**ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR**

**Attitude**

Attitude influences the behaviour of the individuals. Attitude is a usual way of doing things. Successes and failures in life depend upon the attitude of the individuals. If attitudes are positive, then human relations will be positive. And positive human relations are necessary for a successful life.

a. Attitude is a disposition to approach an idea, event, person, or an object.

b. It is a tendency to act in one way or the other toward an `attitude object' or something (i.e. idea, event, person, object, food, colour, and furniture, virtually everything).

**Behaviour**

Behaviour may be defined as

a. The manner in which one behaves.

b**.** The actions or reactions of a person or animal in response to external or internal stimuli.

c**.** The manner in which something functions or operates.

**Types of Attitudes**

Attitude is something that lies between emotions and thought processing. Attitude may be positive or negative. If someone has good feelings about something e.g. towards his/her work, or people, then it is positive attitude otherwise it would be negative.

**Positive attitude**

The predisposition that results in desirable outcomes for individuals and organizations can be

described as positive attitude. Positive attitudes are rewarded. It means the individual is

encouraged to do the same thing in future.

**Negative attitude**

The tendency of a person that results in an undesirable outcome for individuals and

organizations can be described as negative attitude. Negative attitudes are punished in order to

discourage the same action in future.

**Change in Attitude**

Reward and punishment build up attitude. Attitude can be changed, if we differentiate negative attitude from positive attitude. Positive attitude can bring positive change in life.

It is difficult to change attitudes but with some effort, it can be done. A positive attitude is a pre-requisite for change and development. If anybody has negative attitude towards `change', this attitude will extend to anything representing change i.e. leaders, technology, meetings, or any process of change.

**Formation of Attitude**

**Imitation -** Individual attitudes develop through the interaction of complex forces and are learnt.

And what is learnt can be unlearned or changed. We develop our attitudes from copying those people who are important to us (significant others), particularly parents and siblings. Religious beliefs are good examples.

**Rewards and punishments** associated with certain actions make individuals acquire beliefs and accordingly result in building personal attitudes.

**Demonstration** effect from friends and playmates play an important role towards developing attitudes.

**Media or persuasive communications** also help develop certain attitudes. Often our attitudes towards politics come from information or persuasive communications from media.

**How to change attitude**

Negative attitudes towards change will disrupt the process of change.

Information alone is not sufficient to change attitudes towards a new idea or practice.

Don't fertilize the rocks. First, make people less resistant to receiving and processing information. And then expect change in their attitudes.

**Cognitive approaches** focus on changing the way people think about an entity or object. This is done through information, persuasive communication through introducing conflict or dissonance between the existing attitude and the new one.

**Behavioral approaches** focus reward and punishments for certain attitudes and behaviours. It can be used at homes, schools or organizations.

**Social approaches** focus on our tendency to copy the beliefs and behaviours of others. Role models shown on television and in the neighbourhoods are examples. People change their residences, shift from old localities/mohallas to modern localities to learn new values and bring change in their attitudes.

An individual is capable of holding two contradictory beliefs or notions as long the person is not made aware about them. Once the person becomes aware, cognitive dissonance occurs.

Dissonance is the uncomfortable feeling when we feel that what we believe may not be true. We cannot live with such discomfort and we try to modify either our thinking or change our behaviour. We can take the example of an environmentalist who is the advocate of keeping the environment clean, himself uses smoke emitting car. When he/she is made to realize, about his/her attitude, the conflict or dissonance emerges in his mind. In the result of this dissonance his/her probable actions will be either

1. Deny the evidence,

2. Change the car,

3. Rationalize the action that he had to drive a large car for safety or for some other reasons.

In all the cases, he tries to reduce dissonance or discomfort, because nobody likes to remain with the discomfort. He/she will bring change in the attitude to get rid of dissonance. Dissonance can be a great tool towards change. This conflict or dissonance can be created by oneself or by an organization or a group.

**Steps towards change in attitude**

Attitudes of individuals towards life, family, ideas, political thinking, religion or anything can be changed.Following are the various steps for bringing change in one's attitude that bring change in the behaviours.

1. Identify the object towards which change of attitude is desired.

2. Introduce information about which individual agrees.

3. Introduce the new information that contradicts the existing beliefs or attitudes.

4. Identify the ways through which belief or practice conform to new information