

Q. What is the difference between culture and civilization? Highlight important features of Islamic civilization.

1- Culture | Civilization

Definition

" Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, customs, beliefs and traditions, any other capabilities acquired by a man as a member of a society.

(Edward B. Taylor)

" Civilization is the particular stage of human development, characterized by the presence of cities, writing, and a system of government."

(Arnold J. Toynbee)

Etymology

The term "culture" originates from Latin word "cultura" means to cultivate or grow.

The term civilization comes from the Latin "civitas" (city or citizen) and is associated with the development of cities.

Tangible Vs. Intangible

Culture encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects of society.

Tangible : food, architecture etc.
Intangible : beliefs, rituals, symbols, language and values etc. Culture is mainly comprised of intangible aspects.

Civilization represents the tangible, external manifestations of societal progress such as governance and political system, economic institutions, technological advancements, and urbanization etc.

Elements

Elements of culture include values, beliefs, norms, language, symbols etc.

Elements of civilization include cities, social classes, religion, governance, writings and job specialization etc.

Scale and Complexity

Culture exists at all levels of social organization, from small tribes to nations.

Civilization emerges when societies reach a level of complexity that allows for governance, division of labour etc.

Dynamics of Change

Culture is dynamic and evolving. It quickly adapts to new ideas, innovations and influence.

Civilization tends to evolve gradually over long periods. Civilizations also face cyclical phases of rises and fall.

Examples

Islamic culture, Chinese culture, Western culture.

Islamic Civilization,
- Chinese Civilization,
- Indus Valley Civilization,
Roman Civilization and
Persian civilization, etc.

2- Islamic Civilization :-

" Islamic civilization is a virtuous social phenomenon that arises from the interactions of human beings and their environment, and is characterized by development of cities, trade and learning.

(Muqaddimah) Ibn Khaldun

3- Important features of Islamic Civilization :-

Important features which encompass Islamic civilization are as follow :

3.1 Islamic Civilization as a Divine Kingdom :-

Islamic civilization is based on the concept of Tawhid (Oneness of Allah). Oneness of Allah provides the foundation for all others aspects of life. In an Islamic state Allah is the absolute sovereign and Quran is the constitution to follow.

3.2 Universal Dimension :-

Islamic civilization is not restricted to specific race, nation, creed or territorial boundary instead all those who believe in Tawhid, Prophethood, Day of judgement, Angels and Revealed Books are part of Islamic civilization. Islamic civilization is premised on the concept of "Muslim Ummah".

3.3 Openness to other Civilizations :-

Islamic civilization absorbed knowledge and cultural elements of Greek, Persian and Roman civilizations. Baghdad was considered as Bait-ul-Hikmah.

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where Haroon-ur-Rahed specifically focused on the translation of Books of Romans.

3.4 Perennial Nature :-

As long as Islam exists, its civilization will remain. Unlike other civilizations which are linked to specific nations, Islamic civilization is eternal and -linked to divine guidance.

3.5 Historical land-marks of Islamic Civilization :-

i) -State of Madina was the first state to establish governance and pluralistic society.

ii) Righteous Caliphs established an excellent example of just governance system based on consensus and a welfare society.

iii) Damascus of Umayyad dynasty, Baghdad of Abbasid dynasty and Constantinople of Turkish empire symbolized the growth of Islam.