

## CULTURE

Man alone of all the animals create and transmit a social environment. It is his unique characteristic. Other animals can acquire behavior pattern by initiating other animals or by resorting to trail and error. They do not transmit their learned activities to future generations through languages and other symbolic systems neither they can make physical objects to use as tools in their efforts to get food, shelter and other goods nor they pass them on to succeeding enervations. Man in adjusting to the natural environment- and to his fellows' vast quantities of physical and biological materials and large bodies through and action pattern. All these he uses to fulfill his desires and needs which make it possible for him to satisfy present and expanding wants, to satisfy new values, to express creative desire, to store product for future use and to transmit them to succeeding generations.

### Culture

Culture has been defined in number of ways. Some of these definitions are the following:

1. Sorokin defines as “culture stands for the moral, spiritual and intellectual attainments of man”.
2. David Bidney defines the culture as the self cultivation of the natural geographical environment. He says that culture is a product of agrofacts (products of cultivation), artifacts (products of industry), sociofacts (social organization), and manifacts (language, religion, art, etc).
3. According to Mac Lever “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”.
4. Hepple says “culture includes all the material and non material traits in our environment which are man made or modified by man and transmitted from one generation to another generation by the process of learning”.

Culture includes everything that man learns or acquired as a member of particular society.

According to **Ralph Linton** culture may be the thought in terms of **three** different orders:

Two **overt** (which can be seen) orders of culture are:

1. Material products of industry, implements, tools etc
2. Overt behavioral patterns like customs, folkways etc

One **covert** (which cannot be seen or hidden) order of culture is:

1. Psychological like attitudes, values etc. held by the individuals or groups

**The study of culture helps to understand the behaviour of people** in different parts of the world. The desired change cannot be successfully brought about without clear comprehension of the concept of **culture**. Extension worker should have knowledge of elements of culture that are important in relation to his work.

In sociology, the word culture is used to denote acquired behaviors which are shared by and transmitted among the members of the society. The essential point in culture is that it is acquired by man as a member of society and persists through tradition.

### **Characteristics of culture**

#### **i. Culture is an acquired quality**

Culture is not innate, traits learned through socialization habits and thoughts are called as culture. Culture is learned.

#### **ii. Culture is social and not individual heritage of man**

It is inclusive of the expectations of the members of the groups. It is a social product.

#### **iii. Culture is idealistic**

Culture embodies the ideas and norms of the group. It is a sum- total of the ideal patterns and norms of behavior of a group.

#### **iv. Culture is the total social heritage**

Culture is linked with past. The past endures because it lives in culture. It is passed from one generation to another through tradition and customs.

#### **v. Culture fulfils some needs**

Culture fulfils those ethical and social needs of the groups which are ends in themselves.

#### **vi. Culture is an integrated system**

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

#### **vii. Language is the chief vehicle of culture**

Man lives not only in the present but also in the past and future. He is enabled to do possess language which transmits to him what was learnt in the past and enables him to transmit the accumulated wisdom.

## **Functions of culture**

Culture is important for individual and group. The functions of culture come under two heads.

**a) For individual and**

**b) For groups.**

### **Important to the individual**

- I. Culture makes a man a human being, regulates his conduct and prepares him for group life. It provides him a complete design of living. It teaches him what type of food he should take and in what manner, how he should behave with and influence the people and how he should co-operate or compete with others. In short, the qualities required to live in a social life are acquired by man from his culture.
- II. Culture provides solutions for complicated situations. Culture provides man with a set of behavior even for complicated situations. Culture thoroughly influences him so that he does not require any external force to keep himself in conformity with social requirements. His actions become automatic (eg.) forming a queue where there is rush.
- III. Culture provides traditional integrations to certain situation (eg.) if a cat crosses his way he postpones the journey. These traditional interpretations differ from culture to culture.

### **For the group**

#### **i Culture keep social relationships intact**

Culture is important not only for man but also for the group. Had there been no culture there would have no group life. By regulating the behavior of the people and satisfying their primary drives pertaining to hunger, shelter, and sex it has been able to maintain group life. In fact life would have been poor, nasty, brutish and short if there had been no cultural regulations. It is culture which keeps all social relations intact.

## **ii. Culture broadens the vision of the individual**

Culture has given a new vision to the individual by providing him a set of rules for the cooperation of the individuals. It provides him the concepts of family, state, nation and class and makes possible the co ordination and division of labour.

## **iii. Culture creates new needs**

Culture creates new needs and new drives, for example, thirst for knowledge and arranges for their satisfaction. It satisfies the aesthetic, moral and religious interests of the members of the group. In this way group owe much to culture.

## **Ethnocentrism**

Ethnocentrism refers to the preferential feeling we have for the way we do things in our culture. We presume that ours is the best of all cultures and the way we do things is the right way to do them. It is the tendency of a society to consider its own culture as best and others as inferiors. This is common characteristic we find among the people of all cultures. This influences the extension activities some times, which we have to understand and safeguard.

## **Acculturation**

Closely related to the concepts of accommodation and assimilation is the concept of Acculturation, referring to the changes in culture that result from continued contact between two cultures. Modern transport, communication, overseas development programmes facilitate the processes of assimilation and acculturation.

## **Cultural lag**

Cultural lag means that some parts of people's culture do not changes as do other traits. It means that one or more phases of culture have moved ahead and that all other phases are lagging behind.

## **Cultural diffusion**

Cultural diffusion is the process by which the cultural traits invented or discovered in one society are spread directly or indirectly to other societies.

Exact origin of a specific cultural trait is difficult to trace, however, the diffusion of a trait can fairly be traced. In history certain societies have served as centres from which cultural traits have spread to other societies. Egypt was for many centuries a cultural centre. Subsequently Rome was a great cultural centre from where law spread in most countries of Europe. In Asia the Chinese middle kingdom was considered from early time as the dominant culture centre. Now, the United States is exporting its culture to other countries.

Following are the influential factors to the process of diffusion.

- a) Relation and communication
- b) Need and desire for new traits
- c) Competition with old traits
- d) The respect and recognition of those who brings new traits.

Cultural diffusion may be incidental or by direction. Whenever a person migrates from one culture area to another he carried out culture patterns with him. Cultural diffusion by direction is normally done either by sending missionaries or by colonization.

### **Marginal man**

Difference in culture produces a marginal man. A person who is living in two cultures is likely to occupy not the centre of either by margins of both. He is the man who belongs to two or more cultures but is not fully accepted in any. A migrant, who has moved into a decidedly different culture area from the one in which he grew to manhood, is likely to be marginal man.

### **Role of culture in Extension:**

1. Culture is **dynamic** and continuously **changes** because of internal as well as external forces of stimuli. **Community development** aims at bringing about the changes in the culture of rural people towards desired goals. Scientific understanding of the culture is therefore basic E.g. Improved pig rearing in Muslim village is not possible.

2. It is possible to record greater success when the improved practices introduced are in **familiar** terms i.e. something that is already present in the culture E.g. Improved plough with iron ploughshare.

3. Change is more likely to occur in those aspects of culture where there is **lack of adjustment or stress**, then in those aspects, which are established and fixed. E.g. Introduction of improved practices in areas which are rehabilitated on account of flood or fire.

4. Change in **technology** is usually more readily accounted than change in other aspects of culture E.g. Introducing of improved seed of a crop.