



Mains Practice Question

Q. What is the difference between attitude and aptitude? Among the two, which one do you think is more important for a civil servant. (150 words)

02 Jan, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach:

- List the differences between the attitude and aptitude.
- Explain with examples the need for both attitude and aptitude for a civil servant.

Introduction

- Both attitude and aptitude are essential traits to succeed in any walk of life. However, they become more important in civil services for its impact on society. Having said this, there are few vital differences between aptitude and attitude.

Body

Attitude	Aptitude
Attitude refers to a psychological response to a particular situation, person, thing or an issue. Attitude can be positive as well as negative.	It is a component of a competency to do a certain kind of work at a certain level.
It is associated with character or virtues.	It is associated with talent.
Attitude is a mental aspect.	Aptitude can be both physical as well as mental.
It is relatively permanent. However, if an attitude is undesirable in a modern society, it should be changed accordingly. E.g.: The government by various campaigns (advertisements) is trying to change the attitude of citizens for the success of Swachh Bharat Mission.	This can be changed and developed through training and capacity building.

- A civil servant must possess both to adequately respond to any situation which is complex, multi-faceted and dynamic. A positive attitude directs and guides a civil servant to utilise his aptitude for the welfare of society. E.g.:
 - Recently, an IAS officer volunteered to collect relief materials for the Kerala flood victims. The officer had an attitude to reach out to the people and help them. In this case, a competency or skill set was not as important as an urge to serve, i.e. a component of attitude.
 - In another example, an IAS officer from Kerala came up with initiatives like Compassionate Kozhikode, Operation Sulaimani, Freedom Café, Tere Mere Beach Mein, etc to usher in a new era of governance that endeavored to bridge the gap between the district administration and citizens through the optimal employment of social media and technology. This was an example of the importance of aptitude or skill set to achieve desired goals.

- In both examples enumerated above, we can see that a successful administrator requires both attitude as well aptitude to serve the society. Although their importance may vary from case to case. However, the attitude often takes precedence over aptitude because the latter can be enhanced easily and moulded accordingly but the former is difficult to change one deeply ingrained.
- Moreover, the right attitude also helps influence other aspects like emotional intelligence, leadership, team spirit, fraternity, empathy, compassion, which are very vital for a civil servant.

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