would you do?
- (5) You are the Chief Minister of the School Cabinet. What are the functions you would perform?

Activities

- (1) Set up and run a Students' Cooperative Store in your school, with the help of your teachers. Write about your experiences of this activity.
- (2) Make a chart of all the rules you follow in the school and in your class and display the chart in your class.
