

Improve the way of life, move Tamil society to the highest level of every field and achieve global influence

Eliathamby Logeswaran, Researcher

The problem, cause and solution

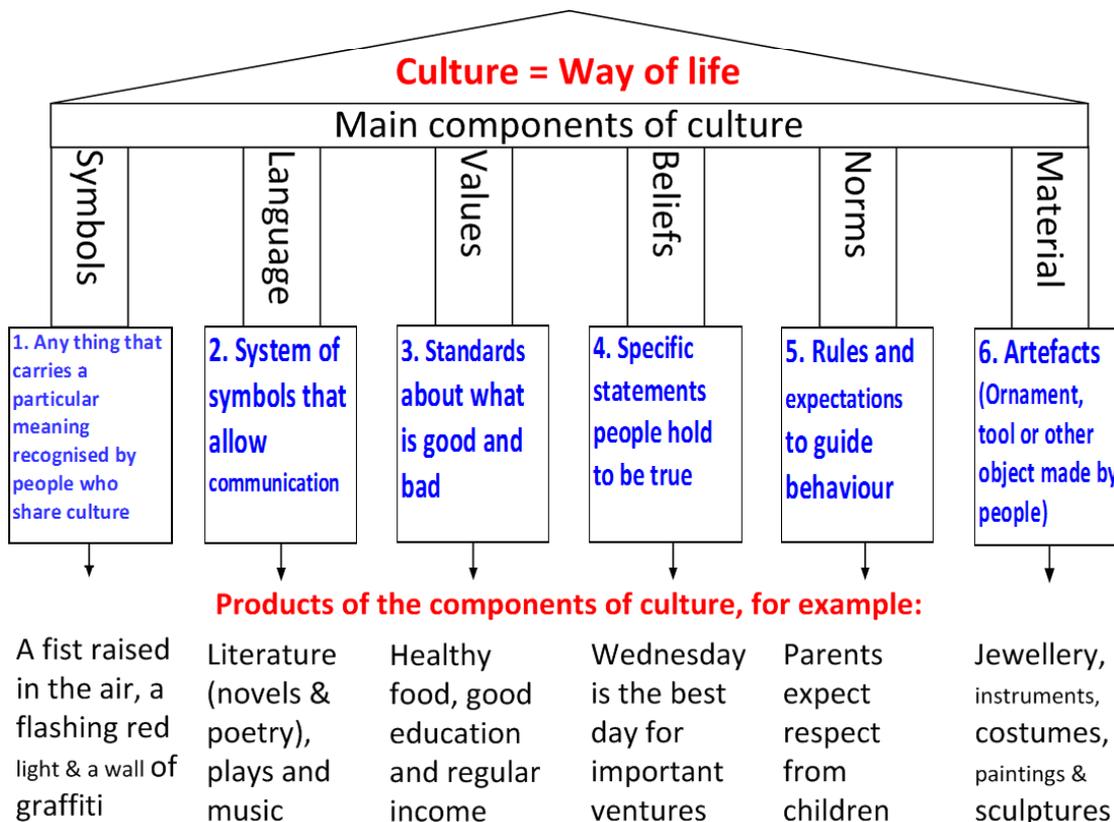
The way of life (culture) of many Tamils is based on symbols, language, values, beliefs, norms and material objects. Over the years, this Tamil culture has not been built correctly, followed consistently, or most importantly, transferred to the next generation. This has resulted in the inability of the global Tamil community to move Tamil society fully, to its highest level in every field, and to have global influence. To change this situation, we need to set a clear vision for the Tamils, understand the different ways of life, close the gaps between the “current way of life” and the “best way of life” and transfer this best way of life to the next generation.

1. Tamil vision

Tamils will unite, exercise their rights, control the factors that pose threats to their survival, ensure their social existence, preserve their identity, improve their way of life, raise their standard of living, make changes that will give happiness and move Tamil society to the highest level in their country of residence effectively, efficiently and continuously.

2.1 Culture

A culture, of any society, consists mainly of 6 components: symbols, language, values, beliefs, norms and material objects. Every component has numerous products. These products together constitute our way of life (culture). To illustrate this, an example is shown below:



People can create a way of life. A way of life is a strategy for survival, ties people together and gives them an identity. A way of life is a design for living, poses solutions for everyday problems, a bridge to the past, a guide to the future and it is passed down from generation to generation by parents, grandparents, teachers and others.

2.2 Different cultures in different countries

The table below, illustrates different cultures in different countries. It shows that the major components of culture are the same in the Tamil, English, Chinese and African ways of life, but the products of the components are different. The table shows 3 products per component, as an example. The products are shown using abbreviations in red, purple, blue and green, where the colours represent different cultures and their associated country of origin.

Different cultures (different ways of life)												
Components	Different products of the same components											
	Tamil			English			Chinese			African		
Symbol (S)	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Language (L)	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3
Values (V)	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3
Beliefs (B)	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3
Norms (N):	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3
Folkways (F)	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3
Mores (M)	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3
Taboos (T)	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
Laws (LA)	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA1	LA2	L3	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA1	LA2	LA3
Artefacts (A)	A1	A2	A3	A1	A2	A3	A1	A2	A3	A1	A2	A3

Every country, city, town, centre, road, house and even each person has their own culture. There are millions of different cultures around the whole world.

2.3 Multicultural society in a country

A multicultural society in a country is a single society united by shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities, within which people have freedom and opportunities to express and foster their cultural heritage, and participate in the broader life of society. They have a responsibility to abide by and contribute to the laws and aspirations that unite society. They co-exist peacefully and equitably in a single country and co-create a community.

Multiculturalism recognises the past and present cultural diversity in its society and promotes the equality of all cultural traditions. It is a beautiful rainbow which encompasses different people, beliefs, yearnings, hopes, and dreams. Multiculturalism embraces and preserves these differences as part of both our national and individual identities. The core element of multiculturalism is for people to have their own culture, but in addition, are able to understand, accept, appreciate different cultures and co-exist with people of different cultures. The table below demonstrates how an individual from one culture can choose products of other cultures that they want to learn about and create their own individual culture.

Immigrant culture in the multicultural Ireland														
Components of culture	Irish			Indian			Chinese			African				
	Some of the products of the components of the culture													
1. Symbol	Statue	S1	S2	S3	Own statue	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
2. Language	Irish	L1	L2	L3	Own languages	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3
3. Values	Irish stew	V1	V2	V3	Rice and curry	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3
4. Beliefs	Democracy	B1	B2	B3	Good governance	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3
5. Norms	Rules	N1	N2	N3	Expectations	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3
6. Material	Suit	MC1	MC2	MC3	Saree and Verti	MC1	MC2	MC3	MC1	MC2	MC3	MC1	MC2	MC3
Immigrant following culture =	Some of the inevitable products of the components of the Irish culture followed by the immigrants				+ Some products of the components of their own and other cultures which could be practiced simultaneously using the facilities and the environment available in the state of Ireland									

There are no "pure," original cultures. Each culture has incorporated elements of other cultures. Cultures are the result of interactions with one another. Culture is a continuous process of change. In this sense, the cultures of immigrants are seen as opportunities for the enrichment of one's own culture. We can choose to learn about each other and grow.

2.4 Mixed and enriched culture of a child

Tamil Father's culture				English Mother's culture				*Other cultures			
Components	Products of components			Components	Products of components			Components	Products of components		
Symbol	S1	S2	S3	Symbol	S1	S2	S3	Symbol	S1	S2	S3
Language	L1	L2	L3	Language	L1	L2	L3	Language	L1	L2	L3
Values	V1	V2	V3	Values	V1	V2	V3	Values	V1	V2	V3
Beliefs	B1	B2	B3	Beliefs	B1	B2	B3	Beliefs	B1	B2	B3
Norms:	N1	N2	N3	Norms:	N1	N2	N3	Norms:	N1	N2	N3
Folkways	F1	F2	F3	Folkways	F1	F2	F3	Folkways	F1	F2	F3
Mores	M1	M2	M3	Mores	M1	M2	M3	Mores	M1	M2	M3
Taboos	T1	T2	T3	Taboos	T1	T2	T3	Taboos	T1	T2	T3
Laws	LA1	LA2	LA3	Laws	LA1	LA2	LA3	Laws	LA1	LA2	LA3
Artefacts	A1	A2	A3	Artefacts	A1	A2	A3	Artefacts	A1	A2	A3

Giving a child a broad cultural experience allows them to make choices about their heritage and about what is right for them. This allows them to develop self-confidence and a strong sense of pride in who they are and where they come from. Children should be encouraged to respect and value the cultures that make up our society.

Child's culture			
Components	Products of components		
Symbol	S1	S2	S3
Language	L1	L2	L3
Values	V1	V2	V3
Beliefs	B1	B2	B3
Norms:	N1	N2	N3
Folkways	F1	F2	F3
Mores	M1	M2	M3
Taboos	T1	T2	T3
Laws	LA1	LA2	LA3
Artefacts	A1	A2	A3

Culture is the life you live. It shapes your life experience and you can choose to like, dislike, or identify with any culture you choose. Culture is a way of life so it is up to you to decide which one or ones you want to identify with. You can't change your heritage because you can't change who your parents are, but you can change your way of living and that would be your culture.

* Other cultures: Home, school, work and social cultures.

Individual identity

Family	Nationality	Citizenship	Ethnicity	Colour
Father	Irish	Irish	Tamil	Brown
Mother	UK	UK	English	White
Child	Irish & UK	Irish & UK	Tamil	Beige or Tan

The tables above show the culture, nationality, citizenship, ethnicity, colour and the Tamil identity of the child born to a Tamil father and an English mother. The child must understand and know his/her identity clearly to survive in this world.

2.5 Types of Tamil culture under the influence of different cultures & different environments

In the table below, the products of the components of the original Tamil culture are represented in red, and the products of the components of an oppressor's culture are represented in black. All the other colours represent the products of the components of the cultures of three other randomly selected societies. The table shows that the Tamil culture is undergoing changes under the influence of different cultures and different environments resulting in the following six outcomes for the Tamil culture:

Components	Different environment									
	Under genocide			Within Tamil Diaspora			Under correct Tamil rule			
	Products of the components of the Tamil culture									
Symbol	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1
Language	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1
Values	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3	V1
Beliefs	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3	B1	B2	B3	B1
Norms:	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3	N1	N2	N3	N1
Folkways	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3	F1
Mores	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3	M1
Taboos	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1
Laws	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA1
Artefacts	A1	A2	A3	A1	A2	A3	A1	A2	A3	A1
Types of Tamil Culture	Fully destroyed			Mixed and partly enriched or degraded			Original		Enriched fully	

a. Destroyed Tamil culture: All the products of the components of the Tamil culture were changed to the products of the components of the oppressor's culture.

b. Lost Tamil Culture: Products of the components of the culture were not passed from the previous generation to the next

c. Degraded Tamil culture: Some of the bad products of the components of other cultures were absorbed into the Tamil culture.

d. Mixed Tamil culture: Products of the components of the Tamil culture are mixed with the products of the components of other cultures

e. Original Tamil culture: Products of the components of Tamil culture are preserved and not mixed with other cultures

f. Enriched Tamil culture: Some of the high value products of the components of other cultures and newly developed products of the components of the Tamil culture were absorbed into the Tamil culture

The global Tamil community, must select our individual way of life which will help us to enrich our culture and achieve our Tamil vision under different environments.

2.6 Judging cultures

All people are the same, only their individual habits are different. We often judge another culture by the standards of our own culture, but we should instead judge a culture by its own standards. To do this, we need to be open to understand other cultures fully.

2.7 General benefits of culture

Culture is a means of communication between people. It ties people together and gives them an identity. It is necessary to establish order and discipline in society. It creates a feeling of belonging and togetherness among people in the society

2.8 Benefits of following the Tamil culture correctly and continuously

The Tamils way of life allows a continuous happy life. It helps to earn respect and support for Tamils worldwide. Individuals, families and societies can become role models and rise to the highest level in every field. Tamil culture focuses on developing an attitude of helping people who are suffering, and a thinking that others must live happily and grow. It allows for the preservation of the vital components of the old culture and the inclusion of new components with changing times.

3. How to achieve the Tamil vision

Tamils should close the gaps between the “current way of life” and the “best way of life”, which will help to achieve the vision. The table below illustrates some products, arbitrarily chosen in this example, of the best way of life and products of the current way of life. Understanding the differences between the two, highlights the gaps. When the gaps are known, they can then be closed, so that the best way of life can be realised and transferred to the next generation.

Best way of life to achieve the Tamil vision			Current way of life			= Gaps	Before closing the gaps		After closing the gaps	
Components	*Products of components		Components	*Products of components			Colour code		*Status of the products of the components of culture	
Symbol	S1	S2	S3	Symbol	S1	S2		Original	Retain	
Language	L1	L2	L3	Language	L1	L2	L3	New	Retain	
Values	V1	V2	V3	Values	V1	V2	V3	Enriched	Retain	
Beliefs	B1	B2	B3	Beliefs	B1	B2	B3	Degraded	Enrich and retain	
Norms:	N1	N2	N3	Norms:	N1	N2	N3	Lost	Find, enrich & reintroduce	
Folkways	F1	F2	F3	Folkways	F1		F3	Useless	Preserve as a history	
Mores	M1	M2	M3	Mores	M1	M2	M3			
Taboos	T1	T2	T3	Taboos	T1	T2	T3			
Laws	LA1	LA2	LA3	Laws	LA1	LA2				
Artefacts	A1	A2	A3	Artefacts	A1	A2	A3			

4. How to preserve and transfer* the best way of life to the next Tamil generation



* Cultural transmission is the process by which one generation passes culture to the next.

The greatest and the most powerful gift a parent can give their children, is to pass on their language and the rest of their culture.

Note:

Some of the contents of this article were taken from websites and the book “Sociology, a global Introduction”, 4th edition by John J. Macionis and Ken Plummer. Workshops will be conducted to do some exercises where we can discuss, understand and learn how to improve our way of life to achieve global influence. Specific information about the Tamil culture is given in a presentation which could be obtained from the author of this article. Author’s e-mail address is e_logeswaran@yahoo.co.uk