

**CBSE Class-12 Sociology Test Paper-01**  
**Challenges to Cultural Diversity**

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**General Instruction:**

- Question 1-5 carries two marks each.
  - Question 6-8 carries four marks each.
  - Question 9-10 carries six marks each.
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1. Define 'diversity'.
2. What is 'community identity'?
3. Why do people often react emotionally or even violently whenever there is a perceived threat to their community identity?
4. Define 'nation'.
5. Define 'state'.
6. Why do cultural diversity present tough challenge?
7. Why is community identity important?
8. What is community identity based on?
9. What are the various nation building strategies adopted by states and why?
10. How does assimilationist and integrationist strategies try to establish singular national identities?

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1. The term 'diversity' emphasises differences rather than inequalities. When we say that India is a nation of great cultural diversity, we mean that there are many different types of social groups and communities living here.
2. Community identity is based on birth and 'belonging' rather than on some form of acquired qualifications or 'accomplishment'. It is what we 'are' rather than what we have 'become'. We don't have to do anything to be born into a community – in fact, no one has any choice about which family or community or country they are born into.
3. Expanding and overlapping circles of community ties (family, kinship, caste, ethnicity, language, region or religion) give meaning to our world and give us a sense of identity, of who we are. That is why people often react emotionally or even violently whenever there is a perceived threat to their community identity.
4. Nation is a sort of large-scale community. It is a community of communities. Members of a nation share the desire to be part of the same political collectively.  
Nation is a community that believes itself to be a community, based on several shared characteristics such as: common language, geographical location, history, religion, race, ethnicity, political aspirations, etc. However, nations may exist without one or more of such characteristics. A nation is comprised of its people, who are the ultimate guarantors of its existence, meaning and powers.
5. In its most general sense, the term state refers to an abstract entity consisting of a set of political-legal institutions claiming control over a particular geographical territory and the people living in it. In Max Weber's well-known definition, a state is a "body that successfully claims a monopoly of legitimate force in a particular territory".
6. Cultural diversity presents tough challenges because:
  - i. India is a nation of great cultural diversity with many different types of social groups and communities living here. These are communities defined by cultural markers such as language, religion, sect, race or caste.
  - ii. When these diverse communities are also part of a larger entity like a nation, then difficulties may be created by competition or conflict between them. This is why cultural diversity can present tough challenges.
  - iii. The difficulties arise from the fact that cultural identities are very powerful – they can

arouse intense passions and are often able to mobilise large numbers of people.

iv. Sometimes cultural differences are accompanied by economic and social inequalities, this further complicates things. Measures to address the inequalities or injustices suffered by one community can provoke opposition from other communities. The situation is made worse when scarce resources – like river waters, jobs or government funds have to be shared.

7. Community identity is important as every human being needs a sense of stable identity to operate in this world. Our community provides us the language & the cultural values through which we comprehend the world. It also anchors our self-identity.

People feel a deep sense of security and satisfaction in belonging to communities in which their membership is entirely accidental. We often identify very strongly with communities. It is because of this accidental, unconditional and yet almost inescapable belonging that we can often be so emotionally attached to our community identity. Expanding and overlapping circles of community ties (family, kinship, caste, ethnicity, language, region or religion) give meaning to our world and give us a sense of identity, of who we are.

People often react emotionally or even violently whenever there is a perceived threat to their community identity.

8. It is based on birth & 'belonging' rather than on some form of acquired qualifications or 'accomplishment'. It is what we 'are' rather than what we have 'become'.

We don't have to do anything to be born into a community – in fact; no one has any choice about which family or community or country they are born into.

These kinds of identities are called 'ascriptive' – that is, they are determined by the accidents of birth and do not involve any choice on the part of the individuals concerned.

A second feature of ascriptive identities and community feeling is that they are universal. Everyone has a motherland, a mother tongue, a family, a faith, etc. This may not necessarily be strictly true of every individual, but it is true in a general sense. And we are all equally committed and loyal to our respective identities.

9. Historically, states have tried to establish and enhance their political legitimacy through nation-building strategies. Attaining these objectives was not easy, especially in a context of cultural diversity where citizens, might also feel a strong sense of identity with their community – ethnic, religious, linguistic and so on.

Most states feared that the recognition of such difference would lead to social

fragmentation and prevent the creation of a harmonious society. In short, such identity politics was considered a threat to state unity. In addition, accommodating these differences is politically challenging, so many states have resorted to either suppressing these diverse identities or ignoring them on the political domain. Hence, they sought to secure the loyalty and obedience through policies of assimilation or integration.

Policies of assimilation – often involving outright suppression of the identities of ethnic, religious or linguistic groups – try to erode the cultural differences between groups.

Policies of integration seek to assert a single national identity by attempting to eliminate ethno-national & cultural differences from the public & political arena, while allowing them in the private domain. Both sets of policies assume a singular national identity.

10. Policies that promote assimilation are aimed at persuading, encouraging or forcing all citizens to adopt a uniform set of cultural values and norms. These values and norms are usually entirely or largely those of the dominant social group. Other, non-dominant or subordinated groups in society are expected or required to give up their own cultural values and adopt the prescribed ones.

Policies promoting integration are different in style but not in overall objective: they insist that the public culture be restricted to a common national pattern, while all ‘non-national’ cultures are to be relegated to the private sphere. In this case too, there is the danger of the dominant group’s culture being treated as ‘national’ culture. Assimilationist and integrationist try to establish singular national identities through various interventions like:

- Centralising all power to forums where the dominant group constitutes a majority, and eliminating the autonomy of local or minority groups.
- Imposing a unified legal and judicial system based on the dominant group’s traditions and abolishing alternative systems used by other groups.
- Adopting the dominant group’s language as the only official ‘national’ language and making its use mandatory in all public institutions.
- Promotion of the dominant group’s language and culture through national institutions including state-controlled media and educational institutions.
- Adoption of state symbols celebrating the dominant group’s history, heroes & culture, reflected as choice of national holidays or naming of streets, etc.
- Seizure of lands, forests and fisheries from minority groups and indigenous people and declaring them ‘national resources’.