

06. SOCIAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Social Value

The function of extension is to bring about desirable changes in the behaviour of people. The overt behaviour or what we call as action is based on attitude. Unlike action, attitude cannot be seen. They can only be inferred by way of tendency to act or react positively or negatively to some stimuli. These tendencies or attitudes in turn are based upon individual's values.

Social values are ideas which help an individual to discriminate whether a particular object or behaviour is good or bad, desirable or undesirable. There are at times rules which govern the action which is known as "Norms". People are expected to behave in accordance with the values held by the individual and in the expected behaviour which is known as "normative behaviour". S.C.Dood. defined the value as "desiderata" (i.e.) anything desired or chosen by someone, sometime. In broad sense value may be considered as attitude-related attribute that are projected upon people, objects and situations. Since values, sometimes gives orientation or striving towards a given goal, it can be viewed as motives.

Socio-psychological determinants of values

People will be eager to change and many times they accept changes, when changes give prestige to them and/or increase their socio-economic changes. Though change is common every individual will not accept changes. Only some individuals accept the changes. An analysis of factors that influences the changes were studied by Reddy (1987). They are caste of the individual, age, possession of land and type of tenure, wealth and economic position, hard work and physical stamina, personal characteristics like truthfulness, honesty, reliability etc. These factors have obvious implications in the introduction of improved practices.

Type of Values

Value may be classified in different ways. **Fraenkel** (1976) classified as:

Moral Value	deciding particular alternative as better than other because of its just or more humane
Real value	deciding based on real worth in terms of legal, aesthetic, etc.
Market value	based on how much can be paid - value in terms of price

Personal value	based on ones likes and preferences over things of similar nature
Instrumental Value	based on some standards that help us to achieve or acquire other values

Spranger classified as

Theoretical value	expressed in the urge for discovery of truth
Economic value	based on the criterion of usefulness
Aesthetic value	based around form and harmony
Social value	referring to interest of people on others
Political value	central round power
Religious value	meaning thereby a mystic sense of utility

Major values prevailing

1. Importance of described status

Status of individual in a group is decided by the group to which he belongs. There is an established order of hierarchy of casts in Indian society.

2. Recognition of inequality

Still exists on caste basis

3. Patrilineal tendency

Eldest male member of the family has supreme power and tends to act automatically

4. Status of women

Though there is tendency to give greater respect they are still inferior to men.

5. Charity

There is religious significance and approval for giving of aims. A person with a charitable disposition is respected.

6. Tendency of non-violence

Killing of animals except for the purpose of food is considered to be immoral. It sometimes brings conflict.

7. Respect to old age and elders

They are generally given respect and recognition.

8. Religious attitude

People in rural areas are religious

Desired new values

1. Equal status to all.
2. Modification in marriage norms - (education on intercaste marriage)
3. Charitable disposition
 - a. Donation irrespective of the eligibility of vagarants to be avoided and channelised to the needy and welfare institutions.
4. Attitude to non-violence
5. Non violence is to be rationalized. Animal spoiling food crops should be prohibited.
6. Respect for the elders and old and due consideration for the younger generation.
7. Religion and technology

Along with faith in religion, people have to develop faith in science and technology.

Some of the values found out in farmers are:

1. Profitability and productivity preference were the highest ranked values for the adoption of improved practices.
2. Scienticism was the lowest ranked value for farming. Various studies suggested that Indian farmers are profit-minded. They aim for higher profit and greater productivity.

Role of Values of Agricultural Extension

We have already seen that culture of the people is changing and it is dynamic. The development workers or extension workers are the major strongest forces to bring changes in the culture of rural India. In fact community development programmes are the promotion of cultural changes among rural people towards desired goals. Accepted on that irrespective of the involvement of extension workers the changes happen. But the desired changes in the direction deemed desirable by the government in the rural society only when extension workers are involved the change agents.

Scientific understanding of culture of people among whom extension work operate helps the effective functioning by these workers. This is particularly significant in countries like India. For instance, piggery is not introduced in Muslim areas, poultry farming in Brahmin areas, and the like. Thus, the study on caste structure would reveal certain types of improvements of change.

Religious festivals and other local functions form important part of village life. Extension workers can look upon these festivals and meals as potentially useful for technology transfer through exhibition, demonstration, etc.

It is generalised that greater success may be anticipated when a new improved practice is introduced in familiar terms something that is already present in the culture.

Change is more likely to occur where there is lack of adjustment. For example when village fields are wiped out by flood or fire, that would be the right opportunity to introduce a technology. Several model villages and model settlements have been established with little resistance on the part of people under such conditions. The point is not such calamities are desirable, but when they happen the full advantage can be taken up for development.

Some of the recent high yielding varieties of wheat and rice could not make head way due to the colour of the wheat which is not liked by the buyers, poor cooking quality etc. When the extension workers bring this to the researcher's knowledge the researcher would evolve new varieties which do not have these drawbacks. This is a good example of how the value factor can influence both the extension worker and researcher.

Attitude

Attitudes involve some knowledge of a situation. However, the essential aspect of the attitude is found in the fact that some characteristic feeling or emotion is experienced and, as we would accordingly expect, some definite tendency to action is associated. Subjectively, then, the important factor is the feeling or emotion. Objectively it is the response, or at least the tendency to respond. Attitudes are important determinants of behaviour. If we are to change them we must change the emotional components. Allport has defined attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects with which it is related.

A farmer may vote for a particular political party because he has been brought up to believe that it is "right" party. In the course of experience he may learn some thing about the policies of that party. In that case his attitude will probably change. As a result, he may be expected to vote in a different way. Knowledge, attitude and behaviour are then very closely linked.

Measuring attitudes

Attitude scales: It is meant for scientific studies. Scales have been developed for measuring a great number of attitudes. Each scale consists of a group of statements related to a particular attitude. Some scales ask the person to respond by indicating whether he agrees or disagrees with each statement. Other scales ask the person to specify the degree of his agreement with a statement. The degree of agreement will be given predetermined values.

Public opinion poll: A large number of people are asked only a question or two because they don't have much time to respond too many items.

There are two major problems in public opinion poll (i) wording of questions and (ii) sampling.

For the poll to be accurate, the sample must be representative. For this we have to use stratified sampling. In stratified sampling, the polling agencies set quotas for certain categories of people based on Census data. The most common categories are age, sex, socio-economic status, and geographical region, all of which are known to influence opinions. By seeing to it that the quotas in the sample are in proportion to the categories in the general population, the sample is made more representative.

Attitude change

Well established attitudes tend to be resistant to change, but others may be more amenable to change. Attitudes can be changed by a variety of ways. Some of the ways of attitude change are as follows.

1. By obtaining new information from other people and mass media, resulting in changes in cognitive component of a person's attitudes.
2. Attitudes may change through direct experience.
3. Attitudes may change through legislation.
4. Since person's attitudes are anchored in his membership group and reference groups, one way to change the attitude is to modify one or the other.
5. Attitude change differs with reference to the situation also.

Factors influencing the development of attitudes

I. Maturation

The young child has only a very limited capacity for understanding the world about him and he is consequently incapable of forming attitudes about remote, or complex, or abstract things or problems.

At about a mental age of twelve years the child begins to understand abstract terms such as pity and justice, and his capacity for both inductive and deductive reasoning shows a marked and continuous increase during adolescence. As a result of this growth in capacity, he becomes able to understand and react to more abstract and more generalized propositions, ideas and ideals.

At the age of four or five years, three characteristics especially deserve mention. These are curiosity, contra-suggestibility, and independence. The child at this age is likely to express his curiosity by asking an endless series of questions.

Adolescence is marked especially by the maturation of sex emotions and by the development of altruism and co-operativeness. These in large measure furnish the basis for the formation of attitudes that differentiate adults from children. Boys at the age of twelve years may have a distant interest in girls and they may even have crushes on particular girls, but their interest is quite different from what it will be some years later.

2. Physical factors

Clinical psychologists have generally recognized that physical health and vitality are important factors in determining adjustment, and frequently it has been found that malnutrition or disease or accidents have interfered so seriously with normal development that serious behaviour disturbances have followed.

3. Home influences

It is generally accepted that attitudes are determined largely by social environmental and that home influences are especially important.

4. The Social Environment

The home environment is of primary importance in the formation of early attitudes, but friends, associates and the general social environment come to have an increasing influence as the child grows older has wider social contacts.

5. Government

The form of the government seems to be an important factor in determining attitudes both towards government itself and towards other things.

6. Movie pictures

Attendance at movie pictures constitutes another important possible influence in determination of attitudes. Thurston concluded that films definitely change social attitudes, although only about 10 per cent of the attitudes studied seemed to be affected by movie attendance.

7. The Teacher

Brown asked 300 graduate and undergraduate students in educational sociology to evaluate the various factors in their school experience that had been influential in the formation of personality and character traits. According to their judgement, the personalities of their teachers had been the most important single factor, 65.3 per cent thought this influence had been good, but 33.3 per cent thought it had been unfavourable. Only about 10 per cent did not consider, the teacher's influence is important.

8. The Curriculum

Thorndike asked 155 teachers to rate eleven subjects and activities on the basis of

what they considered the value of these to be or the training of character. Teaching has the highest rank, but athletic sports come next. English literature and history have the best ranks for the regular school subjects; mathematics and foreign languages are ranked much lower. This indicates that, in the opinion of this group of teachers, literature and the social sciences have more influence than other subjects on the determination of attitudes. This seems a reasonable view and it suggests that the units of work and the readings in these areas should be selected with particular reference to their probable influence on the attitudes formed by the students.

9. Teaching Methods

One of the categories in Brown's study was "*manner of presentation*" of subject matter. This was judged to have a favourable effect by 8.0 per cent of the students and an unfavourable effect by 17.7 per cent.

Development of Attitude

Attitudes are not mere accidents of individual experience. They result from day- to-day living in home, in school, and in the community. Whatever attitude children develop can be traced, in part atleast, to the effect upon them, of teacher precept and example. The challenge to teacher is that of helping the learner retain his identity, develop his individuality and absorb a background of democratic culture. Theoretically all education is aimed at helping learners develop to the full extent of their ability and those attitudes that fit them for living constructively in a democratic society.

Attitudes are formed without direction and also by direction as the result of careful planning by a person or persons who desire to encourage the development of certain attitudes in others. One function of school is that of stimulating young people towards acquisition of attitudes that are individually and socially desirable. It is through initiation, emotional experience and deliberate efforts on the part of the individual himself, teacher, and other and new attitudes arise.

Child is a great initiator and builds its most of attitudes in that way. Adolescent develops attitude by his enlarging adjustment problems with expanding groups. The environment to which he is exposed influences the attitude either desirable or undesirably. Radio, television, film and printed matter contribute to the attitude development. Thus, there are so many factors that influence the adults to develop attitudes.