UNIT 7 ATTITUDES AND VALUES

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- describe concepts of attitudes;
- analyse the components of attitudes;
- describe importance of attitudes in behavioural science;
- explain process of formation of attitudes;
- explain process of change of attitudes;
- establish relationship between attitudes and behaviour;
- discuss the work related attitudes;
- describe the concept of values;
- examine the bases for formation of values; and
- develop a design for value-based organisation.

1.1INTRODUCTION

Attitudes refer to tendency to respond to certain objects, persons or situations. They are the feelings and beliefs that determine the behaviour of the persons. They provide framework for responding in a particular fashion. The attitudes may be positive or negative. The positive attitudes yield favourable behaviour and the negative attitudes yield unfavourable behaviour. Therefore all variables must be identified and analysed which help in the formation of favourable attitudes. The persons having positive attitudes towards the job and organisation may contribute their best to the organisation. Another important indicator of behaviour is value which provides basic foundation for understanding a person's attitude, perception and personality. It contains judgmental element of right, wrong, good, bad, etc. The individuals having high value system may be involved in constructive activities and refrained to the destructive activities. Therefore the organisations must inculcate high value system to their members. In this unit, you will learn the concept of attitude, the process of formation and change in attitude. You will be exposed to various work related attitudes. You will further learn the meaning, importance and types of values and the values across the culture. You will be familiarised with the process of designing the value based organisation.

7.2 CONCEPT OF ATTITUDE

Consider following three statements:

Statement 1 : Male executives are high achievers in comparison to female counterparts;

Statement 2 : Anything with a tag "Made in Japan" is reliable;

Statement 3 : Discipline can be established through coercion only.

You might have heard the statements mentioned above, or you might have yourself used such statements sometime in recent past. In all the three statements you are inclined to evaluate something. The first, second, and third statements are attempts to evaluate groups (male versus female), objects (anything made in Japan), and an issue (maintaining discipline) respectively. These statements may or may not be true in overall sense. However a person giving such statements is revealing his/her own attitude towards the groups or objects or the issue.

There are three basic components of Attitudes:

- evaluative component (how do you feel)
- cognitive component (what do you believe)
- behavioural component (a predisposition to act in a certain way).

Attitudes reflect past experience, shape ongoing behaviour, and serve essential functions for those who hold them. Attitudes lead individuals to react in certain ways to events or situations they encounter. Gordan and Allport opine that Attitude is Social Psychology's most central concept.

Definition of Attitude

According to Baron, Attitude is defined as, lasting evaluations of people, groups, objects, or issues- in fact, of virtually any aspect of the social or physical world.
Petty and Cacioppo state, Attitudes are general evaluations people make about themselves, other persons, objects, or issues. Breckler and Wiggins state, Attitudes are enduring mental representations of various features of the social or physical world. They are acquired through experience and exert a directive influence on subsequent behaviour.

Functions of Attitude

According to Katz, Attitudes serve four important functions for individuals:

- **Adjustment Function:** People tend to develop favourable attitude towards rewarding and beneficial functions as well as relationship. Similarly people develop negative attitude towards such functions and relationships, which shall attract punitive actions.
- **Ego-defensive Function:** Attitude can serve as devise for protecting self-image.
- **Value-expressive Function:** Attitude supports expression of core values.
- **Knowledge Function:** Attitude serves as standard or frame for understanding and interpreting people and events around them.

7.3 PROCESS OF FORMATION OF ATTITUDE

There are basically two sources of formation of attitude: a) Social Learning, and, b) Direct Experience:

a) **Social Learning :** It is acquiring attitudes from others. There are broadly three processes of acquiring attitudes through social learning: Classical Conditioning, Instrumental Conditioning, and Modeling.

- ***Classical Conditioning*** is a basic form of learning in which one stimulus regularly precedes another. It is learning based of association, that when first stimulus is present, the second would follow. Prejudices and preferences are created through classical conditioning. Classical Conditioning can play a role in the development of attitudes.

- ***Instrumental Conditioning*** is concerned with learning to express the "right" views. Instrumental Conditioning is created through rewarding a desirable behaviour and discouraging an undesirable behaviour. Thus a particular type of attitude is created towards a particular type of action through Instrumental Conditioning.

- ***Modeling*** as a concept, deals with individuals acquiring new behaviours through observing the actions of others. Individuals tend to do what others do, not what others say. Thus attitudes may be transmitted from one person to another, or from one group to another, or from one generation to another.

b) **Direct Experience :** Attitudes are also formed through real life experience, which may be also called as direct experience or personal experience. Various studies suggest that strength of the attitudes acquired through direct experience is stronger than the strength of attitudes acquired indirectly. Attitudes acquired through direct experience are held more confidently and are more difficult to be subjected to change. If you hold strong attitude about an object, issue, or a person, and you want others to properly understand your stand, it is better to let others have direct experience with the attitude object.

7.4 PROCESS OF CHANGE IN ATTITUDE

There is continuous effort around us to change the attitude of individuals, so that there may be possible effect on their behaviour. Advertisements, publicity, appeals, announcements etc. in various media are attempts to change our attitude towards objects, people, or issues, so that our behaviour towards them may be directed in desired direction. There are broadly two processes of change in attitude: a) Persuasion, and ii) Cognitive Dissonance. Persuasion influences us from outside, and Cognitive Dissonance influences us from within.

7.4.1 Changing Attitude through Persuasion

Changing attitude through persuasion is a difficult task. Our ability to resist persuasion is considerable due to three factors. These factors are: i) Reactance, ii) Forewarning, and iii) Selective Avoidance. Reactance refers to the negative reactions we experience whenever we feel that someone is trying to limit our personal freedom. In some cases individuals shift away from a view advocated even if it is one they might normally accept. Forewarning refers to tendency of building counter-arguments against a persuasive argument. These help receivers resist the conclusions recommended by the message. Selective avoidance refers to a tendency to direct our attention away from information that challenges our existing attitudes.

However, persuasion is a fact of modern life. Every day we are exposed to countless attempts at persuasion. Persuasion is effort to change attitudes through various types of communications such as advertisement or speeches. We shall examine issues like, factors those influence success of persuasion efforts, and, the extent to which such efforts are effective. There are two approaches of analysing effect of persuasion on attitudes: i) Traditional Approach, and ii) Cognitive Approach.

The Traditional Approach : According to this approach, there are three elements of persuasion:

- Source: the communicator or sender;
- Message: the communication;
- Target audience: the receiver.

The traditional approach focussed on a basic question: “Who says what to whom and with what effect?” The most notable findings of this approach are:

- Experts are more persuasive than non-experts;
- Messages which do not appear to be designed to change our attitudes have more impact than those appearing to be designed so;
- Popular and attractive communicators are more effective in changing attitudes than unpopular or unattractive ones;
- Individuals with relatively low in self-esteem tend to get persuaded more easily than those high in self-esteem, especially by persuasion from high-status or attractive sources;
- Two-sided approach is more successful than one-sided approach;
- Persuasion can be enhanced by messages that arouse strong emotions in the audience.

The Cognitive Approach : Cognitive approach attempts to explain what do people think about when exposed to persuasive appeals. Several theoretical models have emerged to explain this phenomenon, but the most widely known among them is Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

ELM explains that there are two distinct routes to persuasion, depending on how important or relevant the issues are to the persons who are the targets of persuasions. The two routes are called- Central Route, and Peripheral Route. If we focus considerable attention on a message and its argument, because persuasive message appears to be important, persuasion occurs through central route. In this case degree of attitude change depends on quality of arguments. To the contrary, if we find the persuasive message to be of little interest, we may not pay considerable attention on the message. Yet such messages can change our attitude, if we find that message or the argument was more balanced rather tilted one-sided, or if we find that the source (communicator) has expertise and commands high status. In such case, persuasion occurs through peripheral route. There are two implications of ELM. First, attitude may or may not change either through central route

or through peripheral route. Second, attitude is more likely to change if persuasions come from multiple sources as well as the arguments are strong, because in this case information receives greater scrutiny by the receivers.

Another model that explains the cognitive approach to persuasion is the Heuristic Model of Persuasion. This model deals in one question: When individuals overhear the reactions of an audience to a persuasive message, does this influence the extent to which they, too, are persuaded? Studies on this model suggested that audience reaction would be influential when the individuals in question had little involvement in the issue. In contrast, when the issue is important to the persons involved, audience reactions would make little difference- in this case systematic processing would occur and persuasion would depend on quality of arguments.
Cognitive approach provides insight for choosing message in advertisements for different types of products. Some products serve utilitarian function- people buy and use them because they are required to be used. In contrast, some products serve social identity function- people buy and use them because they boost the personal image of the users. For the utilitarian products, users are more persuaded by advertisements, which describe features of the products. For the social-identity products, they are more influenced by advertisements, which have glamorous appeal.

Cognitive approach to persuasion explains why are people in a good mood easier to influence. It states that perhaps when people are in a good mood, they are less able to engage in careful, systematic processing than when they are in a neutral mood. Therefore, they may be more easily influenced, particularly by strong and convincing arguments.

Cognitive approach to persuasion also explains the relation between individual differences and its influence on persuasion. Take one aspect of personality, self-monitoring. Persons high in self-monitoring tend to make an attempt for creating positive impression in the minds of others. Such persons are more likely to be persuaded, if the message is coming from attractive sources, and get relatively less effect of persuasion if the message is coming from expert sources. On the other hand, persons low on self-monitoring are less interested in creating positive impressions on others, and, more concerned with reflecting their true and inner feeling. They are persuaded less by attractive sources, and, more by expert sources.

7.4.2 Changing Attitude through Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive Dissonance is the internal state that occurs when individuals notice inconsistencies among their attitudes or between their attitudes and their overt behaviour. Such inconsistencies create unpleasant feeling, which produces pressures that may result in change in attitudes. The weaker the reasons for acting in attitude-discrepant ways, the stronger these pressures are. Dissonance is a motivational state- people who experience it want to reduce it. Earlier, inconsistency was identified as the basic feature of cognitive dissonance. However, recent studies suggest that inconsistency is not the essential ingredient in dissonance. Rather, dissonance- and the motivation to reduce it- stems primarily from feelings of responsibility for negative events or outcomes.

7.4.3 Methods of Effecting Attitude Change

Richard M. Steers has described the following methods of effecting attitude change.

- **Providing New Information:** New information, especially coming from accurate sources, may alter belief structure, subsequently leading to expected attitude changes.

- **Fear Arousal and Reduction:** Both can lead to change in attitude. However excessive arousal of fear may lead to rejection of message by the individuals. Studies suggest that fear reduction is more appropriate for changing attitudes than fear arousal.
- **Dissonance Arousal:** Dissonance leads to inconsistencies among individual's attitude or between his/her attitudes and overt behaviour. This creates unpleasant feeling which results in change in attitudes.
- **Position Discrepancy:** The greater the discrepancy between the individual's own position and the position advocated by others, the more the individual will move towards the position held by others.
- **Participation in Decision Making:** Attitude change can be brought about by involving the individual in the process by which decisions are made.

Kelman has identified three processes that act as instruments of change in attitude.

- **Compliance:** It is application of subtle pressure either through reward or punishment in order to change the behaviour, and expecting this change to be lasting.
- **Identification:** It is identification with the person who is affecting the change and is acting as a change agent.
- **Internalisation:** This means that the new attitude is integrated with the other attitudes and becomes a part of the person's total personality. It is more permanent in nature. This change may occur due to desire to change that comes from within.

Check Your Progress A

1) What do you mean by attitude ?
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2) How are attitudes towards a person formed?
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3) Can attitudes be changed? If so, how?
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7.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR

The basic purpose of your studies on attitudes is to know the degree of impact of attitude on work behaviour. Early research works suggested that attitudes simply influence behaviour. However in the late 1960s, researchers had different tone. They opined that behaviour is far from simple, but it is understandable, and certainly not random. It was found that attitudes and behaviour are at best only weakly related. Now the more

recent research works suggest that the influence of attitude on behaviour is significant, provided that we choose to focus on specific, relatively narrow attitudes (well defined) rather than more general ones. In other words, in presence of certain moderating variables (conditional factors), impact of attitude on behaviour is significant. Following are the factors, which determine degree of influence of attitudes on behaviour.

- **Attitude Specificity:** Specific attitudes are much better predictors of behaviour than general ones.
- **Attitude Strength:** Intense or strong attitudes are generally much better predictors of overt behaviour than weak ones.
- **Attitude Relevance:** It means the extent to which attitude objects actually have an effect on the life of the person holding various attitudes. The stronger such effects, the stronger the link between attitudes and behaviour.
- **Attitude Accessibility:** It is the ease with which specific attitudes can be brought into consciousness from memory. The greater such accessibility, the stronger the effect of various attitudes on behaviour.
- **Existence of Social Pressure:** When social pressures hold exceptional power, individuals' overt behaviour follows the pattern set by such pressures, though there may be discrepancies between attitudes and behaviour.
- **Direct Experience:** Attitude may influence behaviour more strongly if an attitude refers to something with which the individual has direct personal experience.

So, do attitudes influence behaviour? Systematic research on this question indicates that they do. Researchers have shown interest in other direction also- whether or not behaviour influences attitudes? Interestingly higher correlation has been found in this direction, and it has been concluded that behaviour influences attitudes more strongly than attitudes influence behaviour. This view is called Self-perception theory. This theory proposes that attitudes are used after the fact to make sense out of an action that has already occurred, rather than as devices that precede and guide action. This concept appears to be in opposite tune with respect to the theory of Cognitive Dissonance. However, it may be beneficially used to shape the attitudes of individuals by encouraging them to participate in certain actions. For example if students are made to visit an institution engaged in providing vocational training to handicapped, students' attitude towards handicapped may be positive in future. Taking help of our understanding on influence of attitudes on behaviour, as well as, influence of behaviour on attitudes- and making best use of both- we can say that in formative years (when experience is limited) there is significant influence of behaviour on attitudes. Once attitudes are formed after exposure to sufficient experience, attitudes start influencing behaviour in significant way.

7.6 WORK RELATED ATTITUDES

Field of Psychology deals in hundreds of attitudes. Organisational Behaviour is concerned with work-related attitudes and behaviour. There are primarily three work-related attitudes which have significant influence on the organisation.

- **Job Satisfaction:** The various attitudes people hold towards their jobs are referred to as job satisfaction. It is individuals' cognitive, affective, and evaluative reactions towards their jobs.

- **Job Involvement:** It indicates how far individuals identify themselves with the job, and whether outcome of the work is attached to self worth.
- **Organisational Commitment:** It explains how people feel toward their organisations. It is an attitude, which reflect the extent to which people identify with and are involved with their organisations and are unwilling to leave them.

Organisations should attempt to continuously gauge the attitudes of personnel at work place, so that corrective measures may be taken in proactive manner, for ensuring desirable behaviour at work place.

It is important to study attitudes, as attitudes influence behaviour. Now we shall focus our attention toward another issue -values- that influences attitudes, and in turn also determine choice of action as well as behaviour.

Activity A

Ask about your attitude towards a junior employee (or a younger family member) while talking to the person directly. Get the feedback about your behaviour towards the person. Such feedback would give you indications about your attitude towards that person. Also discuss with the person what he expects of you for building effective relationship. You may also express, what you expect of him / her for building effective relationship.

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7.7 VALUES : MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

Values provide the basic foundation for understanding a person's attitudes, perceptions and personality. Values contain judgmental element as to what is right, good, or desirable. Values have both content and intensity attributes. Content attribute describes- what is important; intensity attribute describes- how much is it important. When individual's values are ranked in terms of their intensity, we obtain that person's value system. Value system is a hierarchy based on a ranking of an individual's values in terms of their intensity. All of us have a hierarchy of values that forms our value system. However everyone does not hold the same values. Edward Spranger defines the values as the constellation of likes, dislikes, viewpoints, shoulds, inner inclinations, rational and irrational judgements, prejudices, and association patterns that determine a person's view of the world. M. Rokeach defines values, as a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence, personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.

It is important to study values, as it influences attitudes, perceptions, motivation, evaluations, interpersonal relationships, behaviour, conflict handling styles, leadership patterns etc. In nutshell, values are at the core of bahaviour pattern of an individual.

7.8 TYPES OF VALUES

G.W. Allport and his associates have identified six types of values.

- **Theoretical:** high importance to discovery of truth through critical and rational approach.
- **Economic:** Emphasis on useful and practical.
- **Aesthetic:** Highest value on form and harmony.
- **Social:** Highest value to the love of people.

- **Political:** Emphasis on acquisition of power and influence.
- **Religious:** Concerned with the unity of experience and understanding of the cosmos as a whole.

Jones and Gerard have broadly identified two types of values- positive and negative. According to them anything for which the individual strives, or approaches, extols, embraces, voluntarily consumes, incurs expense to acquire is a positive value. Anything that the individual avoids, escapes from, deplores, rejects, or attacks is a negative value.

M. Rokeach identified two sets of values. One set is called terminal values, which refers to desirable end-states of existence. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime e.g. a sense of accomplishment, family security, self- respect, social recognition etc. The other set, called instrumental values, which refers to preferable modes of behaviour or means of achieving one's terminal values.

Several studies suggest that values differ across culture. Various cultural factors influence values of a particular society; in turn they also influence perceptions, attitudes, motivation, behaviour, relationship patterns, leadership styles etc. of the people of the society. As far as findings of cross-cultural studies are concerned, they are more indicative than deterministic, at a particular point of time. You shall study about cross-cultural values in detail in Unit 20.

Check Your Progress B

1) What is the degree of influence of attitude on behaviour?
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2) Do values of a person influence his / her behaviour? If so, how?
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7.9 DESIGNING VALUE BASED ORGANISATION

Organisations should be so designed that they ensure high productivity, high satisfaction of all stakeholders, and low negative factors such as absenteeism, employee turnover etc.

A value-based organisation promises sustainability and prosperity to its endeavours. For designing value-based organisation, based on suggestions of Tannenbaum and Davis, following points may be useful.

- Treat people with trust.
- Be respectful to human being.
- Treat people as dynamic entity.
- Accept and utilise human differences.
- Treat individual as a whole person.
- Encourage appropriate expression of feelings.
- Promote authentic behaviour.

- Use authority and networking for benefit of organisation.
- Encourage appropriate confrontation.
- Encourage willingness to take calculated risks.
- Set process which shall take care of effective accomplishment.
- Emphasise collaboration.

Activity B

Discuss with your three friends about two issues: a) what do they want to achieve in next one decade? b) how do they like to achieve? You also share your own views on two issues.

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7.10 LET US SUM UP

Attitudes are enduring mental representations of various features of social or physical world. They are acquired through experience and exert a directive influence on subsequent human behaviour. The attitudes are formed by the process of social learning and direct experience. There is continuous effort around us to change the attitude of the persons in an organisation. The attitude can be changed through persuation and cognitive dissonance. The methods of effecting attitude change include : providing new information, fear arousal and reduction, dissonance arousal, position discrepancy, participation in decision making, compliance, identification and internalisation. The factors which determine the degree of influence of attitude on behaviour are: attitude specificity, attitude strength, attitude relevance, attitude accessibility, existence of social pressure and direct experience. There are three primarily work-related attitudes which have significant influence on the organisation. They are : job satisfaction, job involvement and organisational commitment.

Values provide the basic foundation for understanding a person's attitudes, perception and personality. It contains judgmental element as to what is right, good, or desirable. There are six major types of values. They are : theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious. Values differ across culture. Various cultural factors influence values of a particular society. Organisations should be so designed that they ensure high productivity, high satisfaction of all stakeholders, and low negative factors such as absenteeism, employee turnover, etc. A value based organisation must be designed which promises sustainability and prosperity to its endeavours.

7.11 KEY WORDS

Attitudes: General evaluations people make about themselves, other persons, objects, or issues.

Classical Conditioning: A basic form of learning in which one stimulus regularly precedes another.

Cognitive Approach: Attempts to explain what do people think about when exposed to persuasive appeals.

Cognitive Dissonance: Internal state that occurs when individuals notice inconsistencies among their attitudes or between their attitudes and their overt behaviour.

Compliance: Application of subtle pressure either through reward or punishment.

Instrumental Conditioning: Learning to express the right views.

Instrumental Values: Preferable modes of behaviour or means of achieving one's terminal values.

Modeling: Acquiring new behaviours through observing the actions of others.

Persuasion: Process of influencing.

Self-Monitoring: Tendency to make attempt for creating positive impression.

Self-perception Theory: Behaviour influences attitudes more strongly than attitudes influence behaviour.

Terminal Values: Desirable end-states of existence.

7.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1) What do you mean by the term attitude? Describe process of formation of attitude.
2) How attitude can be changed? Is it easy to change attitude? Discuss with suitable examples.
3) Explain how attitudes influence behaviour, and how behaviour influence attitudes?
4) For a manager, what are the uses of learning about attitudes?
5) What do you mean by values? How value-based organisation can be created?

Note : These questions will help you to understand the unit better. Try to write answers for them. Do not submit your answers to the university for assessment. These are for your practice only.