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## UNIT 2 SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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Culture is a complex term, which is used very often in our daily lives. Culture can be defined as the language, norms, values, and beliefs of a group of people. It is connected to and derived from people's way of life. It is a combination of elements that affect how people think, how they act and what they own. Culture is an essential part of the life of a human being. No one is complete without it; in fact most of us (individuals) can be part of many cultures and sub cultures. For example; a person may be born in India and now lives in United States is influenced by the culture of both the places. Culture can be interpreted as some common traits in national culture, or regional groups. A society is a group of people involved in persistent social interaction, or a large social group sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institution; a given society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its members. In the Social Sciences, a larger society often demonstrates satisfaction or dominance patterns in subgroups. Using the anthropological standpoint, our culture includes norms and standards which are concerned with optimum and correct acceptable behavior whereas society is a group of people who occupy a particular territory and share a culture. Let us understand the learning objectives of this unit in the following paragraph.

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## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define society and culture;
- explain the nature types of material and non-material society;
- describe the importance of socialization;
- discuss the religious minorities; and
- explain the importance of culture and environment.

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## 2.2 DEFINITION OF MATERIAL AND NON-MATERIAL SOCIETY

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Sociologists describe two interrelated aspects of human culture: the physical objects of the culture and the ideas associated with these objects. Material culture refers to the physical objects. Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. Homes, neighborhoods, schools, temples, mosques, churches, offices, factories and plants, tools, means of production, goods and products, stores are part and parcel of material culture. All of these physical aspects of a culture help to define its member's behaviors and perceptions. For example, technology is a vital aspect of material culture in today's United States. Non-Material culture refers to the non physical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, value, norms, morals, instance, the non-material cultural concept of religion consists of a set of ideas and beliefs about worship of specific representation of God, associated morals and ethics. These beliefs, then, determine cultural response to its issues and events. When considering non-material culture, sociologists refer to several processes that a culture uses to shape its member's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The most important of these are:

- Symbols
- Language
- Values
- Norms and Rituals

Material culture has its own significance. It is a reference point for archaeology and other anthropology related domains to understand and refer to all the corporeal, tangible objects that are created, used, kept and left behind by a culture. Material cultures refers to objects that are used, lived in displayed and experienced: and the terms includes all the things people make including tools, pottery, furniture, roads even the cities themselves. For example, the dancing girl statue of Mohenjo-Daro, Limestone slabs of Ancient Greece or coins of the Mughal era are a referent symbol of that time.

Thoughts or ideas that make up a culture are called the non-material culture. In contrast to material culture, non-material culture does not include any

physical objects or artifacts. Examples of non-material culture include any ideas, beliefs, values, norms that may help shape society.

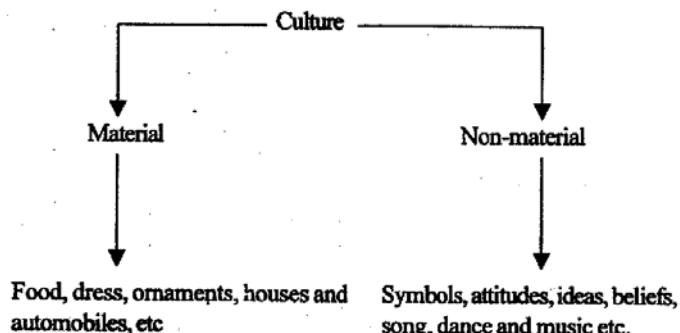


Figure 2.1 Pathways of Culture

### Check Your Progress 1

**Note:** a) Write your answer in 50 words.

b) You can check your answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What is the difference between material culture and non-material culture?

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## 2.3 NATURE OF CULTURES

Like most sociological concepts, culture is a word with both a popular and sociological meaning. From childhood, we learn that Human being is a social animal. At the same time he/she is a cultural animal. Culture is one of the most important accomplishments of man. To be human being will inherently indicate some form of culture. It is culture, which makes human life meaningful. A human being is born and brought up in a cultural environment. It is culture which distinguishes a man from an animal. Man is called as a culture bearing animal. Any understanding of human society, human behavior and beliefs requires the understanding of culture. Each and every society possesses culture and humanness only develops in a cultural framework. Sociologists have developed the two concepts i.e. culture and society to account for and explain the regularities in human action and the essence of social life.

The sociological meaning of the word culture sharply differs from the common or literary meaning. Ordinarily the term culture refers to those particular traits and behavior systems that are regarded as refinements such as music, poetry, art, dance, painting etc. It refers to special qualities and persons in society who acquire these qualities are considered as 'cultured'. Persons

who do not have knowledge about these artistic refinements are called 'uncultured'. This is a very narrow and myopic view of culture. Sociologists, Anthropologists, Archeologists interpret culture in a different way.

Culture is an intangible and appropriated set of rules and procedures with a supporting set of ideas and values. Culture refers to the distinct way of life of a specific group of people. It is surprising that many cultures in the world have similar concepts yet are thousands of miles apart geographically. While there are many aspects of culture, which have been unique to only one specific group of people, there are also some basic human norms shared by all cultures. For example; values like respect of elders in society, taking care of children, respecting nature and natural resources etc. Acquiring a way of life is culture, it is the tool kit of habits and values which initiate action. Culture is also shared memory. Thus culture is a learned behavior, organic and essential for human living. Hence culture is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. And to understand this complex phenomenon more exactly and more accurately we must have to analyze some of its definitions given by different scholars.

- 1) According to the classic definition of culture by Edward Burnett Tylor, the 19<sup>th</sup> century English Anthropologist (1871) : '*Culture ...is that complex whole which includes knowledge , belief, art , morals, law custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.*'

This concept of culture has sustained for over a long period of time. In contemporary times culture is also related to symbols and according to some scholars, the 'publically available forms through which people experience and express meaning becomes culture.'

The Nature of Culture as elements:

- *Culture is acquired:* It is not biologically inherited but learnt socially by individuals. Socialization plays an important role in orienting humans to follow norms and rituals.
- *Culture is Collective:* Culture is not individual. Culture is inclusive of the expectations of the members of the groups. Without social interaction or social relations it is very difficult and almost impossible to be cultured.
- *Culture is Transmissive:* Culture never remains constant and is transmitted from one generation to another. This transmission is a spontaneous process.
- *Culture is connected to human needs:* Our need for food, clothing, shelter, name, fame, status, and position are fulfilled as per our cultural ways. It also fulfills Psychological needs of individuals.
- *Culture is accumulative and adaptive:* It accumulates as it grows from one generation to another. It also keeps aligning to the requirements of society.

- *Culture is shared:* Culture cannot be the possession by a single individual or group.
- *Culture is aimed at Order:* Different parts of culture are well organized into a cohesive whole.
- *Culture uses language as a collaborator:* Language and symbols are part of culture. Language is one of the most important binding agents in any culture.
- *Culture has a Communicative role:* Symbols are intrinsic to human communication. Culture inherently has symbol communicates through different symbols. Common ideas and social heritage etc. are communicated from one generation to another.
- *Culture is heritage shared by all:* The constant accumulation of culture leads to established collective memory structures. As this information forms a portion of the past, it becomes a social heritage shared by all related to that culture.



Figure 2.2 Systematic representation of Culture

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** a) Write you answer in 50 words.

b) You can check your answers given at the end of the unit.

2) What are the main elements of culture?

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## 2.4 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is the process of learning how to become part of a culture. From the birth of a human, he or she undergoes through this process, learns the culture's language, their role and expectations. Socialization starts at a very early stage. Socialization is a particularly important process in the forming of personality. Socialization is an important life process. It allows individuals in a community to interact and develop very similar values, norms, and beliefs. Socialization is a lifelong process. Without Socialization a person will develop different physical and mental incapacities.

From the point of view of society, socialization as a process is important. Socialization means transmission of culture, the process by which belonging is created. Every society is faced with the necessity of making a responsible member out of each child born into it. Society is structured in a way to convey to a child, the basic expectations so that his behaviour can be relied upon. Role taking allows young children to be part of an existing group with a certain ideology. In this stage, the children understand roles of multiple people at the same time.



Figure 2.3 Agents of Socialization

Essentials elements and functions of socialization include the following:

- Member of society must acquire the group norms in order to take the behaviour of others into account.
- It generates belongingness
- It helps a society to maintain a social system, transmits its culture from generation to generation.

- From the point of view of the individual, socialization is the process by which the individual learns social behaviour, develops his self.
- Socialization plays a unique role in personality development of the individual.
- Values and roles are interconnected with a person's specific role within a group.
- The individual learns the culture as well as skills, ranging from language to skills, which will enable him or her to become a participating member of human society.
- It inculcates basic disciplines, ranging from toilet habits, food habits, interpersonal relations to concept of success, failure etc.
- Individual is also socialized with regard to sexual behavior and gender interactions

The child has no self. The self emerges through the process of socialization. The self, the core of personality, develops out of the child's interaction with others. Therefore, socialization is a very important process throughout life, but it is most important in young children.

Socialization among children is very important. Children must learn to walk, talk, eat, and lots of other life skills. Without socialization individuals cannot develop intelligence, and never learn how to perform basic daily functions. The process of socialization and the sources of socialization are very important in the development processes of children.

Socialization, most importantly teaches skills. When an individual acquires needed skills, he is able to find his place in a society. In the past, traditional practices were handed down from generation to generation; were usually learned by imitation and practice in the course of daily functions. Socialization is a very intricate process. As society gets complex and multidimensional with the advent of new specialization and division of work, socialization is becoming more multifaceted. The concepts of Literacy and digital literacy are some of the new challenges of socialization process.

### Check Your Progress 3

**Note:** a) Write you answer in 50 words.

b) You can check your answers given at the end of the unit.

3) What is the function of socialization?

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## 2.5 PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization helps to develop a human being into a member of society. It develops the brain, body, attitude, behaviour of a human being. It induces the people into the social world. The concept of socialization is related to interaction of people who learn the habits, attitudes, values and beliefs of the social group. An individual depends on it to feel included. From the society point of view, it transforms culture from one generation to other generation while also maintaining some common ideals.

The individual learns, the behaviour of society and develops his 'self. The process functions at two levels:

- 1) Internalization
- 2) Observing the external

Socialization is mostly looked on the basis of internalization of social norms.

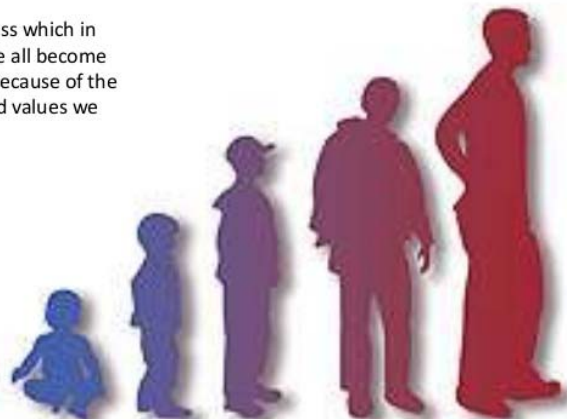
Rules of society are usually internalized by the people. People convert this understanding and create their self-imposed rules, which develops the personality. There are certain rules, which are external. The people hence tend to feel an urge of conforming. Secondly, socialization can be seen on the basis of necessary aspects of social interaction. In this case, individuals become socialized because they tend to feel the urge to fulfill the complex expectations of others with whom they are interacting. Social interaction is the key to socialization which is a continuous process in the life of a human being.

### Process of Socialization

- a) *Primary Socialization:* It is mainly internalization of the society's culture and structuring of the personality. As a human takes birth, this process starts with the child becoming socialized through the family in the early childhood years. In case of the primary socialization, the key catalyst and agent is the family.

### Social process

The process which in society we all become uniform because of the norms and values we learn.





Lets take an example: two children are born in the same culture but to two different households. Both these children possess very little information about his culture and he/she is not aware about the values, practices and the social norms. They are taught by his or her immediate surroundings, which involves the family he or she belongs to. Therefore, primary socialization creates internalization and structuring of basic personality.

- b) *Secondary socialization*: It is the process that starts in the later years through agencies such as education and peer group. Primary and the secondary socialization occur at the different time period, in case of secondary socialization the involvement of the family will be less and other social agents or the agencies plays the dominant role. This can understood from the schools as school acts as the bridge between the family and the society and in school child learns to be equally treated as other as they don't get special attention as in the home .So through school child gets exposed to the actual society.



Figure 2.5 Process of Socialization

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## 2.6 RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

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Most national populations have a heterogeneous mix of people from different social groups based on religion. Religious Minorities is a term used for a religious group, which is held by a minority of the population of a country, state, or region. Since socio-political and economic factors may be controlled by the Majority representation, Minority religions may be subject to stigma or discrimination. The National Commission of Minorities Act, 1992 notifies five religious' communities as minorities: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians. The Indian subcontinent has seen an influx of invasions and migration from territories around it over the last hundreds of years. Religious Minorities are an important component of the social fabric of India.

As per Census 2011 figures, released by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, the total population in the country in 2011 was 121.09 crore. The Hindu population is 96.63 crore (79.8 percent); Muslim 17.22 crore

(14.2 percent); Christian 2.78 crore (2.3 percent); Sikh 2.08 crore (1.7 percent); Buddhist 0.84 crore (0.7 percent); Jain 0.45 crore (0.4 percent), Other religions and persuasions (ORP) 0.79 crore (0.7 percent) and religion not stated 0.29 crore (0.2 percent). Total percentage of Minority communities in India is 19.2 % as per 2011 census. The growth rate of Muslims was 29.5%, Christian population grew at 15.5% while Sikh population was stable at 8.4%. Within the minority, the most educated and wealthy community is the Jains, whose growth rate in the 2011 census was just 5.4%. The Constitution provides several safeguards for minorities. In 2006, the Ministry of Minority Affairs was established as a ministry of the Government of India. This apex body regulates the developmental programs for the religious minorities in India. The literacy rate among Muslims is lowest among all the religious communities, with the girls being most illiterate. Many Muslim children are first generation learners. There is high poverty, and most Muslims are self- employed. The overall literacy rates among all communities since 2001 Census, has gone up. The literacy rate in the biggest minority community of Muslims has risen from 48.05 percent to 57.28 percent. Muslims and Buddhists both comprise 20 percent each of the cultivator category; Sikhs were highest at 32.4 percent followed by the Christians with 29.2 percent. Due to limited land ownership and literacy, most Muslims are engaged in non-agricultural occupations, they are also self-employed and are a part of the unorganized sector. In view of these factors, they face issues of social security and financial stability. Throughout recent history, Muslims have traditionally been extremely skilled and engaged in occupations like weaving, spinning, textiles and tailoring. With globalization, these professions have suffered most. Many skilled labour in these industries face the challenge of occupation and stability of income. While Muslims have the highest sex ratio of any social group in India. Lack of Socio-economic inclusion in mainstream and threat against minority communities has led to alienation in the Muslim community.

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

**Note:** a) Write you answer in 50 words.

b) You can check your answers given at the end of the unit.

4) What is a minority status?

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## **2.7 CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

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Human beings are not born with predetermined notions of identify, gender and values. All human beings as children learn, observe and adopt their behaviors from parents, peers and role models. Personality, habits, belief and traits are shaped by environment and culture. Culture is the way of living by

a specific group, which is a key influence in constructing beliefs and choices and values. The distinctness in culture included this difference of daily experiential living. Culture is constantly carried over the next generations thus people have similar principals even in today's age of technology.

As we have read, culture is transmissible and is spread through modeling of behavior and language, as humans adopt and adapt. Humans with proximity tend to influence each other and sharing of language is also a part of cultural transmission. Biological factors though are projected to be the main precursor to shaping personality but do not really fully account for variance in behavior. Culture is connected to and shaped by ecology, which determines socialization patterns and are responsible for personality variance.

This means Personality is a combination of the influences of culture and environment. Personality has a direct impact on the socialization among people. Family is the first level of social process and behavior of parents can have a huge influence on shaping personality. It has been observed that in cultures where parents offer comfort; emotional stability, high self-esteem and positivity will be recognized and practiced among the children. In case of parents who are rejecting, children belonging to that environment adopt negative views.

Environment understood as nature and Environmental factors play a great role in lifestyle. All traditional societies of the world have a very strong bond with nature and natural cycles. This is visible in rural societies where culture and traditions are still based around harvest cycles, festivals associated with changing seasons. Food is also closely connected with cultural bonding. Staple food is seasonal and is directly affected by the nuances of environment in that geographical area. Societal influences also align people to living patterns that neighbors have adopted. In a close-knit village, everyone more or less will practice similar patterns of daily life and responses. Natural factors like the weather lead to choices of appropriate attire. One would feel out of the context if he or she wears silk in places where it is perpetually hot.

Human beings are influenced by socialization but at individual level, experiences and lifestyle also shape individual personality. In conclusion, personality traits emerge during childhood and are influenced by a multitude of elements. Personality traits are derived from both environment and cultural aspects of life. Each individual's character is shaped majorly by life experiences. The unique life experiences, which occur for each person individually when emerge collectively, create the edifice of the traits, which then are transferred from generation to the other. Thus, culture and environment will shape people's lifestyle over generations.

## **DIFFERENT KINDS OF CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.7.1 Tribal culture**

Tribals are perceived by most people as very primitive and existential. In reality, Tribal culture is rooted in respect for nature, simplicity and community living. India is home to many unique tribal cultures. Warm hospitality, simple ways of living and sincere judgment of the opinions are

some of the traits that mark the tribal cultures of India. Their custom depicts their sincere belief in simplicity. Indian tribes have their own gods and goddesses and customs. Most tribes are sociable, hospitable with strong community bonds but there are some tribes, which have not been receptive to outsiders intervening in their social structures. Some of the tribes share patriarchal cultural ties while some are women oriented. They have their specific lifestyle, festivals and celebrations. Some tribes are very gender neutral, which makes these societies an example of division of tasks between men and women.

In contemporary times, tribal societies are under threat of the homogenizing external influences. The tribal people are still clinging to their identity. There is also some visible changes like modern education in tribal society, which are influenced by missionary culture but many customs are still intact.

Tribal people firmly cling and are attached to their identity, despite external influences that had threatened tribal culture. In order to entirely understand tribal culture especially in India and to deeply appreciate the unique aspects of their culture, ethnographic studies are needed.

### **2.7.2 Bishnoism**

The Bishnois are born nature lovers and considered as the first environmentalists of India. Reverence and respect for nature along with all forms of life is what make them a true 'BISHNOI'. For centuries, their way of combining eco-conservation with faith makes it one of the most ecologically relevant orders of today. Bishnoism is said to have started in 1485AD by Saint Guru Jambheshwar in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, India. Long before the world came to know about the environmental crises, Bishnoi visionaries understood man's relationship with nature and the importance to maintain its delicate balance. It is remarkable that this sect thought about environment issues, half a century ago. By far, no other religious order has given so much importance to protection and care of the environment. Guru Jambheshwar Ji recommended 29 principles to become a Bishnoi. The word 'Bishnoi' stands for BISH (which means 20) and NOI (mean 9) derived from these 29 principles out of which 6 principles are dedicated to environmental protection and compassion for all living beings.

The famous 'Chipko Movement' by Sunder Lal Bahuguna was inspired by a true story of a brave lady called Amrita Devi Bishnoi who refused to let the king's men cut the trees. Her head was severed. Seeing their mother lay down her life for the trees, her daughters clung to them. Their heads were severed too. Agitated by the happenings, the neighboring village folk clung to the trees, as the massacre continued. More than 300 people were killed for non-obedience and for trying to protect the trees. When the king came to know of this, he was ashamed of his mistake. The king apologized to the Bishnoi community, ordered to stop felling the trees and hunting of wild animals in Bishnoi areas and punished those who transgressed his orders. Government of India also gives the "Amrita Devi Bishnoi Smrithi Paryavaran Award" for contributing to environment conservation.

The Bishnois are one of the first organized proponents of eco-conservation, wildlife protection, and green living. With their ideals steeped in basic 29 religious tenets, the Bishnois and Bishnoism are very relevant to materialistic ideals of today's world.

Bishnoism lays emphasis on protecting the gifts of God – nature. Since the religion is based on love, peace, respect for life and non-violence, it champions harmony amongst trees, animals and human beings, which is a perfect ecosystem in balance.

The Bishnois in spite of living in the arid desert regions for centuries are rightfully called the first environmentalists of India. They have given more to nature in comparison to many modern day environment movements. They strictly follow the following dictates, which are part of their religious principles.

- Bishnois do not cut green trees and are compassionate to all living beings.
- The Bishnoi settlements are made from material gathered locally.
- They only collect dead wood. Even a carpenter waits patiently for the tree to fall.
- To combat the severe drought and water shortage, the Bishnois build water storage tanks that can collect and store rainwater. This water is not only for humans but animals too. A lesson for equitable distribution of water resources.
- Deers, Black Bucks, Peacocks, Blue Bulls, Chinkaras, are protected by the Bishnoi community. These animals are not allowed to be hunted and therefore have survived so long around their settlements.
- To avoid wastage of firewood, they bury the deceased.
- To minimize the use of green trees, they use cow dung cakes as fuel for cooking.
- They believe in the dignity of both man and animal. One of their principle tenets "*Amar Rakhave That*"; means to provide shelter for abandoned animals so that they can live the rest of their life with dignity.
- They do not believe in idol worship but in worshipping the gifts of nature.

The Bishnoi community, a tribal settlement in Thar desert, living in harsh conditions, struggles to make a living, still wants to protect and preserve the resources that could have been exploited as a key to their prosperity. Bishnois do not believe in unnecessary rituals, idol-worship, caste system, etc., but continually lay emphasis on compassion, love, and peace, and a unique bond with Mother Nature. Their lifestyle and simple approach to life is the key to their unique philosophy.

The Bishnois are very protective of their surroundings and are known to be violent in course of its protection. They do not tolerate destruction of flora

and fauna by unnatural means. They have been fighting court cases, poachers, and any threat to the environment they cherish, even if it means fighting a neo capitalist system, which protects the rich and famous like Salman Khan, the popular actor. The Bishnois, are sole crusaders in protecting the Black Buck and Chinkara, which come under Section 9 of the Wildlife Protection Act. Otherwise this species would have vanished like other species.

The Bishnoi traditions are also being passed on to their next generations.

### 2.7.3 Sacred Groves

Traditional Knowledge of most ancient communities emerged from observing nature. Groves are part of this ancient way of life of man. Groves are the relic forest patches preserved in the name of religion/culture as observed in many societies. They were reported from many countries extending from Asia, Africa, Europe and Americas but their present occurrence is mostly restricted in Africa and Asia. In India, Groves are present from North-east Himalayan region, Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats, Coastal region, Central Indian Plateau and Western desert. The grove tradition is a way of preserving diverse range of ecosystem with its regional and local identities as represented in name, practices and management of groves.

Sacred Groves, one form of nature worship, are considered as “Sacred Natural Sites” as per the definition provided by IUCN (OVIEDO, G., JEANRENAUD, S. & OTEGUI M. 2005. Protecting Sacred Natural Sites of Indigenous and Traditional Peoples: an IUCN Perspective. Gland, Switzerland).

Dating the historic time period, nature worship was a primary custom. This tradition was quite evident in every continent as represented in the culture, religion and social norms of traditional societies. Nature worship has various forms, divinity could be assigned to any place or natural elements (e.g. stone, rock, mountain, river, jungle etc.) or plant / animals depends on cultural and religious practices of a society. These practices were mostly viewed through socio-religious and anthropological aspects of the societies by the sociologists / anthropologists. The resurgence of worldwide interest in nature worship has increased manifold nowadays mainly due to the realization of importance of these community based practices in nature and natural resource conservation.

Indian sacred groves have Pre-Vedic origin and divinity attached to them. Most of them are associated with indigenous / tribal communities who mostly believe in divinity of nature and natural resources, therefore distinctly different from the later icon oriented main stream religions which emerged in agricultural and feudal systems.

There are also exceptions when a society understands the importance of natural resources and initiates a way to protect it with groves. The Western Ghats region is a good example; unlike a tribal community, the culture of sacred grove was predominant in these agro-pastoral communities. In this

region, the expansion of agriculture and human settlement destroyed vast tracts of forestland. This resulted in gradual wash out of fertile topsoil, depletion of water resources and loss of local biodiversity. This change affected livelihood to a great extent. The adverse consequences made them realize the importance of forest ecosystem in soil and water conservation as well as livelihood security. Ultimately, this realization manifested in the form of protection of remaining forest patches under various socio-religious norms.

Sacred grove studies in India are also categorized into three time periods. There is a great scope of research in the area of sacred groves and human sociological aspects related to nature. After the declaration of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the importance of sacred grove in nature conservation has been increased manifold. Community based conservation initiatives are one of the prime agendas for this initiative CBD, for which sacred grove tradition reflects community involvement. The interconnection of sacred groves in socio-religious life with livelihood security established by indigenous communities are also substantiated and supplemented with numerous local customs, folk lore, social and religious taboos throughout Indian history across various geographical locations.

The serious introspection of cultural norms, values of both human and animal life, environment in traditional social structures and traditional wisdom especially in tribal communities will reveal the wisdom of ancestors to protect nature's wealth for future generations.

**Check Your Progress 5**

**Note:** a) Write your answer in 50 words.

b) You can check your answers given at the end of the unit.

5) What are the distinct aspects of tribal culture?

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6) Who are the Bishnois and why are they called the first environmentalists of India?

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## TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the difference between a culture and a society?
- 2) How is material and nonmaterial culture related?
- 3) What is the concept of socialization?
- 4) What is the socialization process?
- 5) What is a minority status?

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## 2.8 LET US SUM UP

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Let us briefly state the significant points about the society and culture as discussed in this unit.

According to sociologists, a society is a group of people with common territory, interaction, and culture. Social groups consist of two or more people who interact and identify with one another. People of the same society share aspects of their culture, such as language or beliefs. Culture refers to the language, values, beliefs, behavior, and material objects that constitute a people's way of life. It is a defining element of society. There are many, many elements and aspects of culture and can be categorized as either material or nonmaterial culture. Material culture includes all the physical things. Clothing, food, tools, and architecture are examples of material culture. Non-material culture includes creations and abstract ideas that are not embodied in physical objects. In other words, any intangible products created and shared between the members of a culture over time are aspects of their nonmaterial culture. Social roles, rules, ethics, and beliefs are just some examples. All of them are crucial guides for members of a culture to use to know how to behave in their society and interpret the world. Socialization is the process of learning how to become part of a culture. Through socialization one learns the culture's language, their role in life, and what is expected from them. The socialization of young children is very important and as a learning process begins just after birth. Early childhood is the most crucial period for socialization. Humans acquire language and learn the fundamentals of our culture. Childhood and process of socialization is also when personality takes shape. In a country, state or region, there are many people who share the same religion and some belonging to another religion. Therefore, a minority religion is a religion held by a minority of the population of a country, state, or region. Minority religions can be subject to stigma or discrimination. The social environment, social context, sociocultural context, or milieu refers to the immediate physical and social setting in which people live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual was educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom they interact.

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## 2.9 KEYWORDS

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**Culture:** It can be defined as the language, norms, values, and beliefs of a group of people. It is connected to and derived from people's way of life.



**Bishnoi:** The word 'Bishnoi' stands for BISH (which means 20) and NOI (mean 9) derived from these 29 principles out of which 6 principles are dedicated to environmental protection and compassion for all living beings.

**Chipko Movement:** This movement led by Sunder Lal Bahuguna was inspired by a true story of a brave lady called Amrita Devi Bishnoi who refused to let the kings men cut the trees.

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## 2.10 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

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## 2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Answers to Check Your Progress 1

1) You can find the answer under section 2.2.

### Answers to Check Your Progress 2

2) You can find the answer under section 2.3.

### Answers to Check Your Progress 3

3) You can find the answer under section 2.4.

### Answers to Check Your Progress 4

4) You can find the answer under section 2.5.

### Answers to Check Your Progress 5

5) You can find the answer under section 2.7.1.

6) You can find the answer under section 2.7.2.

## Answers to Terminal Questions

Your answers should include the following points:

- 1) Culture is defined as the set of learned behaviors and beliefs that characterize a society or a people group. It is the tangible and intangible institutions, beliefs, and attitudes that make them a people group. Included in a culture are norms, standards or rules about acceptable behavior.
- 2) Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. Non-material culture refers to the nonphysical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions.
- 3) Socialization, is a term used by sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and educationalists to refer to the lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs, and ideologies, providing an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participating within their own.
- 4) In sociology, socialization is the process of internalizing the norms and ideologies of society. Socialization encompasses both learning and teaching and is thus "the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained". Socialization is strongly connected to developmental psychology.
- 5) Minority, a culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group that coexists with but is subordinate to a more dominant group. As the term is used in the social sciences, this subordinancy is the chief defining characteristic of a minority group. As such, minority status does not necessarily correlate to population but largely is understood as an identity which is lesser in numbers.