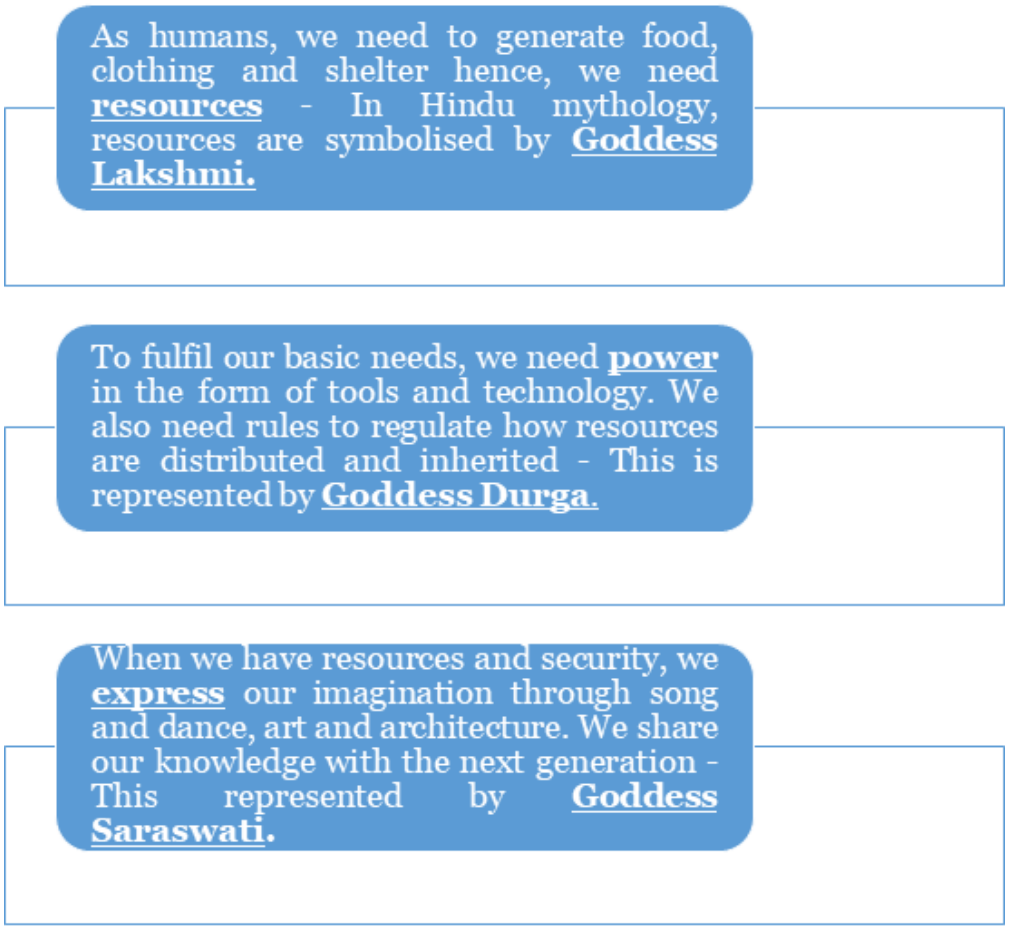
Culture and Civilisation

Why in news?

Subject experts opine that there is a need for a new definition of a culture and civilisation.

What is the meaning of culture and civilisation?

- **Culture** – The term 'culture' is a Latin origin of the world '***cultus***', which refers to *cultivating or refining something*, in such a way that it provides admiration and respect.
- It is the way people live, reflected in the language they spoke, food they eat, clothes they wear and the Diety they follow or worship.
- It expresses the *manner in which one thinks and do things*.
- **Man-made** – *Plants and animals do not have culture*, while humans do as they are made by man.
- When we became humans from apes, we started using tools, painting on cave walls, etc. invoking the birth of a culture.
- There is *no human who does not have a culture*.
- **Relation with mythology** – Culture is intertwined with mythology.



- **Civilisation** – The term 'civilization' is derived from a ***Latin term 'civis'*** which indicates *'someone who resides in a town'*.
- **Concept** – It is a complex culture with hierarchy, complex organisations, and most importantly ruins of public buildings and monuments created from surplus resources.
- **haracteristics** – There are seven characteristics of a civilisation.
- It includes the presence of a government, written language, language, religion, arts, food supply, technology and social structure

What is the relationship between a culture and civilisation?

	Culture	Civilisation
Meaning	A term used to denote the manifestation of the manner in which we think, behave and act.	It refers to the process through which a region or society, outstretches an advanced stage of human development and organization.
Basis	It is more psychological and about values	It is more material and about goods, technology, art and architecture.
Components	It is a people's belief systems, rituals and customs	It is a complex culture with hierarchy, complex organisations, and ruins of public buildings and monuments.
Representation	Culture is what we are	Civilisation is what we have
Reflected in	Religion, art, dance, literature, customs, morals, music, philosophy, etc.	Law, administration, infrastructure, architecture, social arrangement, etc.
Expression	Higher level of inner refinement	Higher level of general development
Interdependency	Culture can grow and exist without civilization	Civilization cannot grow and exist without culture

What can be the new definitions of culture and civilization?

- **Issues with existing definitions** – A century ago, the Europeans used the word civilisation to distinguish themselves as a culture which had a complex structure with a hierarchy, cities and monuments.
- But they saw themselves as *civilised and the "other" as uncivilised.*
- It assumed that only those *who colonised and created class divisions have civilisation*.
- It implies that *tribal folks have a culture but not civilisation* which seems rather insulting.
- Therefore, these old definitions need to be questioned.
- **New definition** – *Every human has a culture* that takes care of its own people, while a *civilisation engages with other cultures* through trade.
- **Transition from culture to civilisation** – Stone Age cultures turned into Bronze Age civilisations as they began trading.
- Metal and stones from mountains were exchanged with agricultural settlements in river valleys.
- Civilisation is thus measurably larger than culture, looking at the needs of not only the in-group but also of the out-group.

Trade system of Harappan civilisation
• They *traded with modern-day Iraq and Iran* 4,500 years ago. • Harappans exported via sea routes cotton textiles, sesame oil, ivory, beads made of carnelian, agate and other semi-precious stones, live chickens, water buffaloes, dogs. • In exchange, they received bitumen, incense, silver, copper, and woollen textiles.
Trade system of Andaman Tribe
• The Jarawa tribe in Andaman *does not trade* and continues to remain isolated, it is *not yet a civilisation*. • But since they are humans, who use tools and have rites and rituals, they *have a culture*.

- Having goods exemplifies the saying that civilisation is what we have, while the exchange mindset stands for who we are, our culture.
- However, *not all cultures have an exchange mindset*, but the ones that have it become civilisation.
- In other words, ***all civilisations are cultures, but not all cultures are civilisations***.

Diversity in Indian Culture
• **Northwest India** – Around 2500 BC, in the Northwest of India, the Harappan civilisation was thriving with its *red and black pottery*. • **Ganges Plains** – Around 1500 BC, the *painted grey ware* of Vedic culture thrived in the Gangetic Plain. • **Deccan region** – There were communities *building megaliths and ashmounds,* and hoarding copper artefacts. • This is culture because they are man-made. • But since we *do not see a trading pattern*, we cannot call them a civilisation. • **Western coast** – On the Ratnagiri coast of Maharashtra, 10,000 years old rock art was found. • These were made by cultured people. • But in the absence of knowledge about their trading pattern, we *cannot say whether they had a civilisation*.

Reference

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