

Altered tribal
societies their
purpose tends to be



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Altered states of consciousness are an issue which has been touched upon on various fields. Those fields encompass history, archeology, cultural anthropology, religious studies, philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience. (Garcia-Romeu, Tart in Friedman and Hartelius, 2015). Garcia-Romeu and Tart compiled an array of basic definitions, major terms and concepts regarding such altered states of consciousness. As consciousness is a controversial term they also explain that any definition for it is tentative at best (Garcia-Romeu, Tart in Friedman and Hartelius, 2015).

Some of the definitions which they provide are those of Chalmers, which states that consciousness is a difficult term to define, as consciousness is an experience well known to almost everyone however it is very difficult to explain (Friedman, 2015). Tart also defined consciousness as an exclusive active pattern of arrangement of psychological structure (Friedman, 2015). Various altered states of consciousness include rhythm-induced trance, which can be achieved through activities such as drumming, and dancing, relaxation, meditation, and hypnosis (Weiss, 2006). Furthermore, altered states of consciousness can be achieved through chemical reactions which can take place through the consumption of products such as drugs.

According to Tart, the intake of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25) shares common features of other altered states of consciousness which are induced by practices such as hypnosis (Tart, 1990). Such common features include alterations in thinking, a loss of control, a distorted sense of time, changes in emotional expression, body image changes, perceptual distortion changes in meaning or significance, a sense of infallibility, and feelings of rejuvenation. Hallucinations are another feature of altered states of

consciousness, and cross-culturally they tend to take place within ritual meetings, and are often associated with religious beliefs and traditions (Ward, 1989). Hallucinations which are inhibited by the intake of narcotic substances such as psilocybin and LSD tend to differ in their consumed purpose in vastly different societies and cultures, for example in many modern western societies their intake is for personal purposes, whereas in tribal societies their purpose tends to be collective and ritual.