



## Mains Practice Question

Q." Attitude is a small thing but it makes a big difference". Discuss the factors that contribute to the formation of attitude and functions of attitude. (250 Words)

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### Approach

- Start your answer by giving a brief about attitude.
- Discuss the factors behind the formation of attitude.
- Discuss functions of attitude.
- Conclude suitably.

### Introduction

Attitude is a **psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour.**

The evaluations which people make can range from extremely unfavourable to the extremely favourable, or can be more moderate.

Attitudes can be mixed, and with regard to the same object, may vary from time to time.

### Main Body

#### Factors behind the Formation of Attitudes

- **Culture:** Culture exerts enormous influence on an individual. Culture in itself includes religion, tradition, customs, prohibitions, rewards and sanctions. Socialisation is the process by which culture shapes the attitudes of the people. Culture teaches individual beliefs, attitudes and behaviour that are acceptable in one's life and society.
- **Family:** Family is the most important and closest social group for a person. It is the nursery for attitudinal formation. Parents are more influential among the family system who structure and mould the attitude of a child. Extended family and sibling relationships, in particular, play an important role in attitude formation.
- **Social Groups:** Several social groups apart from family play an important role in attitude formation which includes friends, peers, colleagues, etc. Consider the voting pattern in India. There are people who do not listen to candidate's speeches, read newspapers or follow debates. They talk with friends, family, etc. and vote for a candidate. Families, friends and other such social groups most definitely influence the choice of a candidate.
- **Institutions:** A man is never alone. From cradle to grave he is under the influence of one institution or the other. For example: Educational institutions like schools and colleges act as repositories of knowledge, direct and shape the beliefs, values of a person and thus form attitudes.
- **Familiarity:** Familiarity breeds positive attitude. Man, generally has a fear of the unknown, so anything familiar might make him or her feel at peace. Familiarity and classical conditioning act on emotions of an individual and therefore shape the affective component of attitudes.

## Functions of Attitude

- **Knowledge Function:** Attitudes have a knowledge function, which enables individuals to understand their environment and to be consistent in their ideas and thinking. Most attitudes serve this basic function in some measure.
- **Utilitarian Function:** Attitude helps individuals in maximizing benefits and minimizing disadvantages while interacting with individuals, groups and situations in their environment. Utilitarian attitudes lead to behaviour that optimizes one's interests.
- **Performing a Social Role:** Attitudes help perform a social role, helping in an individual's self-expression and social interaction. Subscribing to a given set of attitudes signals one's identification with important reference groups to express one's core values, and to establish one's identity. This social role of attitudes is known as social identity function, it underlies an individual's desire to establish his individual and social identity.
- **Maintain an Individual's Self-Esteem:** Attitudes can serve as defence mechanisms for handling an individual's internal mental conflict which reflect tensions within the individual psyche. The defence mechanisms hide an individual's true motives from himself or psychologically isolate him from groups perceived as hostile or threatening.

## Conclusion

According to A.P. J. Abdul Kalam "All birds find shelter during a rain. But Eagle avoids rain by flying above the clouds." It means problems are common, but attitude makes the difference.

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