Concepts: Cultural Lag, Assimilation, Acculturation and Cultural Pluralism
Cultural Lag

The concept of Cultural Lag was first introduced by William. F. Ogburn in the study of Social Change. In this theory, he emphasized on the relation between two types of culture. So before discussing the concept of Cultural Lag, it's pertinent to know about two types of Culture.
Material Culture

Culture is a complex whole. It consists of socially learned behaviour, norms and values shared by a human group. Culture is divided into two parts, first is Material Culture.

1. It includes all of the material items that the member of a society have and use. It consists of all the man made products.
2. It is directly observable, tangible and concrete.
3. They can be viewed and can be handled.
4. All of them are human creations.
5. For example, furniture, tools, automobiles, buildings, cultivated farms, in fact, any physical substance which has been changed and used by the people.
6. Material culture is the externalization or physical manifestation of the interaction of human beings.
Illustrations of Material Culture
Non - Material Culture

Culture is a complex whole. It consists of socially learned behaviour, norms and values shared by a human group. Culture is divided into two parts, second is Non - Material Culture.

1. Non material culture comprises of behaviour patterns, values and social relationships of a human group.
2. It consists of words people use, the ideas, customs and beliefs they hold, and the habits they follow.
3. They can be viewed and can be handled.
4. For example, in the aim of cricket, balls, bats etc are the elements of material culture, whereas rules of the game, skills of the players etc are the components of non –material culture.
5. Non Material culture consists of a set of ideas, learned and shared by a members of group, which provides them with either general knowledge about the world or guidelines for behaviour in social institutions.
Illustrations of Non – Material Culture
Crux of Cultural Lag

Referring to material and non-material aspects of culture, William F. Ogburn states that:

- Material Culture changes first due to many discoveries and inventions.
- The non material aspects respond to it.
- Material culture always changes more rapidly than non-material culture and leaves a gap in the two cultures, known as cultural lag.

Hence, cultural lag means that certain part of culture change more rapidly than the others and some parts change relatively slow. Since there is no coordination between these parts, there than exists a ‘lag’ or ‘gap’ between these parts till such time as they get re-adjusted and measured up to the cultural level of the other parts. It is the strain that exists between two co-related parts of culture that change at an unequal speed.
Assimilation

Assimilation is a social process whereby, individuals belonging to different cultures are unified into one.

1. This process deals with interaction between two cultures.
2. In this process of interaction the dominant culture prevails and persists.
3. The new culture which is unimportant is submerged into the dominant culture.

Ultimately, it is the process of unification and establishing identification with one culture.
Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.
Cultural pluralism is a term used when smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities, and their values and practices are accepted by the wider culture.

1. One example is Lebanon where 18 different religious communities co-exist on a land of 10,452 km².
2. India is another example where many cultural practices co-exist.
THANK YOU ...

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