

**Department of Management Studies**  
**University of Rajshahi**  
Master of Business Administration (Evening)  
Course Title: International Business Management (E 514)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Lecture

## **CULTURE**

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.

- ✓ Culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.
- ✓ Culture is communication, communication is culture.
- ✓ Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behavior; that is the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behavior through social learning.
- ✓ A culture is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.
- ✓ Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.
- ✓ Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning influences upon further action.
- ✓ Culture is the sum of total of the learned behavior of a group of people that are generally considered to be the tradition of that people and are transmitted from generation to generation.
- ✓ Culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

## **CHARACTERISTICS/IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE**

### **❑ CULTURE IS SOCIAL**

No man can acquire culture without association with others (Man becomes a man only among men). It develops through social interaction. It is a product of society. Culture does not exist in isolation. For example, customs, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values, morale etc are all shared by people of a group or society.

### **❑ CULTURE IS SHARED**

Culture is a social and not individual heritage of man One has to learn the tradition, customs as the society in which he is living. Culture is not something that an individual alone can possess.

### **❑ CULTURE IS LEARNED**

Culture is learned or acquired after birth and through life consciously or unconsciously through agents influencing directly or indirectly on individuals. It is not innate Culture is often called "learned ways of behavior "Unlearned" behavior is not culture. But shaking hands, saying thanks' or "Starymashy", dressing etc are cultural behavior Any normal baby can be placed into any family on earth and grow up to learn their culture and accept it as his or her own.

### **❑ CULTURE IS AN ADAPTIVE MECHANISM**

Culture is adopted, you can't create it It has given us a major selective advantage in the competition for survival with other life forms Culture has been a highly successful adaptive mechanism for our species. Examples, efficient hunting skills, Fire use, Clothing, Warm/Cold housing, Agriculture, and Commerce.

### **❑ CULTURE IS TRANSMITTED**

Culture is transmitted from one generation to another generation during the process of socialization and is disseminated among members of society. Language is the main vehicle of culture. Language in different form makes it possible for the present generation to understand the achievement of earlier generations.

### **❑ CULTURE IS CONTINUOUS AND CUMULATIVE**

Culture exists as a continuous process. In its historical growth it tends to become cumulative Sociologist. Linton called culture "the social heritage" of man It becomes difficult for us to imagine what society would be like without culture.

**❑ CULTURE VARIES FROM SOCIETY TO SOCIETY –**

All the societies in the world have culture but each society has a different culture from one another. E.g. Pakistani Culture, Pashtoon Culture, Balooch Culture, African culture, Western culture. Culture of every society is unique to itself. Cultures are not uniform. Cultural elements like customs, traditions, morale, values, beliefs are not uniform everywhere. Culture varies from time to time and place to place also.

**❑ CULTURE GIVES US A RANGE OF PERMISSIBLE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS**

What you can do and what you can't do. Example, traditional dress and its limitations in Pashtoon Society, Mustache for man and specific gown for females etc.

**❑ CULTURE IS DYNAMIC**

No culture ever remains constant or changeless. It is subject to slow but constant change. Addition of new traits and vanishing of old traits. The rate of change and the aspects of culture that change varies from society to society. For instance, people in Germany generally are eager to adopt new words from other languages, especially from American English. While many French people are reluctant to it because of the threat of "corrupting" their own language. The North American woman considers her dog to be a close friend and essentially a member of her own family. In the Muslim world, dogs are generally considered to be dirty animals that are likely to be kicked if they get in the way. There commonly is a resistance to major changes. For example, many men in North America and Europe resisted the increase in economic and political opportunities for women over the last century because of the far ranging consequences. It inevitably changed the nature of marriage, the family, and the lives of all men. It also significantly altered the workplace as well as the legal system and the decisions made by people.

**❑ PEOPLE USUALLY ARE NOT AWARE OF THEIR CULTURE**

People are unaware of their own culture until they meet or spent time with other culture follower. The common response in all societies to other cultures is to judge them in terms of the values and customs of their own familiar culture. Some knowledge is limited largely to particular social classes, occupations, religious groups, or other special purpose associations. Alien culture traits are often viewed as being not just different but inferior, less sensible, and even "unnatural." For example, European cultures strongly condemn other societies that practice polygamy and the eating of dogs.

## ❑ CULTURE TELLS US BASIC VALUES

Culture tells us basic values and norms of a society. Examples, marriage, business, other day to day activities. It tells us what you can do and can't do in a particular situation. It tells us ethics of a particular society.

Culture is found everywhere in this world but in different shape. Only human beings possess the culture, other animals do not possess it. Man has created the culture during the process of controlling himself, others and nature. Culture is idealistic – it stands for ideal norms of human behavior toward which persons are expected to strive. Culture is accumulating. It goes on increasing in size, according to the funds of his knowledge, regarding the science or literature in each generation.

## COMPONENTS OF CULTURE

All cultures have five common components:

- a. Symbols,
- b. Language,
- c. Values and beliefs,
- d. Norms, and
- e. Material culture, including technology.

## **BUSINESS ETHICS**

Business ethics is the behavior that a business adheres to in its daily dealings with the world. The ethics of a particular business can be diverse. They apply not only to how the business interacts with the world at large, but also to their one-on-one dealings with a single customer.

Good business ethics should be a part of every business. There are many factors to consider. When a company does business with another that is considered unethical, does this make the first company unethical by association? Some people would say yes, the first business has a responsibility and it is now a link in the chain of unethical businesses.

Many global businesses, including most of the major brands that the public use, can be seen not to think too highly of good business ethics. Many major brands have been fined millions for breaking ethical business laws. Money is the major deciding factor.

## **WHY WE NEED VALUES AND MORALS**

It is important to carefully consider your values for several reasons:

- (1) They could guide your life minute by minute towards noble goals, rather than your life being controlled by self-serving motives, customs, accidental occurrences, bad habits, impulses, or emotions. You have to know where you are going before you can get there.
- (2) Values and morals can not only guide but inspire and motivate you, giving you energy and a zest for living and for doing something meaningful.
- (3) Sensitivity to a failure to live up to your basic values may lead to unproductive guilt or to constructive self-dissatisfaction which motivates you to improve.
- (4) High values and some success meeting those goals are necessary for high self-esteem.
- (5) Professed but unused values are worthless or worse—phony goodness and rationalizations for not changing. We must be honest with ourselves, recognizing the difference between pretended (verbalized) values and operational (acted on) values.

## **BENEFITS OF MANAGING ETHICS IN THE BUSINESS**

### **1. Attention to business ethics has substantially improved society.**

A matter of decades ago, children in our country worked 16-hour days. Workers' limbs were torn off and disabled workers were condemned to poverty and often to starvation. Trusts controlled some markets to the extent that prices were fixed and small businesses choked out. Price fixing crippled normal market forces. Employees were terminated based on personalities. Influence was applied through intimidation and harassment.

### **2. Ethics programs help maintain a moral course in turbulent times.**

Attention to business ethics is critical during times of fundamental change — times much like those faced now by businesses, both nonprofit and for-profit. During times of change, there is often no clear moral compass to guide leaders through complex conflicts about what is right or wrong. Continuing attention to ethics in the workplace sensitizes leaders and staff to how they want to act — consistently.

### **3. Ethics programs cultivate strong teamwork and productivity.**

Ethics programs align employee behaviors with those top priority ethical values preferred by leaders of the organization. Usually, an organization finds surprising disparity between its preferred values and the values actually reflected by behaviors in the workplace.

### **4. Ethics programs support employee growth and meaning.**

Attention to ethics in the workplace helps employees face reality, both good and bad — in the organization and themselves. Employees feel full confidence they can admit and deal with whatever comes their way.

### **5. Ethics programs are an insurance policy — they help ensure that policies are legal.**

There is an increasing number of lawsuits in regard to personnel matters and to effects of an organization's services or products on stakeholders. As mentioned earlier in this document, ethical principles are often state-of-the-art legal matters.

### **6. Ethics programs help avoid criminal acts “of omission” and can lower fines.**

Ethics programs tend to detect ethical issues and violations early on so they can be reported or addressed. In some cases, when an organization is aware of an actual or potential violation and does not report it to the appropriate authorities.

### **7. Ethics programs promote a strong public image.**

Attention to ethics is also strong public relations — admittedly, managing ethics should not be done primarily for reasons of public relations. But, frankly, the fact that an organization regularly gives attention to its ethics can portray a strong positive to the public.

### **8. Last – and most — formal attention to ethics in the workplace is the right thing to do.**