



# CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION



# CULTURE: Meaning of Culture

- **Culture** refers to the **learned** and **shared** way of life of a group or society.
- It includes the ideas, beliefs, values, norms, practices and material objects that people learn as members of society.
- Culture is learned, **not biologically inherited**.
- It is **shared by members** of a society.
- It provides people with ways of thinking, behaving and interacting.

# Definitions of Culture

## Edward B. Tylor

Culture = a “complex whole” including:  
knowledge + belief + art + morals + law +  
custom + other capabilities and habits  
acquired by a person as a member of society.

**Important:** Tylor gives a broad definition of culture and emphasises its learned nature.

## Clifford Geertz

Culture may be understood as “webs of significance” created by human beings.

**Important:** His approach focuses on meaning and interpretation.

## Bronislaw Malinowski

Culture includes:  
inherited artefacts + goods + technical  
processes + ideas + habits + values

**Important:** He clearly includes the material as well as non-material aspects of culture.

## Leslie White

Culture gives meaning to objective reality.

**Example:** Water from a particular source may be considered holy because of its cultural meaning.

# DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

Culture has three important dimensions:

## 1. Cognitive Dimension

The knowledge, ideas, beliefs and ways of understanding the world shared by members of a society.

Examples:

- Language
- Knowledge
- Beliefs about the world
- Ways of understanding the environment

## 2. Normative Dimension

The rules, standards and expectations that guide behaviour in society.

- **Norms** — expected rules of behaviour.
- **Values** — shared ideas about what is desirable or important.
- **Folkways** — customary ways of behaving in everyday life.
- **Mores** — norms considered important for the moral well-being of society.
- **Customs** — established and commonly followed practices.
- **Conventions** — accepted ways of doing things.
- **Laws** — formally established and legally enforced rules.

## 3. Material Dimension

The physical objects and material products created and used by people.

Examples:

- Tools
- Machines
- Buildings
- Clothes
- Vehicles
- Other technological objects

Easy Recall: Cognitive → Knowledge & Ideas | Normative → Rules & Standards | Material → Physical Objects

# CULTURAL LAG



*Refers to the gap that develops when the material and non-material aspects of culture change at different speeds.*

- Generally: Material culture changes faster → Non-material culture takes longer to adjust
- Example: Technology may change rapidly, while values, beliefs, norms and social practices take more time to adapt.

# IDENTITY

*Refers to the way individuals understand who they are and how they are recognised in relation to others.*

- Shaped through: Society + Culture + Social Interaction
- Connected with: Language, Religion, Region, Gender, Caste, Ethnicity, Other social memberships.

# SUB-CULTURE

- Definition: *A culture within a larger culture that has some distinct values, practices or ways of life, while remaining part of the wider society.*
- Example: A youth group may develop its own: Language/slang, Dress style, Music preferences, Lifestyle.

# ETHNOCENTRISM vs COSMOPOLITANISM

| Ethnocentrism                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Cosmopolitanism                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Judges other cultures by the standards of one's own culture</li><li>• May consider one's own culture superior</li><li>• Less accepting of outside cultural influences</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open to cultural differences</li><li>• Recognises cultural diversity</li><li>• More receptive to different cultural influences</li></ul> |

## Key Idea/ Remember:

Ethnocentrism → "My culture is the standard."  
Cosmopolitanism → "Different cultures can coexist."  
(Respect and openness towards cultural diversity)

# CULTURAL CHANGE

**Culture Changes** as societies and their conditions change

## 1. Environmental / Natural Changes

Changes in the natural or physical environment can influence people's ways of living and cultural practices.



## 2. Internal Change

Changes can arise within the culture itself through:

- New ideas
- Inventions
- Innovations.



## 3. External Change

Culture can change through contact with other cultures, leading to:

- Cultural borrowing
- Adaptation
- Cultural exchange.



## Revolution and Non-Revolutionary Change

- ⌚ • **Revolutionary change:** Rapid and major transformation in cultural patterns.
- ⌚ • **Non-revolutionary change:** Gradual and slower transformation.

**Key point:** Cultural change may occur through environmental change, innovation, cultural contact and adaptation.

# SOCIALISATION: Meaning of Socialisation

- **Meaning of Socialisation**

**Socialisation** is the process through which an individual **learns** and **internalises** the **culture**, norms, **values** and expected behaviour of society.



- **Through socialisation, individuals learn:**

- How to **behave**
- How to **interact**
- Social **roles**
- **Norms** and **values**
- **Skills** and **knowledge**
- Ways of **thinking** and acting

## Key Idea:

**Culture** is learned through **socialisation**. **Socialisation** is therefore an important process through which **society shapes** an **individual's behaviour** and **personality**.

# AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

## 1. Family



The most important agency of primary socialisation.

Provides the child with basic: **Language, Values, Norms, Behaviour.**

Creates the earliest social environment.

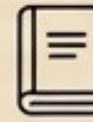
## 2. Peer Group



Becomes increasingly important during childhood and adolescence.

Influences: **Behaviour, Language, Dress, Interests, Attitudes.**

## 3. School / Educational Institutions



Provides secondary socialisation.

Teaches: **Knowledge, Discipline, Rules, Cooperation, Social responsibilities.**

Introduces individuals to roles and expectations beyond the family.

## 4. Mass Media



Includes television, films, newspapers, internet and social media.

It can influence: **Ideas, Attitudes, Lifestyle, Behaviour.**

Exposes individuals to cultures beyond their immediate surroundings.

## 5. Workplace

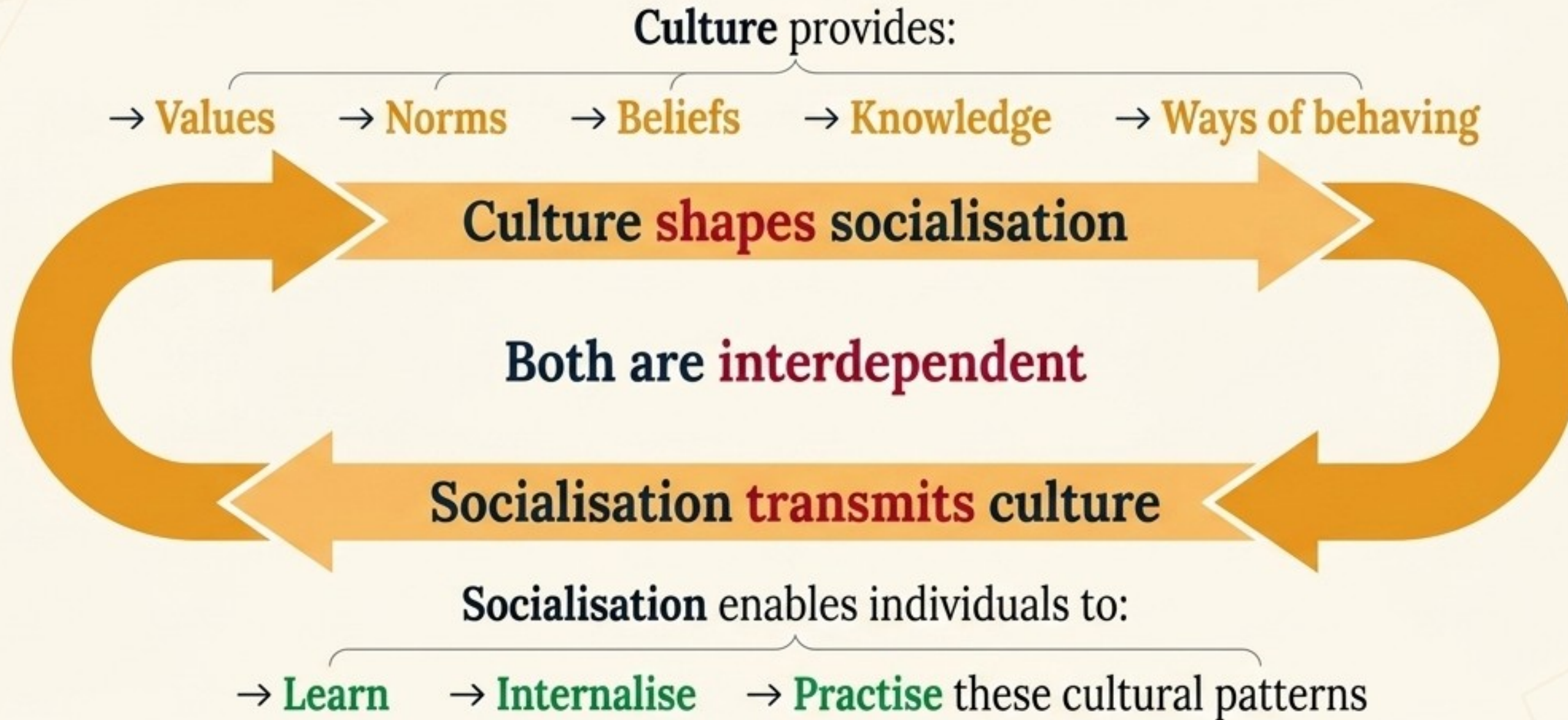


Teaches the **norms, skills** and **expectations** associated with professional life.

Helps individuals develop **occupational roles** and **work-related behaviour.**

**Key Idea:** **Socialisation occurs through various agencies** such as the family, peer group, school, mass media, and workplace, each **contributing to the individual's development and integration into society.**

# CULTURE AND SOCIALISATION — THE CONNECTION



## Example:

A child learns: **Language** + **manners** + **food habits** + **values** + **behaviour** through interaction with family, school and peers.

Thus, **cultural patterns** are **transmitted** from **society** to the **individual** through the **process of socialisation**.

## EXAM-ORIENTED Q&A: MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q1. According to Clifford Geertz, culture may be understood as:

- ☐ A) A complex whole
- ☐ B) Webs of significance
- ☐ C) Cognitive reality
- ☐ D) Material products

Q2. Which of the following is an example of the cognitive dimension of culture?

- ☐ A) Buildings and Vehicles
- ☐ B) Customs and Laws
- ☐ C) Knowledge and Beliefs about the world
- ☐ D) Formal rules of behaviour

Q3. The gap that develops when material culture changes faster than non-material culture is called:

- ☐ A) Cultural change
- ☐ B) Sub-culture
- ☐ C) Ethnocentrism
- ☐ D) Cultural lag

## EXAM-ORIENTED Q&A: MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

**Q4.** The tendency to judge another culture by the standards of one's own culture is known as:

- ☐ A) Cosmopolitanism
- ☐ B) Ethnocentrism
- ☐ C) Cultural relativism
- ☐ D) Identity

**Q5.** Which agency of socialisation is considered the most important for primary socialisation?

- ☐ A) Mass Media
- ☐ B) Peer Group
- ☐ C) Family
- ☐ D) Workplace

**Q6.** What type of cultural change involves a gradual and slower transformation?

- ☐ A) Revolutionary change
- ☐ B) Non-revolutionary change
- ☐ C) Environmental change
- ☐ D) External change

**MCQ ANSWER KEY:** 1 - B | 2 - C | 3 - D | 4 - B | 5 - C | 6 - B

# SHORT & CONCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

**Q1. Define 'Sub-culture' with an example.**

Ans: A sub-culture is a culture within a larger culture that has distinct values, practices, or ways of life, while remaining part of the wider society. Example: A youth group developing its own slang, dress style, and music preferences.

**Q2. What is the fundamental difference between Ethnocentrism and Cosmopolitanism?**

Ans: Ethnocentrism judges other cultures by the standards of one's own culture (believing "my culture is the standard"). Cosmopolitanism is the opposite; it refers to an attitude of being open to, respectful of, and appreciative of cultural differences and diversity.

**Q3. How does Leslie White define culture?**

Ans: Leslie White defines culture as that which gives meaning to objective reality. For example, water from a specific source is considered holy strictly because of its cultural meaning.

# LONG ANSWER EXAM QUESTIONS

**Q1. Explain the three important dimensions of culture with suitable examples.**

**Ans Structure:**

- **Cognitive Dimension:** Explain as knowledge/ideas. Give examples (Language, beliefs).
- **Normative Dimension:** Explain as rules/standards. List components (Norms, values, folkways, mores, customs, laws).
- **Material Dimension:** Explain as physical objects. Give examples (Tools, machines, buildings).

**Q2. "Culture shapes socialisation, and socialisation transmits culture." Discuss the connection between the two and outline the major agencies of socialisation.**

**Ans Structure:**

- Define both interdependent concepts (Culture provides values/norms; Socialisation enables individuals to learn/practise them).

- List and explain the 5 agencies:

**1. Family** (Primary, basic norms)

**3. School** (Secondary, discipline/cooperation)

**4. Mass Media** (Broad ideas, lifestyle)

**5. Workplace** (Professional skills/roles).

**2. Peer Group** (Adolescence, interests)

**4. Mass Media** (Broad ideas, lifestyle)