

## 1. Concept of Attitude

Have you noticed that whenever we meet someone, we tend to evaluate him or her? You may think of your friend as trustworthy, caring and helpful and hence have a positive and favourable feeling towards him/her. On the other hand, you may consider your neighbour to be loud who tend to interfere in your family's activities. You are likely to have a negative or unfavourable feeling toward such a person. Similarly, our family, neighbours, friends, political leaders and others communicate their attitudes and beliefs towards us.

We need to understand ourselves and others and evaluate the social world we live in. Also, when we come across a new experience, we evaluate it to form long-term reactions that then govern the way we perceive that object again. Attitudes are these lasting evaluations that people make of the world around them. Our attitudes and beliefs help to understand ourselves and the people who live around us.

Attitude has been defined in different ways by different scholars and psychologists. Some of its definitions showcasing different characteristics of attitude are:

- "Attitude is a readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way" (Jung, 1921)
- "An attitude is a complex tendency of the person to respond consistently in a favourable or an unfavourable way to social objects in the environment" (Proshansky and Seidenberg, 1965)
- "An attitude is a predisposition to act in a certain way towards some aspect of one's environment, including other people." (Mednick et al 1975)
- "Attitudes are likes and dislikes" (Bem 1979)
- An attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols" (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005)

From the above definitions, one can view attitude as a predisposition to act, think and feel in particular ways toward a class of people, objects, events, places or an idea. It is a positive or negative evaluation of just about anything in your environment. Attitudes are about things. There is an object involved about which we feel, think and behave in certain ways. An attitude object does not have to be an object in the concrete sense of things that can be touched. You can have an attitude about fox hunting or a piece of music as well as about any organisation like BCCI, World Bank or United Nations.

We communicate our attitudes in the form of statements such as:

- I like mangoes
- I enjoy classical music or
- I do not enjoy rock music

When we use words such as 'like', 'dislike', 'love', 'hate', 'good' and 'bad' we are describing our attitude towards objects, people or issues. Different people can have different political attitudes; attitudes about smoking, jogging, and other activities.

**Types of Attitudes:** Attitudes are either positive, negative or neutral in nature.

1. Example of positive attitudes:
  - There is something good in every situation.
  - A problem is an opportunity to do something different.
  - Change is a sign of growth
  - A mistake is a valuable step towards success.
2. Example of negative attitudes:
  - There is always something wrong
  - Other people cause problems.
  - A mistake is a failure
  - I have little or no control over my life.