

Society and Culture

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Society

- **Ballantine and Roberts:** A society consists of individuals who live together in a specific geographical area, who interact with each other, than they do with outsiders, cooperate for the attainment of common goals and share a common culture over time
- **A Society is marked by:** mutual interaction, cooperation, difference, division of labour, interdependence, social control, culture, social institutions, stratification, status and role and norms and values

Components of Society

Norms: Rules and Expectations by which a society guides behaviour of its members

Some norms are prescriptive and some are proscriptive

Values are higher order norms

Examples of values and norms

Indian values and American Values

Values: Culturally defined standards by which people assess desirability, goodness, right or wrong that serve as broad guideline for social living – abstract standards of goodness

Values tell us what ought to be

Role: The expected social behaviour associated with social position. A role refers to the many parts a person plays in life.

Status: It is the relative position in social structure that determines where a person fits in community.

Multiple status: age, gender, caste, religion, profession, citizen, voter etc.

Achieved status: position a person attains largely through personal effort

Acquired status: assigned to a person at birth

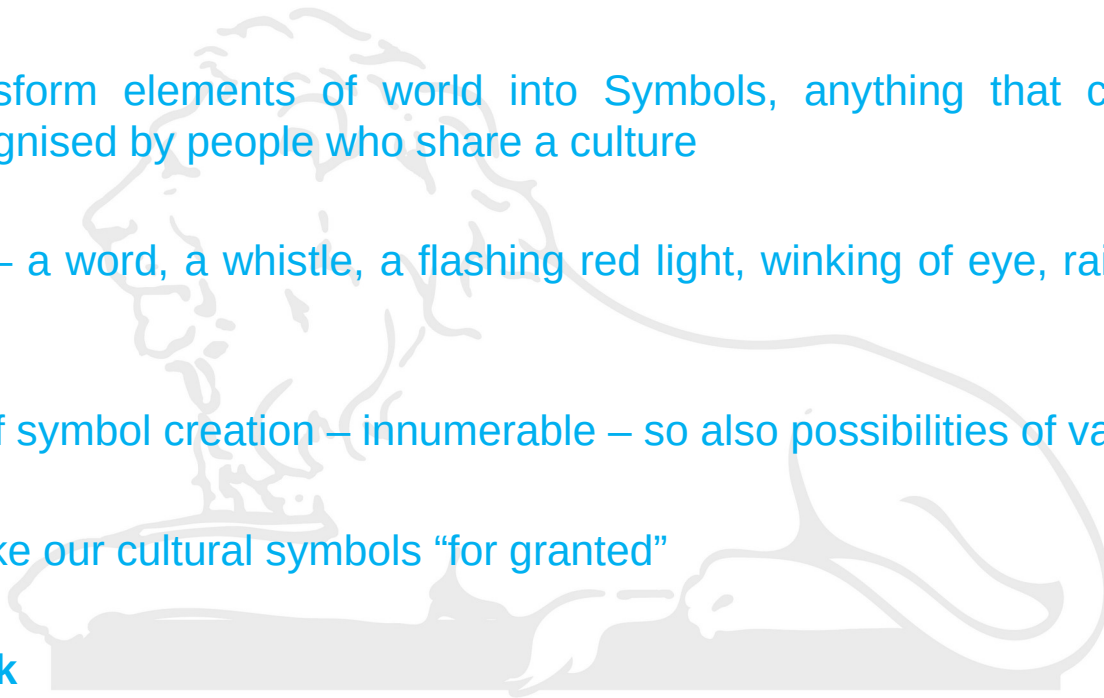
Culture

- Ralph Linton – “Culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation”
- Clyde Kluckhohn – elegantly defined – “Culture is the design for living”
- Culture is not “natural” it is created, by people like you and us
- Most living creatures – guided by instincts – biologically programmed more or less – animals (e.g., cats) show remarkable uniformity in behaviour and action
- *Human beings rely on culture rather than instinct to ensure the survival of their kind*
- Provides routine, pattern and expectation for carrying out daily rituals and interactions – life would be chaotic without a culture

Components of Culture



- Language – is the vehicle of culture - system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another. **Language is basic to the maintenance of cultural continuity**
- **Symbols - life blood of culture**
- Humans transform elements of world into Symbols, anything that carries a particular meaning recognised by people who share a culture
- For example – a word, a whistle, a flashing red light, winking of eye, raised fist – all serve as symbols
- Possibilities of symbol creation – innumerable – so also possibilities of varieties of culture
- We tend to take our cultural symbols “for granted”
- **Culture shock**
- When in an unfamiliar cultural territory – it is the inability to read “meanings” in new surroundings – can leave you lonely, confused, isolated and sometimes frightened



Components of Culture

Ethnocentrism

- The practice of judging another culture by the standards of one's own culture
- The tendency to see one's group's way of life including behaviours, beliefs, values and norms as the only right way of living, proper & superior
- Stems from lack of mutual understanding, exposure, rigid family socialisation, intolerance
- This small concept has tremendous implications vis a vis world history, polity and society and of course conflict creation and conflict resolution
- Can cultural ethnocentrism be positive?

Subculture

- Maintains its uniqueness in shared lifestyle, norms, beliefs, common life experiences, similar identity and outlook – yet retains harmony with mainstream culture (in most cases!)
- For exm: ethnic communities, religious sects, professional cricketers, regional groups, old people

Assimilation

Acculturation: One cultural group in prolonged contact with another cultural group incorporates cultural elements into its own culture.
Example: Indian Diaspora
It's a preliminary and necessary step to assimilation.

Assimilation is the process whereby group differences gradually disappear. It is a social process whereby individuals and groups come to share the same sentiments, values, and goals.

Ogburn & Nimkoff: Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar and identified in their interest and outlook

Assimilation

Characteristics of Assimilation

Assimilation is a two-way process

Assimilation is a group process

Assimilation is often incomplete

Assimilation proceeds unevenly

Factors facilitating Assimilation

Intimate social relationship

Long contact

Tolerance

Factors acting as Hindrance to Assimilation

Economic Insecurity

Number of immigrants

Religious and Language differences

Physical Differences



***Thank
You***