UNIT II : THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIETY

A. CULTURE

Culture and Human Intelligence

Culture is one of the most important concepts within sociology. It is important for shaping social relationships, everyday actions, and experiences in maintaining and challenging social order. It is composed of both non material and material things. Sociologists define the non-material aspects of culture as the values and beliefs, language, communication, and practices that are shared in common by a group of people. Culture is made up of our knowledge, common sense, assumptions and expectations.

Material culture is composed of the things that humans make and use. This aspect of culture includes a wide variety of things from buildings, technological gadgets, music, literature, film, etc. Aspects of material culture are more commonly referred to as cultural products. Material culture can also influence the non-material aspects of culture. For example, a powerful documentary film might change people's attitudes, and beliefs. Culture can be a force for oppression and domination, but it can also be a force for creativity, rejection and liberation. It is important aspect for human social life and social organization. Without it, we would not have relationships or society. Cultures evolved and developed in specific environmental contexts, enabling their communities, to not only survive but to flourish in unique and dynamic way.

Humans are social creatures. Since the dawn of Homo sapiens nearly 250,000 years ago, people have grouped together into communities, in order to survive. Living together, people form common habits and behaviors from specific methods and childbearing to invention of fire to preferred techniques for obtaining food.

Human intelligence is the intellectual power of humans, which is marked by complex cognitive feats and high levels of motivation and self-awareness. Intelligence enables humans to remember descriptions of things, and use those descriptions in future behaviors. Society has been gradually developed. In the process of development today, we are in information or technological society. There are four stages of society.

i.   Primitive, or Stone Age
ii.   Feudal or Agrarian Age
iii.   Industrial Age
iv.   Information or Technological Age

Primitive or Stone age means Paleolithic era which refers to a time in human history when foraging, hunting and fishing were the primary means of obtaining food. Humans had yet to experiment with domesticating animals and growing plants. Since hunters, gatherers could not rely on agricultural methods to produce food intentionally, their diets were dependent on the fluctuations of natural ecosystems.

In order to ensure enough food productions for their communities, they worked to manipulate those systems in certain ways such as rotational hunting and gathering.

After some years, these hunter gatherers systems began to transform. As humans began migrating and adapting to new environments, they began developing tools and methods that equipped them to make the best of their respective environmental constraints.

Paleolithic humans were not simply caveman who were concerned only with conquering their next meal but they were the inventor of simple tools, creator of cultures. Cultural evolution cannot be divorced from biological evolution of a more highly developed and advanced human brain more highly attuned to social structures enabled cultural growth.

In fact, the very large size of a human brain itself necessitated certain cultural adaptation which played a big role in the cultural evolution of human.

Next was the agrarian or feudal society whose economy and wealth was primarily based upon agriculture.

It had been around for at least 5000 years but today the poorest of the lesser developed countries are pretty much agrarian society. Agriculture production relies primarily upon human and animal labor as opposed to mechanized tools.

For example, farmers in this society likely to plow a field with a plough powered by horse, oxen, or even just himself. But an industrial society would utilize tractor to till the field.

Agriculture output grew faster than the population over the century to 1770 and thereafter productivity remained among the highest in the world. The rise is productivity accelerated the decline of the agricultural share of the labor force, adding to the urban workplace on which industrialization depended. The Agriculture Revolution has therefore been cited as a cause of the Industrial Revolution.

In the field of sociology, an industrial society is one that uses advances in technology to drive a strong manufacturing industry that will support a large population. The objective of an industrial economy is the mass production of goods which is the fast and efficient manufacturing of standardized products. The industrialization of societies and cultures began in mid18th century in England. Because of the human intelligence, there has been change in the use of tools.

By harnessing the power of natural elements, like water or steam manufacturers were able to increase the speed of production by incorporating the use of mass machines driven by the elements but still operated by human hands. The increased use of new tools and machinery meant that manufacturing jobs no longer required export skills, or brute strength.

Because most factories located in urban areas, the new jobs created by the industrialization of manufacturing drove up the population of western cities and raise the standard of living by providing employment opportunities to lower class, who had previously lacked the skills. People moved from farms to urban centers, where the factory jobs were, as farms themselves needed. Fewer laborers, farms, eventually became more industrialized using mechanical planters and combine harvesters to do the work of multiple people.

We are increasingly living in information technology age, as wireless technology vies with machine and factories as the basis for our economy. Societies in which this is happening are moving from agrarian society to a postindustrial phase of development. Human beings have come to this modern age because of the intelligence and idea they have used in the process of their sustainability. Scientists have stepped on the Moon and now exploring for the human settlement due to the intelligence.

Culture

The word Sanskriti is derived from the Sanskrit word Sanskar which means refined. An individual or a child from his birth completes many cultures that process is performed up to his death.

Culture changes the people and culture is made by man himself. The man makes capacity to make the culture from nature. The culture can be hand over from one generation to another generation. Thus learning of culture is a behavior and it can be imitation. Culture make the man different from animal.

Sociologist generally recognized two kinds of culture, non-material and material.

Non-material culture means that culture which we cannot see and touch but just we can feel it.Example: beliefs, norms values etc.

Material culture means that culture which we can see and touch. Example: buildings, temples, cars, etc

Definitions

E.B. Taylor

Culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Malinowski

"Culture is the hand work of man and the medium through which he achieved his ends."

From the above definitions we can say that culture is acquired by man as a member of society and persists through tradition.

Characteristics of Culture

1. Culture is learned

   Culture is learned socially by man. Culture is often called" learned behaviour." All ways of behaviour learned by man culturally.

2. Culture is Social

   Culture is product of society. It originates and develops through social interaction. It is shared by the member of society.

3. Culture is communicable/ transfer

   Culture is mentally communicated or transfer from one generation to another generation.

4. Culture satisfies certain needs

   Culture satisfies those moral and social needs of a man. Without fulfillments of needs no culture can exist.

5. Culture is found only in human society.

   There are societies among animals but they donot have culture. In this way, man is the only cultural being. In the world, culture is found only in human societies.

6. Quality of integrated in culture
   There is order and unity in culture. It's different parts keep united among them and any new elements that arrives gets united within it.
7. Culture is dynamic
   Change of growth is latent in culture. We find amazing growth in the present Nepali culture when we compare it with the culture of ancient Nepal.

Nation

A nation is a group of people who normally live in a particular territory, wish to form their own state, if they already have it, then they wish to keep it as the most important social bond that express their sentiment of belonging together and sharing a common destiny. In modern times, the nation is the largest effective community. Nation at present is the largest group which is permeated by a common consciousness of a common kind. Nation signifies consciousness of unity prompted by psychological and spiritual feelings which may or may not be sovereign. A nation is larger group of people who inhabit a specific territory and are connected by history, culture or another commonality. Nations are cultural homogenous group of people who share a common language, institution, religion and historical experience. A nation has also been defined as a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, unity and particular interests.

Definitions

H.T.Majumdar
   "Nation is a community delimited by the state."

Ramsay Muir
   A nation is a nation because its members believe it to be so."

From the above definition we can say that nation is constituted by socio-psychological rality.

Characteristics of Nation

1.Common religious beliefs

One of the main characteristics of a nation is that those who consider themselves as a part of it share the same religious beliefs. This is the religion that unites them as a nation.

2. Common language

The people of a nation usually have one common language. They identify themselves as belonging to one nation through this one common language. They also use the common language as a way of reaching out to each other.

3. Common culture and tradition

Members of a nation have a common identity. This identity is reflected in their common social and cultural ties as well as common traditions. This distinguishes them from other nation.

4. Common origin

Another feature of a nation is that the members feel a sense of a common origin. They feel that they come from the same place and therefore trace their ancestry to that place.

5.Common historical experience

Member of a nation share common historical experience. These experience could be those of battles that they have won together or bad experience of their history.

6.Geographical area

A nation identifies itself with a specific geographical area and considers that area as national homeland.

Meaning and definition of society

The term society is derived from the Latin word 'socius' which means companionship or friendship. In sociology, society means not only the group of people but also the groups with interaction and co-operation. Society is that group of people who live in organized form and they represent as a unity. On the basis of interdependence, interrelation interaction between the individual has formed and is known as society. Society is the web/network of social relationship. Aristotle said that "Man is social animal." Man cannot fulfill his basic needs by sitting alone from society. Man has many needs and desire, he doesn't fulfill his need alone. So man began society to fulfill his need and they start interaction with each other. When their interaction will be reciprocal and meaningful, it is called society.

Definitions

George Simmel

"Society is the group of that people which are related by interaction."

Giddings

"Society is the unionitself, the organization, the sum total of formal relations in which associating individual are bound together."

All the definitions,mentioned above shows that society is the complex of an organized associations and institution within the community.

Characteristics of Society

1. Society consists of people
   Society is composed of people. Without people there can be no society, no social relationship and no social life.
2. Co-operation and division of labour
   Division of labour involoves the assignment to each unit or group a specific share of a common task. Division of labour is possible because of co-operation. Society is based on co-operation. It is basis of our social life.
3. Society implies interdependence
   Social relationships are characterized by interdependence. Today not only individuals are interdependent upon one another but even community, social groups, societies and nation are interdependent.
4. Society is dynamic

Society is not stable, it is dynamic. Change is even present in society. Changeability is an inherent quality of human society. No society can ever remain constant for any length of time.

5. Social control

Society has its own ways and means of controlling the behaviour of its members. Society has various formal as well as informal means of social control.

6. Culture

Every society is unique because it has its own way of life called culture. Culture is an element of society. So we can find culture everywhere in the world.

7. Gregarious nature of man

Gregarious refers to tendency of man to live in groups. This internal nature of man has forced him to establish social groups and societies.

B. The Components of Culture

≠ Symbols

A symbol is anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture. A word, a whistle, a wall covered with graffiti, a flashing red light, a raise fist-we can see the human capacity to create and manipulate symbols reflected in the very different meanings associated with the simple act of winking an eye, which can convey interest, understanding or insult.

Society creates new symbols all the time. The seeing sociology in everyday life box describes some of the "cyber-Symbols" that have developed along with our increasing use of computers for communication.

We are also dependent on our culture's symbols that we take them for granted. However, we become keenly aware of the importance of a symbol when someone uses it in an unconventional way. Entering an unfamiliar culture also reminds us of the power of symbols; culture shock is really the inability to "read" meaning in strange surroundings. Not understanding the symbols of a culture leaves a person feeling lost and isolated, unsure of how to act and sometimes frightened. Symbolic meanings also vary within a single society.

The world of symbols changes all the time. One reason that people creates new symbols is that we develop new ways to communicate. Today, 90 % of adults in the United States, own cell phones and 80% of adults – especially those who are young -use mobile text-messaging on a regular basis. Researchers report that cell phone owners between 18-24 years of age typically send or receive more than 100 messages a day (Pew /// Research center-2011, 2014)

Here are some of the most common text-messaging symbols.

b = be

b4 =before

cu = see you

idc = I don't care

idk = I don't know

j/s = Just saying

np = no problem

omg = oh my god

rt = right

u = you, etc.

≠ Language

Language is the key to the world of culture, is a system of symbols that allows people and communicate with one another. Humans have created many alphabets to express the hundreds of language we speak. Even rules for writing differ. Most people in western societies writes from left to right, but people in northern Africa and western Asia write to left.

Of the 7000 languages in the world today, Chinese is the mostly widely used first language, meaning that it is spoken at home by 1.2 billion people.

Language not only allows communication but is also the key to cultural transmission, the process by which one generation posses culture to the next. Language is the key that unlocks centuries of accumulated wisdom.

Throughout human history, every society has transmitted culture by using speech, a process sociologist call the "Oral Cultural tradition." Some 5,000 years ago, humans invented writing, although at that time only a privileged few learned to read and write.

Language skills may link us with past, but they also spark the human imagination to connect symbols in new ways, creating an almost limitless range of future possibilities. Language sets human aware of our limitation and ultimate morality, yet able to dream.

≠ Values and beliefs

Which is right or wrong and what is important or not important, what should be done or should not be done all these can be known from values. Social values is that measurement by means of which we can differentiate good or bad behaviour of an individual. In each society, there is measurement of social values through which the social condition can be evaluate and this basis is known as social values. The social values are different in different aspects of social life and activities. If someone goes against values, he will be criticized by the society.

Beliefs are more personal. Beliefs do not lay down like values which judge anything as good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. Beliefs are neither true nor false. An acceptance

that something exists or is true, especially one without proof. Belief is a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing. Belief is something that is accepted, considered to be true. Belief is psychological in nature whatever the psychological characteristics of belief, i is clear that its specific form are largely social in nature.

Values refers to principle or standards of behaviour, one's judgement of what is important in life. Beliefs refer to the conviction or acceptance that something exists or is true, especially without proof. Values and beliefs are two important concepts that govern our behaviour and attitudes. Although values and beliefs are interrelated since they collectively affect our attitudes, perceptions, personality, character and behaviour; Beliefs that influence our values. Every individuals and organization are involved in making hundreds of decisions every day. The decisions we make are reflection of our values and beliefs, and they are always directed towards a specific purpose. That purpose is the satisfaction of our individual or collective (organization) needs.

≠ Meaning and definitions of Norms

Social rules is that norms which directs the human behaviour. It is participated by all the people of the society. To control the human behaviour in each society, there are many rules and regulations which is known as social norms. The behaviour of the individual which is expected by the society is known as social norms. This behaviour of the people is directed by social norms. In each society there are this type of rules and systems which helps to remove unnecessary behaviour which is known as social norms. Social norms is that thing which is approved by the society and is followed by all the members of society.

Definitions

Kingsley Davis

"If there were no normative order, there could be no human society."

A.W.Green

"Social norms are standardized generalization concerning expected behaviours in matter consequences."

All the definitions mentioned above shows that norms are major part of the mechanisms of social control which are concerned with maintaining order in society.

Characteristics of norms

1. Social norms are universal.
   No society can function smoothly in the absence of norms. Even in the uncivilized and primitive societies also we find some norms.
2. Norms are related to groups.
   Each group in a society to a certain extent at least has its own norms. Within the same society, they differ with age, sex, occupation and social status of the individual.
3. Norms are not always obeyed by all.

It is wrong to assume that people in a society obey all the norms always because some norms may be disobeyed by others at the same time.

4. Norms are written and unwritten.

Social norms may be written and unwritten. Tradition and customs are unwritten and law and constitution are written.

5. Social control

Social norms control the social behaviour of the people. So we can say that social norms are informal means of social control.

≠ Ideal and Real Culture

Ideal culture refers to the practices, values or norms that society is supposed to follow or desires to achieve. This can be distinguished from the real culture which refers to practices and norms that culture actually follow.

Ideal culture refers to those goals that a society consider ideal; we see what to want to see and we say what we want to say instead of what the actual interpretation of the society that can be like. For example, when we say that crime and violence rates are decreasing, we see only what is positive. However, a true or real picture will tell us that in reality, it has been increasing sue to the advancement of the society and consequent competitiveness and complexity it has brought about.

Ideal culture distinguishing itself from the real culture, which is the actual picture of the society. The gap between the ideal and real culture is wide. While ideal culture involves an idealized and resolute value system that controls perfect behaviour, real culture involves a value system which is adaptable and serves as a set of preferred guideline. For instance, while ideal marriages are thought to be the ones which are based on love and considered to continue forever, real marriage often end up in divorces or family fights. Ideal values are absolute with little or no exception, but real cultures contain exception to solve the contradiction between ideal values and pragmatic realities.

The differences between ideal culture and real culture can also be explained through the example of marriage. While in the Hindu society, marriage is considered to an auspicious, divine and indissoluble occasion. So, in theory, the ideal Hindu society should not have divorces and the marriage ties should be maintained forever. However in reality, (real culture), in contemporary society, there are numerous instance of divorce happening in the country with marriage becoming a contract from sacrament. An ideal culture can never be realized because people preach what they never practice.

Values and norms do not describe actual behaviour so much as they suggest how we should behave. We must remember that ideal culture always differ from real culture, which is what actually occurs in everyday life.

Material culture and technology

Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and space that people use to define their culture. These includes homes, cities, schools, churches, temples, factories, tools, means of productions, goods and products, car, bus, mobile, computer, laptop etc. All of

these physical aspects of a culture help to define its member's behaviour and perception. For example, technology is a vital aspects of material culture.

Technology influences everyday life and has strong influence on culture. Find out how the people within different cultures choose to incorporate technologies. Today and since the dawn of homo sapiens, technology is embedded in peoples lives. In the 21st century technology is integral because not only is there the technology of lights and computers used in everyday life, but also our bodies are physically altered through vaccines and the medicine people take daily. Technology is imperative. So, technology is incorporated in all aspects of culture including travel, food, government and art.

Technology shapes cultures and differentiates one from another. Between technology and matter, culture is cyclical. Logically a culture will develop technologies based on the needs or desire of the people. As this technology spreads and is absorbed into the people's life, it affects their culture and way of life. This change in lifestyle can also occur when a technology developed outside a culture is introduced into the culture, providing an external influence.

≠ New information technology and culture

Information technology is the study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer based information systems, particularly software application and computer hardware. Information technology helps ensure that computers work well for people. Every company from a software design firm, to the biggest manufacturer, to the smallest store, need information technology workers to keep their business running smoothly. Most information technology jobs fall into four broad categories: computer scientists, computer engineers, systems analysts and computer programmers.

Technology is evolving rapidly. Artificial intelligence, geotargeting, automation and other advancements in information technology specifically set the stage far more technological evolution. Robotics are becoming smarter, and even our thermostate and refrigerator can be connected to the internet.

There has been a connection between information technology and culture. Technology has influenced human culture just as much as culture has sparked advancements in technology. Both technology and culture continue to influence each other as they develop and change over time. In the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, technology and culture have significantly influenced one another. As cultures change so does the technology they develop. With development in manufacturing, communication and engineering, culture have been re-shaped around the world. These technology development have changed the culture positively but negatively as well. For example, internet and cell phones.

With the creation of the internal, it gives us access to information at a twenty-four hours rate and you have access to almost anything online. In addition, it allows students to get work done easier. Students can take quiz and exam more easily and teachers being able to hold online classes can be very effective. It also expands the boundaries of the classroom, encouraging self paced learning. People can access learning through You Tube and social

media. This helps students learn better than sitting down for lectures and reading from textbooks. These advancement of information technology has direct impact on teaching learning culture. So we can say that new information technology and culture are so closely related.

C. Development of culture around the world

≠ Cultural Universals

Cultural universal is an element, pattern, traits and institution that is common to all human cultures worldwide. Cultural universals are pattern or traits that are globally common to all societies. One example of a cultural universal is the family unit, every human society recognizes a family structure that regulates sexual reproduction and the care of children. Even though, how that family unit is defined and how it functions varies. In many Asian culture, for example, family members from all generations commonly live together in one household. In these cultures, young adults continue to live in the extended household until they marry and join their spouse's household.

Anthropologist George Murdock first recognized the existence of cultural universal while studying system of kinship around the world. Murdock found that cultural universal often revolve around basic human survival, such as finding food, clothing and shelter or around shared human experience, such as birth and death or illness and healing. Murdock identified other universal including language, the concept of personal names and interesting jokes. Humor seems to be a universal way to release tensions and create a sense of unity among people. Sociologist consider humor necessary to human interaction because it helps individuals navigate otherwise tense situations.

Cultural universals can be defined as being anything common that exists in every human culture on the planet yet varies from different culture to culture, such as values and mode of behaviour. Examples of elements that may be considered cultural universals are gender roles, the incest taboo, religious and healing ritual, mythology, marriage, language, art, dance, music, cooking, games, jokes, sports, birth and death because they involve some sort of ritual ceremonies accomplishing them etc.

Among the cultural universals listed by Brown are :

1. Language and cognition
   All cultures employ some types of communication. Symbolism is also a universal idea in language.
2. Society
   Being a family, having peers or being a member of any organized group or community is what makes society.
3. Myth, Ritual and Aesthetic
   Different cultures have a number of common things, for example, a belief system, celebration of life and death and other ceremonial events.
4. Technology

There are worldwide variation in clothing, housing, tools and techniques for getting food through the different types of technology.

5. Dance

Dance is a great example of cultural universal because it exists in every culture as form of expression, social interaction or presented in a spiritual or performance setting.

≠ Globalization, Diffusion and Technology

Globalization

In general, globalization means the transfer of labour, capital and technologies from one country to another country. In sociology, not only these qualities but the transform of culture, norm, values, technology, attitudes, behaviour, social processes from one country to another. Generally, the term globalization is the worldwide integration of government policies, culture, social movement and financial markets through the trade and exchange of ideas. It is related to the international diffusion of culture, capital, technology, labour, goods and services from one society to another society or from one country to another country. This is the age of globalization. Global corporation are everywhere.

Diffusion means spreading of something more widely. Diffusion, also known as cultural diffusion is a social process through which elements of culture spread from one society or social group to another, which means it is in essence, a process of social change. Things that spread diffusion include ideas, values, concepts, knowledge, practices, behaviour, materials and symbols. Sociologists and Anthropologists believe that cultural diffusion is the primary way through which modern societies developed the cultures that they have today. Further they note that the process of diffusion is distinct from having elements of a foreign culture forced into a society, as was done through colonization.

Technological globalization is speeded in large part by technological diffusion, the spread of technology across borders. In the last two decades, there has been rapid improvement in the spread of technology to peripheral and semi- peripheral nations and World Bank report of 2008 discusses both the benefits and ongoing challenges of this diffusion. In general, the report found that technological progress and economic growth rates were linked and that the rise in technological progress has helped improve the situation of many living in absolute poverty (World Bank, 2008).

The diffusion of information technologies has the potential to resolve many global social problems, it is often the population most in need that is most affected by digital device. For example, technology to purify water could save many lives but the village in peripheral nations most in need water purification don't have access to the technology, the funds to purchase it or the technological comfort level to introduce it as a solution.

First globalization allows countries to gain easier access to foreign knowledge. Second, it enhances international competition, including as a result of the rise of emerging market firms and this strengthens firms incentives to innovate and adopt foreign technology.

Bishal Shrestha

The spread of knowledge and technology across borders has intensified because of globalization.

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