

1. Attitude –Definition and overview

1.1. Meaning of Attitude



Attitude is the learned and **enduring predisposition** to behave, either favourably or unfavourably, towards something. This something can be an event, a person, an object or classes of such events, persons, or objects, respectively.

Few examples - Explanation of “half-full glass” i.e. a person’s attitude determines whether it is half-full or half-empty. Another example when population of India was exploding, one set of people looked at it as burden, while another set of people looked it as expansion of human resource that can be capitalized for development.

Two different individuals make two opposite senses of the same target object. This is because of the differences in their attitude.

Characteristics of attitude

- Attitudes are **abstract constructs**, not something we can directly observe. We are only able to infer them from behaviour.
- It is **lasting evaluation** with respect to various social significant issue and events. It is always serving some purpose.
- Attitude is **acquired through the socialisation** process. It may involve individual or groups.
- Attitude can be expressed both verbally and non-verbally.
- Attitude is important **because it shapes people’s perceptions of the social and physical world and influence overt behaviour**. For example, attitude influences friendship and animosity towards others, giving and receiving help, hiring of ethnic minority job candidates, etc. More dramatically, attitudes are at the heart of many violent attacks, including crimes against humanity.
- Attitudes change with **experiences and knowledge** as man is a ‘rational’ animal.
- **A rigid or dogmatic attitude** is not the same as a strong attitude. A strong attitude may have been formed with knowledge and experience and be grounded in rationality, hitherto oblivious to others

Difference between Value and Attitude	
 VALUES	ATTITUDES 
Moral principles or moral ethics standards of behaviour	Opinions or stances about a certain subject matter or a person
A part of person’s character	A part of person’s personality
Showcase a particular person’s moral ethics and his/her overall character	Highlight a person’s behaviour through the personality
Directly influenced by family, friends, culture, religion, and social interactions	Directly influenced by a person’s values
Moral ethics	Can be negative and positive