

# ATTITUDE AND SOCIAL COGNITION

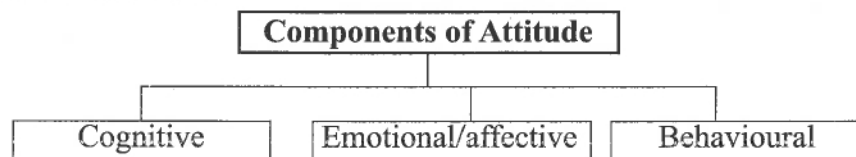
## STUDY-NOTES

### • DEFINITIONS

- ❖ **Social Psychology:** Social behaviour is a necessary part of human life and social psychology deals with all behaviour that takes place in the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others.
- ❖ **Impression Formation:** When we meet people, we make inferences about their personal qualities. This is called impression formation.
- ❖ **Attribution:** We are interested in why people behave in the ways they do, i.e., we assign causes to the behaviour shown in specific social situations. This process is called attribution.
- ❖ **Social Cognition**
  - Mental activities such as attitude, impression formation, attribution, etc. related to the gathering and interpretation of information about the social world are collectively called social cognition.
  - Social cognition is activated by cognitive units called schemas.
  - Cognitive processes cannot be directly seen; they have to be inferred on the basis of externally shown behaviour.

### ❖ Attitudes

- An attitude is a state of the mind, a set of views, or thoughts, regarding some topic (called the 'attitude object'), which have an evaluative feature (positive, negative or neutral quality).
- If one's views aren't merely thoughts but also have emotional and action components, then they are attitudes.
- Because of social influences, people form views, or attitudes about people, and about different issues in life, that exist in the form of behavioural tendencies.
- **Components of Attitude:**



- (a) The thought component is referred to as the **cognitive** aspect.
- (b) The emotional component is known as the **affective** aspect.
- (c) A tendency to act in a particular way with regard to the attitude object is called the **behavioural** (or conative) aspect.
- Taken together, these three aspects have been referred to as the A-B-C (Affective-Behavioural-Cognitive) components of attitude.

### • BELIEFS

- ❖ Beliefs refer to the cognitive component of attitudes. For example, Belief in God, belief in democracy as a political ideology, etc.

### • VALUES

- ❖ Values are attitudes or beliefs that contain a 'should' or 'ought' aspect, such as moral or ethical values.

- ❖ For example, The idea that one should work hard, or that one should always be honest, because honesty is the best policy.

**Features/Properties of Attitudes**

- (1) Valence (positivity or negativity):** The valence of an attitude represents whether an attitude is positive or negative (or neutral) towards the attitude object. A neutral attitude would have neither positive nor negative valence.
- (2) Extremeness:** The extremeness of an attitude indicates how positive or negative an attitude is.
- (3) Simplicity or Complexity/multiplexity:** This feature refers to how many attitudes there are within a broader attitude. Each member attitude that belongs to an attitude system also has Affective-Behavioural-Cognitive components. An attitude system is said to be:
  - ‘Simple’ if it contains only one or a few attitude
  - ‘Complex’ if it is made up of many attitudes
- (4) Centrality/Significance:** This refers to the role of a particular attitude in the attitude system. An attitude with greater centrality would influence the other attitudes in the system much more than non-central (or peripheral) attitudes would.

• **PROCESS OF ATTITUDE FORMATION**

Terms	Definition	Example
Learning attitudes by association	A particular attitude towards the subject is learned through the positive/negative association between the subjects at play.	Students often develop a liking for a particular subject because of the teacher. This is because they see many positive qualities in that teacher; these positive qualities get linked to the subject that s/he teaches, and ultimately get expressed in the form of liking for the subject.
Learning attitudes by being rewarded or punished	If an individual is praised/punished for showing a particular attitude, chances are high that s/he will develop/constrain that attitude further.	For example, if a teenager does yogasanas regularly, and gets the honour of being ‘Miss Good Health’ in her school, she may develop a positive attitude towards yoga and health in general. Similarly, if a child constantly falls ill because s/he eats junk food instead of proper meals, then the child is likely to develop a negative attitude towards junk food, and also a positive attitude towards eating healthy food.
Learning attitudes through modelling (observing others)	Often, we learn them by observing others being rewarded or punished for expressing thoughts, or showing behaviour of a particular kind towards the attitude object.	For example, children may form a respectful attitude towards elders, by observing that their parents show respect for elders, and are appreciated for it.
Learning attitudes through group or cultural norms	Very often, we learn attitudes through the norms of our group or culture. Norms are unwritten rules about behaviour that everyone is supposed to show under specific circumstances. Over time, these norms may become part of our social cognition, in the form of attitudes.	For example, offering money, sweets, fruit and flowers in a place of worship is a normative behaviour in some religions. When individuals see that such behaviour is shown by others, is expected and socially approved, they may ultimately develop a positive attitude towards such behaviour and the associated feelings of devotion.

Learning through exposure to information	Many attitudes are learned in a social context, but not necessarily in the physical presence of others. Today, with the huge amount of information that is being provided through various media, both positive and negative attitudes are being formed.	By reading the biographies of self-actualised persons, an individual may develop a positive attitude towards hard work and other aspects as the means of achieving success in life.
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• **FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ATTITUDE FORMATION**

**1. Family and School Environment:**

- ❖ In the early years of life, parents and other family members play a significant role in shaping attitude formation.
- ❖ Later, the school environment becomes an important background for attitude formation.

**2. Reference Groups:**

- ❖ Reference groups indicate to an individual the norms regarding acceptable behaviour and ways of thinking. Thus, they reflect learning of attitudes through group or cultural norms.
- ❖ Attitudes towards various topics, such as political, religious and social groups, occupations, national and other issues are often developed through reference groups.
- ❖ Their influence is noticeable especially during the beginning of adolescence, at which time it is important for the individual to feel that s/he belongs to a group.

**3. Personal Experiences:**

- ❖ Many attitudes are formed, not in the family environment or through reference groups, but through direct personal experiences which bring about a drastic change in our attitude towards people and our own life.

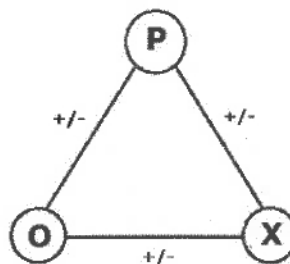
**4. Media-related Influences:**

- ❖ Technological advances in recent times have made audio-visual media and the Internet very powerful sources of information that lead to attitude formation and change.
- ❖ School level textbooks also influence attitude formation.
- ❖ These sources first strengthen the cognitive and affective components of attitudes, and subsequently may also affect the behavioural component.
- ❖ The media can exert both good and bad influences on attitudes:
  - The media and Internet make people better informed than other modes of communication.
  - There may be no check on the nature of information being gathered, and therefore no control over the attitudes that are being formed, or the direction of change in the existing attitudes.

• **PROCESS OF ATTITUDE CHANGE**

**I. Balance (Fritz Heider)**

- (a) The concept of balance, proposed by **Fritz Heider** is sometimes described in the form of the 'P-O-X' triangle, which represents the relationships between three aspects or components of the attitude: P is the person whose attitude is being studied, O is another person, and X is the topic towards which the attitude is being studied (attitude object). It is also possible that all three are persons.



- (b) The basic idea is that an attitude changes if there is a state of imbalance between the P-O attitude, O-X attitude, and P-X attitude. This is because imbalance is logically uncomfortable. Therefore, the attitude changes in the direction of balance.
- (c) Imbalance is found when
  - all three sides of the P-O-X triangle are negative
  - two sides are positive, and one side is negative
- (d) Balance is found when
  - all three sides are positive
  - two sides are negative, and one side is positive

## II. Cognitive Consistency (Leon Festinger)

- (a) The concept of cognitive dissonance was proposed by Leon Festinger. It emphasises the cognitive component.
- (b) Here the basic idea is that the cognitive components of an attitude must be 'consonant' (opposite of 'dissonant'), i.e., they should be logically in line with each other.
- (c) If an individual finds that two cognitions in an attitude are dissonant, then one of them will be changed in the direction of consonance.
- (d) For example: Consider following ideas ('cognitions'):
  - **Cognition I:** Pan masala causes mouth cancer which is fatal.
  - **Cognition II:** I eat pan masala.
- (e) Holding these two ideas or cognitions will make any individual feel that something is 'out of tune', or dissonant, in the attitude towards pan masala. Therefore, one of these ideas will have to be changed, so that consonance can be attained. To remove or reduce the dissonance:
 

I will stop eating pan masala (change Cognition II).

This would be the healthy, logical and sensible way of reducing dissonance.
- (f) Both balance and cognitive dissonance are examples of cognitive consistency which means that two components, aspects or elements of the attitude, or attitude system, must be in the same direction. Each element should logically fall in line with other elements.
- (g) If this does not happen, then the person experiences a kind of mental discomfort, i.e. the sense that 'something is not quite right' in the attitude system. In such a state, some aspect in the attitude system changes in the direction of consistency, because our cognitive system requires logical consistency.

## III. Two-Step Concept (SM Mohsin)

Identification → Attitude change (usually by observational learning)

According to S.M. Mohsin, an Indian psychologist, attitude change takes place in the form of two steps.

- ❖ In the first step, the target of change identifies with the source. Identification means that the target has liking and regard for the source. S/he puts herself/himself in the place of the target, and tries to feel like her/him.
  - The 'target' is the person whose attitude is to be changed.
  - The 'source' is the person through whose influence the change is to take place.
- ❖ The source must also have a positive attitude towards the target, and the regard and attraction becomes mutual.
- ❖ In the second step, the source herself/himself shows an attitude change, by actually changing her/him behaviour towards the attitude object.
- ❖ Observing the source's changed attitude and behaviour, the target also shows an attitude change through behaviour. This is a kind of imitation or observational learning.

## • FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ATTITUDE CHANGE

### Characteristics of the Existing Attitude:

- (a) The properties of attitudes including valence (positivity or negativity), extremeness, simplicity or complexity (multiplexity), and centrality/significance of the attitude, determine attitude change.

(b) **Easier to change:**

- Positive attitudes
- Peripheral (less significant) attitudes
- Less extreme attitudes
- Simple attitudes

**More difficult to change:**

- Negative attitudes
- Central attitudes
- Extreme attitudes
- Multiple attitudes

(c) **In the context of the direction and extent of attitude change, an attitude change may be:**

- **Congruent:** It may change in the same direction as the existing attitude (e.g., a positive attitude may become more positive, or a negative attitude may become more negative). For example, Suppose a person has a somewhat positive attitude towards empowerment of women. Reading about a successful woman may make this attitude more positive.
- **Incongruent:** It may change in a direction opposite to the existing attitude (e.g., a positive attitude becomes less positive, or negative, or a negative attitude becomes less negative, or positive). For example, After reading about successful women, a person may think that women might soon become too powerful, and neglect their family responsibilities. This may make the person's existing positive attitude towards empowerment of women, less positive, or even negative.

Congruent changes are easier to bring about than are the incongruent changes in attitudes.

- (d) An attitude may change in the direction of the information that is presented, or in a direction opposite to that of the information presented.

(e) **Source characteristics:**

- Credibility
- Attractiveness

Attitudes are more likely to change when the message comes from a highly credible source rather than from a low-credible source.

For example, adults who are planning to buy a laptop are more convinced by a computer engineer who points out the special features of a particular brand of laptop, than they would be by a schoolchild who might give the same information. But, if the buyers are themselves schoolchildren, they may be convinced more by another schoolchild advertising a laptop than they would be by a professional giving the same information. In the case of some products such as cars, sales may increase if they are publicised, not necessarily by experts, but by popular public figures.

- (f) **Message characteristics:** The message is the information that is presented in order to bring about an attitude change. Attitudes will change when the amount of information that is given about the topic is just enough, neither too much nor too little.
- (g) Whether the message contains a rational or an emotional appeal, also makes a difference.
- (h) The motives activated by the message also determine attitude change. For example, drinking milk may be said to make a person healthy and good-looking, or more energetic and more successful at one's job.
- (i) The mode of spreading the message plays a significant role. Face-to-face transmission of the message is usually more effective than indirect transmission, as for instance, through letters and pamphlets, or even through mass media. These days transmission through visual media such as television and the Internet are similar to face-to-face interaction, but not a substitute for the latter.
- (j) **Target characteristics:** Qualities of the target influencing the likelihood and extent of attitude change include:
- Persuasibility
  - Strong prejudices
  - Self-esteem
  - Intelligence

• **ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR RELATIONSHIP/CONNECTION**

- ❖ Though we usually expect behaviour to follow logically from attitudes, an individual's attitudes may not always be exhibited through behaviour.
- ❖ Sometimes, one's actual behaviour may be contrary to one's attitude towards a particular topic.

For example, in the days when Americans were said to be prejudiced against the Chinese, Richard LaPiere, an American social psychologist, conducted the following study.

LaPiere asked a Chinese couple to travel across the United States, and stay in different hotels. Only once during the entire trip were they refused service by one of the hotels.

Some time later, LaPiere sent out questionnaires to managers of hotels and tourist homes in the same areas where the Chinese couple had travelled, asking them if they would give accommodation to Chinese guests.

A very large percentage said that they would not do so. This response showed a negative attitude towards the Chinese, which was inconsistent with the positive behaviour that was actually shown towards the travelling Chinese couple. Thus, attitudes may not always predict actual pattern of one's behaviour.

LaPiere discovered that they liked the experiment. That is, on the basis of their behaviour (telling others that the experiment was interesting, for only a small amount of money).

LaPiere concluded that their attitude towards the experiment was positive ("I would not have told a lie for this amount of money, which means that the experiment was actually interesting").

### DEFINITION OF PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION AND STEREOTYPES

A stereotype is a cluster of ideas regarding the characteristics of a specific group. All members belonging to that group are assumed to possess these characteristics.

Stereotypes consist of undesirable characteristics about the target group, and they lead to negative attitudes or prejudices towards members of specific groups.

Prejudices are examples of attitudes towards a particular group. They are usually negative, and in many cases, are based on stereotypes (the cognitive component) about the specific group.

The cognitive component of prejudice is frequently accompanied by dislike or hatred, the affective component.

Prejudice may also get translated into discrimination, the behavioural component, whereby people behave in a less positive way towards a particular target group compared to another group which they favour. For example, the genocide committed by the Nazis in Germany against Jewish people is an extreme example of prejudice.

Prejudice can lead to hatred, discrimination and mass killing of innocent people.

Prejudices can exist without being shown in the form of discrimination. Similarly, discrimination can be shown without prejudice. Yet, the two go together very often.

Prejudices are very likely to arise between groups within such a society. For example, India has witnessed many notable instances of discrimination, with and without prejudice, based on gender, religion, community, caste, physical handicap, and illnesses such as AIDS.

In many cases discriminatory behaviour can be curbed by law. But, the cognitive and emotional components of prejudice are more difficult to change.

### CAUSES OF PREJUDICE

**Learning:** People who learn prejudiced attitudes may develop a 'prejudiced personality', and show low adjusting ability, anxiety, and feelings of hostility against the outgroup. Prejudices can be learned through:

- association
- observing others
- media
- reference groups
- exposure to information that encourages prejudice
- reward and punishment
- group or cultural norms
- the family
- personal experiences

**Strong social identity and ingroup bias:** Individuals who have a strong sense of social identity and have a positive attitude towards their own group boost this attitude by holding negative attitudes towards other groups. These are shown as prejudices.

**(iii) Scapegoating:**

- This is a phenomenon by which the majority group places the blame on a minority outgroup for its own social, economic or political problems. The minority is too weak or too small in number to defend itself against such accusations.
- Scapegoating is a group-based way of expressing frustration, and it often results in negative attitudes or prejudice against the weaker group.
- For example, Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's loss in WWI and its economic crisis and hence began murdering them in large numbers

**(iv) Kernel of truth concept:**

- Sometimes people may continue to hold stereotypes because they think that, after all, there must be some truth, or 'kernel of truth' in what everyone says about the other group.
- Even a few examples are sufficient to support the 'kernel of truth' idea.

**(v) Self-fulfilling prophecy:**

- In some cases, the group that is the target of prejudice is itself responsible for continuing the prejudice.
- The target group may behave in ways that justify the prejudice, that is, confirm the negative expectations.
- For example, if the target group is described as 'dependent' and therefore unable to make progress, the members of this target group may actually behave in a way that proves this description to be true. In this way, they strengthen the existing prejudice.

● **AIM OF STRATEGIES TO HANDLE PREJUDICE**

- ❖ Minimising opportunities for learning prejudices,
- ❖ Changing such attitudes,
- ❖ De-emphasising a narrow social identity based on the ingroup, and
- ❖ Discouraging the tendency towards self-fulfilling prophecy among the victims of prejudice.

● **STRATEGIES/METHODS TO HANDLE PREJUDICE**

- ❖ Education and information dissemination, for correcting stereotypes related to specific target groups, and tackling the problem of a strong ingroup bias.
- ❖ Increasing intergroup contact allows for direct communication, removal of mistrust between the groups, and even discovery of positive qualities in the outgroup.
- ❖ **Conditions for success of strategies to handle prejudice**
  - The two groups meet in a cooperative rather than competitive context
  - Close interactions between the groups helps them to know each other better
  - The two groups are not different in power or status
- ❖ Highlighting individual identity rather than group identity, thus weakening the importance of group (both ingroup and outgroup) as a basis of evaluating the other person.

● **SOCIAL COGNITION**

- ❖ While 'cognition' refers to all those mental processes that deal with obtaining and processing of information, 'social cognition' refers to all those psychological processes that deal with the gathering and processing of information related to social objects guided by mental units called schemas.
- ❖ These include all the processes that help in understanding, explaining and interpreting social behaviour.
- ❖ The processing of information related to social objects (particularly individuals, groups, people, relationships, social issues, and the like) differs from the processing of information related to physical objects. People as social objects may themselves change as the cognitive process takes place.
- ❖ For example, a teacher who observes a student in school may draw conclusions about her/him that are quite different from the conclusions drawn by the student's mother, who observes her/him at home.

- ❖ The student may show a difference in her/his behaviour, depending on who is watching her/him — the teacher or the mother.
  - ❖ Social cognition is guided by mental units called schemas.
- **SOCIAL SCHEMAS**
    - ❖ A schema is defined as a mental structure that provides a framework, set of rules or guidelines for processing information about any object.
    - ❖ Schemas (or ‘schemata’) are the basic units stored in our memory, and function as shorthand ways of processing information, thus reducing the time and mental effort required in cognition.
    - ❖ For social cognition, the basic units are social schemas. Some attitudes may also function like **social schemas**. We use many different schemas.
    - ❖ Most of the schemas are in the form of categories or classes. Schemas that function in the form of categories are called **prototypes**, which are the entire set of features or qualities that help us to define an object completely.
    - ❖ In social cognition, category-based schemas that are related to groups of people are called **stereotypes**. These are category-based schemas that are overgeneralised, are not directly verified, and do not allow for exceptions. For example, All Asians are good at math, All Arabs and Muslims are terrorists, etc.
    - ❖ The inferences drawn are based on pre-conceived ideas about a particular group. Thus, stereotypes provide fertile ground for the growth of prejudices and biases against specific groups.
  - **IMPRESSION FORMATION AND ATTRIBUTIONS**
    - ❖ The process of coming to know a person can be broadly divided into two parts: (i) Impression formation, and (ii) Attribution.
    - ❖ Every social interaction begins with the formation of an impression about the person(s) we meet.
    - ❖ eg. Public figures and applicants appearing for job interviews are good examples that show it is very important to ‘make a good impression’ on others.
  - **ROLE OF PERCEIVER**
    - ❖ The person who forms the impression is called the perceiver. The perceiver gathers information, or responds to a given information, about the qualities of the target, organises this information, and draws inferences about the target.
    - ❖ In attribution, the perceiver goes further, and explains why the target behaved in a particular way. Attaching or assigning a cause for the target’s behaviour is the main idea in attribution.
    - ❖ Often perceivers may form only an impression about the target, but if the situation requires it, they may also make attributions to the target.
      - Target:** The individual about whom the impression is formed is called the target.
  - **FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPRESSION FORMATION AND ATTRIBUTION**
    - ❖ The nature of information available to the perceiver
    - ❖ Social schemas in the perceiver (including stereotypes)
    - ❖ Personality characteristics of the perceiver
    - ❖ Situational factors
  - **ASPECTS OF IMPRESSION FORMATION**
    - (1) The process of impression formation consists of the following three sub- processes :
      - (a) **Selection** : We take into account only some bits of information about the target person.
      - (b) **Organisation** : The selected information is combined in a systematic way.
      - (c) **Inference** : We draw a conclusion about what kind of person the target is.
    - (2) Some specific qualities influence impression formation more than other traits do.



- (3) The order or sequence in which information is presented affects the kind of impression formed:
- The information presented first has a stronger effect than the information presented at the end. This is called the primacy effect (first impressions are the lasting impressions).
  - If the perceiver may be asked to pay attention to all the information, and not merely to the first information, whatever information comes at the end may have a stronger influence. This is known as the recency effect.
- (4) We have a tendency to think that a target person who has one set of positive qualities must also be having other specific positive qualities that are associated with the first set. This is known as the halo effect.
- For example, if we are told that a person is 'tidy' and 'punctual', we are likely to think that this person must also be 'hard-working'.

#### ATTRIBUTION OF CAUSALITY

- (i) After forming an impression, we often go through the process of assigning causes to a person's behaviour.
- (ii) This is also a systematic process.

#### ASPECTS OF ATTRIBUTION

1. **Internal versus external:** When we assign a cause to a person's behaviour, we can broadly classify the cause as being internal — something within the person, or external — something outside the person.  
For example, if we see a person A hitting another person B, as observers we may explain the hitting behaviour by saying that:
  - (i) A hit B because A is a hot-tempered person, which is an internal (personality-related) cause, or that
  - (ii) A hit B because B behaved in a nasty way, which is an external, situational cause.
2. **Stable versus unstable:** When people make attributions for success and failure, the causes they give can be classified into stable or unstable factors. **Bernard Weiner** suggested the following classification of causal factors:

	<i>Internal Factors</i>	<i>External Factors</i>
<i>Stable Factors</i>	<i>Ability</i>	<i>Fate</i>
<i>Unstable Factors</i>	<i>Effort, hard work</i>	<i>Task characteristics</i>

**Weiner's Classification of Causal Factors**

- Stable factors refer to those causes that do not change with time, while unstable factors are those that do change.
3. **Fundamental Attribution Error:** In making attributions, there is an overall tendency for people to give greater weightage to internal or dispositional factors, than to external or situational factors. This is called the fundamental attribution error. This tendency is stronger in some cultures than it is in others. For instance, research shows that Indians tend to make more external (situational) attributions than Americans do.
  4. **Attribution on success versus failure:** There is a difference between the attribution made for success, and the attribution made for failure. In general, people attribute success to internal factors, such as their ability or hard work. They attribute failure to external factors, such as bad luck, the difficulty of the task, and so on.
  5. **Actor-Observer Effect:** A distinction is also found between the attribution that a person makes for her/his own positive and negative experiences (actor-role), and the attribution made for another person's positive and negative experiences (observer-role). This is called the actor-observer effect. The basic reason for the difference between the actor and observer roles is that people want to have a nice image of themselves, as compared to others. For example, if you yourself get good marks in a test, you will attribute it to your own ability or hard work (actor-role, internal attribution for a positive experience).

If you get bad marks, you will say that this was because you were unlucky, or that the test was too difficult (actor-role, external attribution for a negative experience).

On the other hand, if one of your classmates gets good marks in the test, you will attribute her/his success to good luck or an easy test (observer-role, external attribution for a positive experience).

If the same classmate gets bad marks, you are likely to say that her/his failure was because of low ability or lack of effort (observer- role, internal attribution for a negative experience).

#### • BEHAVIOUR IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS

- (i) Performance on specific tasks is influenced by the mere presence of others which is called social facilitation.
- (ii) As early as 1897, Norman Triplett observed that individuals show better performance in the presence of others, than when they are performing the same task alone. For instance, cyclists racing with each other perform better than when they cycle alone.
- (iii) For example, Reena is about to participate in a music contest. She is very talented, yet she is feeling very nervous about the event.
- (iv) In short, task performance can be facilitated and improved, or inhibited and worsened by the presence of others.
- (v) Many other kinds of social influence have been noticed.  
For example, if we are working together in a group, the larger the group, the less effort each member puts in. This phenomenon is called **social loafing**, based on diffusion of responsibility. This is frequently seen in situations where people are expected to help.
- (vi) Better performance in the presence of others is because the person experiences arousal, which makes the person react in a more intense manner. This explanation was given by **Zajonc**.
- (vii) The arousal is because the person feels she or he is being evaluated. **Cottrell** called this idea evaluation apprehension. The person will be praised if the performance is good (reward), or criticised if it is bad (punishment). We wish to get praise and avoid criticism, therefore we try to perform well and avoid mistakes.
- (viii) The nature of the task to be performed also affects the performance in the presence of others. For example, in the case of a simple or familiar task, the person is more sure of performing well, and the eagerness to get praise or reward is stronger. So the individual performs better in the presence of others than s/he does when alone. But in the case of a complex or new task, the person may be afraid of making mistakes. The fear of criticism or punishment is stronger. So the individual performs worse in the presence of others than s/he does when alone.
- (ix) If the others present are also performing the same task, this is called a situation of co-action. In this situation, there is social comparison and competition. Once again, when the task is simple or a familiar one, performance is better under co-action than when the person is alone.

#### • PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- (1) Throughout the world, doing good to others and being helpful is described as a virtue. This behaviour is called helping or pro-social behaviour.
- (2) Pro-social behaviour is very similar to 'altruism', which means doing something for or thinking about the welfare of others without any self-interest (in Latin 'alter' means 'other', the opposite of 'ego' which means 'self').
- (3) Common examples of pro-social behaviour: sharing things, cooperating with others, helping during natural calamities, showing sympathy, doing favours to others, and making charitable donations.

#### • CHARACTERISTICS OF PRO SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- (1) Aim to benefit or do good to another person or other persons
- (2) Be done without expecting anything in return
- (3) Be done willingly by the person, and not because of any kind of pressure
- (4) Involve some difficulty or 'cost' to the person giving help  
For instance, if a rich person donates a lot of money that is obtained illegally, with the idea that her/his photograph and name will appear in the newspapers, this cannot be called 'pro-social behaviour' although the donation may do good to many people.
- (5) People do not show pro social behaviour very often.

For example, Nobody came forward to help a girl on a moving suburban train in Mumbai, when her purse was being snatched. The other passengers did nothing to help, and the girl was thrown out of the train. Even as the girl was lying injured on the railway tracks, people living in the buildings around the area did not come to help her.

#### • FACTORS INFLUENCING PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- (1) Pro-social behaviour is based on an inborn, natural tendency in human beings to help other members of their own species. This inborn tendency facilitates survival of the species.
- (2) Pro-social behaviour is influenced by learning. Individuals who are brought up in a family environment that sets examples of helping others, emphasises helping as a value, and praises helpfulness, and showing more pro-social behaviour than individuals who are brought up in a family environment devoid of these features.
- (3) Cultural factors influence pro-social behaviour. Some cultures actively encourage people to help the needy and distressed. In cultures that encourage independence, individuals will show less pro-social behaviour, because people are expected to take care of themselves, and not to depend on help from others. Individuals in cultures suffering from a shortage of resources may not show a high level of pro-social behaviour.
- (4) Pro-social behaviour is expressed when the situation activates certain social norms that require helping others. Three norms have been mentioned in the context of pro-social behaviour :
  - (a) The norm of social responsibility : We should help anyone who needs help, without considering any other factor.
  - (b) The norm of reciprocity: We should help those persons who have helped us in the past.
  - (c) The norm of equity: We should help others whenever we find that it is fair to do so. For example, many of us may feel that it is more fair to help a person who has lost all belongings in a flood, than to help a person who has lost everything through gambling.
- (5) Pro-social behaviour is affected by the expected reactions of the person who is being helped. For example, people might be unwilling to give money to a needy person because they feel that the person might feel insulted, or may become dependent.
- (6) Pro-social behaviour is more likely to be shown by individuals who have a high level of empathy, that is, the capacity to feel the distress of the person who is to be helped. For example, Baba Saheb Amte and Mother Teresa. Pro-social behaviour is also more likely in situations that arouse empathy, such as the picture of starving children in a famine.
- (7) Pro-social behaviour may be reduced by factors such as a bad mood, being busy with one's own problems, or feeling that the person to be helped is responsible for her/his own situation (that is, when an internal attribution is made for the need state of the other person).
- (8) Pro-social behaviour may also be reduced when the number of bystanders is more than one. When each person thinks that it is not her/his responsibility alone to give help, and that someone else may take the responsibility, this phenomenon is called diffusion of responsibility. On the other hand, if there is only one bystander, this person is more likely to take the responsibility and actually help the victim.

For example, the victim of a road accident sometimes does not get help because there are many people standing around the scene of the accident

## QUESTION BANK

### MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. When we assign causes to the behavior shown in specific social situations. This process is called
  - (a) Attribution
  - (b) Impression formation
  - (c) Prejudices
  - (d) Altruism
2. When the cyclist perform better as the crowd is cheering is
  - (a) Social inhibition
  - (b) Social facilitation
  - (c) Prejudices
  - (d) Altruism
3. Responding to others who are in need or distress is \_\_\_\_\_
  - (a) Attribution
  - (b) Impression formation
  - (c) Altruism
  - (d) Prejudices

4. Making inferences about about people's their personal qualities after meeting them for the first time is called  
(a) Attribution (b) Impression formation (c) Prejudices (d) Impression formation
5. A state of mind or views that have an evaluative feature will be termed as \_\_\_\_\_  
(a) Impression formation (b) Attitude (c) Prejudices (d) Impression formation
6. \_\_\_\_\_ are attitudes that contain moral content.  
(a) Opinions (b) Beliefs (c) Values (d) Prejudices
7. Identify the component of attitude 'Planting more trees makes earth healthy by decreasing pollution'  
(a) Affective (b) Cognitive (c) Behavioral (d) None of these
8. I like swimming as water makes me feel happy. Identify the component of attitude.  
(a) Behavioral (b) Cognitive (c) Affective (d) None of these
9. Values are formed when a particular belief or attitude becomes an inseparable part of the person's outlook  
(a) True (b) False (c) Can't say (d) Incomplete
10. When the attitudes indicate direction it is called  
(a) Extremeness (b) Valence (c) Simplicity (d) Centrality
11. When the attitude indicate the degree or intensity of positivity and negativity it is:  
(a) Valence (b) Extremeness (c) Simplicity (d) Centrality
12. When attitude toward Junk food is a \_\_\_\_\_ attitude.  
(a) Simple (b) Complex (c) Multiple (d) None of these
13. I like maths because I adore the teacher teaching it reflects attitude learnt through  
(a) Modelling (b) Association (c) Culture (d) Media
14. If a teenager boy does exercise regularly, and gets the awarded for full attendance in his school, he may develop a positive attitude towards exercise  
(a) Modelling (b) Reward and punishment (c) Culture (d) Media
15. Radha developed respect for Mary Com after reading her biography. This is attitude formation due to:  
(a) Modelling (b) Reward and punishment (c) Culture (d) Exposure to information
16. We consider it right to remove our footwear outside a temple since we have learnt it as a part of our:  
(a) observation (b) information (c) social norms (d) None of these
17. \_\_\_\_\_ indicate to an individual the norms regarding acceptable behaviour and ways of thinking.  
(a) Culture (b) Reference groups (c) Exposure to information (d) None of these
18. Role of a reference group is highest in \_\_\_\_\_  
(a) adolescence (b) adulthood (c) Childhood (d) None of these
19. Attitudes that are still at formative stages are more like opinions.  
(a) True (b) False (c) Can't say (d) Incomplete
20. Festinger gave the theory of \_\_\_\_\_  
(a) Balance (b) Cognitive dissonance (c) Two step concept (d) None of these
21. Who gave the theory of balance related to attitude  
(a) Fritz Heider (b) Festinger (c) Carlsmith (d) Mohsin
22. \_\_\_\_\_ gave the two-step theory which has a target and a source.  
(a) Fritz Heider (b) Festinger (c) Carlsmith (d) Mohsin
23. I want to lose weight. I eat junk food. Indicate \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Balance (b) Cognitive dissonance (c) Consonance (d) None of these
24. After reading about doctors my aspiration to choose medicine as my career became stronger reflect \_\_\_\_\_ attitude change  
(a) Congruent (b) Incongruent (c) Inconvenient (d) Partial

25. After reading about women empowerment and seeing its ill effect on family my attitude became less positive from being positive reflect \_\_\_\_\_attitude change  
 (a) Congruent (b) Inconvenient (c) Partial (d) Incongruent
26. The case of some products such as cars, sales may increase if they are publicised, by popular public figures  
 (a) Credibility (b) Attractiveness (c) Motive (d) None of these
27. Drinking milk may be said to make a person healthy and good-looking, or more energetic and more successful at one's job indicate attitude change due to:  
 (a) Emotional appeal (b) Rational appeal (c) Motive (d) Mode
28. Using pressure cooker saves fuel indicate attitude change due to:  
 (a) Emotional appeal (b) Rational appeal (c) Motive (d) Mode
29. There would be consistency between attitudes and behaviour when:  
 (a) The attitude is strong, and occupies a central place in the attitude system,  
 (b) The person is aware of her/his attitude,  
 (c) There is very little or no external pressure for the person to behave in a particular way  
 (d) All the above
30. LaPiere experiment was done on  
 (a) Chinese (b) Indian (c) American (d) Russian
31. Telling a Lie for Twenty Dollars experiment was done by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) Fritz and Hider (b) Festinger and Carlsmith (c) Mohsin and Mohsin (d) None of these
32. A cluster of ideas regarding the characteristics of a specific group is called \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) Prejudices (b) Stereotypes (c) Attitude (d) None of these
33. When the majority group places the blame on a minority outgroup for its own social, economic or political problem. This phenomena is called \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) Scapegoating (b) Prejudices (c) Stereotypes (d) kernel of truth
34. People may continue to hold stereotypes because they think that, after all, there must be some truth in what everyone says about the other indicate  
 (a) Scapegoating (b) Prejudices (c) Stereotypes (d) kernel of truth
35. When the target group is itself responsible for continuing the prejudice. This is called:  
 (a) Scapegoating (b) Self-fulfilling prophecy (c) Stereotypes (d) kernel of truth
36. Mental structure that provides a framework, set of rules or guidelines for processing information about any object is called  
 (a) Prejudices (b) Stereotypes (c) Schemas (d) Attribution
37. Category-based schemas that are related to groups of people are called  
 (a) Stereotypes (b) Prejudices (c) Prototype (d) None of these
38. The person who forms the impression is called \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) Perceiver (b) Target (c) Attribution (d) None of these
39. When we draw a conclusion about what kind of person the target it is called \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) Perceiver (b) Target (c) Attribution (d) Inference
40. The information presented first has a stronger effect than the information presented at the end.  
 (a) Primacy effect (b) recency effect (c) Halo effect (d) None of these
41. When we are told that a person is 'tidy' and 'punctual', we are likely to think that this person must also be 'hard-working' this shows:  
 (a) Primacy effect (b) recency effect (c) Halo effect (d) None of these

42. Overall tendency for people to give greater weightage to internal or dispositional factors, than to external or situational factors is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- (a) Primacy effect (b) Recency effect  
(c) Halo effect (d) Fundamental attribution error
43. According to Cottrel arousal is due to \_\_\_\_\_.
- (a) Evaluation (b) Nature of task (c) Co-action (d) None of these
44. The phenomenon is called social loafing, based on \_\_\_\_\_.
- (a) Arousal (b) Diffusion of responsibility (c) Evaluation (d) Nature of task
45. Which norm states: We should help anyone who needs help, without considering any other factor?
- (a) Empathy (b) Reciprocity (c) Equity (d) Social responsibility
46. Each person thinks that it is not her/his responsibility alone to give help, and that someone else may take the responsibility. This phenomenon is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- (a) Diffusion of responsibility (b) Social responsibility (c) Reciprocity (d) Equity

### Input-Text Based MCQs

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow (47 to 49).

In a well-known experiment where the two groups of students were given dollars for telling lie. One group was paid \$1 another \$20. It was found that one group changed their opinion about the experiment and considered it interesting although in reality the experiment was boring.

47. Name the psychologist associated with the experiment.
- (a) Fritz heider (b) Festinger (c) Mohsin (d) Lapierre
48. Which concept is shown through the experiment?
- (a) Cognitive dissonance (b) Cognitive consonance (c) Balance (d) Identification
49. Which group changed their perception about the experiment?
- (a) \$1 (b) \$10 (c) Both (a) and (b) (d) None of these

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow (50 to 52).

In the case of some products such as cars, sales may increase if they are publicised, not necessarily by experts, but by popular public figures. Many times we find famous sport star or actor advertising for a product like car, energy drink, etc. This has a strong impact on the sale of these products. The glamour and fan following often lead to attitude change and helps in increasing the sale.

50. Which aspect of attitude change has been discussed?
- (a) Credibility (b) Attractiveness (c) Message characteristics (d) None of these
51. Name the psychologist who proposed this.
- (a) Fritz heider (b) Festinger (c) Mohsin (d) None of these
52. Name the factor under which this concept has been discussed.
- (a) Message characteristics (b) Source characteristics (c) Target characteristics (d) Valence

### ANSWERS

#### Multiple Choice Questions

1. (a) 2. (b) 3. (c) 4. (d) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (c) 9. (a) 10. (b)  
11. (b) 12. (a) 13. (b) 14. (b) 15. (d) 16. (a) 17. (b) 18. (a) 19. (a) 20. (b)  
21. (a) 22. (d) 23. (b) 24. (a) 25. (d) 26. (b) 27. (c) 28. (b) 29. (d) 30. (a)  
31. (b) 32. (b) 33. (a) 34. (d) 35. (b) 36. (c) 37. (a) 38. (a) 39. (d) 40. (a)  
41. (c) 42. (d) 43. (a) 44. (b) 45. (d) 46. (a)

#### Input-Text Based MCQs

47. (b) 48. (a) 49. (a) 50. (b) 51. (b) 52. (b)