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CSS Sociology - 2017 Past Paper

Q Discuss in brief the socio-cultural factors that may enhance and retard the process of social and cultural change in societies.

1 INTRODUCTION

Society, its institutions, its culture and the individuals within are all subject to change. The nature of change and the rate at which it happens varies from society to society. Some societies change faster while others are resistant to change. The primary factor that contributes to any kind of alteration in the fabric of society is driven by cultural change.

2 CULTURE & ITS TYPES

a) Defining Culture:-

"Culture is continually changing patterns of behaviour which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society."

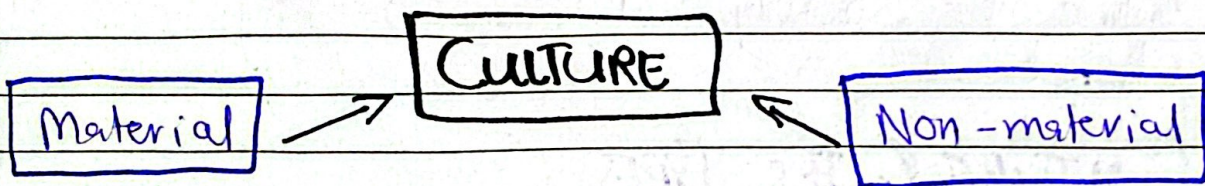
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- Edward Burnett Tylor in his book 'Primitive Culture'.

B) Types of culture:

Culture is generally of two types :-

- 1) Material culture: It refers to the physical parts of culture such as architectural buildings, places of worship i.e. mosques and temples, goods and products.
- 2) Non-Material Culture: It refers to the intangible aspects of a culture such as beliefs, values, norms, customs and morals.



3) FACTORS ENHANCING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE:-

i TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS:

One of the most critical drivers of socio-cultural change is technological advancement. Innovations such as internet, smartphones, and artificial intelligence have transformed the world. These inventions significantly altered the way individuals in society interact

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and communicate with each other. For example, the internet has transformed how people connect, learn, and conduct business, leading to widespread cultural transformation and the birth of what is known as a global community.

ii EDUCATION:

Another factor that plays a vital role in promoting change is education. It encourages critical thinking, fosters tolerance, and spreads scientific and rational thinking. For example, in Pakistan, as more and more of the population got educated, calls for female empowerment got stronger. This shows how educated societies are more likely to eliminate outdated customs and practices and embrace progressive values such as gender equality.

iii URBANIZATION:

The process of urbanization leads to the replacement of conservative and traditional rural social values. In urban settings, people from diverse backgrounds interact, which leads to mixing of ideas and different cultural values and norms. This

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process leads to the society becoming more multicultural and innovative.

iv MEDIA AND GLOBALISATION

The ^{role of} Media and globalization is another significant factor. Exposure to global ideas through mass and social media leads to the adoption of new norms, values and lifestyles. This leads to the processes of acculturation and cultural diffusion. This not only impacts the non-material aspect of culture but material as well. The popularity of Korean media and their cosmetic products worldwide is an example of change through media.

4) FACTORS RETARDING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

a) Defining Cultural Lag:-

The process that hinders cultural and social change is known as cultural lag. Theorised by William F. Ogburn, this phenomenon describes the phenomenon where material culture, like technology, advances at a faster pace than non-material culture, such as social norms, values, and customs. This lag can lead to various social issues and conflicts as societies try to adapt to the newer

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technologies.

B) Reasons behind cultural change:

i TRADITION AND CONSERVATISM:

Some culture, especially like Pakistan's, are deeply conservative. This is a major barrier in bringing in social change. The cultures of these societies have deep-rooted customs and rituals that resist change. For instance, in south asian culture marriage outside of one's own caste are frowned upon and can sometimes lead to social ostracization of those individuals.

ii RELIGIOUS BELIEFS:-

Religious beliefs can play a part in delaying the process of social change when interpreted rigidly. When man-made norms are presented as the word of god, questioning them is considered taboo. For instance, in Pakistan, female education is considered against the principles of Islam. This belief, while untrue, is widely accepted as questioning it might lead to social sanctions.

iii ETHNOCENTRISM

A large number of societies believe

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that their culture is superior to that of others. These values and norms are considered sufficient to fulfill the present needs of these individuals and hence they are less likely to adopt new change. For example, people in rural areas are less likely to adapt to new changes, as they think those are not required.

iv **LACK OF EDUCATION:**

Lack of education and awareness plays a key role in slowing down change. Lack of critical thinking skills and access to information means people are likely to remain confined to traditionally held beliefs and less likely to question those beliefs. This behaviour stems from fear of the unknown and misinformation. Lack of education plays a big role in why rural areas often lag behind in catching up with technological and social advancements.

5) **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the process of socio-cultural change is a constant interaction between different elements of material and non-material parts of culture. Understanding the

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reasons cultural
lag and addressing them by promoting
education is essential to ensure that
cultural and societal values evolution
can keep up with technological and
material advancement.