

# Psychological Perspectives on Diversity and Social Development

Janak Pandey • Rashmi Kumar • Komilla Thapa  
Editors

# Psychological Perspectives on Diversity and Social Development

 Springer

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*Dedicated to  
Professor Rama Charan Tripathi  
for his distinguished contributions to  
understanding  
Social diversity and development  
for building an inclusive and just society.*

# Foreword

*Psychological Perspectives on Diversity and Social Development* is appearing at a time when diversity is being perceived as a threat to development, particularly to social development. Diversity in fact is a valuable resource for development. It is a natural part of human beings. No two individuals are alike, except identical twins. Individuals and the groups and communities that they form possess unique information, ideas, insights, skills, experiences, and so on. They pool them together to structure systems, norms, and values and perform functions for their mutual benefits, living harmoniously and enhancing well-being. That's how they have developed civilizations and cultures and have been ascending on a growth trajectory. What has been happening simultaneously since the beginning, but is happening more conspicuously now, is that individuals and their groups also compete for valuable material resources and dominance that can enable them to claim disproportionately greater access to valuable resources. In the process, they see some others as adversaries and rivals evoking real or imagined threat perception to their own interests. They look for bases on which they can identify those posing a threat and tend to take them out of their way. It is here that social diversity comes in handy. It is easy to differentiate and target others by distancing, denigrating, discriminating, and depressing them. They cover up their motif by an ideology or some high-sounding words that they think can justify their behaviour. Only a few from them carry on their tirade to extreme actions and violence. But they do so generally because of tacit support that they get from the rest of them.

It has so happened that the balance between the two—sharing and cooperating versus competing and conflicting—approaches to different-than-self and own group people has been tilted in favour of the latter because of the nature of the worldview that is being globalized now. In this worldview, material affluence is the most valued goal. Individuals and groups compete with, outwit, and surpass others. They are the successful people deserving power and position in the society. They are the role models that the rest of the people emulate. However, fewer and fewer entrepreneurial individuals and groups in this race are able to acquire, hoard, monopolize, and misuse resources to make a fortune and show it as the nation's affluence and political clout. They are too involved in their achievement to be sensitive to others or to

have any empathetic appreciation of those with whom they are competing. Rather, they are more inclined to identify different and gullible ones who can be used and misused. It is a social arrangement that is exclusive by its nature and designed to create wealth, but not to bother for human well-being. So, the threat to inclusive development is real and has to be addressed at two levels. First, a strong advocacy for the superiority and ethical merit of inclusive development for human well-being over the exclusive one primarily for wealth creation has to be initiated. There is nothing wrong in creating wealth, but it has to be done with the participation of all by ensuring equitable allocation of resources and allowing equal opportunity to access them. The new design for development will provide an ideational ground for making deliberate efforts to tilt the balance in people's approach from competing and conflicting to sharing and cooperating with diverse individuals and groups.

Psychologists have an expertise in both domains. They have been working on individual differences and group dynamics and have shown how individuals and groups can be enabled to build bridges across contritently dependent individuals and groups in realizing superordinate goals. I am pleased to see that the present volume deals with or refers to most of the concepts, processes, methods, theories, strategies, and techniques, which are available in psychological literature. They are a rich source for working with other policy scientists to come up with viable alternatives to the existing framework of making policy decisions and taking actions accordingly. Professor R. C. Tripathi, along with his associates, has been preparing the ground for this kind of endeavour for the last several decades. In the late 1980s, he proposed to align social development to the values of embeddedness and openness. Individuals, he argued, need to be embedded in their natural collectives in order to realize their unique potentials. The collectives, as a result, become diverse. However, if individuals are simultaneously open to other individuals' and groups' needs, expectations, hopes, and fears, the diverse collectives would form overlapping networks for generating social energy for mutual benefits and well-being. His recent work on how "othering" people of a different community objectifies them, rendering them vulnerable to be mistrusted and mistreated. His contributions to this area are the source of inspiration to psychologists. It is appropriate that the volume is dedicated to Professor R. C. Tripathi. I wish that he keeps leading psychologists through research and actions and plays an effective role in facilitating social development by showing that diversity is a valuable resource for social development and human well-being.

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Jai B. P. Sinha

# Preface

In the world today, diversity is a ubiquitous reality and social development is a common goal. It is widely accepted that diversity and development though they appear incompatible still coexist. International development agencies like the UNDP unambiguously assert that sociocultural diversity does not slow development and dismiss the idea that there has to be a trade-off between respecting diversity and sustaining peace and development. It is well known that some of the world's richest and most peaceful countries are historically multi-ethnic, such as Switzerland, Canada, and Belgium. But there is some evidence that diversity has costs and managing ethnic diversity is expensive while meeting competing demands of scarce resources by different groups. In our recent history, there are examples of breaking apart of multi-ethnic nations like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia proving that diversity and unity may not go together. There are also examples of merger of countries due to ethnic similarity like East and West Germany and North and South Yemen. In the globalized economy of the world today, the destination of immigrants is determined by the availability of opportunities in economically prosperous and wealthy nations or regions which continue to welcome diverse people who meet the needs of their growing economies. The process of globalization has further added to social diversity particularly in rich countries due to migration. Immigration within a nation like India also shows a similar pattern. People migrate from regions of deprivation and lesser opportunities to prosperous areas. Thus, diversity is a reality of the contemporary societies around the world, and therefore, the task ahead is to learn, collectively, the challenges of governance and peaceful progressive existence.

The sources of diversity are biological such as race, social history, social structure, culture, and economy related to possession of resources. For example, racial origin, caste system, economic disparities, and linguistic and religious variations constitute diversities and divide the population in India in categories posing challenges for cooperation, a necessity for development. Most of the nations of the contemporary world like India are diverse, facing complex problems related to social harmony. In the contemporary world, all societies and nations are grappling with issues related to socioeconomic plurality, diversity, and inequalities.

The social science disciplines like psychology, sociology, and economics have made rich contributions in enhancing knowledge related to aspects of socio-economic-cultural diversities and social development. An individual may be unique, but individuals and their societies are interrelated and interdependent. It is increasingly and convincingly accepted that harmony in diverse sociocultural groups with equality of opportunities and participation in socio-political processes determines the quality of social and economic development. This book is a collection of essays representing diverse perspectives with the objective to enhance our knowledge and insights on sociocultural diversity and social development.

Psychologists and other social scientists have long shown interest in issues related to social development and intergroup relations. Among the social scientists, particularly for psychologists, the study of diversity has been a favoured area of research. They have consistently pursued studies and enhanced the understanding of diversities leading to policies for promoting inclusive social development. Research on diversities in varied contexts has led to the formulation of theoretical approaches and evolution of models for understanding sociocultural-economic conflicts, intergroup relations, inequalities of different kinds enabling policy recommendations to achieve equality of opportunities, inclusive social development, and harmony. This book primarily presents socio-psychological perspectives on diversities and its linkages with social development.

Traditionally, economic growth used to be considered the main indicator of development. Today, however, an overwhelming number of scholars with varied disciplinary backgrounds hold critical views regarding the overemphasis on economic parameters of development and consider a harmonious social order with equality of opportunities and participation in governance as the modern definition of social development. A highly developed society where diverse social groups live in an ever-increasing disharmony needs to be re-evaluated. The scholars strongly link social development to harmonious intergroup relations in society. The issues of inequality among groups in terms of access to economic, social, and political resources and opportunities available in society, prevailing prejudices, intergroup conflicts, feelings of injustice, and relative deprivation and contestations of group identity all become matters of concern when we try to define social development in terms of a society free from tensions and intergroup conflicts.

Defining social development necessitates examining the very process of social development including the concepts we need to focus on to understand the bases of social development and change. With the increasing trend of globalization, developing societies are changing fast in terms of diversity and posing new challenges to deal with issues related to diversity, inequality, and marginalization of disadvantaged groups. Unfortunately, policy-makers in developing or even developed societies, have not given much attention to these social issues which are so integrally related to the processes of development. Social issues related to development have been neglected at the cost of focusing mainly on economic development.

It is worth noting that disadvantaged groups in this race of development face social exclusion directly or indirectly which keeps them away from the fruits of development. It is important to address the issues related to such diversity along

with development, as a failure to do so may rupture the social fabric of society and give rise to intergroup conflict and violence.

The book appropriately entitled as *Psychological Perspectives on Diversity and Social Development* aims to bring forward various viewpoints on this worldwide reality. The book has chapters on multiculturalism, social inclusion/exclusion of minorities, and other marginalized groups such as low castes, linguistic minorities, Adivasis (tribals), persons with disability, and the unemployed youth. The book aims to focus on some of the concepts considered necessary to understand the very process and historical advancement of the term social development such as pro-sociality, authentic responsible self, and leadership ideology. The book also deals with the challenges for achieving social harmony and social development. The authors are mostly social and cultural psychologists who have been working in their respective interest areas for many years. Some authors have revisited their earlier work and presented refreshing new formulations covering different aspects of social diversity and development.

The book begins with a foreword by a highly respected scholar Prof. J B P Sinha, internationally well known for his contribution to social and organizational psychology enhancing our understanding of the Indian society and its institutions. The first introductory chapter by Prof. Komilla Thapa introduces the concepts and issues of diversity and social development. The chapters of the book are organized in two parts: Part I Social Diversity and Harmony and Part II Development and Change.

Part I is devoted to social diversity, a major feature of contemporary social reality with linkages in human history, irrespective of where one is located in the world. Some major sources of social diversity may be economic, political, social, racial, and religious or cultural distinctions. One of the preconditions for a nation to develop is living together in harmony, respecting social and cultural diversity. There is much evidence to suggest that today's challenge is to achieve harmony *in the midst* of diversity. The question then arises whether a new policy paradigm is needed. Perhaps one that would uphold a core of fundamental, universal values to which everyone could adhere to, human rights and equality, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for all, might be examples of universal aspirations that could lay the foundation for harmonious societies. These and related issues are discussed in Part I of this volume. The first chapter in this part by John W. Berry "Diversity and Equity in Plural Societies: Psychological Perspectives" emphasizes that diversity without the opportunity for equitable participation can lead to a form of separation; equity without diversity can lead to a form of assimilation; the absence of both can lead to marginalization; and the presence of both need to be achieved in order for there to be societal development that is inclusive of all cultural communities. This chapter also proposes policy and programmes to achieve both diversity and equity. In her chapter "Addressing Feelings of Relative Deprivation of Muslim Minority for Inclusive Development", Rashmi Kumar emphasizes that the benefits of development should be available to socially excluded and marginalized groups such as the Muslim minority to enable them to become a part of the development process. Citing her studies with colleagues on relative deprivation, she demonstrates that Muslims consistently experience greater relative deprivation in comparison to

Hindus. These findings constitute the basis for formulating policy initiatives for improving intergroup relations and thus promoting inclusive development. Chapter 4, “The Dilemma of Harmony: From Distrust to Trust”, by Roomana N. Siddiqui asserts that the acceptance of plurality and multiple identities has always thrown up challenges for the syncretic culture prevailing in Northern India. Though diversity is celebrated occasionally, communal tensions and riots create a sense of mistrust among communities. The challenge faced by the country is how to transform a culture of violence into a culture of peace.

Ype H. Poortinga and Richard DeRidder in their chapter “‘Jumping the Queue’: Implications of Norm Violations Research in India and the Netherlands” discuss how participants in a research project on norm violations and intergroup relations responded to this iconic question and how humans are different and how they are the same across cultural boundaries. Reflecting on the project 25 years later, they address the implications of the findings about hierarchical relations among societal groups.

Contentious and controversial issues pertaining to caste are discussed by G. C. Pal in his chapter “Caste, Outcaste and Recasting Social Justice: Trajectories of Social Development”. This chapter presents the expression of caste identity in everyday social life with implications on unequal social development in Indian society and intergroup relationships. The implications for social development of the caste groups who are at the lower end of the caste hierarchy are also discussed. The Adivasi communities have always been counted as among the most excluded and marginalized groups in India. Ramesh Chandra Mishra in his chapter, “Cultural and Psychological Dimensions of Development of the Adivasi Communities”, examines the ecological and cultural features of Adivasi groups. The chapter elaborates developmental and acculturative changes in the life of Adivasi groups. Ajit Kumar Mohanty in his chapter, “Dynamics of Marginalisation and Assertive Maintenance in Multilingual Contact”, examines multilingualism in India and outcomes of contact between different linguistic groups. In multilingual societies, power asymmetry between the contact languages leads to marginalization and domain shrinkage of the non-dominant languages which get confined to limited domains of in-group communication. The last chapter in this part is “Social Attitudes and Rehabilitation of People with Disability” by Ajit K. Dalal. He considers disability as more of a social than medical problem, and the stigma of disability leads to prejudice and discrimination. The worst affected are the disabled poor. Various welfare measures instituted by the Government of India are discussed, and their shortcomings have been highlighted.

It is clear that over the last decades the cultural, social, and political landscapes of diversity are changing radically. These eight chapters thus add to the knowledge base on diversity. They address foundational and conceptual issues and refer to a myriad of realities. They also focus on some of the most pressing contemporary concerns of our globalized world.

Part II of the book deals with social development which puts people at the centre of development. The development processes need to benefit all sections of people. Social development thus implies changes in the society, such as social structures and institutions, norms, values, trust, and reciprocity. It also includes participation

in democratic processes, civic organizations, and socially cohesive activities to achieve peaceful and safe environment within neighbourhoods and larger society.

The first chapter in this part by Janak Pandey “Psychology and Societal Development: Indian Context” reviews the work of Indian psychologists in understanding development-related issues and contributions of psychological research in the solution of development-related problems both at individual and societal levels. The new challenges related to societal development and the way these problems are addressed by psychologists worldwide are also discussed. Shivantika Sharad and Girishwar Misra in their chapter “Dynamics of Social Development and Engagement of Authentic Responsible Self” argue that social development rests on balance, harmony, interdependence, and complementarity of various forces emanating from the individual and collective levels of existence. Uriel Leviatan in his chapter “Leadership Ideology and Socioeconomic Inequality: The Case of Israeli Kibbutzim” states that in affluent societies and communities, socioeconomic inequality brings adverse outcomes for their members in terms of lower levels of social capital, lowered levels of health and well-being, and higher levels of morbidity and mortality. He attributes this adoption of inequality to leadership ideology. Lilavati Krishnan’s chapter, “Prosociality for Societal Development”, focuses that Indian society today is witnessing a decline in prosocial values, on one hand, but there are also many examples of prosocial behaviour at the individual and group levels. Conceptual links are also proposed between prosociality and societal development, through cultural characteristics, socialization, economic values, prosocial values, and well-being. Mala Sinha views unemployment through the lens of liberalization and globalization in her chapter, “Educated Youth, Employment and Globalized India”. She examines the motivational states, perceptions of stress, and psychosocial variables that have shaped the life experiences of educated unemployed Indian youth. She attempts to explicate the nature of impact that structural, demographic, and cultural changes have on educated youth in the country.

The chapters in Part II deal with the cultural, social, and political landscapes of diversity which are changing radically. These chapters focus on certain aspects of development and include a vast range of conceptual and theoretical issues. They add to our understanding of the experiential and psychological aspects of development.

The book is dedicated to Prof. R.C. Tripathi who in his long academic career of over five decades has systematically studied intergroup relations, conflicts, and violence and made significant theoretical contributions with applied value for social policy and resolution. In addition to his research, he has influenced improvement of academic quality in multiple ways such as mentoring of generations of doctoral and masters students; building institutions like Centre of Advanced Study of Psychology, Allahabad; directing research and teaching programs for rural development at GB Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad; and after his superannuation heading the Swaraj Vidyapeeth which has been engaged in a number of social intervention and action programs for societal development. We strongly believe that by dedicating this book to Prof R.C. Tripathi, we are recognizing fearless thinkers, researchers, and social activists who can save society from social evils like conflicts, violence, inequalities, and all kinds of discrimination.

The readership is intended to be researchers, teachers, and professionals interested in issues related to social development, social diversity, intergroup relations, and their policy implications. The book is expected to draw attention of both interdisciplinary scholars and faculty from psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science and development studies, who may adopt it for master- and doctoral-level courses. In addition, development professionals and administrators interested in the issues related to social development, social diversity, and intergroup relations would find it useful for policy formulation and action.

Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Janak Pandey  
Rashmi Kumar  
Komilla Thapa

# Acknowledgements

The driving force behind this book was none other than Prof. R.C. Tripathi. His exemplary dedication and contributions for the development of the discipline of psychology and particularly the Department of Psychology, University of Allahabad, inspired us to seek means of acknowledging and commemorating his diverse work and dedicating this volume to him.

We are indebted to the authors of this volume, many of them contemporaries, eminent colleagues, and friends of Prof. Tripathi, who patiently bore the travails of revision and the inevitable delays that marked the progression of this volume. Their fortitude and endurance are truly commendable. We are grateful to Prof J.B.P. Sinha for kindly writing the Foreword.

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Janak Pandey  
Rashmi Kumar  
Komilla Thapa

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**Ajit K. Dalal** (deceased) had a long association with the Department of Psychology, University of Allahabad, and had made significant and outstanding contributions in diverse areas of psychology. He received the Fulbright Senior Fellow and worked at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He was also a recipient of the UGC Career Award, Rockefeller Foundation Award and ICSSR Senior Fellowship. He was a visiting faculty at several institutes. He had published about 80 research articles and book chapters. His recent books were *Health Beliefs and Coping with Chronic Diseases* (2015), *Cultural Psychology of Health in India* (2016), *Disability, Rehabilitation and Social Work* (2018) and *Wither Indian Psychology* (in press).

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**Roomana N. Siddiqui** is a Professor of Social Psychology at Aligarh Muslim University. She is interested in the perception of people on issues of social relevance ranging from environmental stressors to intergroup relations. Apart from investigating the behaviour environment link, she addresses the issue of identity and how it is being negotiated by young people. Currently she is focusing on the nature of intergroup threat experienced by members of majority and minority groups and its implication for assertion of social identity. She is also interested in identifying the barriers and shared spaces between different groups and investigating those psychological and social factors that have implications for intergroup harmony.

**Mala Sinha** is Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi. She obtained her doctorate in Psychology from the University of Allahabad. She has drawn indigenous values and management principles from Indian scriptures and philosophies. She is a corporate trainer and consultant for multinational corporations including, WHO and World Bank. Presently she is mentoring the women empowerment program at Akhand Jyoti Eye Hospital and researching on its social impact. She is also interested in painting, writing poetry and short stories.