

The Concept of Culture:

If you ask 100 anthropologists to define culture, you'll get 100 different definitions. However, most of these definitions would emphasize roughly the same things: that culture is shared, transmitted through learning and helps shape behavior and beliefs. Culture is of concern to all four subfields and while our earliest ancestors relied more on biological adaptation, culture now shapes humanity to a much larger extent.

- One of the earliest definitions of culture was put forth by Tylor in 1871: "Culture, or civilization, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."
- The book defines culture as, "a society's shared and socially transmitted ideas, values and perceptions, which are used to make sense of experience and generate behavior and are reflected in that behavior (147)."
- Culture is universal among all human groups and even exists among some primates.
- All cultures have to provide for the physical, emotional, and social needs of their members, enculturate new members, resolve conflicts and promote survival for their members.
- Society must balance the needs of the whole with the needs of the individual. If individual needs are continually suppressed, social systems can become unstable and individual stress can become too much to handle. Every culture has its own methods of balancing the needs of society in relation to individual needs.
- **Subcultures** are groups with distinct patterns of learned and shared behavior (ethnicities, races, genders, age categories) within a larger culture. Despite these distinctive traits, members of subcultures still share commonalities with the larger society. Subcultures exist in most state level systems because those systems are pluralistic, they encompass more than one ethnic group or culture.

Characteristics of Culture

Culture has five basic characteristics: It is learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated, and dynamic. All cultures share these basic features.

- Culture is learned. It is **not** biological; we do not inherit it. Much of learning culture is unconscious. We learn culture from families, peers, institutions, and media. The process of learning culture is known as **enculturation**. While all humans have basic biological needs such as food, sleep, and sex, the way we fulfill those needs varies cross-culturally.
- Culture is shared. Because we share culture with other members of our group, we are able to act in socially appropriate ways as well as predict how others will act. Despite the shared nature of culture, that doesn't mean that culture is homogenous (the same). The multiple cultural worlds that exist in any society are discussed in detail below.
- Culture is based on symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. Symbols vary cross-culturally and are arbitrary. They only have meaning when people in a culture agree on their use. Language, money and art are all symbols. Language is the most important symbolic component of culture.

- Culture is integrated. This is known as holism, or the various parts of a culture being interconnected. All aspects of a culture are related to one another and to truly understand a culture, one must learn about all of its parts, not only a few.
- Culture is dynamic. This simply means that cultures interact and change. Because most cultures are in contact with other cultures, they exchange ideas and symbols. All cultures change, otherwise, they would have problems adapting to changing environments. And because cultures are integrated, if one component in the system changes, it is likely that the entire system must adjust.

CULTURE AND ADAPTATION

Biological adaptation in humans is important but humans have increasingly come to rely upon cultural adaptation. However, not all adaptation is good, and not all cultural practices are adaptive. Some features of a culture may be maladaptive, such as fast food, pollution, nuclear waste and climate change. However, because culture is adaptive and dynamic, once we recognize problems, culture can adapt again, in a more positive way, to find solutions.

ETHNOCENTRISM AND THE EVALUATION OF CULTURE

The diversity of cultural practices and adaptations to the problems of human existence often lead some to question which practices are the best. **Ethnocentrism** is when one views their own culture as the best and only proper way to behave and adapt.

- Since most humans believe their culture is the best and only way to live, there are small amounts of ethnocentrism everywhere in the world.
- Small doses help to create a sense of cultural pride and to build strong, cohesive groups.
- But taken to extremes, and certainly when it includes an unwillingness to be tolerant, it can be destructive. Ethnocentrism is at the heart of colonization and genocide.
- Cultural anthropologists have, however, pushed for **cultural relativism**, the principle that all cultures must be understood in terms of their own values and beliefs, not by the standards of another. Under this principle, no culture is better than any other and cultures can only be judged on whether they are meeting the needs of their own people.
- **This article provides information about the meaning, characteristics, and functions of culture !**
- The customs, traditions, attitudes, values, norms, ideas and symbols govern human behaviour pattern.

- The members of society not only endorse them but also mould their behaviour accordingly. They are the members of the society because of the traditions and customs which are common and which are passed down from generation to generation through the process of socialisation. These common patterns designate culture and it is in terms of culture that we are able to understand the specific behaviour pattern of human beings in their social relations. Cultural ideas emerge from shared social life.

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- **Meaning of Culture:**

- Sometimes an individual is described as “a highly cultured person”, meaning thereby that the person in question has certain features such as his speech, manner, and taste for literature, music or painting which distinguish him from others. Culture, in this sense, refers to certain personal characteristics of a individual. However, this is not the sense in which the word culture is used and understood in social sciences.
- Sometimes culture is used in popular discourse to refer to a celebration or an evening of entertainment, as when one speaks of a ‘cultural show’. In this sense, culture is identified with aesthetics or the fine arts such as dance, music or drama. This is also different from the technical meaning of the word culture.
- Culture is used in a special sense in anthropology and sociology. It refers to the sum of human beings’ life ways, their behaviour, beliefs, feelings, thought; it connotes everything that is acquired by them as social beings.
- Culture has been defined in number of ways. There is no consensus among sociologists and anthropologists regarding the definition of culture. One of the most comprehensive definitions of the term culture was provided by the British anthropologist Edward Tylor. He defined culture as ” that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”.

- There are some writers who add to this definitions some of the important” other capabilities and habits” such as language and the techniques for making and using tools. Culture consists of all learned, normative behaviour patterns – that is all shared ways or patterns of thinking and feeling as well as doing.
- Some of the thinkers include in culture only the nonmaterial parts. For instance, Sutherland and Wood word say, “If culture exists only where there is communication then the content of culture can be ideas or symbol patterns. Culture is then an immaterial phenomenon only, a matter of thoughts and meanings and habits and not of visible and touchable material things or objects”.
- The “material elements that are made and used in accordance with socially inherited tradition” should be called culture objects. Others include in culture all the major social components that bind men together in society. For instance, the British anthropologist Malinowski included ‘inherited, artifacts, implements and consumer goods’ and ‘social structure’ within his definition of culture.
- It is, Cooley, Argell and Car say,
- *“The entire accumulation of artificial objects, conditions, tools, techniques, ideas, symbols and behaviour patterns peculiar to a group of people, possessing a certain consistency of its own, and capable of transmission from one generation to another.*
- Some of the other important definitions of culture are as follows. “Culture is the expression of our nature in our modes of living and our thinking. Intercourse in our literature, in religion, in recreation and enjoyment, says Maclver.

- According to E.A. Hoebel,
- *“Culture is the sum total of integrated learned behaviour patterns which are characteristics of the members of a society and which are therefore not the result of biological inheritance.”*
- “Culture is the complex whole that consists of everything we think and do and have as members of society”, says Bierstedt. “Culture is the total content of the physio-social, bio-social and psycho-social universe man has produced and the socially created mechanisms through which these social product operate”, According to Anderson and Parker.
- Mlinowski defines culture” as the handiwork of man and the medium through which he achieves his end
- According to H.T. Mazumadar,
- *“culture is the sum total of human achievements, material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically, i.e., by tradition and communication, vertically as well as horizontally”.*
- Combining several of these definitions, we may define culture as the sum-total of human achievements or the total heritage of man which can be transmitted to men by communication and tradition. It is a way of life of the people in a certain geographical area. Life style and social pattern of a society being the direct consequence of the accumulated heritage of ages past distinguish and differentiate one community from another.

- Culture therefore, is moral, intellectual and spiritual discipline for advancement, in accordance with the norms and values based on accumulated heritage. It is imbibing and making ours own, the life style and social pattern of the group one belongs to. Culture is a system of learned behaviour shared by and transmitted among the members of the group.
- Culture is a collective heritage learned by individuals and passed from one generation to another. The individual receives culture as part of social heritage and in turn, may reshape the culture and introduce changes which then become part of the heritage of succeeding generations.
- **Characteristics of Culture:**
- **From various definition, we can deduce the following characteristics:**
- ***1. Learned Behaviour:***
- Not all behaviour is learned, but most of it is learned; combing one's hair, standing in line, telling jokes, criticising the President and going to the movie, all constitute behaviours which had to be learned.
- Sometimes the terms conscious learning and unconscious learning are used to distinguish the learning. For example, the ways in which a small child learns to handle a tyrannical father or a rejecting mother often affect the ways in which that child, ten or fifteen years later, handles his relationships with other people
- Some behaviour is obvious. People can be seen going to football games, eating with forks, or driving automobiles. Such behaviour is called "overt" behaviour. Other behaviour is less visible. Such

activities as planning tomorrow's work (or) feeling hatred for an enemy, are behaviours too. This sort of behaviour, which is not openly visible to other people, is called Covert behaviour. Both may be, of course, learned.

- **2. Culture is Abstract:**

- Culture exists in the minds or habits of the members of society. Culture is the shared ways of doing and thinking. There are degrees of visibility of cultural behaviour, ranging from the regularised activities of persons to their internal reasons for so doing. In other words, we cannot see culture as such we can only see human behaviour. This behaviour occurs in regular, patterned fashion and it is called culture.

- **3. Culture is a Pattern of Learned Behaviour:**

- The definition of culture indicated that the learned behaviour of people is patterned. Each person's behaviour often depends upon some particular behaviour of someone else. The point is that, as a general rule, behaviours are somewhat integrated or organized with related behaviours of other persons.

- **4. Culture is the Products of Behaviour:**

- Culture learnings are the products of behaviour. As the person behaves, there occur changes in him. He acquires the ability to swim, to feel hatred toward someone, or to sympathize with someone. They have grown out of his previous behaviours.

- In both ways, then, human behaviour is the result of behaviour. The experience of other people are impressed on one as he grows up, and also many of his traits and abilities have grown out of his own past behaviours.

- **5. Culture includes Attitudes, Values Knowledge:**
- There is widespread error in the thinking of many people who tend to regard the ideas, attitudes, and notions which they have as “their own”. It is easy to overestimate the uniqueness of one’s own attitudes and ideas. When there is agreement with other people it is largely unnoticed, but when there is a disagreement or difference one is usually conscious of it. Your differences however, may also be cultural. For example, suppose you are a Catholic and the other person a Protestant.
- **6. Culture also includes Material Objects:**
- Man’s behaviour results in creating objects. Men were behaving when they made these things. To make these objects required numerous and various skills which human beings gradually built up through the ages. Man has invented something else and so on. Occasionally one encounters the view that man does not really “make” steel or a battleship. All these things first existed in a “state nature”.
- Man merely modified their form, changed them from a state in which they were to the state in which he now uses them. The chair was first a tree which man surely did not make. But the chair is more than trees and the jet airplane is more than iron ore and so forth.
- **7. Culture is shared by the Members of Society:**
- The patterns of learned behaviour and the results of behaviour are possessed not by one or a few person, but usually by a large proportion. Thus, many millions of persons share such behaviour patterns as Christianity, the use of automobiles, or the English language.

- Persons may share some part of a culture unequally. For example, as Americans do the Christian religion. To some persons Christianity is the all important, predominating idea in life. To others it is less preoccupying/important, and to still others it is of marginal significance only.
- Sometimes the people share different aspects of culture. For example, among the Christians, there are – Catholic and Protestant, liberal or conservation, as clergymen or as laymen. The point to our discussion is not that culture or any part of it is shared identically, but that it is shared by the members of society to a sufficient extent.
- **8. Culture is Super-organic:**
- Culture is sometimes called super organic. It implies that “culture” is somehow superior to “nature”. The word super-organic is useful when it implies that what may be quite a different phenomenon from a cultural point of view.
- For example, a tree means different things to the botanist who studies it, the old woman who uses it for shade in the late summer afternoon, the farmer who picks its fruit, the motorist who collides with it and the young lovers who carve their initials in its trunk. The same physical objects and physical characteristics, in other words, may constitute a variety of quite different cultural objects and cultural characteristics.
- **9. Culture is Pervasive:**
- Culture is pervasive it touches every aspect of life. The pervasiveness of culture is manifest in two ways. First, culture provides an unquestioned context within which individual action and response take place. Not only emotional action but relational

actions are governed by cultural norms. Second, culture pervades social activities and institution

- According to Ruth Benedict, “A culture, like an individual is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. With each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to these purposes, each person further consolidates its experience and in proportion to the urgency of these drives the heterogeneous items of behaviour; take more and more congruous shape”.
- **10. Culture is a way of Life:**
- Culture means simply the “way of life” of a people or their “design for living.” Kluckhohn and Kelly define it in his sense, ” A culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designed members of a group.”
- Explicit culture refers to similarities in word and action which can be directly observed. For example, the adolescent cultural behaviour can be generalized from regularities in dress, mannerism and conversation. Implicit culture exists in abstract forms which are not quite obvious.
- **11. Culture is a human Product:**
- Culture is not a force, operating by itself and independent of the human actors. There is an unconscious tendency to defy culture, to endow it with life and treat it as a thing. Culture is a creation of society in interaction and depends for its existence upon the continuance of society.

- In a strict sense, therefore, culture does not ‘do’ anything on its own. It does not cause the individual to act in a particular way, nor does it ‘make’ the normal individual into a maladjusted one. Culture, in short, is a human product; it is not independently endowed with life.
- **12. Culture is Idealistic:**
- Culture embodies the ideas and norms of a group. It is sum-total of the ideal patterns and norms of behaviour of a group. Culture consists of the intellectual, artistic and social ideals and institutions which the members of the society profess and to which they strive to confirm.
- **13. Culture is transmitted among members of Society:**
- The cultural ways are learned by persons from persons. Many of them are “handed down” by one’s elders, by parents, teachers, and others [of a somewhat older generation]. Other cultural behaviours are “handed up” to elders. Some of the transmission of culture is among contemporaries.
- For example, the styles of dress, political views, and the use of recent labour saving devices. One does not acquire a behaviour pattern spontaneously. He learns it. That means that someone teaches him and he learns. Much of the learning process both for the teacher and the learner is quite unconscious, unintentional, or accidental.
- **14. Culture is Continually Changing:**
- There is one fundamental and inescapable attribute (special quality) of culture, the fact of unending change. Some societies at sometimes change slowly, and hence in comparison to other societies seem not

to be changing at all. But they are changing, even though not obviously so.

- ***15. Culture is Variable:***

- Culture varies from society to society, group to group. Hence, we say culture of India or England. Further culture varies from group to group within the same society. There are subcultures within a culture. Cluster of patterns which are both related to general culture of the society and yet distinguishable from it are called subcultures.

- ***16. Culture is an integrated system:***

- Culture possesses an order and system. Its various parts are integrated with each other and any new element which is introduced is also integrated.

- ***17. Language is the Chief Vehicle of Culture:***

- Man lives not only in the present but also in the past and future. He is able to do this because he possesses language which transmits to him what was learned in the past and enables him to transmit the accumulated wisdom to the next generation. A specialised language pattern serves as a common bond to the members of a particular group or subculture. Although culture is transmitted in a variety of ways, language is one of the most important vehicles for perpetuating cultural patterns.

- To conclude culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society. It is culture that, in the wide focus of the world, distinguishes individual from individual, group from group and society.

- **Functions of Culture:**

- Among all groups of people we find widely shared beliefs, norms, values and preferences. Since culture seems to be universal human phenomenon, it occurs naturally to wonder whether culture corresponds to any universal human needs. This curiosity raises the question of the functions of culture. Social scientists have discussed various functions of culture. Culture has certain functions for both individual and society.

- **Following are some of the important functions of culture:**

- ***1. Culture Defines Situations:***

- Each culture has many subtle cues which define each situation. It reveals whether one should prepare to fight, run, laugh or make love. For example, suppose someone approaches you with right hand outstretched at waist level. What does this mean? That he wishes to shake hands in friendly greeting is perfectly obvious – obvious, that is to anyone familiar with our culture.

- But in another place or time the outstretched hand might mean hostility or warning. One does not know what to do in a situation until he has defined the situation. Each society has its insults and fighting words. The cues (hints) which define situations appear in infinite variety. A person who moves from one society into another will spend many years misreading the cues. For example, laughing at the wrong places.

- ***2. Culture defines Attitudes, Values and Goals:***

- Each person learns in his culture what is good, true, and beautiful. Attitudes, values and goals are defined by the culture. While the

individual normally learns them as unconsciously as he learns the language. Attitudes are tendencies to feel and act in certain ways. Values are measures of goodness or desirability, for example, we value private property, (representative) Government and many other things and experience.

- Goals are those attainments which our values define as worthy, (e.g.) winning the race, gaining the affections of a particular girl, or becoming president of the firm. By approving certain goals and ridiculing others, the culture channels individual ambitions. In these ways culture determines the goals of life.
- ***3. Culture defines Myths, Legends, and the Supernatural:***
- Myths and legends are important part of every culture. They may inspire, reinforce effort and sacrifice and bring comfort in bereavement. Whether they are true is sociologically unimportant. Ghosts are real to people who believe in them and who act upon this belief. We cannot understand the behaviour of any group without knowing something of the myths, legends, and supernatural beliefs they hold. Myths and legends are powerful forces in a group's behaviour.
- Culture also provides the individual with a ready-made view of the universe. The nature of divine power and the important moral issues are defined by the culture. The individual does not have to select, but is trained in a Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or some other religious tradition. This tradition gives answers for the major (things imponderable) of life, and fortuitously the individual to meet life's crises.

- **4. Culture provides Behaviour Patterns:**
- The individual need not go through painful trial and error learning to know what foods can be eaten (without poisoning himself), or how to live among people without fear. He finds a ready-made set of patterns awaiting him which he needs only to learn and follow. The culture maps out the path to matrimony. The individual does not have to wonder how one secures a mate; he knows the procedure defined by his culture.
- If men use culture to advance their purposes, it seems clear also that a culture imposes limits on human and activities. The need for order calls forth another function of culture that of so directing behaviour that disorderly behaviour is restricted and orderly behaviour is promoted. A society without rules or norms to define right and wrong behaviour would be very much like a heavily travelled street without traffic signs or any understood rules for meeting and passing vehicles. Chaos would be the result in either case.
- Social order cannot rest on the assumption that men will spontaneously behave in ways conducive to social harmony.
- **Culture and Society:**
- The relationship between society, culture and personality is stressed by Ralph Linton: "A society is organised group of individuals. A culture is an organised group of learned responses. The individual is living organism capable of independent thought, feeling and action, but with his independence limited and all his resources profoundly modified by contact with the society and culture in which he devel

- A society cannot exist apart from culture. A Society is always made of persons and their groupings. People carry and transmit culture, but they are not culture. No culture can exist except as it is embodied in a society of man; no society can operate without, cultural directives. Like matter and energy, like mind and body, they are interdependent and interacting yet express different aspects of the human situation.
- One must always keep in mind the interdependence and the reciprocal relationship between culture and society. Each is a distinguishable concept in which the patterning and organisation of the whole is more important than any of the component parts.

IMPORTANCE OF SPORTS IN MODERN SOCIETY

Sport is an important part of today's society and plays a large role in many people's lives. Now more than ever, sport events dominate headlines and athletes have become national heroes. It goes without saying that sport should be constantly present in our life, but my question is "does sport have only positive aspects?" From a social standpoint, sport plays a positive role in uniting people from different social backgrounds in support of their favorite team. This can aid people's understanding and tolerance of each other. However, just as sport unites people so it can divide them, as is often demonstrated by crowd violence at football matches. As far as education is concerned, sport is an important part of every child's schooling, as it plays a big role in both their physical and mental development. It teaches children how to work as a part of a team and cooperate with others, while at the same time improving physical condition. The only drawback to this is that children who are less able to perform well in sport are likely to feel inadequate in comparison to their more gifted classmates, which may affect their self-confidence. From an economic point of view, sport can be very profitable, as it attracts a lot of sponsorship and advertising. On the one hand this creates revenue for the sporting industry which allows for improvement and expansion. On the other hand large sums of money are often paid to event organizers to promote products such as cigarettes, which are harmful to one's health.

Moreover many people do sport because they want to keep fit and be healthy not only now but in future as well. However, as my grandmother said “between sport to disability”, it happens physical activity can bring us some troublesome, long-lasting injuries.

Don't conclude from my speech that I'm against every kind of sport in our lives. I just wanted to show you that it has also some negative aspects. I hope you know how important sport is in my life. Now, knowing both advantages and disadvantages of it, think about the importance of sport in your life, because you're the modern world.

Sport is an important part of today's society and plays a large role in many people's lives. Now more than ever, sport events dominate headlines and athletes have become national heroes. The question is, does sport merit this kind of interest and attention? From a social standpoint, sport plays a positive role in uniting people from different social backgrounds in support of their favourite team. This can aid people's understanding and tolerance of each other. However, just as sport unites people so it can divide them, as is often demonstrated by crowd violence at football matches. As far as education is concerned, sport is an important part of every child's schooling, as it plays a big role in both their physical and mental development. It teaches children how to work as a part of a team and cooperate with others, while at the same time improving physical condition. The only drawback to this is that children who are less able to perform well in sport are likely to feel inadequate in comparison to their more gifted classmates, which may affect their self-confidence. From an economic point of view, sport can be very profitable, as it attracts a lot of sponsorship and advertising. On the one hand this creates revenue for the sporting industry which allows for improvement and expansion. On the other hand large sums of money are often paid to event organisers to promote products such as cigarettes, which are harmful to one's health. In my opinion, sport should be used as much as possible to encourage people to lead a more healthy and peaceful life instead of being used to promote unhealthy products.

Tourism, nowadays is one of the most popular way of spending free time. It is highly developed in almost all countries, mainly because of material profits it brings. But unfortunately, there is the other side of the coin too, especially if it comes about foreign tourism.

From educational point of view, travelling lets people to see world, other peoples, culture and traditions. It is said, that “traveling broadens” and most people consider, it does. At the same time, tourists who has not wide knowledge about World, can “see

the grass greener on the other side of the fence". It causes danger of discontent with country that person live in, what entail complaints and dissatisfaction. Also economical aspect plays huge role in domestic market economy. Lot of people works in tourist branch what is often their only source of income. What is more, there are some countries - like Malta for example - where tourism is basis of all its revenue. However, if all field are tourist-minded, prices are inflated what is huge drawback for natives.

Thirdly, tourism can have influence on tourist religious viewpoint. Seeing place which is some religion root, surely strengthens pilgrims faith. On the other hand, showing ones faith can meet with incomprehension or even contempt.

In my opinion, tourism is too important for my mental to be stoped, or even restricted because of mentioned below reasons. It should be still developing, and becoming easier to get for more and more people.