



Mains Practice Question

Q. What do you understand by attitude and attitude change? Highlight the factors that influence attitude change. (150 Words)

29 Apr, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Define the terms attitude and attitude change with the help of relevant examples.
- Also enumerate the factors responsible for attitude change.
- Conclude by emphasizing the significance of attitude in one's behaviour.

Introduction

Attitude refers to the views, beliefs or evaluations of people about someone, place, thing, ideas or an event. It can be positive, negative or neutral.

Attitudes are formed through learning, emotions and past experiences and are powerful in influencing the behaviour of the people.

For example, a person believes that smoking is unhealthy, feels uncomfortable when people smoke, and avoids being in situations where people smoke.

Body

Attitude change occurs anytime an attitude is modified. Attitudes may change and modify through various influences. Some attitudes change more than others do. Attitudes that are still in the formative stage, and are more like opinions, are much more likely to change compared to attitudes that have become firmly established, and have become a part of the individual's values.

For example, people participating in Swachh Bharat Mission by construction of more toilets has witnessed an attitudinal change where they have given up the practice of openly defecating and have started using toilets.

Attitude change is influenced by various factors such as

- **Persuasion:** It is an active attempt to change another person's attitudes, beliefs or feelings. People can be motivated through emotional appeal, rational calls through radio, TV, social media etc leading to attitudinal shift. It can be enhanced if the speaker is a renowned personality. For instance, roping in celebrities for spreading the message of Swachh Bharat Mission.
- **Dissonance:** People can change their attitudes when they have conflicting beliefs about an issue (Cognitive Dissonance) so as to reduce the mental discomfort created by these incompatible beliefs.
- **Experience or Upbringing:** Attitude of children can be changed depending on the parenting attitudes, family's belief and values etc.
- **Mode of spreading the message:** Face-to-face transmission of the message is usually more effective than indirect transmission, such as through mass media. For example, a positive attitude

towards Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) for young children is more effectively created if community social workers and doctors spread the message by talking to people directly, than by only describing the benefits of ORS on the radio.

Conclusion

Attitudes are important because they guide thoughts, behaviours, and feelings. They help in mediating between a person's internal needs (ex: self-expression) and the external environment.

It is one of the important factors in helping one get through the highs and lows of life. Since attitude spells how a person copes, it invariably has an effect on one's performance thus helping people to achieve their goals.

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