INTRODUCTION
Introduction to Culture

This chapter deals with the meaning of Culture and the Cultures of Vedic Aryans, Vedic Hindus, the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilization, Dravidians, and Puranic Hindu Culture.

The Culture of the Greeks was reflected in the political and educational system and in the case of the Romans in their legal code. However, Culture, by which is meant good taste and refined manners is also observed in buildings, gardens, and paintings as well. Culture is used in the most general and abstract sense when it is stated that Eastern Culture is more spiritual than Western Culture.

The Meaning of Culture

The meaning of Culture becomes clear when distinguished from two allied concepts - religion and civilisation.

The inner experience, which reveals the real meaning and purpose of life, is but an aspect of religion whereas it is the very soul of Culture. Religion is often in conflict with cultural life, when the former degenerates into form without substance.

Civilisation and Culture

Civilisation and Culture are sometimes used synonymously. Civilisation, which represents a higher material life, is just a stage in the cultural development of the people. It becomes an impediment to cultural progress when such a life is in conflict with one of the valuable moral values. History
reveals many examples in which an old degenerate civilisation had to be weeded out so that true Culture could exist.

♦ **Definition of Culture**

The meaning of Culture becomes clearer in the following definition of Culture. Culture is sense of ultimate values possessed by a particular society which it has expressed in its collective institutions, which its individual members express in their dispositions, feelings, attitudes and manners as well as in significant which they give to material objects.¹

In the nineteenth century, Culture was defined as that which included knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. It includes all the entire gamut of human activities, customs, habits, beliefs as a member of society and as reflected by their industries and discoveries. The emotional response patterns of habitual behaviour and ideas is also Culture. Culture is the totality of material and non-material traits with their associated patterns and the use of language. The traditions, manner of living etc. are socially regulated ways of Culture.

♦ **Enumeration of Content**

The total body of belief behaviour, knowledge, values and goals that mark the way of life of any people is Culture. The formal or informal education offered by man’s own creative activity, artefacts and art, the skills and instrument, is Culture.

Culture is an acquired technique, behaviour, feeling and thought of individuals within society in which they strive for the attainment of common

needs. Culture is the collection of learned and transmitted reactions, habits, ideas, and values. The immediate conditioning factors such, as points of view, which help to form behavioural pattern, are Culture.
The ideal aspect of Culture is one that is closely related to values. This goes beyond the two modes of existence such as physical and mental. The ideas, beliefs and principles culminate into the norms or standards of perfection, which form an ideal existence, or Culture.

♦ Kulture or Culture

Culture belongs to a group of human beings in a society and the unity of the general cultural life is necessary pre-condition of nationhood. During and after World War-II, the Germans propelled by aggressive nationalism and claiming to belong to a superior race used the word ‘Kulture’. The meaning of Kulture in Germany at that time had a popular meaning identical with what anthropologists’ use. The British, American, and the French were unaware of this interpretation and used civilisation instead.

➢ The Cultures of Vedic Aryans

Towards the end of the fourth millennium B.C., the Indian subcontinent emerged as a region of highly developed Culture.
The important landmark in ancient India is the advent of Vedic Culture associated with the Coming of Aryans. A section of the migratory population from Caspian Sea region, during the middle of the third millennium B.C. started on a great migration towards Europe and Asia. They reached Punjab and moved eastwards spreading all over the Gangetic

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2 The original meaning of the word “arya” is “devout,” “pious”; and so “the Aryans” are “those belonging to the pious,” in which sense the word “arya” was also originally
valley. It is here in Punjab; the hymns of the *Rig-veda*³ were composed. A synthesis between the Aryan tribes and the original inhabitants took place, resulting in the wider usage of the Sanskrit, which belongs to the Indo-Europeans⁴ group of languages. This new synthesis of Culture broadly came to be known Hinduism.

➢ **VEDIC HINDUS CULTURE**

The Ramayana and Mahabharata, the two great epics of the later Vedic or neo-Vedic period, which extends unto 600 B.C. give an idea of the times and Culture of the later Vedic period. Although the society did not change in its mode of living and dress, the caste system had taken roots and the divisions became more prominent. Brahmins⁵ enjoyed utmost respect, though the Kshatriyas challenged their superiority. The rituals and sacrifices became more elaborate and the position of women deteriorated. The Aryan settlements transformed into townships and forts. The Culture of that existed in the Gangetic Valley remained untouched as Alexander the great stopped short of it during his invasion of India in 326 B.C.

➢ **INDUS VALLEY (HARAPPAN) CIVILIZATION**

understood as the name of a people. This alone indicates the original nature of the Culture that was created by the Aryan Indians.

³ The Veda, "the (sacred) knowledge," is the oldest monument preserved of Indian and Indo-European literature. It is more than six times as extensive as the Bible. Originally, in accordance with ancient Indian usage, its texts were passed on by word to mouth, and only later were they recorded in writing.

⁴ The Indo-Europeans who had settled in India, at all times called themselves Aryans, and still so called themselves even in the Buddha’s time. The Buddha himself says in the Digha-Nikāya XVI, 1, 28: "As far as Aryans dwell, and as far as commerce extends that is fostered by merchants, this defended city of Pātaliputta will shine as the first.”
The Indus Valley Culture around 3000 B.C. to 1500 B.C., the ruins of buildings and other things like household articles, implements, weapons of war, gold and silver ornaments, seals, toys, pottery etc. found in the ruins of two old cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, unearthed by the Archaeological Department of India in 1922-23 show that a highly developed Culture flourished in the region of the Indus Valley. The Indus Valley Culture was an urban Culture containing well-planned and well-built towns with centres of trades. By 1500 B.C., Harappan Culture ended. The likely cause being Aryan invasion, earth quakes etc.

> **DRAVIDIANS CULTURE**

Between four and five thousand years ago, ancient India received the seeds of many sorts of Culture by sea and land. These Cultures fossilised and underwent changes and became the starting point of a new development propelled by the nature geniuses of the Dravidian races. The Dravidians were capable of originating and developing the Dravidian language. The Dravidian element preponderates over all other elements in the racial making of the people of southern India. Southern India was relatively sheltered from the religions transcendentalism and other influences like patriarchal Culture. The Dravidian Culture thus belongs to the southern part of India.

The word ‘Dravidian’, a Sanskrit word means ‘southern’, and the Dravidian languages are broadly the languages of southern India. Of the fifteen languages, Tamil is the most Cultured and also is the purest form the other three languages Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam have borrowed from

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5 In the Neo-Vedic period, which lasted from about 1000 to 500 B.C. and ends with the Upanishads, the place of the Rishis of the Rig-Veda was taken by the great men of the
Sanskrit than Tamil. The usage of Sanskrit or Sanskrit derivatives amongst the Dravidian population was the result of the Aryan inducement of the Dravidian Brahmin to expound the Vedas. This led ultimately to the enrichment of the caste system which occupations becoming hereditary.

In the existing deities and worship of its temples of south India the development of the philosophical and spiritual elements in Dravidian Cultures. The Dravidian mind and social life has the characteristic of retaining and hardening on the generation to generation whatever acquisitions it makes in ideas or customs, refusing to discard the old when it adopts the new. The Dravidian architecture reflects on elaboration never reached elsewhere in modular (rock-granite) and ornamentation (the temple architecture).

➢ **PURÄNIC HINDU CULTURE**

The confusion that followed the death of Alexander during his retreat gave Chandragupta Maurya the opportunity to liberate the country from the Greeks and establish the superiority of the Maurya Empire (322 to 185 before Christ) in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. Megasthenes’ Indica, Vishakhadatta’s Mudra-rakshas and Kautilyas Arthashastra indicate that the king earnestly looked after his subjects - The happiness of his subjects is the happiness of the king Chandragupta Maurya was succeeded by his son Bindusara, who in turn was succeeded by Aśoka, the first Indian king to rule over almost the whole of India. The most important event of Aśoka’s reign was his war with Kalinga (modern Orissa). The sight of the massive bloodshed during this battle affected Aśoka deeply who vowed never to wage a war anymore and turned towards Buddhism. It

Brahman caste, with the formation of the caste system.
was through his efforts, that Buddhism became a world-wide religion. In the Buddhist history, next to Asoka is cherished the memory of Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty until the middle of the third century A.D. The most notable achievement of their rule was the development of Gandhara School of Art and further spread of Buddhism into distant regions of Asia. The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, who visited India during the reign of Harshardhana in the seventh century, gives a vivid description of India under the rule of Harsha and speaks highly of the king, who respected all religious and worshipped the Buddha, Śiva and the Sun God. After Harshavardhana’s death, India was left without any central paramount power.

The beginning of the seventh century also the founding of Islam, Muslim religion by Prophet Mohammed. He preached that Allah was the only God forbade the worship of idols and enjoined the people to have full faith in God and his prophet. He died in A.D. 632 and was buried in Median and by this time the entire Arabia had accepted Islam, with adherents from other parts of the world as well.

The Buddhist and the Jain scriptures during the seventh century B.C. give details of the republics and monarchies that existed during that period. The republics were highly democratic in nature while the monarchies were ruled by vigorous personalities, who were expansionist, by nature. During the life of Lord Buddha, there were distinct signs of decay in the republican states while those under the monarchs flourished and expanded.

➤ **Summary**

The meaning of Culture and the Cultures of Vedic Aryans, Vedic Hindus, the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilization, Dravidians, and Purāṇic Hindu Culture have been dealt with.
Culture is a set of ultimate values reflected not only in collective institutions but also in materials, attitudes, and manners. The ideal aspect of Culture goes beyond the physical and mental culminating the ideas, beliefs, and principles into standards of perfection. Towards the end of the fourth millennium, B.C. the Indian Continent emerged as a region of highly developed Culture. Within the Indus Valley flourished a Culture reflected in the ruins of buildings, ornaments, pottery etc., found in the two sites of Harass and Mohenjo-daro, starting from around 30000 B.C. and ending by 1500 B.C. The next important landmark in ancient India is the advent of Vedic Culture associated with the coming of the Aryans, the Rig-Vedas were composed here in the Punjab, resulting in a wider usage of Sanskrit. The new synthesis of Culture broadly came to be known as Hinduism. A study of the Buddhist and Jain scriptures reveal the existence of republican states and monarchies around the seventh century B.C. with the former showing signs of decay and the latter flourishing. The Culture that existed during the later Vedic period extending upto 600 B.C. is reflected by the two great Epics : Ramayana and Mahabharata. Townships, rituals, prominent division of the Brahmin and Kshatriya and the deteriorating position of women were outstanding features of this period. The Aryans with their predominance passed the Rig-Veda to the Dravidian race, which had a considerable Sanskrit speaking population. However, the Dravidian element superseded the entire element in the racial make-up of the people of Southern India. The Culture that existed in the Gangetic Valley remained untouched by Alexander the Great’s invasion. The Mauryan Empire (322 B.C. to 185 B.C.) remained supreme the happiness of the people was of paramount importance during Chandra Gupta Maurya’s rule and under Harshvardhana’s rule all religions were respected and the worship of the
Buddha, Śiva and the Sun-God encouraged. The beginning of the seventh century saw the founding of Islam by Prophet Mohammed giving rise Islamic architecture and Culture.

The Culture of the early period which began with the legal code and political system of the Romans and Greeks later witnessed the nationalistic Culture of comparatively later origin. Some of the Culture that existed during the early times has ceased to exist while as those of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islam have continued to flourish. Thus, we see different Culture has to exist during different periods. Therefore, Culture, an abstract idea encompasses religions, civilisations, values, behavioural patterns and the formal and informed education offered by man's own creative activity.

*The study on the Culture of the early period, it is found that some of the National Culture are comparatively of later origin, while some other Culture is in vogue in early times and have ceased to exist in course of time. Different Culture has come into existence in different periods.*
Review of Literature

Reviews of the Related Literature in which certain note are taken of contribution of different research scholars related with the research topic. To understand the nature of social relations, a sociological understanding of the basic nature of Culture is important. Many foreign races and religions entered in India through either natural migration or conquests.

A Story of Indian Culture of Bahadur Mal [1956] is a book describes the different periods of Indian Culture. It starts with the philosophical life of the Vedic Aryans. It points out how the casteless society of the Early Aryans became divided into different castes and sub-castes. Information in the fields of literature, science and mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and higher religion is also explained in this book. The last part of the book describes the revival, which took place in Hindu Culture.

Dr. Abid Hussain had written a book named The National Culture of India on Indian Culture. The purpose of the book is to analyse the various problems, which India had, to study the past development and present position of Indian Culture. According to him, religion is a transforming experience. It is a spiritual consciousness. The last chapter of the book has been completely changed to make before a cultural change. It is necessary for the national unity and freedom.

The subject matter in Suniti Kumar Chatterji’s book about Indian Culture has the basic characteristic of Indian Culture. The second chapter explains
the basic unity in the diversity of Culture. It also explains the racial and historical background of Indian Culture.

The third and the final chapter describe the traditional arts and their place in the Culture of India. The author has attempted to explain the Art, Yoga, Erotic Sculpture, Painting, Puja, Pottery etc.

P. Spratt [1966] writes Hindu Culture and Personality. This book helps to understand the Hindu Culture with the help of psychoanalytical Ideas. It is a scientific work. It explains the personality of Mahatma Gandhi.

Michael Edwardes [1969] writes Everyday Life in Early India. He gives an account on Indian’s everyday life over a period of thousand years.

Studies in Indian Culture History mentioned about the history of paper and paper industry. It also tells about castes, social life, cultural hipster and the topic life, antiquity of Karnadu Brahmins, history of glass vessels and glass bangles etc.

U.N. Roy [1969] writes Studies in Ancient Indian History and Culture. He explains that the Mehrauli Pillar Inscription is in fact a posthumous. The first part of his work deals with some important problems of Indian History of the Gupta Age. The paper has ten parts; each of them explains certain Inscriptions of Indian Culture.

Sanskrit and Maharashtra is a symposium being conducted at New Delhi in the form of the International Sanskrit Conference in 1972. The first part deals with what Maharashtra has done for the Sanskrit and the second part deals with what Sanskrit has done for Maharashtra. Maharashtrian authors in Sanskrit have written these books.
Society and Culture in the Time of Dandin is a cultural study of the works of Dandin. He lived in the courts of the Pallava of Kanji towards the end of the seventh c. A.D. and the beginning of the eighth c. A.D. This book gives an account of the various activities of social and economic life. Dharmendra Gupta deals the political theory in Dandin’s Writings mainly after Kautilya and Manu. He attempted to give an account of the religious life of the people in relation with the different sects and cults. This book points out how the artists worked under the liberal patronage of the royalty and nobility of the time.

Educational Practices in Manu, Panini, and Kautilya of Prof. Achyuttan has noted his comments on our ancient educational system. He has divided his works into five chapters. In the first chapter a background of the study is given. The third is for Panini’s Education; the fourth for Kautilya’s Education and the last chapter explains the outstanding features of the educational system.

Some Early Dynasties of South India is the book written by Sudhakar Chattopadhya. This book has three parts. Part-I gives an account of the Early and Later Satavahanas. Part II deals with the Eastern Dynasties. Part III mentions about the Vakatakas of Maharashtra.

Some Problems of Indian History is series of three lectures delivered by Dr. Sircar. According to him, since India is a large country having different tribes of Aryans and Non-Aryan Origin, their Cultures differ considerably.

Indian Culture: The Tradition of Non-Violence and Social Change in India of Girish Chandra Roy [1976], the first part of the book specifies the nature
and moral aspects of Indian Society. The second part of the book includes examples from Indian Society in the form of case studies. This study suggests how Culture, society, and personality are related internally in terms of an organised order. Culture has both modes - historic and genetic, which make up the social organisation of a society. This book suggests a theory of Culture in sociology.

**Spirit of Ancient Hindu Culture** is a comprehensive study of two of the hemispheres of the universe - the East and the West. The author V.D. Ojha [1977] has attempted to comprise a detailed comparison of their Cultures and literature. He explains about the contrast of Cultures of the East and the West and a comparison of English and Sanskrit literatures.

**The Classical Age** is a book written by K.M. Munshi. This book covers the period of Indian History during the time of Gupta A.D. 320-740. It reveals the Golden Age of India when it reached the climax of intellectual development in different fields of art, science, and literature.

**A Historical and Cultural Study of the Inscriptions of Gujarat** is the work of H.G. Shastri. This book gives an account of cultural study devoted to religion, art, and architecture. It also contains a critical study of the epigraphic data, which has the cultural history through the successive stages of the Ancient Period.

Kireet Joshi writes **The Veda and Indian Culture**. The aim of the work is to serve the young generation to know the basic roots of Indian Culture and to
explore the fundamental rules of spiritual upliftment of Indian Culture. It also presents the core of the Vedas discovery.

State and Government of Ancient India is a book written by A.S. Altekar. This book is based on various Smriti books and *Arthaśāstra* books in Sanskrit.

The materials supplied by Inscriptions has been arranged chronologically and province wise. Its each chapter, the author has attempted to trace the development of political theories and institutions from age to age.

P. Satya Murty writes *Text Book of Indian Epigraphy*. He has shown the relationship of epigraphy with other disciplines. The author suggests for the compulsory intensive Sanskrit courses along with epigraphy.

*Indian Culture: Ancient Glory and Present Gloom* is a book authored by O.P. Sharma for the students who are beginners in the field of learning Indian Culture. The author hopes that the reader would achieve proper vision and insight. Our cultural tradition should help us to dispel the clouds of gloom.

Swami Tejomayananda writes *Hindu Culture* explain the two basic types of Culture, material and spiritual. He explains the full significance of Sanatana Dharma. He points out that keeping the values gives a sense of dignity and purpose to every individual. The fundamental ideas have provided a spiritual base and direction to the Hindu Culture throughout ages.

D.C. Sircar gives the various aspects in *Indian Epigraphy*. He had mentioned palaeography together with some connected topics of epigraphy.