



IIT ROORKEE



NPTEL ONLINE
CERTIFICATION COURSE

Soft Skills

Lecture 18

Culture as Communication

Dr. Binod Mishra
Department of HSS, IIT Roorkee



Culture

- A common population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining, to produce new generations of members without relying on outside people.
- Totality of that group's thoughts, experiences and patterns of behaviour and their contact with other cultures.

The world today

- ❖ A global village
- ❖ Multicultural differences
- ❖ Culture affects people's behaviour
- ❖ Globalization of markets



Business Trends

- Globalization
- Technological Revolutions
- Multicultural Workforce
- GATT (General Agreement on Tariff and Trade)
- NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement)

Technological Advancements

- New transportation and information technologies.
- Availability of fresh flowers and fruits.
- Choices to have our own pick.
- Online store making business more smooth.



Multicultural Workforce

- Prospects of peace, prosperity and education
- Immigration on move
- Multicultural Communication
- Cultural Diversity



Culture as Communication

- Complex system of values, traits, morals and customs
- Not all cultures are alike.
- Culture teaches people how to think, behave and react.
- Humans are extra-ordinarily flexible.



Elements of Culture

- Symbols, rituals, values, heroes. (Hofstede)
- To understand a culture one needs to understand things as language and gestures, personal appearance, social relationships, religion, philosophy and values, family customs, education and communication systems.

Characteristics of Culture

- ✓ Cultures can be learned.
- ✓ Culture norms are logical.
- ✓ Culture represents identity and community.
- ✓ It mixes both the visible and the invisible.
- ✓ Culture is dynamic.



Major Dimensions of Culture

- Context
- Individualism
- Formality
- Communication Style
- Time Orientation



Formality

- ❑ Tradition, Ceremony and Social rules
 - Americans: Casual, direct and coming to point soon
 - Mexicans: Hurt when asked to “get down to business”
 - Japanese: Exchange of cards and signing documents are treated as rituals.

Contd.

- Europeans: Never use first name without invitation
- Arabian, South Americans and Asians: Friendship first and business later
- Western Countries: Relaxed about social status and power

Communication Style

- ❑ Americans: Straightforward, uncomfortable with silence and delays
 - Take words literally
- ❑ Arabs and South Americans: Poetic language
- ❑ Nigerians: Quiet and clear
- ❑ Germans: Direct but understated

Business Styles

- Americans and Germans: Emphasis on words
- Greek: Treat contract as formal statement
- Japanese: Contract as statement of intention
- Mexicans: Artistic exercises to be accomplished in an ideal world.
- Arab: Contract as insulting

Time

- Asians: Punctual
- North Americans: A Commodity
- Japanese: Take time to decide
- Hispanics: More relaxed regarding time