

Indian Culture-1

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Concept

In common parlance term culture is used to refer to manners and mannerism, for ex. in expression 'a cultured person'. This also suggests that there can be an uncultured person.

- However in socio-historical and anthropological sense, all persons have culture.

Concept

- In fact culture is a group phenomena. Every society has some culture. An individual's culture is the culture of society to which he/she belongs.
- Primitive societies have simple culture. Developed societies have complex culture.

definition

- According to Tylor ' culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society.
- Hoebel says, ' culture is the sum total of integrated learned behaviour patterns which are characteristics of the members of a society, and which are therefore result of biological inheritance.
- According to Mazumdar, culture is the sum total of human achievements, material as well as non-material, capable of transmission by tradition and communication.

Discussion

- Culture covers every aspects of life that one can imagine. It includes all kinds of learned behaviours. Besides, cultures encompasses beliefs, values, attitudes, ideals, mode of dressing, way of eating, etc.
- Culture is commonly shared. Members of a society share culture.
- Culture is transmitted from generation to another by means of communication and traditions.
- Culture is acquired or learned. It is not innate. Through socialisation new members of society learn culture.
- Culture refers to total social heritage of a society.

Indian culture

- Cultural heritage of India is very rich.
- Indian cultural tradition is at least five thousand year old.
- Indian culture is not only most ancient, but also has a continuity. Other ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt , etc have come to an end.
- Earliest urban civilization of India is known as Harappan or Saraswati-Indus civilization. It flourished around three thousand to fifteen hundred BC.
- Harappan or Saraswati-Indus civilization covered large part of Hindustan and Pakistan. Many sites of this civilization have been discovered and excavated so far.
Ex.Mohanjodaro, Harappa, Lothal, Kalibanga, etc.

Facets of Harappan civilization

- Pictographic script used by Harappans has not been deciphered so far, therefore we do not know much about their belief system.
- Their town planning tells a story of developed 'civil engineering'. Grid system used in Harappan towns is similar to modern towns like Chandigarh or New York.
- They used stone tools and were acquainted with bronze. They wore jewelry of different sorts and wore cotton as well as woollen

Facets of Harappan civilization

- As suggested by 'bronze dancing girl', they new art of dancing. They played dice games.
- Mother worship and worship of Pashupati Mahadev (Lord Shiva) formed important part of their religious belief. In Indian tradition lord Shiva is known as Adi Yogi.

Vedic tradition

- Vedic literature was composed by people described as Indo-Aryans. Indo-Aryans refers to linguistic group and not a racial group.
- Vedas are four – rig veda, sama veda, yajur veda and atharvaveda. Rig veda is the oldest and therefore most important. (Rig veda is oldest book of the world). It contains nature worship as well as high flights of philosophy, for ex Nasadiya Sukta.
- Vedas have two parts Karma Kanda and Gyan Kanda. Karma Kanda consists of rituals. Sacrifices such as Ashvamedha Yjna were part of Karma Kanda.

Vedic tradition

- Whereas gyan kanda lays philosophical foundation of spiritualism in India. This gyan kanda is known as Upanishads. The Upanishads are also called Vedanta- the end (portion) of vedas. Vedanta forms bedrock of later day Hinduism.
- Concept of omnipotent Brahma (or one god), doctrine of karma, doctrine of rebirth and doctrine of mukti/moksha (freedom from wordly attachment and realization of god or siezing of cyble of rebirth) are major contributions of Upanishads.
- Ramayana and Mahabharata (besides puranas) have greatly influenced Indian culture and contributed in the formation of Indian value system.

Schools of philosophy

- We come across nine schools of Indian philosophy. Six of them are regarded as Astik and three are regarded as Nastik.
- Those schools which regard Vedas as proof or authority are called Astik and those who do not regard Vedas as proof are called Nastik.
- Six astik schools of philosophy are – Nyaya (Gautama), Vaisheshika (Kanada), Sankhya (Kapila), Mimansa (Jamini), vedanta (vyasa).
- Three Nastik schools of philosophy are – Charvaka which did not believe in the existence of soul, Jaina and Buddhist.