

# CULTURE - CIVILIZATION

## INTRODUCTION

Culture has great influence on individual value framework. It is a set of traditional belief and values that are transmitted and shared in a given society. Culture is also the total way of life and thinking patterns, speech action and artifacts that are passed from generation to generation. However, this is dependent on the man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generation. In nutshell, culture is a total sum of customs, rituals, artifacts, beliefs and values.

"According to UNESCO, culture is usually "Interpreted as art, we speak of culture in connection with behaviour of people in the moral values and human relations. We denote it by action, behaviour and attitudes considered useful for the interests of society or of a certain social group. We mean standard of living, of habitation and clothing, of physical culture. We appraise by it the culture of language, of thought, of work..."

Social anthropologists distinguish between "material" and "non-material" culture. The former includes technology, art forms, architecture, material goods and equipments used in daily life, house hold, agriculture, trade and commerce and other social activities. In the latter are included the literary and intellectual traditions, beliefs, myths, legends and other forms of oral tradition.

Culture has three dimensions. First, it is a normative system, by which there is a social control in the form of sanctions, which make people follow generally accepted moral/ ethical norms. Secondly there is an expressive system; music, art, literature and so on are cultural expressions of people. Thirdly it is a system of ideas which enables members of a society to interpret the world meaningfully and process through which culture influences a social system is called institutionalization.

### Definition

- "Culture is symbolic, cumulative and progressive process" (White)
- "Culture is an organized body of conventional understanding manifested in art and art craft, which persisting through tradition characterize a human group". (Redfield)

### Characteristics of culture

1. **Culture is learned:** - culture is not inherited generally but it must be learned and acquired. A child is instilled with cultural values at an early age. Cultural learning can occur by informal learning and by formal learning. Enculturation is the process of learning values of one's own culture from childhood. If a person learns the culture of a society other than the one in which he is raised, the process of acculturation occurs.
2. **Culture is dynamic:** - Culture is not static it is dynamic. It evolves according to changing social, political, economical and technical environment.
3. **Culture is shared:** - culture is socially shared, based on social interaction and creation. It cannot exist by itself. It must be shared by the members of a society. Cultural values are widely held. Each culture has certain widely held and commonly accepted values that differentiate it from other cultures. The sharing of values is facilitated by language.

### Elements of subculture

1. **Belief:** - Beliefs consist of large number of verbal or mental statement about any object based on person's specific information and judgment of something about that object. Based on beliefs person decides what is right wrong, what is good or bad. Belief about anything has different dimensions.
2. **Values:** - Values are also beliefs. But, these are those beliefs which are less in number, core in nature and very difficult to change and is shared by most of the member of the society values guide that what is good and desirable versus what is bad and undesirable.
3. **Customs:** - Customs are apparent modes of behaviour that form culturally approved or acceptable ways of behaving in particular situations. They consist of every day or routine behaviour. For example, bargaining for goods and services is common in India. In west it could be considered rude.
4. **Rituals:** - A ritual is a series of symbolic behaviours that occur in fixed sequence and are repeated most often. In India, Dhothi and Kurta of Khadi was ritual during the independence movement.
5. **Language and symbols:** - Language is considered to be a system of communicating with other people using sounds, symbols and words in expressing a meaning, idea or thought. Many languages use gestures, sounds, symbols, or words, and aim at communicating concepts, ideas, meanings and

thoughts. This language can be used in many forms, primarily thought oral and written communications as well as using expressions through body language. Symbol is anything that stands for something else. The symbolic characteristics of culture are a subtle, notion, as are all symbols. Symbols are seen in every act of faith.

6. **Stories:** - Culture is often embedded and transmitted through stories, whether they are deep and obviously indented as learning device or whether they appear more subtly. The power of stories is in when and how they are told, and the effect they have on their recipients.
7. **Artifacts:** - Artifacts are the physical things that are found and that have particular symbolism for culture, when people see them, they think about their meaning and hence they are remind of their identity as a member of the culture, and by association, of the rules of the culture.

### Layers of culture

There are three layers of culture. They are.

1. Body of cultural tradition
2. Subculture
3. Cultural universal

The body of cultural traditions distinguishes one society from the other. When people speak of Chinese or Italian Culture, they are referring to the shared language, traditions, and beliefs that set each of these peoples apart from others.

The Second layer is the subculture. In a complex diverse society, people have come from many different parts of the world. They often retain their original cultural traditions. As a result they are likely to be part of an identifiable subculture in their new society. The shared cultural traits of subcultures set them apart from the rest of their society.

The third layer consists of cultural universals. These are the learned behaviour patterns that are shared by all of humanity collectively. No matter where people live in the world, they share these universal traits.

Another point of view of culture has six levels

1. National level: - Associated with nation as a whole.
2. The regional level: - Associated with ethnic, linguistic or religious differences that exist within a nation.
3. The gender level: - Associated with gender differences.
4. The generation level: - Associated with the difference between grandparents and parents, parents and children.
5. The Social class level: - Associated with educational opportunities and difference in occupation.
6. The corporate level: - Associated with particular culture of an organization.

### Manifestations of culture

1. **Symbols:** - Are words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning which is not recognized by those who share a particular culture. New symbols easily develop, old ones disappear. Symbols from one particular group are regularly copied by others.
2. **Heroes:** - Are person, past or Present, real or fictitious, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in culture.
3. **Rituals:** - Are collective activities, sometime superfluous in reaching desired objectives, but are considered as socially essential
4. **Values:** - Are broad tendencies for preferences of certain state of affairs to others. Many values remain one unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore they often cannot be discussed, nor can they directly observed by others. Values can only be inferred from the way people act under different circumstances.

### Discourses on culture

#### 19th Century Discourses:

##### I - English Romanticism

In the nineteenth century, humanists such as English poet and essayist Matthew Arnold used the word 'culture' to refer to an ideal of individual human refinement, of "the best that has been thought and said in the-world".

This concept of culture is comparable to the German concept of holding, that is "....culture being a pursuit, of our total perfection. By means of getting to know, on all the matters which most-concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world;" In practice, *culture* referred to an elite

ideal and was associated with such activities as art, classical music, and cooking of a very good cuisine, these / forms were associated with urbane life, “culture’ was identified with ‘civilization’. Another facet of the Romantic movement was an interest in folklore, which *led* to identifying a ‘culture’ among non-elites. This distinction is often characterized as that between ‘high culture: ’, namely that of the ruling social group, and ‘low culture’. That is the idea of culture that developed in Europe, during the 18th and early 19th centuries, reflected inequalities within European societies:

## II - German Romanticism

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant formulated an individualist definition of enlightenment similar to the concept of Bildung: “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.” He argued that this immaturity comes not from a lack of understanding, but from a lack of courage to think independently. Against this intellectual cowardice, Kant urged: Sapere aude, “Dare to be wise!” In reaction to Kant, German scholars such as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) argued that human creativity, which necessarily takes unpredictable and highly diverse forms, is as important as human rationality. Moreover, Herder proposed a collective form of Bildung: “For Herder, Bildung was the totality of experiences that provide a coherent identity, and sense of; common destiny, to a people.” During the Romantic era, scholars in Germany, especially those concerned with nationalist movements—such as the nationalist struggle to create a ‘Germany’ out of diverse principalities, and the nationalist struggles by ethnic minorities against the Austro-Hungarian Empire—developed a more inclusive, notion of culture as ‘worldview’. According, to this school of thought, each ethnic group has a distinct worldview that is incommensurable with the worldviews of other groups. Although more inclusive than earlier views, this approach to culture still allowed for distinctions between ‘civilized’ and ‘primitive’ or ‘tribal’ cultures.

### 20th century discourses

#### I-American anthropology

American anthropology is organized into four fields, each of which plays an important role in research on culture; biological anthropology: - linguistics, cultural anthropology and archeology.

##### (a) Biological anthropology- the evolution of culture

Discussion concerning culture among biological anthropologists. Centers around two debates. First, is culture uniquely human, or shared by other species (most notably, other primates)? This is an important question, as the theory of evolution holds that humans are descended from non-human primates. Second, how did culture evolve among human beings?

##### (b) Archeological approaches to culture - matter *and* meaning

In the 19th century archeology was often a supplement to history, and the goal of archeologists was to identify artifacts according to their typology and stratigraphy, thus marking their location in time and space. Franz Boas established that archeology is one of American anthropology’s four fields, and often paralleled debates among cultural anthropologists. In the 1920s and “1930s, Australian-British archeologist V. Gordon Childe and American archeologist W., C McKern independently began moving from asking about the date of an artifact *to* asking about the people who produced it – when archeologists work alongside historians, historical materials generally help answer these questions, but when historical materials are unavailable, archeologists had to develop new methods. Child and McKern focused on analyzing the relationships among objects found together; their work established the foundation for a three-tiered model:

1. An individual artifact, which has surface, shape, and technological attributes .
2. A sub-assemblage, consisting of artifacts that are found, and were likely used together
3. An assemblage of sub assemblages that together constitute the archeological site

##### (c) Language and culture

The connection between, culture and language has been noted as far back as” the classical, period, and probably long before. The ancient Greeks, for example, distinguished between civilized peoples and barbaros “those who babble”, i.e. those who speak unintelligible languages. The fact that different groups speak different unintelligible languages is often considered more tangible evidence for cultural differences than other less obvious cultural traits. A community’s ways of speaking or signing are a

part of the community's culture, just as other shared practices are. Language use is a way of establishing and displaying group identity.

#### **(d) Cultural anthropology**

##### ***(i) Universal versus particular (1899-1946):***

Franz Boas founded modern American anthropology with the establishment of the first graduate program in anthropology at Columbia University in 1896. One of Boas's greatest accomplishments was to demonstrate convincingly that the existing cultural model is fundamentally flawed, empirically, methodologically, and theoretically. Boas understood the capacity for culture to involve symbolic thought and social learning, and considered the evolution of a capacity for culture to coincide with the evolution of other, biological features defining genus Homo. Boas's students were especially interested in two phenomena: the great variety of forms culture took around the world, and the many ways individuals were shaped by and acted creatively through their own cultures. This led his students to focus on the history of cultural traits: how they spread from one society to another, and how their meanings changed over time and the life histories of members, of other societies. Others such as Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) and Margaret Mead (1901–1978) produced monographs or comparative studies analyzing the forms of creativity possible to individuals within specific cultural configurations.

##### ***(ii) Structural-Functionalist challenge - Society versus culture***

In the 1940s the Boasian understanding of culture was challenged by a new paradigm for anthropological and social science research called Structural functionalism. This paradigm developed independently but in parallel to both the United Kingdom and in the United States. Whereas the Boasians viewed anthropology as that natural science dedicated to the study of humankind, structural functionalists viewed anthropology as one social science among many, dedicated to the study of one specific facet of humanity. This led structural-functionalists to redefine and minimize the scope of 'culture.

##### ***(iii) Symbolic versus adaptive (1946-1968)***

Clifford Geertz, David M. Schneider and Roy Wagner went on to important careers as-cultural anthropologists and developed a school within American cultural anthropology called 'symbolic anthropology/ the study of the social construction and social effects of symbols. Since symbolic anthropology easily complemented social anthropologists' studies of social life and social structure, many British structural-factionists accepted the Parson as a definition of "culture" and "cultural anthropology." British anthropologist Victor Turner was an important bridge between American and British symbolic anthropology.

##### ***(iv) Present-Local versus Global (1940):***

Boas and Malinowski established ethnographic research as a highly localized method for studying culture. Yet

Boas emphasized that culture is dynamic moving from one group of people to another, and that specific cultural forms have to be analyzed in a larger context. This has led anthropologists to explore different ways of understanding the global dimensions of culture.

#### **Cultural diversity**

Cultural differences that exist between people, such as language, dress and traditions, there are also significant variations in the way societies organize themselves, in their shared conception of morality, and in the ways they interact with their environment. Cultural diversity is the variety of human cultures in a specific region or in the world as a whole. Cultural diversity is a necessity for human kind as biodiversity is for nature.

##### **Dimensions or cultural diversity**

1. Cultural beliefs.
2. Norms
3. Age
4. Gender
5. Language
6. Communication style
7. Ethnicity
8. Religious beliefs

9. Education
10. Life experience
11. Geography
12. Opinions
13. Socio economic status

### **Civilization**

The word civilization came from the Latin adjective civil, a reference to citizen. Citizen willingly being themselves together Political, Social, economic and religious organizations- they merge together that is in the interests of larger Community. Over the time the word civilization has come to imply something beyond Organization-it refers to particular shared way of thinking about the world as well as a reflection on that world in art literature drama and a host of other cultural happenings. Its original meaning is the manner or condition in which men live together as citizens.

A Civilization is a complex society or culture group characterized by dependence on agriculture, long distance trade, state form of Government, occupational specialization urbanism and class stratification. Along with this core elements, civilization is often marked by combination of a number of secondary elements, including a developed transportation system, writing, standards of measurement, formal legal system, great art style, monumental architecture, the mathematics sophisticated metallurgy, and astronomy.

### **Definitions**

An advanced state of intellectual, cultural and material development in human society marked by progress in the arts and sciences, that extensive use of record keeping, including writing and the appearance complex political and social institutions.

According to Albert Schweitzern "It is the sum total of all progress made by man every sphere of action and from every point of view in so far as the progress helps towards the spiritual perfecting of individuals as the of all Progress"

According to Oxford English Dictionary civilization is "the action or process of civilizing or of being civilized, developed or advanced state of human society."

### **Characteristics of Civilization**

#### **1. Civilization distinguished by traits**

Civilization have been distinguished by their means of subsistence, types of livelihood, settlement Patterns, forms of government, social stratification, economic systems, literacy and other cultural traits.

#### **2.All human Civilizations have depended on agriculture for subsistence**

Growing food in farms results in a surplus of food, particularly when people use intensive agricultural technique such as irrigation and crop rotation. A surplus of food permits the people to do things besides produce food for a living and also results in a division of labour and a more diverse range of human activity.

#### **3.Different Settlement Patterns**

Civilizations have distinctly different settlement patterns from other societies.

#### **4.Complex Political Structure**

Compared with other societies civilizations have moved to complex political structure namely the State. There is a greater difference among the social classes. The ruling class normally concentrated in the cities, has control over much of the surplus and exercises through the actions of a government or bureaucracy.

#### **5. Display more complex patterns of ownership.**

Living in one place allows people to accumulate more personal possessions than nomadic people. Some people also acquire landed property or private ownership of the land.

#### **6. Development of Writing**

Writing, developed first by people in summer, is considered a hallmark of civilization. Trader's bureaucrats relied on writing to keep accurate records. Like money, writing was necessitated by the size of the population of a city and complexity of its commerce among people who not personally acquired with early other.

### **Elements of civilizations**

Urban society

Religion  
Literature  
Gove  
Specialization  
Social classes  
Tool making  
Once pt of time  
Leisure  
Education / Criticism

### **Benefits of Civilization**

1. Administrative system.
2. Various law
3. Protection from chaos
4. Protection from hunger, shelter etc.
5. Sewage system.
6. Technological invention
7. Innovation, learning etc
8. People working towards a common goal to survive.
9. People are not independent, so that everyone works, forming an economy, making the group self department
10. People can work together to solve problems and create new things.

### **Culture and civilization**

Civilization can be distinguished from other cultures by their high level of complexity and organization, and by their diverse economic and cultural activities. According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary culture is “the custom and believes, art, way of life and social organization of a particular county or particular group.” On other hand civilization is “a state of human society that is very developed and organized” and “all people in the world and the societies they live in, considered as a whole.

The relationship with our daily life differentiates between culture and civilization. Culture is what people pass down from generation to generation and what people do in their daily life. In addition culture and social structure influence each other. On the other hand civilization is what people create by advancement of human’s wisdom. Moreover culture is a generic form of life style, religion the way of thinking and so on and civilization is general term of development of technology and economy in order to make more convenient life.

Therefore culture maintains forever or for a long time unless cultures are not forced to change or people who have unique culture die out. However civilization may vanish stop developing and new civilization occur.

### **Culture Vs civilization**

- Civilization is a bigger unit than culture because it is a complex of the society that dwells within a certain areas along with its form of government norms and even culture.
- Culture is perennial and has impact on humanity as a whole. Civilization is synchronous and keeps pace with the present.
- A culture ordinarily exists within a civilization in this regard each civilization can contain not only one but several cultures.
- Culture can exist in itself where as civilization cannot be called a civilization if it does not possess a certain culture. Hence a civilization will become empty if it does not have its culture, no matter how little it is.
- Culture can be something that is tangible and it can be something that isn’t. But civilization is something that can be seen as a whole and it is more or less tangible though its basic component, like culture can be immaterial.
- Culture can be transmitted trough symbols in the form of language where as an entire transmitted by mere language alone.

### **History of civilization**

#### **i. Civilization and ingredients**

Many different elements must come together before a human community develops to the level of sophistication commonly referred to as civilization. The first is the existence of settlements classifiable as towns or cities. This requires food production to be efficient enough for a large minority of the community to be engaged in more specialized activities such as the creation of imposing buildings or works of art, the practice of skilled warfare, and above all the administration of a centralized bureaucracy capable of running the machinery of state.

Civilization requires at least a rudimentary civil service. In the organization of a civil service, a system of writing is an almost indispensable aid. But the development of writing greatly enhances civilization and with a script comes history. Our knowledge of prehistory derives from surviving objects- the evidence of archaeology.

History, by contrast, is based on documents. These various interconnections mean that history, civilization and writing all begin at that time. That time is about 3100 BC

#### **ii. Mesopotamia and Egypt: 3100 BC**

In about 3200BC the two earliest civilizations developed in the region where southwest Asia joins northeast Africa. Great rivers are a crucial part of story. The Sumerians settle in what is now southern Iraq, between the mouths of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Egypt develops in the long narrow strip of the Nile valley. Rivers offer two main advantages to a developing civilization. They provide water to irrigate the fields, and they offer the easiest method of transport for a society without paved roads. Rivers will play an equally important role in two other early civilizations- those of the Indus and northern China.

#### **iii. The Indus: 2500BC**

It is not known whether contact with Mesopotamia inspires the first civilization of India or whether it is a spontaneous local development, but by about 2500 BC the Neolithic villages along the banks of the Indus are on the verge of combining into a unified and sophisticated culture. The Indus civilization, with its two large cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro expands over a larger region than Egypt and Mesopotamia combined. It will survive, in a remarkably consistent form, for about 1000 years.

#### **iv. The Aegean: 2000BC**

The next region to develop a distinctive civilization centres on the Aegean Sea. The bays and inlets of the rugged combine to make this an ideal area for trade among people whose levels of nautical skill make short hops a necessary precaution. The Aegean civilization stands at the start of the very lively tradition of Mediterranean culture. It begins in the large island which is perfectly placed to guard the entrance to the Aegean-Create.

#### **v. China: 1600 BC**

The longest consistent civilization in the human story so far is that of China. This vast eastern empire seems set apart from the rest of the world, fiercely proud of its own traditions, resisting foreign influences. Its history begins in a characteristically independent manner. There are no identifiable precedents for the civilization of the Shang dynasty, which emerges in China in about 1600 BC. Its superb bronze vessels seem to achieve an instant technological perfection. Its written texts introduce characters recognizably related to Chinese writing today. This is a civilization which begins as it will continue-with confidence.

#### **(iv) America: 1200 BC**

Around this time the earliest American civilizations have their beginnings, with the Olmecs in Central America and the Chavin in the Andes. Both these cultures developed large towns, centered on temples. Both are now famous for their sculpture and each, in its own region, is at the start of a succession of civilization leading directly to the two which are discovered and destroyed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Spanish-the Aztecs in central America and the Incas the Andes.

#### **(vii) The Mediterranean: from 1000 BC**

The first distinctively Mediterranean civilization that of the Aegeans who came to a sudden and still unexplained end in around 1200 BC. Some 200 years later an energetic seafaring people, the Phoenicians, become extensive traders from their base in Lebanon the established colonies along the coast of Africa and even to the Atlantic. Their example, as Mediterranean imperialists, will be followed by Greek and then by the Roman. Mediterranean becomes the world's most creative arena for the clash and synthesis of civilizations-a status which it has never entirely lost.

#### **(vii) Regional civilizations: AD 400-1500**

With the dominance of Greece and Rome in the west (both successfully managing a transition from pagan to Christian empires), of China in the east, and strongly individual cultures in central and south America, each successive civilization in any region tends at same time to be a variation on local traditions. But sometimes there are upheavals which introduce a new culture within already long

civilized parts of the world. One such is Islam. The establishment of the caliphate in Damascus and Bagdad leads to distinctively Muslim civilizations in an unbroken belt from North Africa to North India.

**(ix) Global civilizations: 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Century AD**

The first sustained contact between Europe and America, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, opens the door to new concept-world-wide civilizations, evolving through colonies and empires. Spanish civilization is exported to Latin America; English culture spreads even further, in an empire which includes India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and eventually many parts of Africa. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century it is the imperial impulse which by the 20<sup>th</sup> century different forces at work for much of 20<sup>th</sup> century ideology has been driving force in the export of two very different concepts of civilization, American capitalism and Russian communalism. At the same time mass communication has made it possible to export a region's popular culture to the rest of the world notably that of America through radio, cinema and television.

Other influences, whether multinational companies or the internet, have similar effects. The danger is worldwide sameness. But there is corresponding benefit. Within economic limits, human communities are now free as never before to adopt the aspects of civilization which appeal to them- regardless of where they happen to be on the planet.