



WHAT IS CULTURE?

The infographic features a central blue globe with the word "Culture" written across it. Ten colorful circles are arranged around the globe, each representing a different aspect of culture. Each circle is accompanied by a small icon related to that topic:

- Language**: Represented by a speech bubble icon.
- Medical Care**: Represented by a pill bottle icon.
- Religion**: Represented by a book icon.
- Child-rearing Methods**: Represented by a baby in a stroller icon.
- Food**: Represented by a hamburger icon.
- Folk Art**: Represented by a painting icon.
- Celebrations**: Represented by a party hat icon.
- Dances**: Represented by a person dancing icon.
- Customs and Dressing**: Represented by a person in traditional dress icon.
- Marriages**: Represented by a wedding veil icon.

- SOCIALIZATION AGENTS**
-   
- Family School Peer Group

Answer: It is a **complex whole** which includes our **life styles, behaviour patterns, religion, education, customs, traditions, beliefs, art** etc. that an **individual acquires** as a **member of the society**.

Answer: The customs which are not very strict and if disobeyed the punishment, is not severe. Folkways are customary ways of behaviour, e.g., you have to wish/greet people when you see them.

Answer: If a person disobeys mores, the punishment can be ostracism (complete boycott). E.g. Marrying outside the caste; boycotted from village. Usually in rural areas, close knit community, don't disobey mores.

Answer: Old customs e.g.; Diwali, Holi, Dussera. All activities we do during these festivals, transmitted from generation to generation; e.g. any foreign leader visiting India is taken first to Raighat before their work.

Q5: What do you understand by sanctions? (2mks)

Answer: Sanctions are rewards and punishments. They come into play in regard to norms. Sanctions are the rewards and punishments for following or not following a norm.

- Rewards or Punishment: Both help the individual to confer/follow the norms.
- Children learn cultural norms not only through clear instructions given by the family, but also by observing others and mixing with them.
- For adults, abiding or following the norm becomes part of their behaviour pattern.

Q6: How does the understanding of culture in social sciences differ from the everyday use of the word ‘culture’? (4mks)

Answer: Culture refers to widely shared customs, beliefs, values, norms, institutions and other products of a community that are transmitted socially across generations.

In **social perspective** culture refers to the products of socialization with an organized group, society or nation and involves a set of rules, norms and customs that are agreed by the members of that group.

In **general terms**, culture refers to acquiring etiquettes of society and liking for fine arts like music, painting, folk songs, folk dances etc. Therefore, basic term is used as people being cultured or uncultured.

For a sociologist, the culture of a society is the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habit which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. It is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society.

Q7. How can we demonstrate that the different dimensions of culture comprise a whole? (4mks)

Answer: **Culture has many dimensions**, parts and units but they are **interrelated and interdependent**. They can't emerge or function in vacuum, instead all the dimensions function as an organization.

Culture maintains a balance. **Culture has three components i.e., cognitive, normative and material**. Cognitive part is related to understanding and information; e.g. books and documents. Normative component is the customs, convention and folkways and material component of culture is linked with man-made part of the environment. i.e. dams, roads, electric and electronic gadgets, automobiles etc. All the above-mentioned components are complementary to each other and coordinate to function as a whole.

Q8. Discuss two different approaches to studying cultural change. (4mks)

Answer: Cultural change is the way in which societies change their patterns of culture. The impetus for change can be internal or external.

Scope of cultural change is large. Cultural changes influence social change. *Cultural changes can be categorized as evolutionary/natural changes and revolutionary changes.*

Evolutionary (Natural) changes can bring absolute change in any society. Natural calamities like earthquake, tsunami, flood, famine, etc. may bring physical changes, which in turn may influence culture.

Revolutionary changes bring quick changes in the values and economy of a particular place. These changes are rapid and radical and occur due to political interference or technological innovations that significantly bring changes in the society e.g. Islamic influence on Indian culture or Western influence on Indian culture due to invaders.

Q9: What is cultural relativism? (Read only)

Answer: Cultural relativism: The view that patterns of understanding and behaviour found in different cultures are as good as each other. One of the implications of this view is that it is impossible to judge the superiority of a particular set of values outside the specific cultural context in which they are set. Likewise, judgements of normality or abnormality depend very much on the cultural experiences and biases of the person doing the judging.

Question 10: What is cultural diversity? (read only)

Answer: Cultural diversity is a term which implies **recognition** that the **members** of different **cultures, ethnic groups, socio-economic groups and genders** are **socialized to behave in ways that are considered 'culturally correct'** for those groups of people. Recognizing the importance of cultural diversity in sociology is vital to **understand the complexities in society**.

Q11. Explain what is Culture lag (4mks)

The concept of cultural lag was propounded by Ogburn and Nimkoff. This concerns the difference that arose between material and non-material aspects of cultures. Things like tools, utensils, machines, manufactured goods, transport belong to the material culture.

On the other hand, values, beliefs, norms, education come under non-material culture. When change occurs in society due to rapid advancements and new inventions, the change in material aspects of culture is fast and quick in comparison to the speed of change in non-material culture. Due to this there is a 'Lag' between these two. This phenomenon is called cultural lag.

For example- The fear of vaccinations during COVID indicated culture lag as medical advancement and use of technology aided the creation of vaccines. However non-material culture which includes values and beliefs of people didn't advance enough to readily accept these vaccines.

Question 12: What do you mean by norms in sociology? (2mks)

Answer: Norms are unwritten rules.

- Accepted criteria developed by individuals, groups and society so that everyone behaves in an acceptable way.
- They are present to regulate the behaviour of members in a society.

- They are as important as written rules.
- They are prescriptions which have to be followed by society.
- If they aren't followed it can lead to chaos and disorder in society.

Question 13: How laws are different from norms? (4mks)

Laws	Norms
Formal and written	Informal and unwritten
Formal institutions such as Parliament, police, and courts	Primary groups such as family and friends
Explicit – clearly stated and documented	Implicit – may involve ambiguity
Generally the same for everyone within a society	May differ from person to person and situation to situation
Specific and severe , as prescribed by law	Informal and variable , depending on the context
Formal rewards such as citations, medals, honours, cash prizes, Bharat Ratna , etc.	Informal rewards such as a pat on the back, hug, appreciation, or praise
Based on the legal and institutional requirements of society	Based on the values, customs, traditions, and culture of society
Relatively stable and applicable uniformly within a given society	Can differ according to place, people, culture, and situation
Obeying traffic laws; paying taxes	Greeting elders respectfully; dressing appropriately for an occasion

Qs 14- Explain various dimensions of culture (6 marks)

Culture- Literally, the human-made part of the environment. In its simplest definition, it refers to the products of socialisation within any organized group, society or nation and involves a set of rules, norms and customs that are agreed by the members of that group.

Major characteristics of Culture:

- Culture is learned. It is an acquired behaviour.
- It is shared (cannot be possessed by an individual in isolation) and transmitted amongst the members of a society. It binds the members of a society.
- Culture is dynamic. It constantly changes. It makes each society and group unique or distinct.

Major components of Culture:

1. Non-material (Cognitive and Normative)
2. Material

Non-material Culture:

It refers to the abstract or intangible elements of culture, such as the ways of thinking and patterns of behaviour. It includes the normative and cognitive dimensions of culture.

(A) Normative:

This dimension includes social rules and social expectations, i.e. the norms and values of a society. Norms are socially approved guidelines which direct behaviours of members of a society or a social group. In other words, they are the social expectations of proper behaviour. Norms usually vary across societies and even within the same society across different social groups. There are different types of norms, depending on how strict they are e.g. mores, folkways, customs and laws.

(B) Cognitive Dimension:

The cognitive dimension of culture refers to ideas which include beliefs, knowledge, myths, superstitions etc. of a society.

- In literate society, ideas are transcribed in books and documents.
- But in non-literate societies ideas are in the form of legends and myths which are committed to memory and transmitted orally.
- In the contemporary world ideas are also reflected in audio-visual media [ads, films]

Material aspect of Culture:

It refers to the tangible, concrete products that members of society possess and make use of; e.g.- machines, buildings, jewellery, modes of transportation, technological gadgets.

We need material culture for survival (clothes, food) etc. Material culture refers to the basic conditions which generally include material culture that the members of the society have and are car, science, technology, food etc. as they are instruments of production, communication and transportation.

All the above-mentioned components i.e. material and non-material culture are complementary to each other and coordinate to function as a whole.

Qs 15-Identities are not inherited but fashioned by both by the individual and the group (read only)

Someone rightly said that “Your identity is shaped by your culture”. I agree with this statement as this is evident in the way culture influences the how we behave; it also influences the personality of individuals.

While it is true that Personality can be shaped both by ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’, the social context within which one is born plays an important role in the shaping of one’s personality.

- Each person has status in the society and has corresponding roles which are played as per the culture of that society.
- Carrying out the role is not as important as the society accepting and acknowledging that particular role.
- Each group has its own culture which differs from place to place, society to society.
- The groups create their own codes, rules etc. which have a certain meaning to that particular group.

According to Gillin and Gillin, “By the term socialisation we mean a process by which an individual develops into a functioning member of the group according to its standards, conforming to its mode, observing its traditions and adjusting himself to the social situations.”

Important terms: (1mark questions- please read thoroughly)

- **Ethnocentrism:** It is the application of one’s cultural values in evaluating behaviour and beliefs of people from other culture.
- **Little tradition:** It consists of the cultural traits or traditions which are oral in nature. It operates at the village level.
- **Great Tradition:** The cultural traits or traditions which are generally written make great traditions. Such kind of cultural tradition is popular among the elites of a society who are educated and learned.
- **Social Roles:** Social roles signify rights and responsibilities associated with a person’s social position or status.
- **Cultural Evolution:** It is a theory of culture. According to this theory, just like natural species, culture also evolves through variation and natural selection.
- **Cognitive aspect of culture:** It refers to how we learn to process what we hear, so as to give it a proper meaning.
- **Normative aspect of culture:** It refers to rules of conduct like not opening other people’s letters, performing rituals at death.
- **Acculturation:** It comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural pattern of either or both of groups.
- **Socialization:** It means the process of inducting the individual into the social and cultural world of making him a participant member in the society and its various groups and inducing him to accept the norms and values of that society.
- **Conformity:** It is action that is oriented to a social norm (or norms) and falls within the bank of behaviour permitted by the norm.

Q16. Explain sub-cultures.

In a culture there can be many subcultures, like that of the elite and working class youth. Sub-cultures are marked by **style, taste and association**. Particular sub-cultures are identifiable by

their speech, dress codes, preference for particular kind of music or the manner in which they interact with their group members. Sub-cultural groups can also function as cohesive units which imparts an identity to all group members.

Q17. Explain cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is the opposite of ethnocentrism which values other cultures for their difference. A cosmopolitan outlook does not seek to evaluate the values and beliefs of other people according to one's own. It celebrates and accommodates different cultural propensities within its fold and promotes cultural exchange and borrowings to enrich one's own culture.

Q18. What is socialization? (2 marks)

Ans: Socialization can be defined as the process whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which s/he is born.

Question 19: Discuss various socialization agents of society (any 2 agents will be asked for 6mks)

Answer: A number of people who relate to us possess power to socialize us. Such people are called "socialization agents". The child is socialized by several agencies and institutions in which s/he participates, viz. family, school, peer group, the neighbourhood, the occupational group and by social class/caste, by region, by religion. The various agents of socialization and their influence on the individual are as follows:

Parents

- Parents have most direct and significant impact on children's development. Children respond in different ways to parents in different situations.
- Parents encourage certain behaviours by rewarding them verbally (e.g., praising) or in other tangible ways (e.g., buying chocolates or objects of child's desire). They also discourage certain behaviours through non-approving behaviours.
- They also arrange to put children in a variety of positive experiences, learning opportunities, and challenges. While interacting with children parents adopt different strategies, which are generally known as parenting styles.
- A distinction is made between authoritative, authoritarian and democratic or permissive parenting styles.
- Studies indicate that parents vary enormously in the treatment of children in terms of their degree of acceptance and degree of control.
- The conditions of life in which parents live (poverty, illness, job stress, nature of family) also influence the styles they adopt in socializing children.

School

- School is another important socializing agent. Since children spend a long time in schools, which provide them with a fairly organized set up for interaction with teachers and peers.
- Nowadays school is being viewed as a more important agent of child socialization than parents and family. Children learn not only cognitive skills (e.g., reading, writing, doing mathematics) but also many social skills (e.g., ways of behaving with elders and age mates, accepting roles, fulfilling responsibilities).
- They also learn and internalize the norms and rules of society.
- Several other positive qualities, such as self-initiative, self-control, responsibility and creativity are encouraged in schools.

Peer Groups

- Friendship acquires great significance in this respect.
- It provides children not only with a good opportunity to be in company of others, but also for organizing various activities (e.g., play) collectively with the members of their own age.
- Essential qualities like sharing, trust, mutual understanding, role acceptance and fulfilment develop in interaction with peers.
- Children also learn to assert their own point of view and accept and adapt to those of others.
- Development of self-identity is greatly facilitated by the peer group. Since communication of children with peer groups is direct, process of socialization is generally smooth.

Mass Media

- In recent years media has also become the medium of socialization.
- Through television, newspapers, books and cinema the external world has made/ is making its way into our home and our lives.
- While children learn about many things from these sources, adolescents and young adults often derive their models from them, particularly from television and cinema.
- There is a need to use this agent of socialization in a better way in order to prevent children from developing undesirable behaviours.

Q20. Characteristics of Socialization: (4 marks)

- **Process of learning:** Socialization is a matter of learning and not of biological inheritance. In the socialization process the individual learns the folkways, mores, sanctions and other patterns of culture as well as skills ranging from language to manual dexterity.

- **Lifelong process:** The process of socialization starts right from the time of birth and continues till the death of the individual.
- **Process of cultural assimilation:** An individual not only learns the folkways, mores, sanctions, norms and values but he imbibes and assimilates the culture of his society.
- **Process of becoming a functional member of society:** Socialization consists of teaching the person the culture which we must acquire and share. It makes him a participating member in the society and in various groups.
- **Process of cultural transmission:** Socialization is a process through which society transmits the cultural heritage from one generation to another.

Q21. Importance of Socialization: (read only)

- It makes transmission of culture possible over generations.
- It helps individuals to perform their social roles.
- It transforms individuals from a biological being to a social person.

Q22. Phases of Socialization (read only)

There are two broad phases of socialization as follows:

- **Primary phase:** It occurs from infancy to late childhood. During this stage, family is the most important agency of socialization. The child learns the language and the basic behavior pattern during this phase, which forms a foundation for later learning.
- **Secondary phase:** It extends from late childhood to maturity. During this phase other agents of socialization also play a role e.g- peer group, school, media etc.
- **Adult Socialization:** Socialization, however, is a lifelong process. Individuals throughout their lives are learning new roles associated with different stages of life which extend even beyond the stage of attaining maturity.

Thus, one can talk about adult socialization. It takes place when individuals enter roles in which primary and secondary socialization has not prepared them fully. As an individual enters a new life and a new group, he/she learns the roles associated with the new status. Agencies of Socialization include: Family, peer group, mass media etc.

Thus, we can say that Identities are not inherited at birth, but fashioned by both by the individual (as a member of various groups and playing various roles) and by the larger group of which he is a part.

Objective type questions:

1. According to the sociological understanding of culture, culture is primarily:
 - a) A collection of artistic achievements
 - b) A way of life shared by members of society
 - c) A biological inheritance
 - d) A characteristic possessed only by educated people
2. Which of the following best explains why cultures are described as *dynamic*?
 - a) They remain unchanged across generations
 - b) They are determined entirely by the natural environment
 - c) Their elements are continuously added, deleted, expanded, reduced or rearranged
 - d) They are identical in all societies
3. Edward Tylor defined culture as:
 - a) A system of economic production
 - b) A complex whole including knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and custom
 - c) A collection of material objects
 - d) A system of political institutions
4. Clifford Geertz viewed culture primarily as:
 - a) A biological adaptation
 - b) A set of economic institutions
 - c) A system of meanings that people create and interpret
 - d) A collection of technological inventions
5. Which of the following is an example of the **cognitive dimension** of culture?
 - a) Following a rule about greeting elders
 - b) Using a mobile phone
 - c) Recognising the ringtone of one's own phone
 - d) Observing a ritual at a funeral
6. Which of the following belongs to the **normative dimension** of culture?
 - a) A computer
 - b) A rule against opening another person's letters
 - c) A tractor
 - d) A musical instrument
7. Which of the following is an example of **material culture**?
 - a) Belief in a particular deity
 - b) A custom of greeting elders
 - c) A value attached to honesty
 - d) A machine used for production

8. The term **culture lag** refers to a situation in which:
- a) Cultural traditions disappear completely
 - b) Material culture changes faster than non-material culture can adjust
 - c) Non-material culture changes faster than technology
 - d) Different cultures refuse to interact
9. Which statement best distinguishes a law from a norm?
- a) Laws are always informal whereas norms are formal
 - b) Laws are applicable only to families
 - c) Laws are explicit and formally enforced by the State
 - d) Norms always involve imprisonment as punishment
10. The practice of judging another culture according to the standards of one's own culture is called:
- a) Cosmopolitanism
 - b) Ethnocentrism
 - c) Cultural diffusion
 - d) Cultural adaptation
11. Which of the following best represents a **cosmopolitan outlook**?
- a) Considering one's own culture superior to all others
 - b) Rejecting foreign cultural influences
 - c) Appreciating cultural differences and allowing cultural exchange
 - d) Evaluating every culture using one's own cultural standards
12. A group of young people who share distinctive dress, music, speech and styles within a larger society can be described as a:
- a) Social class
 - b) Subculture
 - c) Kinship group
 - d) Bureaucracy
13. Which of the following can act as an **internal cause of cultural change**?
- a) Colonial conquest
 - b) Foreign invasion
 - c) New methods of farming
 - d) Cultural isolation
14. Revolutionary cultural change occurs when:
- a) Cultural practices remain unchanged
 - b) Culture is transformed rapidly and its values and meaning systems undergo radical change
 - c) Only a few individuals modify their behaviour
 - d) Cultural elements are transmitted orally

15. Socialisation is best defined as:

- a) The biological development of an infant
- b) The process through which an individual learns to become a member of society
- c) The process of acquiring formal education only
- d) The process of economic development

16. Which statement about socialisation is **incorrect**?

- a) It is a lifelong process
- b) Primary socialisation is especially important during early childhood
- c) Individuals passively absorb everything they encounter
- d) Secondary socialisation continues throughout life

17. Which of the following is an example of **primary socialisation**?

- a) Learning workplace etiquette as an adult
- b) Learning basic values and behavioural patterns within the family
- c) Learning professional skills at a university
- d) Learning organisational rules at work

18. Peer groups are particularly significant because they:

- a) Always impose rules more strictly than parents
- b) provide opportunities to test and explore different forms of behaviour
- c) completely replace the influence of the family
- d) have no influence after childhood

19. The **hidden curriculum** of schools refers to:

- a) Subjects excluded from the formal syllabus
- b) Informal lessons and expectations conveyed through school practices
- c) Lessons taught only outside the classroom
- d) Extra textbooks prescribed by the school

20. Which statement best captures the relationship between socialisation and individual freedom?

- a) Socialisation completely eliminates individuality
- b) Socialisation prevents independent thought
- c) Socialisation conditions behaviour but also contributes to the development of self-identity and independent thought
- d) Socialisation has no influence on personality

1 **b 11 c**

2 **c 12 b**

3 **b 13 c**

4 **c 14 b**

5 **c 15 b**

6 b 16 c

7 d 17 b

8 b 18 b

9 c 19 b

10 b 20 c

Assertion Reason type questions

Directions:

For each question, choose the correct option:

- a) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- c) A is true, but R is false.
- d) A is false, but R is true.

1. Assertion (A): Culture cannot be regarded as a finished product.

Reason (R): Cultural elements are continuously added, deleted, expanded, reduced and rearranged.

2. Assertion (A): Modern cultures are necessarily superior to tribal cultures.

Reason (R): Access to modern science and technology does not necessarily make one culture superior to another.

3. Assertion (A): The cognitive dimension of culture concerns how people process information and give it meaning.

Reason (R): Recognising one's own mobile-phone ringtone is an example of the cognitive dimension.

4. Assertion (A): Laws are more formally defined than norms.

Reason (R): Laws are explicit rules derived from the authority of the State and violations can attract formal penalties.

5. Assertion (A): Culture lag may occur when technology changes rapidly.

Reason (R): Non-material values and norms may fail to keep pace with rapid technological change.

6. Assertion (A): Ethnocentrism promotes appreciation of cultural differences without judging them.

Reason (R): Ethnocentrism involves evaluating the behaviour and beliefs of other cultures using one's own cultural values.

7. Assertion (A): Socialisation is a lifelong process.

Reason (R): Secondary socialisation continues beyond childhood and extends throughout the life of an individual.

8. Assertion (A): Family is an important agency of socialisation.

Reason (R): Children learn norms, values and patterns of behaviour through interaction with family members.

9. Assertion (A): Peer groups provide a different form of interaction from that found in the family.

Reason (R): Peer relationships generally involve greater give-and-take and allow children to test and explore rules of behaviour.

10. Assertion (A): Socialisation completely eliminates individual freedom.

Reason (R): Through socialisation, individuals develop self-identity and the capacity for independent thought and action.

Answer Key – Assertion–Reason

Q Answer

1 a

2 d

3 b

4 a

5 a

6 d

7 a

8 a

9 a

10 d