

8 Factors Responsible for Development of Attitudes

The factors which lead to development of attitudes are:

- a. Family
- b. Peers
- c. Conditioning
- d. Social adjustment functions
- e. Direct instruction
- f. Modelling
- g. Satisfaction of wants and
- h. Prejudices!

a. Family:

Family is the most powerful source for formation of attitudes. The parents, siblings provide information about various things.

Attitudes developed by an individual, whether positive or negative are the result of family influence, are very powerful and difficult to undo.

b. Peers:

As the individual develops, he comes in contact with outer world and peers in first place. Peers include same age friends, neighbours, classmates, etc. The child tries to internalise the attitudes of these people.

c. Conditioning:

When we are conditioned or adjusted to a certain set up of people, situation, etc., we will be influenced by that. Hence, our associations lead to develop attitudes. Many times the kind of reinforcement we get from environment also leads to develop attitudes.

On the other hand, negative reinforcement like punishment, teasing, criticizing, troubling may lead to develop negative attitude.

Examples: when a patient's life is saved by a particular hospital at critical moments, he will develop a favourable attitude about that hospital (classical conditioning). Similarly, in instrumental conditioning, reward consequences of any behaviour will shape our attitude. For example, if you express an attitude to a friend, who then

reinforce your behaviour in the form of smiling, your attitude is likely to be strengthened, otherwise gets weakened.

d. Social adjustment functions:

This is otherwise called balance theory. Every society has majority of people who prefer to lead a harmonious life. They try to avoid unnecessary friction of conflicts with people. Naturally, they are inclined to develop positive attitudes towards most of the people and issues. Our attitudes may facilitate and maintain our relationships with members of positively valued groups. Usually we want to go with significant others to us, and rebel against those unwanted.

e. Direct instruction:

Sometimes direct instruction can influence attitude formation. For example, somebody gives information about a hair dye or usefulness of some fruit, we develop an attitude about that product, may be positive or negative.

f. Modelling:

This has been influential in developing attitudes toward a wide range of issues from alcohol to various kinds of dress, shoes, etc.

g. Satisfaction of wants:

Individual develops favourable attitudes towards those people and objects which satisfy his wants and unfavourable attitudes towards those who do not satisfy.

h. Prejudices:

Prejudices are preconceived ideas or judgments where one develops some attitudes on other people, objects, etc., without proper information. For example, disliking a doctor or a nurse without knowing their abilities, just because of their caste, religion, region, nationality, etc.