

CULTURE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT:

Culture is the expression of human nature. It is sometimes describe to mean a general state or habit of the mind, having close relation with the idea of human perfection. It also means the general state of intellectual development in a society as a whole. Then again, it means the general body of the arts. While other approaches consider culture as a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual. More specifically, culture embodies those crucial internal principles which determine the mode of expectation and characterise the pattern of motivation of individuals as well as that of the group in society, involving their conscious, unconscious and sub-conscious activities. According to a group of thinkers, /culture is the inward condition of the individuals leading to purification and fulfilment of life. Culture is a term for which there are no available simple straight cut explanations. Even a very short acquaintance with any study of the definition of culture shows the complexity of the term. Therefore an attempt has been made to bring out the meaning and identity of culture in this study.

Keywords: *Culture, Cultural Identity, Religion.*

1.INTRODUCTION:

In common parlance the word culture is understood to mean beautiful, refined or interesting but this interpretation does not constitute its scientific definition. Culture includes all that man has acquired in the mental and intellectual sphere of his individual and social life. In the words of Maciver and Page, ' "This is the realm of style of values of emotional attachments, of intellectual adventures. Culture, then, is the antithesis of civilisation. It is the expression of our nature in our modes of living and thinking, in our everyday intercourse in art, in literature in recreation and enjoyment." Culture keeps on accumulating through ages. The modern culture is the results of years of experience of individuals. Culture is the self-realisation of human being.

2.OBJECTIVES:

- I. To bring out a clear and accurate exposition of the term 'culture' and 'cultural identity'.
- II. To explain the relation of culture to religion.

3.METHODOLOGY:

The methodology of this paper is descriptive. The subject matter is discussed in the light of secondary sources including books, journals and websites.

4. DEFINITION AND MEANING OF CULTURE:

The word 'culture' is derived from the Latin 'colere' meaning 'to till or cultivate'. The term is sometimes used to include all of the creative expression of man in all field of human endeavour. At other times it is confined to creative expression in the areas of the liberal arts. In the second of these senses the term is sometimes extended to present cultivation. Dewey says that culture means at least something cultivated, something ripened; it is opposed to the raw and crude. According to Gisbert, "the complex whole of objects and ways of behaviour of material and immaterial interests and satisfactions has been designated by early and modern anthropologists by the name of culture."

J.S.Mackenzie has defined culture in two senses--narrower and wider sense. "In the narrower sense it is to be regarded mainly as a process of initiation into the life of the community; in the wider sense it is rather the development of the spiritual nature of man, of which the life of the community is an instrument. The former is the pre-condition of the latter."

Tylor was the first anthropologist who defines and makes extensive use of the term 'culture'. According to him culture is a social heritage; it is the gift of society to an individual. Other thinkers, including Malinowski, culture is a total way of life and the instruments, mental, social and material of which this way is constituted. On the one hand we have social culture and on the other material culture. These view has been extended and yet put in a summarised form by Bidney who defines culture as the product of agrofacts (product of cultivation), artifacts (product of industry), socifacts (social organisation), and mentifacts (language, religion, art and so on).

The word culture, in the sense here discussed means certain kind of entertainment as changed and shaped by man and also human activity that leads to the cultural pattern. Man's culturally creative attitude distinguished him from the animal which is firmly held by its environment and lives within a strictly limited sphere of action, based on Instinct, never able to go beyond these limits. Unlike the animal, man is unsure of his instincts but because of his mental gifts, he is able to reach beyond his natural surrounding although he too remains conditioned by the finite world. This transcendence, the metaphysical possibility of basically limitless human thought and desire, culminates in man's freedom, the hidden driving force of all cultural creativity. His concerned for his physical welfare, a place to live, good social relation and making a worthy environment for himself, drives man, over and above purely utilitarian considerations, to impress upon his world his striving for the infinite, his unrest which torments him and at the sametime brings him joy and which is due to the insufficiency of his infinite experience, so that his world reflect this striving and unrest. Culture can therefore be seen in the work of man and his creative activity as a reflection of his striving after higher things.

5.THE ASPECT OF CULTURE:

We have already understood that culture is a total way of life; it is a blueprint, a design or place to cope with the physical, social and ideational needs. Culture has two basic aspects: (i) External expression or demonstration and (ii)

Immanent aspect. The external manifestations of a culture are the sum-total of the physical and mental reactions and activities that characterise the behaviour of human beings. On the other hand, culture can also be considered as the inner formations of the human mind, formed by the traditions peculiar to a particular social or radical group. Thus understood, "culture is a way of thinking, feeling, believing. It is the group's knowledge stored up in memories, objects and documents of men for further use."

Culture is always understood in terms of these two aspects. But as culture in the external sense can only have life in relation to man the immanent and external aspect of culture cannot be separated either in the creative act or in the way the work is regarded afterwards. Both are part of a living culture: one cannot experience immanent aspect of culture without the historical presence of cultural values or objective product of this culture. External expression has some to do with immanent aspect. Neither external expression of culture as the sum of cultural values nor immanent aspect of culture as the cultural attitude of individual and group's can rest or exist in itself.

6. WORLD VIEW:

Whenever we explain culture we discussed world view. It is the way of we look at things, therefore culture is a very organised an institutionalised system. We begin in a very simple way of world view and gradually they developed and reach a stage of recognition. New people do not say it is their world view but it is their culture. When achieved a stage of recognition, it is not temporary but becomes permanent. World view is heart of culture but it is flexible.

In Gadamerian approach "Fusion of Horizon" there are interconnects in different world views, no isolation exclusively. He also says that when there is interaction between the two world views, there is every possible of fusing both giving rise to a new horizon, change in the culture is fusing to a new horizon and it does not happen in one switch on a button.

Human has culture which animal world has instinctual behaviour. Human culture is learned behaviour. Culture is immanent of inner formation but external immanent is external expression of internal formation. Culture is more or less a geographical, historical, cultural and political. When we say it is our culture, it is understood as organised system. Even within us organised system, we have world view and the way we look at life makes us realise that we have a culture. Culture is understood to be fixed but world view is dynamic. Culture is not a make but a growth. In an initial stage, we look at it as small way but when it gets organised, it becomes more bigger way in an organised way and we call my culture. It comes out spontaneously.

7. CULTURAL IDENTITY:

Culture of identity is always linked with external expression. The concept of identity is one of the global developments of culture. We have the idea of selfless about our culture. Culture is always survived in the idea of selfless. In global village we find the relationship between selfless and otherness. The identity of culture is also influenced by otherness. In this context Gandhi says "I don't want my house walled on all sides and then my windows be blinded. I want all cultures of all countries to come into my house. But I refuse to be wipe away by my culture what so ever."

Gandhi talks about the well-coming of other culture. He supports the all culture of the world. The only my own culture is the best culture is not right word. Gandhi took culture in terms of immanent. It is possible to conceive that our selfless is influenced by otherness.

8. CULTURE AS SYSTEM OF SYMBOL:

Identity of culture associated with symbols. The symbol is understood as context bound. The ideological content of a culture is represented in symbolic forms. The carriers of a particular culture have been taught to understand and used their own symbolic code of their society to communicate their life experience with others. Members belonging to another culture will find it extremely difficult to understand the world view of a culture unless they have learnt the symbolic content of a culture and the meaning it signifies.

Language as a symbolic system constitutes the most important means of communication in human society. It furnishes the main store of commonly shared experiences and ways of life, as well as the main vehicle by which these are transmitted from generation to generation.

9. CULTURE AND RELIGION:

There is opinion that religion is different from culture and culture is different from religion.

Many thinkers hold that religion and culture are not different. But structurally they are different. The survival of religion and culture is depended on external demonstration.

According to Paul Tillich Religion is the ultimate reality. If religion is understood as ultimate reality then religion is a meaning giving substance of culture. Because in this aspects, religion is understood in the form of meaning giving substance of culture. So religion and culture are interdependent. So, in this context we cannot separate religion and culture. Because culture becomes meaningless without meaning giving substance. Paul Tillich says, "Religion as ultimate concerned in the meaning giving substance of culture, and culture is the totality of forms in which the basic concerned of religion expresses itself. In abbreviation; religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion."

The assertion that religion and culture are incompatible rest on a misunderstanding of both religion and culture. Man, through his religious attitude, makes room above all for God in his life and thus endeavours to maintain freedom; at the same time he opens the way to a spiritual formation of his world and thus makes possible a free encounter of cultural worlds, individuals and peoples.

10. CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion, on the one hand shows the richness of the concept of culture and its manifold, and on the other, it is obvious that most dominant concept used by cultural anthropologist, yet there is no unanimity among thinkers

as to what culture is. None of the view point we have discussed enumerated above enjoys any special superiority over the others.

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