

## Characteristics of Material Culture

- Material culture is cumulative, so its organs are constantly, growing.
- Material culture is tangible, means it can be measured.
- The evaluation of usefulness and benefit of material culture is easy.
- The changes are immediate in the material culture.
- It can be transferred.

## Non-material Culture

Non-material Culture includes words we use, the language we speak, our belief held, values we cherish and all the ceremonies observed. Non-material Culture is passed on from generation to generation through the process of socialization and learning.

## Characteristics of Non-material Culture

- Non-material culture is intangible or abstract, means it cannot be measured.
- Non-material culture is complex.
- The evaluation of usefulness and benefits of non-material culture cannot be presented similar to the evaluation of material items.
- The changes in the non-material culture are very slow.
- The non-material culture is related to **spiritual** and **internal life of human**.

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## Concepts of Culture

There are many concepts of Culture which also includes many differences among them-

- **Cultural Relativism:** Cultural relativism is the practice of assessing a Culture by its own standards rather than viewing it through the lens of one's own Culture. Practicing cultural relativism requires an open mind and a willingness to consider, and even adapt to, new values and norms. However, indiscriminately embracing everything about a new Culture is not always possible.
- **Ethnocentrism:** Literally, 'ethno' mean people. Hence, sticking or centering of people to certain attitude or thing is called **ethnocentrism**.

This term was coined by an eminent **American sociologist W.G. Sumner** in 1906, used to describe prejudicial attitudes between in-groups and out-groups. Anthropologists used this term to analyze the bent of mind of the people towards other cultures in terms of their own culture using one's own rating scales.

- **Xenocentrism:** Xenocentrism is the **opposite of ethnocentrism**, and refers to the belief that another culture is superior to one's own. (**The Greek root word xeno pronounced "ZEE-no," means "stranger" or "foreign guest."**) An exchange student who goes home after a semester abroad or a sociologist who returns from the field may find it difficult to associate with the values of their own culture after having experienced what they deem a more upright or nobler way of living.
- **Cultural Reproduction:** Cultural reproduction is the social process through which culture is reproduced across generations, especially through the socializing influence of major institutions. Cultural reproduction is part of a larger process of social reproduction through which entire societies and their cultural, structural, and ecological characteristics are reproduced through a process that invariably involves a certain amount of social change.
- **Cultural Deprivation:** Cultural Deprivation is a term referring to the absence of certain expected and acceptable cultural phenomena in the environment which results in the failure of the individual to communicate and respond in the most appropriate manner within the context of society. Language acquisition and language use are commonly used in assessing this concept.
- **Culture of Poverty:** Lewis propounded the concept of culture of poverty in **1950**. He said that the culture of poverty is not a characteristic of a poor traditional society, but it is a characteristic of a developed society based on the capitalist system. This type of culture is found in the society where there is exploitation, unemployment, poverty as a result of capitalist system.
- **Cultural Conflict:** When there is any ideological difference or conflict between two groups or communities, it is called 'culture conflict'. This is an example of the medieval (or **jihad**) culture conflict. Conflict or conflict often prevails between two societies at the level of beliefs, ideas, ideals

and beliefs, so it can be said that **cultural conflict is a process of eternal struggle.**

### **Functions of Culture**

Culture is that achievement of society, which is constant; therefore there are many functions of culture in life of a person and whole society. Following are the functions of culture-

- Culture is considered as the base of social structure.
- Culture develops the feeling of social unity, which provides support to the feeling of national unity.
- Broaden the vision of individuals.
- Provide behaviour patterns and relationship with others.
- Keep the individual behaviour intact.
- Moulds national character.
- Define myths, legends, super natural believes.
- Creates new needs and interests.
- Provide a social structure for reproduction and mutual support.
- Ensures the biological continuity of its members.

### **Impact of Culture on Human Life**

- Culture fulfills Human Needs
- Culture is Fundamental in Personality Development
- Culture determines Human Habits
- Culture brings Uniformity in Behavior
- Culture provides Values and Ideals to Human Beings
- Culture provides Protection to the Individual
- Culture Solves the Problems
- Culture determines the Status and Role

### **Role of Culture in Social Life**

- **Culture determines the Structure of Society:** The structure of society is determined by culture, because the practices, traditions and values in society are the product of culture. The structure of society is created by

culture, which is culture has an important place in the structure of society.

- **The Nature of Social Organization is determined by Culture:** Social organization is the system through which the parts of the whole society are purposefully connected. Culture has an important place in keeping them connected. Culture interconnects the physical and spiritual parts of society. Families and religious institutions, families and markets, nations and citizens language, etiquette systems governing behavior etc.
- **Culture helps in Social Control:** Every Culture has practices customs, ethos, traditions etc. These determine the conduct and behaviour of the person and maintain control over the person. Social control remains only through personal control.
- **Creation of Institution:** There is a difference between the institutions of different societies; this difference is due to their culture because institutions are built on the basis of non-material culture. The culture of any society determines how it will be like social, economic, religious political institutions.
- **Stratification:** Different levels of individuals are determined in different societies. Indian society has been stratified mainly on the basis of gender, age group, wealth, caste. For example in India, the stratification was classified on the basis of the Varna system and in some tribal societies, women have a high position, so we can say that cultural values are the basis of stratification in society.

### Cultural Lag

The term was coined by sociologist **William F. Ogburn** in his work "**Social change with respect to Culture and original nature**" in 1922. Ogburn has a concept that material culture changes fast in comparison to the non-material culture. Due to this material culture progressed and the pace of change in non-material culture related to or dependent on it remained slow, this condition is called Ogburn cultural backwardness. Cultural Lag is the notion that culture takes time to catch up with technological innovations, and that social problems and conflicts are caused by this lag.

## Relationship between Culture and Civilization

What we consider to be a civilization is also a culture. Where railways, aircraft are part of civilization, there is also a culture in their construction. The journey of civilization and culture is parallel in human life. Both these relationship have been expressed by Maclver and Page in the following forms –

- **Civilization is the Carrier of Culture:** Culture is passed from one society to another by civilization itself. The means of transport and communication have played an important role in the propagation of culture. The development of the means of communication has had a serious impact on those modes of expression, which are essential for cultural activities; hence civilization is called the carrier of culture.
- **Civilization Empowers Cultural Activities:** Civilization indirectly helps in the development of culture. The more the means of production have increased in quantity, the more has been the development of culture. In the absence of those resources, man constantly struggles with nature to fulfill his needs and he is able to devote less time in the development of culture. Due to the development of invention and technology, time and labor were saved in the human being and it was used in the upliftment of culture. In this way, the development of civilization made an important contribution to man in conquering nature and making culture rich.
- **Civilization is the Environment of Culture:** The characteristics of a culture are affected by the environment created by the civilization. The culture of today's machine age is different from the culture of the bullock cart age of the past, because the physical tools of the civilization of both the eras are not similar. The civilization which took birth as a result of industrialization and urbanization has played a special role in giving new direction to our culture.

The religions, customs, family, marriage, ethos, beliefs, thoughts, behaviour, morals and values prevalent in the society before industrialization were different from the industrial and complex societies of the present day. Human reached the moon through rocket and that changed our religious views only. **Now the moon is considered as a**

