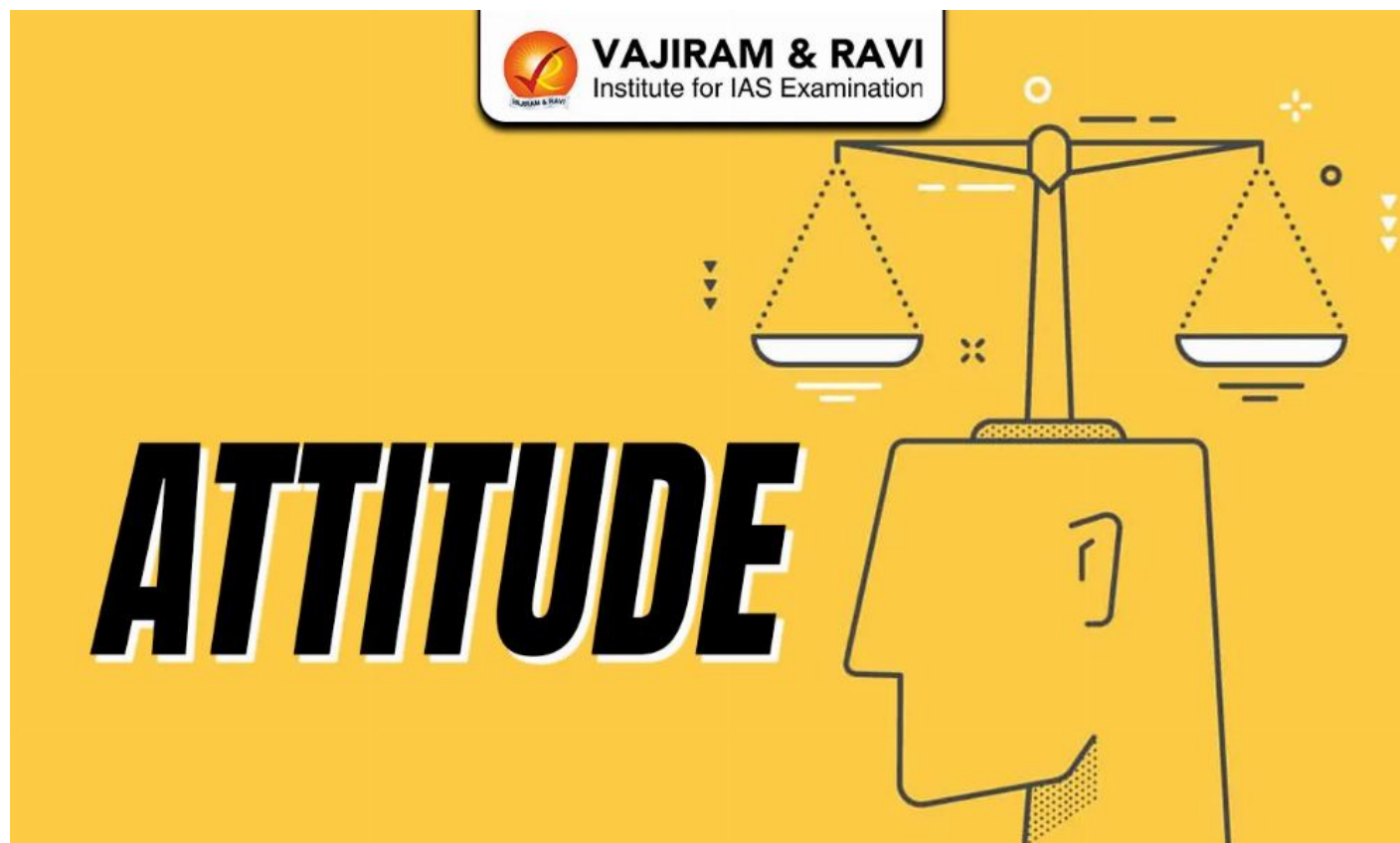


Attitude, Meaning, Types, Content, Structure, Functions, Formation

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Attitude is a learned psychological tendency through which individuals evaluate persons, objects, ideas or events with favour or disfavour, as defined by Eagly and Chaiken. It is not innate but acquired through experience, socialisation and education. William James observed that success in difficult tasks depends largely on one's initial attitude. Attitude reflects a person's inclinations, emotions and readiness to act. It is abstract, changeable and may be explicit or implicit. Grounded attitudes formed through direct experience predict behaviour more accurately than superficial expressions.

Attitude Content

Attitude Content explains what an attitude consists of in practical psychological terms.

- **Evaluation Element:** Every attitude contains a judgement of like or dislike. For example, reverence towards religion leads individuals to follow doctrines and rituals, reflecting favourable evaluation.
- **Learned Nature:** Attitudes are acquired through family, education and environment. A patriarchal upbringing may shape biased views, later corrected through exposure to gender equality evidence.

- **Explicit and Implicit Aspects:** Explicit attitudes are consciously formed and expressed, such as supporting eco friendly products. Implicit attitudes are subconscious, like preference for childhood brands.
- **Direction and Intensity:** Attitudes vary in positivity or negativity and in strength. Strong attitudes rooted in personal experience influence behaviour more consistently.
- **Generality and Specificity:** A general attitude may apply broadly, while a specific attitude predicts precise behaviour, such as attitude towards one teacher versus all teachers.

Attitude Structure

Attitude follows the CAB Model, i.e. Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Components.

- **Cognitive Component:** It involves beliefs and information. Knowledge that Coca Cola harms health shaped Ronaldo's belief during Euro press interaction.
- **Affective Component:** It refers to feelings such as fear, pride or disgust. Emotional dislike towards unhealthy drinks influenced visible reaction.
- **Behavioural Component:** It reflects readiness to act. Removing Coca Cola bottles and replacing them with water demonstrated action aligned with belief and feeling.
- **Synchronisation of Components:** When cognition, emotion and behaviour align, attitudes strongly predict conduct, as seen in disciplined sportspersons or committed public servants.
- **Behaviour Gap:** Research shows behaviour may not always match attitudes due to social pressure, self awareness or situational factors.

Attitude Functions

Attitudes serve important psychological and social purposes in human life:

- **Utilitarian Function:** Individuals adopt attitudes that maximise rewards and minimise punishment, such as striving for honours like Bharat Ratna or **Padma awards**.
- **Knowledge Function:** Attitudes simplify complex environments. Avoiding conflict zones like Syria reflects knowledge based evaluation for safety.
- **Ego Defensive Function:** Attitudes protect self esteem. Appealing to parental pride to prevent child marriage uses psychological defence mechanisms constructively.
- **Value Expressive Function:** Attitudes reflect core values. Standing in solidarity with injustice victims expresses commitment to fairness and equality.
- **Social Identity Function:** Celebrating Independence Day signals patriotism, displaying alignment with national identity.

Attitude Types

Attitudes vary across moral, social and institutional contexts.

- **Explicit and Implicit Attitude:** Explicit Attitude is Conscious and deliberate, such as supporting environmental sustainability policies through informed reasoning. On the other hand, Implicit are subconscious and spontaneous, often shaped by early conditioning and social exposure.

- **Positive and Negative Attitude:** Positive attitudes encourage constructive behaviour; negative attitudes may lead to prejudice or discrimination.
- **Strong and Weak Attitude:** Strong attitudes rooted in experience influence consistent behaviour; weak attitudes fluctuate with circumstances.
- **Ambivalent Attitude:** Mixed reactions, such as appreciating development work of a leader while disapproving corruption charges.

Attitude Formation

Attitudes develop through conditioning, observation and social factors.

- **Classical Conditioning:** Ivan Pavlov demonstrated pairing neutral stimuli with unconditioned stimuli. Repeated positive governance outcomes create favourable citizen attitudes.
- **Instrumental Conditioning:** Reward strengthens behaviour; punishment weakens it. Social ostracism for smoking encourages a negative attitude towards tobacco.
- **Observational Learning:** People emulate rewarded behaviours. Corporate “best employee” awards shape positive workplace attitudes.
- **Genetic Influence:** Preferences for certain foods or temperaments show biological contribution to some attitudes.
- **Socialisation Factors:** Family, religion, education, caste, ethnicity and economic status strongly shape political and social orientations.

Moral Attitude

Moral attitude is rooted in convictions about right and wrong and carries strong emotions.

- **Moral Conviction:** It is stronger than mere belief. Attitude towards democracy carries moral undertones unlike attitude towards snakes.
- **Emotional Intensity:** Moral attitudes prevent deviance due to fear of social ostracisation, reducing crimes like molestation.
- **Positive Outcomes:** It motivates altruism, volunteerism and social service activities.
- **Negative Misuse:** Extremist groups justify riots or terrorism through emotionally charged moral narratives.
- **Core Qualities:** Reverence, faithfulness, veracity, goodness and responsibility shape ethical character and decision making integrity.

Social Attitude

Social attitude refers to conditioned responses towards social groups and issues.

- **Attitude towards Weaker Sections:** Empathy towards poverty and discrimination reflects compassion essential for inclusive governance.
- **Prejudice:** Baseless negative attitudes towards groups, such as stereotypes about women drivers or Dalit merit, lead to discrimination.

- **Countering Prejudice:** Education, inter group contact and broader social identity, seeing oneself as Indian first, reduce bias.
- **Crimes against Women Context:** National Commission for Women reported 46% rise in complaints in first eight months of 2021, highlighting patriarchal backlash and structural insecurity.
- **Social Reform Measures:** Legal steps, gender sensitive policing, 24/7 helplines and NGO involvement are necessary for attitude correction.

Democratic Attitude

Democratic attitude emphasises participation, inclusiveness and bottom up governance.

- **Participatory Decision Making:** Decisions based on majority opinion enhance legitimacy and grassroots empowerment.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Public involvement strengthens democratic institutions and improves service delivery.
- **Inclusiveness:** Focus on compassion and tolerance rather than rigid procedures ensures citizen centric administration.
- **Limitation of Speed:** Mandatory consultations, such as under **Forest Rights Act 2006**, may delay mining or industrial projects.
- **Public Satisfaction:** Aim is maximisation of welfare of largest number while respecting elected representation.

Bureaucratic Attitude

Bureaucratic attitude stresses neutrality, objectivity and strict rule adherence.

- **Rule Based Decisions:** Actions strictly follow law and procedure, ensuring consistency and predictability.
- **Speed in Sensitive Matters:** In national security issues, hierarchical decision making ensures quick execution.
- **Red Tapism Risk:** Overemphasis on procedure may cause delays and stagnation.
- **Public Alienation:** Excess rigidity may create apathy towards citizens and widen trust deficit.
- **Fixing Responsibility:** Clear hierarchy allows easier accountability in administrative decisions.

Political Attitude

Political attitude reflects orientation towards ideologies, leaders and governance systems.

- **Personality Traits:** Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness influence ideological leanings.
- **Social Determinants:** Religion, caste, ethnicity and family shape political ideology, as seen in caste based electoral patterns.
- **Economic Status:** Poor voters may support subsidised welfare promises; affluent groups may prefer market oriented policies.

- **Social Media Influence:** Digital platforms act as propaganda tools shaping ideological orientation in modern democracies.
- **Ideological Spectrum:** Major ideologies include liberalism, conservatism, communism, fascism, environmentalism and feminism, each proposing distinct governance models.

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