

The concepts of Culture:

Culture: (Concept/Definition)

...the total, generally organized way of life, including values, norms, institutions and artifacts that are unique to a given people and that is passed from one generation to the next.

...everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society.

...everything humans perceive, know, think, value and feel is learned through participating in a cultural system.

Components of Culture :

1. Material Culture :

(Artefacts of Culture)

- Material objects and techniques of their use.

2. Non-material Culture :

- Beliefs: true or false assumption which are shared.

- Statements about reality that people accept as true

- We use Beliefs system to interpret our past, explain the present, and predict the future.

- Values : ... as idea shared by the people in a society about what is good and bad, right and

wrong, desirable and undesirable ...

- Norms: ... expectations of how people are supposed to act, think and feel in a specific situation.

- Types of Norms :

o Folkways: popular habits and traditions, a way of doing things that is customary, but not insisted upon.

o Mores: folk ways, which are held by common consent to be conducive to the welfare of the society.

o Laws : guidelines for human behavior which must be obeyed and followed by citizens, subject to sanctions or other legal consequences.

- Language: ... A system of symbolic communication that uses words which are sound patterns that have standard meanings.

Characteristics of Culture :

Culture is Learned

o Enculturation: the process of social interaction through which people learn their culture every time and within different situations.

o The immersion in a culture to the point where the particular

design for living seems only natural.

Culture is Shared

- As members of a society ... we have shared assumptions about things, ideas and behaviors.

Evaluating Cultural Differences :

- Ethnocentrism: the belief that one's own culture is more desirable and superior to all others.
The tendency to evaluate other cultures in terms of one's own culture, to consider one's own culture right and the other wrong.
- Cultural Relativism: the notion that any part of a culture must be viewed in its proper cultural content rather than from the viewpoint of the observer's culture must be judged in its own terms and environment.

Cultural universals :

- Those general cultural traits found in all societies of the world.
- Essential behavioral characteristics of human found in all societies
- What life experience do all humans have in common?
- Rituals
- What necessities do we all have and how our needs met?
- Institutions

- **Examples** : Art, athletics, bodily adornment, cleanliness, training, cooking, cosmology, courtship,

dancing, division of labor, eschatology, family, folklore, funeral rites, games, gestures, greetings, hair style, hospitality, housing, food, hygiene, incest taboos, kin groups, language, dialects, laws....

- Luck superstitions, marriage, medicine, music, mythology, personal names, postnatal care, puberty customs, religious rituals, tools making, trade, visiting people/places, weaning of young baby

Cultural shock:

Cultural shock: a psychological disorientation experienced when someone attempting to operate in radically different cultural environment, this case ranges from mild irritation to an out-and-out panic.