

## **Forms of culture**

**Material Culture** – formed by the physical objects that people create

- Cars, clothing, books, buildings, computers
- Archeologists refer to these items as artifacts

**Non-material Culture** – abstract human creations (can't touch it)

- Language, family patterns, work practices, political and economic systems

## **Characterizes of culture**

- **Functional:** each culture has a function to perform; its purpose is to provide guidelines for behavior of a group of people
- **Social Phenomenon:** human beings create culture; culture results from human interaction and is unique to human society
- **Prescriptive:** culture prescribes (sets down or imposes) rules of social behavior
- **Learned:** culture is not inherited; it is learned from other members of the society
- **Arbitrary:** cultural practices and behaviors are subject to judgment. Certain behaviors are acceptable in one culture and not acceptable in other culture
- **Value Laden:** culture provides values and tells people what is right and wrong
- **Facilitates Communication:** culture facilitates verbal and nonverbal communication

- **Adaptive/ Dynamic:** culture is constantly changing to adjust to new situation and environment; it changes as society changes and develops
- **Long Term:** culture is developed thousands of years ago and it was accumulated by human beings in the course of time and is the sum of acquired experience and knowledge
- **Satisfy Needs:** culture helps to satisfy the needs of the members of a society by offering direction and guidance

**(Source: Reisinger, 2003, p.14)**