

CULTURE

Introduction:

- Culture is one of the important concepts in sociology.
- No human society can exist and develop without its culture. The main difference between the animal and human societies is of culture only.
- Animal societies have no culture because they do not have systems of learning and transmitting social experiences.
- Sociologists are keenly interested in the study of culture because the study of human society is incomplete without it.



Edward Tylor

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society.

Definition of culture

Different sociologists have differently defined the term culture:

- **Taylor**: “Culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and habits and any capabilities acquired by man as a member of society”.
- **Linton**: “Culture is social heredity, which is transmitted from one generation to another with the accumulation of individual experiences”.
- **John Beatte**: Culture is the way of life which is transmitted from generation to generation”.

TYPES OF CULTURE

- **Material Culture**
- **Non-material Culture**
- **Real Culture**
- **Ideal Culture**

1. Material Culture

- From material culture we understand material and physical objects. For instance, house, road, vehicles, pen, table, radio set, book etc. these are the products of human efforts to control his environment and make his life conformable and safe.

2. Non-material culture

- In non-material culture we include non material objects. For example religion, art, ideas, customs, values system, attitudes, knowledge etc. it does not have physical shape. It is very important in determining human behavior and has strong hold on an individual. Both parts are inter-related with each other.

Real Culture:

- Real culture is that which can be observed in our social life. The culture on which we act upon in our daily life is real culture. It is that parts of culture, which the people adopt in their social life, for example. If a person/ says that he/she is Muslim, will be, when followed all the principles of Islam is the real and when doesn't follow, is not a real one.

Ideal Culture:

- The culture which is presented as a pattern to the people is called ideal culture. It is the goal of society and never achieved fully because some parts remain out of practice. This culture is explained in books, speeches etc.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE:

From the definitions it becomes clear that sociologically culture has specific meaning and characteristics. It is the product of human behavior and gaining knowledge through group. It is a system of learned behavior and set procedure. Some of the salient characteristics of culture are as under:

- **Culture is learned.**
- **Culture is shared.**
- **Culture is transmitted.**
- **Culture is changing.**

1. **Culture is learned** – It is acquired through education, training and experience.



2. **Culture is socially transmitted through language**- It is transmitted from one generation to another through the medium of language, verbal or non-verbal through the gestures or signs, orally or in writing.



- **Culture is learned:**
- Most of the behavior is learned in society. This learning might be conscious or unconscious but no body can deny the process of learning. Culture is something learnt and acquired e.g. wearing clothes or dancing. It is not something natural to the person.
- **Culture is shared:**
- All the traits, attitudes, ideas, knowledge and material objects like radio, television and automobiles etc is actually shared by members of society.

Culture is transmitted

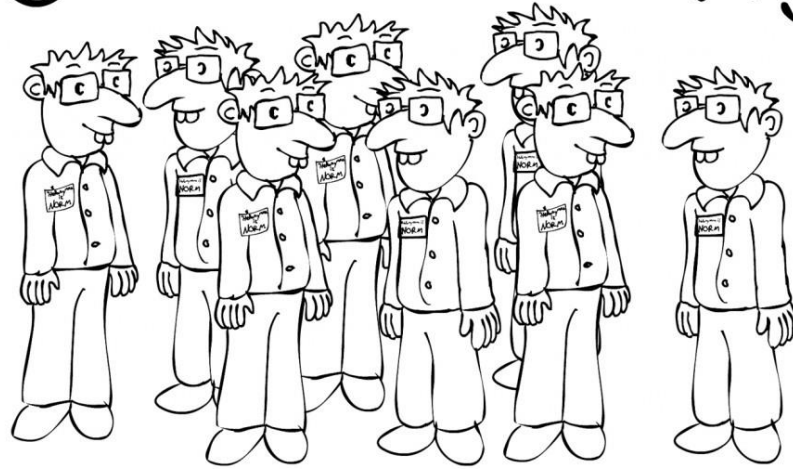
All the culture traits and objects are transmitted among the members of society continually. Most of the cultural traits and material objects are transmitted to the members of the society from their forefathers. We learn new fashion, how to move in society and how to behave in a particular social situation.

Culture is changing

Culture never remains static but changing. It is changing in every society, but with different speed and causes. It constantly undergoes change and adapts itself to the environments.

COMPONENTS OF CULTURE

SOCIAL NORMS



-These are the guidelines people are supposed to follow in their relation with one another.

-they indicate what people should or should not do in specific situation.

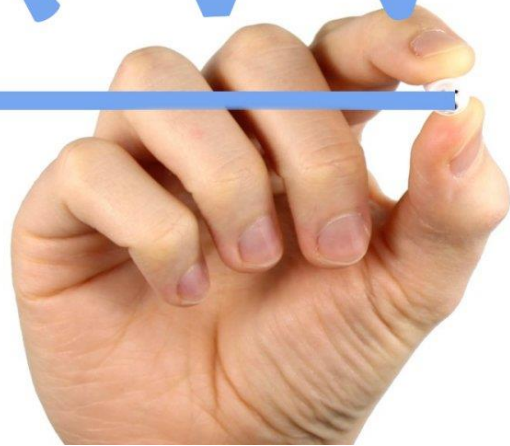
-they indicate the standard of propriety, morality, legality, and ethics of a society that are covered by sanctions when violation are made.

Social norms

- a. Folkways** - these are everyday habits; customs, traditions and conventions people obey without giving much thought to the matter

- b. Mores**- these are the norms people consider vital to their wellbeing and most cherished values; they are special customs with moral and ethical significance, which are strongly held and emphasized.

LAW



c. **Laws**- these are formalized norms enacted by people vested with legitimate authority.

IDEAS, BELIEFS, VALUES

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graph TD; Title[IDEAS, BELIEFS, VALUES] --> Ideas[Ideas are non-materials aspects of culture and embody man's conception of his physical, social and cultural world]; Title --> Beliefs[Beliefs refer to a person's conviction about a certain idea.]; Title --> Values[Values are abstract concepts of what is important and worthwhile, they are general ideas that individuals share about what is good or bad.];
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