# Organisational Culture: Meaning, Characteristics,

### **Meaning of Organisational Culture:**

To understand the meaning of organisational culture, we must first understand the meaning of culture. “Culture is the set of important understandings that members of a community share in common.” It consists of a basic set of values, ideas, perceptions, preferences, concept of morality, code of conduct etc. which create a distinctiveness among human groups.

When we talk about culture, we typically refer to the pattern of development reflected in a society’s system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, social norms and day to day rituals. Depending upon the pattern and stage of development, culture differs from society to society. Moreover, culture is passed on from generation to generation

In simple words we can say that “culture is a combination of factors that are learned through our interaction with the environment during our developmental and growth years.” After understanding the meaning of culture, we will now attempt to define organisational culture.

**Few Definitions:**

“The organisational culture is a system of shared beliefs and attitudes that develop within an organisation and guides the behaviour of its members.”

“Organisational culture can be defined as the philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that knit an organisation together and are shared by its employees.”

According to Edgar Schein, “Organisational culture can be defined as a pattern of basic assumptions-invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration-that has worked well enough to be considered valuable and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.”

### Characteristics of Organisational Culture:

The following characteristics help us to understand the nature of organisational culture better. NB

**When we mix and match these characteristics, we get to the basis of culture:**

#### 1. Individual Autonomy:

The degree of responsibility, freedom and opportunities of exercising initiative that individuals have in the organisation.

#### 2. Structure:

The degree to which the organisation creates clear objectives and performance expectations. It also includes the degree of direct supervision that is used to control employee behaviour.

#### 3. Management Support:

The degree to which, managers provide clear communication, assistance; warmth and support to their subordinates.

#### 4. Identity

The degree to which, members identify with the organisation as a whole rather than with their particular work group or field of professional expertise.

#### 5. Performance Reward System:

The degree to which reward system in the organisation like increase in salary, promotions etc. is based on employee performance rather than on seniority, favouritism and so on.

#### 6. Conflict Tolerance:

The degree of conflict present in relationships between colleagues and work groups as well as the degree to which employees are encouraged to air conflict and criticisms openly.

#### 7. Risk Tolerance:

The degree to which, employees are encouraged to be innovative, aggressive and risk taking.

#### 8. Communication Patterns:

The degree to which, organisational communications are restricted to the formal hierarchy of authority.9. Outcome Orientation:

The degree to which, management focuses on results or outcomes rather than on the techniques and processes used to achieve these outcomes.