

DATE: ___/___/___

What is meant by culture and civilization?
Describe the characteristics of Islamic
culture. CSS 2016

1- Introduction

Culture refers to a society's entire way of life. Culture is the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a way of life. It is both link to our past and our guide to the future.

Civilization, on the other hand, is an advanced state of intellectual, cultural and material development in human society. It is marked by progress in arts and sciences, language, knowledge and the complex social and political institutions.

2- What is meant by culture

"Culture is an organized body of conventional understanding manifest in art and artifacts, which persist through tradition, and characterizes a human group"

Robert Redfield
(Anthropologist)

2.1 Material and non-material culture

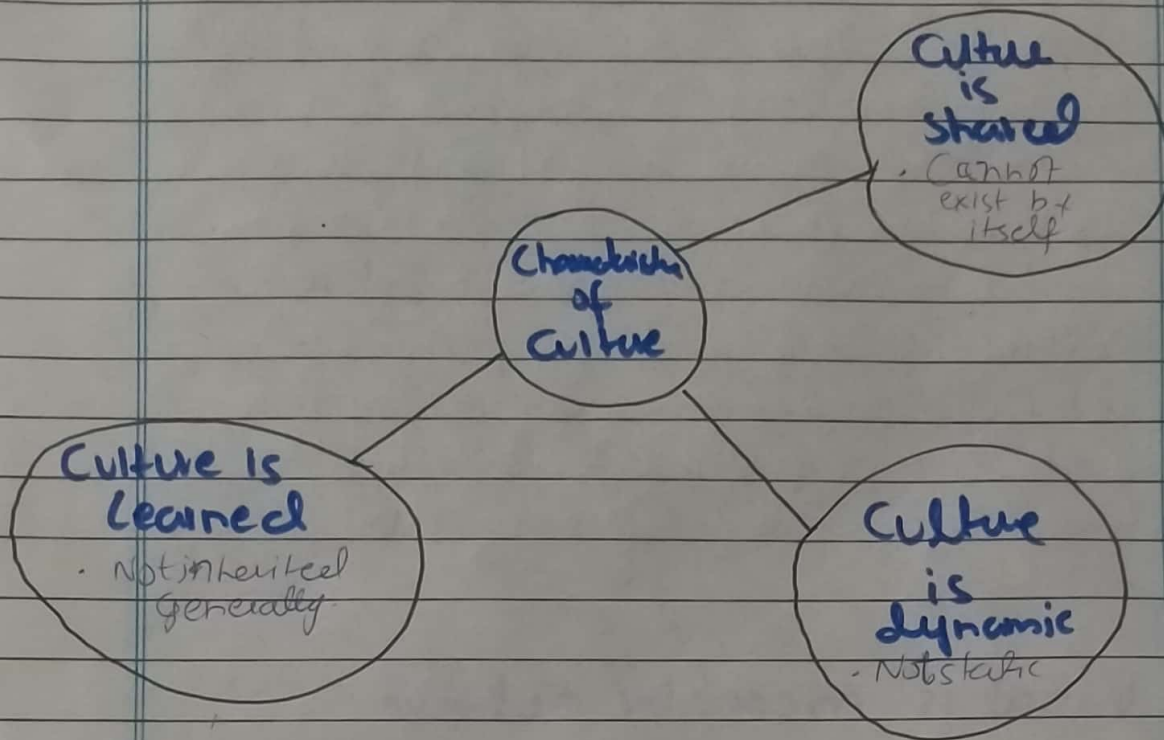
The material culture is the physical

DATE: / /

things created by members of a society, everything from armchairs to zippers.

Non-material culture, in contrast, is the ideas created by members of a society.

2.2 Characteristics of a culture



2.2.1 Culture is learned

Culture is not inherited generally, it is acquired and learned. A child, for instance, is instilled with cultural values at an early age. They are instilled both through the formal and informal learning modes.

2.2.2. Culture is dynamic

Culture is not static, it is dynamic. It

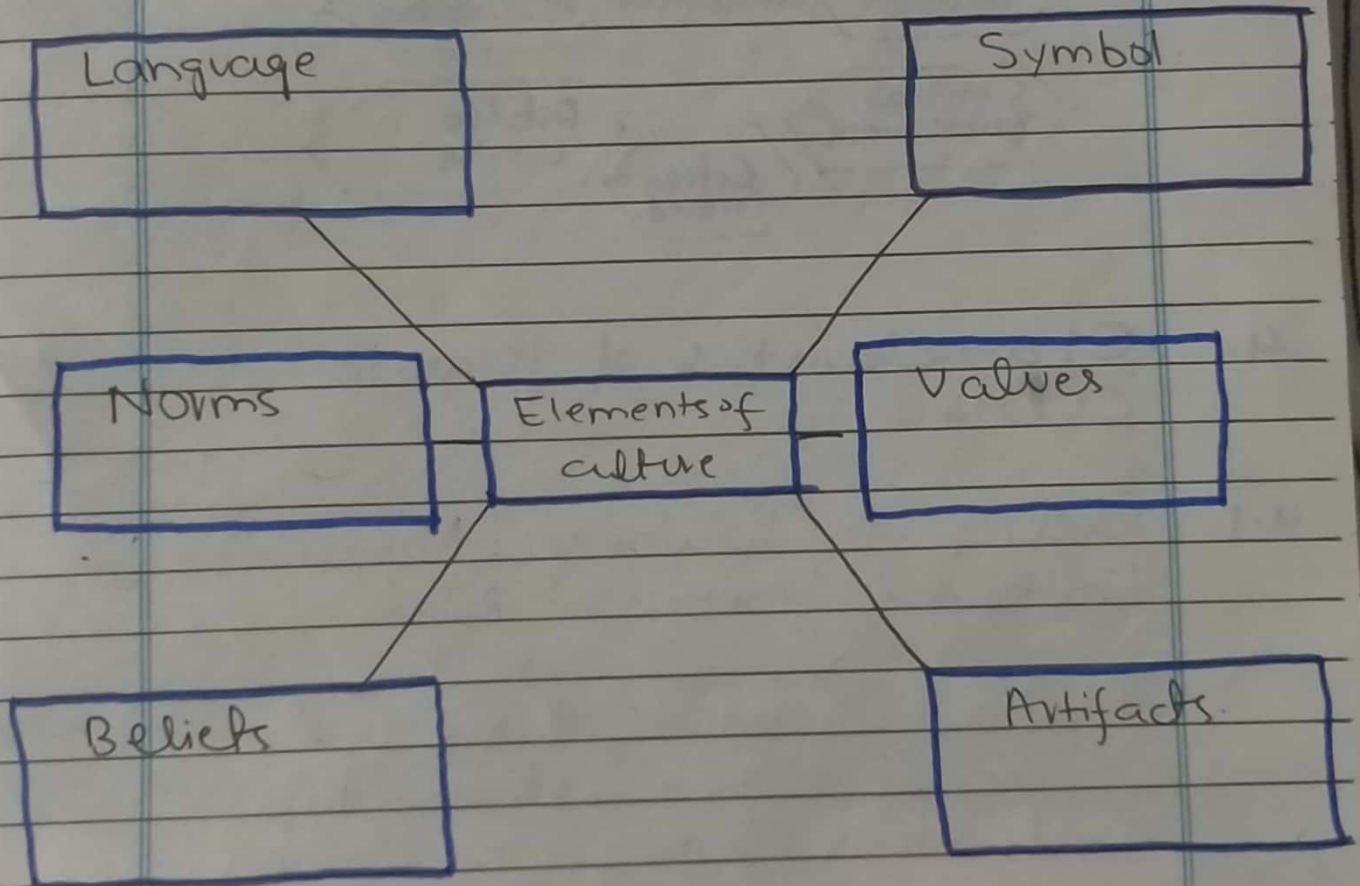
DATE: ___/___/___

evolves according to the changing social, economic, political, and technical advancements and modifications.

2.2.3 Culture is shared

Culture is socially shared, based on social interaction and creation. It cannot exist by itself. Each culture has certain widely held and commonly accepted values that differentiate it from other cultures.

2.3 Elements of Culture



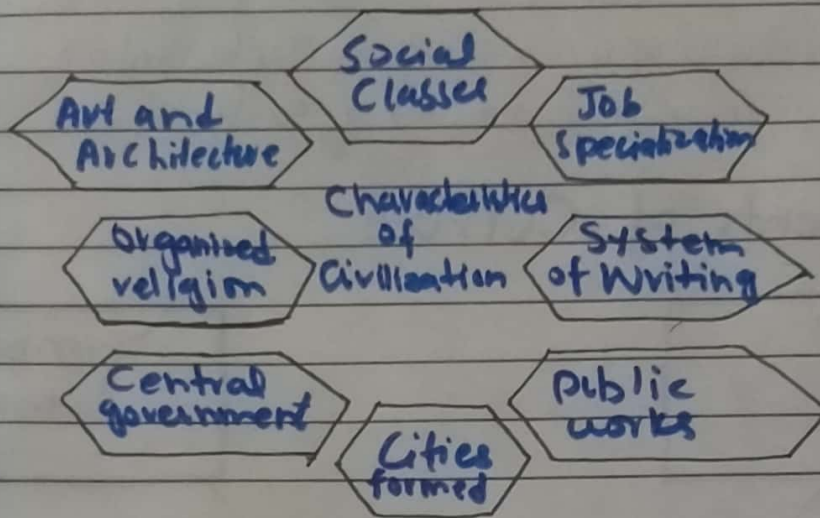
DATE: ___/___/___

3. What is meant by civilization

"A state of human society that is very developed and organized"

Oxford Dictionary

3.1 Characteristics of civilization



4. Characteristics of Islamic culture

4.1 Belief in Tawheed: Absolute Unity and Oneness of Allah

Tawheed is the foundation and essence of Islamic culture. This belief attests not only to the Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah, but also signifies the Oneness of Lordship, the Sovereignty and the Authority of Allah

DATE: ___/___/___

over the entire universe. Suah Ikhlas beautifully encapsulate the concept of Tauheed:

قل هو الله احد ۝
 لم يلد ولم يولد ۝ ولم يكن
 له كفوا احد ۝

Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One ۝

Allah, the Eternal Refuge ۝

He neither begets nor is born ۝

Nor is there to Him any equivalent ۝

Suah Ikhlas

At another place, the concept of Tauheed is reiterated:

الله لا اله الا هو القيوم ...

Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining ...

Suah Baqarah

4.2 Belief in the five pillars of Islam and Articles of faith.

DATE: ___/___/___

The five pillars of Islam, that is, Shadat, Salat, Saum, Zakat, and Hajj form the basis of the Islamic way of life. Similarly, the doctrines of faith, which include, ~~the~~ belief of Tauheed, belief in the prophets of Allah, belief in angels, belief in revealed books, belief in life after death, and the belief in Allah's predestination and Decree serve as the foundation of Islam, hence, of Islamic culture.

4.3 Islamic culture manifests tolerance and peace

Muslims are commanded by Allah Almighty to be tolerant towards their Muslim brothers as well as the non-Muslims. In Muslim culture, the whole society lives in peace, where there is respect and regard for pluralism.

Allah clearly commands in the Holy Quran:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

Let there be no compulsion
in religion

Al-Baqarah

DATE: ___/___/___

And in Surah Imran, Allah clearly instructed Muslims to be united with each other.

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah and do not be divided..."

Al-Imran

4.4 Islamic culture promotes an egalitarian society

The first Constitution of the world, The Medina Accord, is an exemplary instance of how an egalitarian society should be. Islamic culture promotes social equality, the equality of rights and opportunities for all people.

Holy Prophet (PBUH) in his last sermon said:

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve.."

He also said:

"An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white..."

4.5 Islamic culture is dynamic and progressive

DATE: ___/___/___

Islamic culture encourages learning, education, and seeking of knowledge. It encompasses all arenas, including, art, religion, social, political, economic, and environment.

Ijtihad is one example of how Islam emphasizes the use of rational mind, and seek solutions of modern problems and issues through intellectual endeavour. In **Surah Nisa**, Allah says:

.. **يَسْتَبْرِئْ** ..

which means,

'search out'

4.6 Islamic culture is moralistic

Islamic culture is deeply moralistic, emphasizing ethical behavior and adherence to the principles derived from Quran and Sunnah. It promotes honesty, compassion, justice among others. Muslims abhor adultery, fornication, homosexuality, gambling, or use of intoxicants. Allah says:

"O you who believe, be upholders of justice.."

Surah Nisa

At another place, Allah says:

"Do not spread corruption in the land.."

Surah Baqarah

DATE: _/ _/ _

4.7

Islamic culture upholds the dignity of men and women

Islamic culture the dignity of all people by promoting respect, equality, and justice as fundamental principles. Hence the rights and roles of all individuals are valued and protected within the society. This concept of dignity and honor comes from Holy Quran, as Allah says:

"Certainly We created man in the best form"

Surah At-Tin

4.8

Islamic culture is non-exclusivist but Da'wah-oriented and optimistic.

Islamic culture embraces diversity and encourages peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths and backgrounds.

Furthermore, Muslims believe in spreading Islam, but only through peaceful means.

Coercion or forceful imposition is forbidden in Islam.

Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the example for all to follow for peaceful preaching. As Allah says,

وما ارسلناك الا رحمة للعالمين

"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as

DATE: ___/___/___

a mercy to the world."

Surah Al-Anbya

5- Conclusion

In today's Islamic world, the true Islamic culture does not prevail ~~and~~ in essence. This is because Muslims have ignored the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. However, ~~these~~ if they start following these primary source of guidance, the Islamic culture would start to ~~be~~ exist in its true sense.