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## UNIT 3 EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND JOB SATISFACTION\*

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Acquire conceptual understanding of attitudes;
- Understand the relationship between attitudes and job satisfaction;
- List out the characteristics of a committed person;
- Understand different types of employee attitude;
- Explore the factors affecting employee attitude; and
- Discuss the barriers to change attitudes and adopt different ways to overcome them.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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Attitudes refer to feelings and beliefs of individuals or groups of individuals. The feelings and beliefs are directed towards other people, objects or ideas. When a person says, "I like my job," it shows, that he has a positive attitude towards his job. Attitudes often result in and affect the behaviour and/or action of the people. Attitudes can lead to an intended behaviour if there are no external interventions. Attitudes constitute a psychological phenomenon which cannot be directly observed, but which can be observed indirectly by assessing its consequences. For example, if a person is very regular in his job, we may infer that he likes his job very much or is a disciplined person. Attitudes are gradually acquired over a period of time.

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\*Contributed by Prof. G. Bhuvaneshwara Lakshmi, Head of the Department, Department of Education and Education Technology, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

Social psychologists give importance to both theoretical and practical aspects of attitudes because they have powerful effect on behaviour. It is very difficult to assess the type of attitude which causes a particular type of behaviour in different situations. Depending on the strength of an attitude, behaviour can be predicted to an extent. Attitudes have importance in one's life as they help a person to mediate between his own inner needs (expression, defence) and the outside world (adaptive and knowledge).

Attitude is the mental state of an individual who responds or is ready to respond for or against objects, situations, etc. with which his/her feelings, interest, liking, desire and so on are directly or indirectly linked or associated. During the course of his/her development, a person acquires tendencies to respond to objects. These learned cognitive mechanisms are called attitudes.

### ***Meaning and definitions of Attitude***

The word 'Attitude' is derived the Latin term 'Aptus' which means a subjective or mental state of preparation for action. Otherwise, an attitude is an effective byproduct of previous experiences and has its base in inner urges and influences of environment by which a person is surrounded. It can also be said that an attitude is the result of one's desires and group stimulation. It is a part of personality of human beings.

Herbert Spencer was one of the earlier psychologists who employed the term 'attitude'. Later, it was defined by different scholars in diverse ways. It is a concept of belief. An individual may or may not have any preference towards a particular object/thing/issue etc. One may accept a path, while others may reject it. All these beliefs and preferences are expressions of attitudes. Some of the definitions of attitudes are given below for your understanding (cited in Lakshmi, G.D., 2000):

"Attitudes are associated with likes and consequently have an emotional context" --- Norman Marries (1964).

The meaning of attitude is "behaviour of conduct regarding some matters" --- Fowler and Fowler 1968.

An Attitude, defined by Hariman in 1950, is 'A mental set to respond to a situation with a proper reaction; whereas sets may be temporary matters, attitudes are more or less stable.'

In 1994, Woodworth defined an attitude as "a set of dispositions (readiness, inclination, and tendency) to act towards on object according to its characteristics so far as we are acquainted with them".

Skinner (1966) defined an attitude as "a generalised disposition towards a group of people and it is promotionally tended".

### ***Types and Components of Attitude***

Further, attitudes are defined as "Complex of feelings, convictions, prejudices, fears and other tendencies that have given a set or readiness to act to a person because of varied experience" (Chave, 1928). These attitudes may be classified into four types:

- Positive attitude,
- Negative attitude,
- Neutral attitude, and
- Sikken attitude.

Let us discuss these attitudes.

**1. Positive attitude:** A person with positive attitude keeps a positive mind-set and thinks about the greater good, whatever may be his experiences or circumstances. One has to understand how much of positiveness of attitude is needed to keep a work progressing.

Persons with positive attitude generally do not care about the obstacles that they face in their personal and professional life. They tend to develop their talents and skills every day and try to overcome all the difficulties they come across to achieve their own goals. These people put efforts to identify their earlier mistakes rather than blaming others. And they try not to repeat them.

There are different personality traits which come under this category. Some of them are: Self-confidence, joyfulness, hardwork, sincerity and punctuality, decision-making, determination, satisfaction, cooperation, sharing, accepting responsibility for failures, etc. Some of these are elaborated below:

**Joyfulness:** Some people are always joyful. Self-confidence adds to joy and happiness. Happiness generates contentment and positive thinking. A happy mind-set is an abode for all good in one's life or organisation.

**Punctuality and Sincerity:** These personality traits are important to work with a positive mind set. Punctuality is discipline in time management, while sincerity is devotion to any task or mission.

**2. Negative attitude:** Some of the attitudes of an individual are harmful to total personality. Some of these attitudes are anger, frustration, dissatisfaction, doubting, jealousy, prejudices etc. In general, people with such negative attitudes focus on failures and limitations and ignore the positive dimensions of life. Negative people run away from tough situations. Negative attitudes always create hindrances to success even to optimum utilisation of capabilities. Let us discuss some of the personality traits that form negative attitudes.

**Anger:** Anger is an emotional state that adversely affects thinking and reasoning. A person with negative attitude will always be fault finding. Sometimes there may be no reason at all for getting angry, yet the habit of getting angry overpowers the man. This mindset is dysfunctional for constructive work.

**Doubt:** A person who has no confidence in himself is always doubtful and will have a negative mindset. This attitude will not let him progress in his work. Self trust and trusting others are essential for a positive climate for work.

**Frustration:** Frustration is the result of anger and lack of confidence. A negative person is a frustrated person. As said earlier, attitude defines the person. And the mood of frustration will create unfavourable results. A dying spirit cannot generate a living action.

**3. Neutral Attitude:** This is another type of attitude that is common. People with this attitude generally tend to ignore their problems in life, and wait for others to take care of their problems. They are generally victims of complacency and are often unemotional. They never feel the need to change themselves as they can simply live with the way they are. A person with a neutral attitude will feel disconnected quite often and that is why having neutral attitude is very bad and should be fixed as soon as possible. A person with neutral attitude succeeds only if he or she adopts a positive attitude. In most cases, it has been seen that the attitude adjustment mental therapies have led persons to a road filled with positivity.

**4. Sikken Attitude:** It is very difficult to deal with persons having Sikken attitude, because they find bad in everything and can change a positive idea into negative. Sometimes their negativity in thinking dominates others' thinking as well. In general, a person with positive attitude will be an inspiration for many in the team. Therefore, companies look for people with positive attitudes. People in general seem to stick around the positive vibration, as that will motivate them enough to progress in life. Bad or good, attitude has the power to change people's thoughts and therefore, their behaviour.

#### ***Components of Attitude***

The composition of three aspects forms the bases of the attitude. The acronym for these three aspects is ABC: A- Affective (emotional), B-behavioural (conative) C- Cognition (information).

Information/knowledge which consists of beliefs, values and ideas of a person about the object form an attitude. This is known as cognitive/information component. This information in reality may or may not be correct. But this is used as key to an individual's attitude.

Emotional (affective) component involves our individual's feelings and likings. Behavioural component involves the behaviour of the individual in a specific manner towards an object. The first and second component can't be seen by others but surely enough, it can be inferred. To understand the third component, the first two components are essential.

Direct experience of a person: In association with previous attitude towards the objects, family, peer group, economic status, mass media etc, are different sources which play a major role in the formation of one's attitudes. All the attitudes of an individual may not be consciously held. In some cases the individuals may not be aware of their own positive/ negative attitudes and the sources of attitude which they possess. Attitudes formed by direct experiences resist change whereas attitudes formed by social learning may change easily. If the individual experience is positive, it may lead to the formation and sustenance of positive attitude.

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### **3.2 JOB SATISFACTION**

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Job Satisfaction is a collection of positive or negative feelings towards one's job. It shows the amount of satisfaction towards the job. It is the result of the reciprocal relationship between the employee's expectations and the rewards that are received from the employer. Job satisfaction is a part of life and it is

influenced by a host of factors – the nature of the job, one’s inclination and the job environment.

### ***Concept of Job Satisfaction***

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as an emotional feeling developed as a byproduct of job experience. It is a complex phenomenon which reflects and affects the cognitive, affective and motor behaviours of an employee. Feeling, thinking and action are involved in job satisfaction. Blum (1968) explained job satisfaction as the summation of likes and dislikes towards the job.

Job satisfaction is a general attitude which is the result of many specific attitudes in three areas, namely (i) specific job factors; (ii) individual characteristics; and (iii) group relationship outside the job.

Several theories concerning the sources of job satisfaction have been proposed in the organisational literature. These theories can be classified into one of three categories:

1. **Situational theories** which hypothesise that job satisfaction results from the nature of one’s job or other aspects of the environment.
2. **Dispositional approaches** assume that job satisfaction is related to one’s own mindset.
3. **Interactive theories propose** that it is developed as result of nature of the work and one’s own views about job

All these factors cannot be isolated from each other for analysis. The most notable situational influence on job satisfaction is the nature of the work itself—often called “intrinsic job characteristics”. Researches show that nature of work is the most important factor for job satisfaction.

### **3.2.1 Theories of Job Satisfaction**

#### ***Hierarchy of needs***

Maslow’s needs hierarchy theory was one of the first theories that examined the importance of job satisfaction. The theory suggests that human needs form a five-level hierarchy consisting of: physiological, safety, belongingness/love, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs postulates that there are essential needs that need to be met first (such as, physiological needs and safety), before more complex (such as, belonging and esteem) needs can be met.

#### ***Motivator-Hygiene Theory***

Herzberg’s motivator-hygiene theory suggests that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not the two opposite ends of the same continuum, but instead they are two separate and, at times, even unrelated concepts. ‘Motivating’ factors like pay and benefits, recognition and achievement need to be positively addressed in order for an employee to be satisfied with work. On the other hand, ‘hygiene’ factors (such as working conditions, company policies and structure, job security, interaction with colleagues and quality of management) are associated with job dissatisfaction. This theory postulates that when hygiene

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Individual Behaviour**

factors are low, an employee is dissatisfied, but when these factors are high, it means the employee is not dissatisfied (or neutral), but not necessarily satisfied. Motivators influence the satisfaction level of an employee.

***Dispositional approach***

This approach suggests that job satisfaction is closely related to personality. It postulates that an individual has a strong predisposition towards a certain level of satisfaction, and that this remains fairly constant and stable across time.

***Job satisfaction and organisational behaviour***

Organisational behaviour is related to the work behaviour of persons. Most studies in organisational behaviour include reference to job satisfaction, job involvement and organisational commitment. When a person is fully satisfied with his work in the work place, he will be sincerely committed to his job. A high level of job satisfaction develops a positive attitude towards the job. The effect of job satisfaction reflects on the performance of employees: productivity increases, absenteeism reduces and customer service increases.

Job involvement indicates a person's involvement in the work and the degree to which he identifies himself with the job. A person with strong level of job involvement takes care of the work that he undertakes. If he is involved well in his work, the productivity rate increases, the administrative authority recognises his worth and encourages him with incentives.

Organisational commitment is a mental state of an employee who identifies himself with the organisation and its goals. He wants to continue his membership with the organisation. It is clear that job involvement identifies the attitude towards one's specific job, whereas organisation commitment identifies the attitude towards the employing organisation. Thus, all the three attitudes are interlinked. Job satisfaction is required for job involvement which in turn leads to commitment to one's specific job.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the types and components of Attitude.

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2. Discuss different theories of Job Satisfaction.

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### 3.3 COMMITMENT

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Commitment is the act of binding (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action. When a person takes up a job, he is supposed to be making a commitment to do the job well, and his employer makes a commitment to compensate him for his work. There are commitments to quality of work, sincerity and integrity.

#### *Characteristics of committed people*

Committed people share certain traits that make them committed to their passions, whether it is football, education, career or family. Committed people have the following characteristics:

1. **Courage of Conviction:** Committed people value their passions strongly and move toward their goals with full force. Because they are so committed to their passions, they don't care about the disapproval of others. They are able to move forward toward their goals without fear of what people may think of them.
2. **Loyal:** Committed people have their priorities and they stick to them. They develop a routine that allows them to slowly and steadily work toward their goals. They are loyal to their families, their friends, their team, their sport and themselves because they are determined to succeed in various dimensions of life.
3. **Dreamers:** Committed people are committed and loyal to very specific goals, whether it is winning the Heisman Trophy, beating a personal record or becoming a doctor. Committed people constantly make new goals and are always striving to push their boundaries and achieve more.
4. **Tough:** People who are committed have a unique endurance that allows them to physically keep going because they are mentally wired to work endlessly toward their dreams. In other words, their workload does not seem overwhelming because they wholeheartedly want to perform it.
5. **Happy:** Above all, committed people are truly happy because they have a higher purpose to live for. Each day is one step forward toward achieving their goals and dreams, and they feel fulfilled knowing that they are always moving forward.

#### *Organisational commitment*

Organisational commitment is an issue which has been gaining importance over the years. It implies the degree to which an employee is loyal to his/her organisation. The management is very much concerned about the organisational commitment of its employees. Organisational commitment is found to have significant relationship with turnover, productivity and satisfaction.

If individuals are committed towards the organisation, they definitely work and achieve better and even outperform their co-workers and help gain for organisation a more competitive position and more profitability.

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## 3.4 EFFECT OF EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES

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### *Employee Attitude*

People enter jobs with different ideas, expectations, goals and attitudes towards their work. They also expect some recognition from the organisation. The most important attitude of an employee which affects organisation is job satisfaction. Generally a worker with positive attitude shows better performance than a person with negative attitude. So it is the responsibility of the manager to monitor employees' attitudes and take measures to curb laziness and negative attitude of employees.

Employees' attitudes and job satisfaction have close relationship. An employee will show positive attitude towards work when he or she is fully satisfied with job. Job satisfaction depends on pay, promotion, work, supervision etc. And these factors lead to organisational commitment.

### *Types of employees' attitudes*

Based on the findings of different studies, attitudes of the employee generally fit into one of the six categories given below.

1. **Fulfillment seekers:** The people with these attitudes believe that a job should provide opportunity to show their talents. They would not bother about payment and other benefits.
2. **High achievers:** High achievers have certain ambitions to achieve in their life through their career. They show initiative in their work and attain higher positions as engineers, doctors and lawyers.
3. **Clock punchers:** They feel jobs and career are different. Their approach to job is ambivalent.
4. **Risk takers:** They are ready to take risks to achieve financial success.
5. **Ladder climbers:** They seek security in job and standing income. So once they get a job they will not try for better jobs. They will stay in a job for long time and with one employer. This attitude is opposite to risk-taking attitude.
6. **Paycheck cashers:** They give preference to jobs which have higher wages rather than jobs that have opportunity to show their talents. The factor of financial status dominates their thinking.

There are a number of methods for measuring employee attitudes such as conducting focus groups, interviewing employees or carrying out employee surveys.

### *Factors affecting attitude*

Factors which affect the attitude of employees are discussed below:

**Psychological:** Attitude of a person is determined by many factors like ideas, values, beliefs, perception, etc. All these have a role in determining a person's attitude. Values are ideals or guiding principles in one's life.



**Family:** Home is the first school for the child to learn good and bad to develop proper attitudes. Family plays an important role in the formation of attitudes

**Society:** Every person will be influenced by the society and the culture to which he belongs.

His ideas, values and attitudes will reflect the conditions of the society

**Economic:** Attitudes are also affected by changes in position, compensation, financial conditions of the work place etc.

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### 3.5 CHANGING ATTITUDES

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Attitudes may change with time, environment and with proper attention towards them. So it is the responsibility of managers of the organisations to take care of the employee's attitude. Positive attitudes of employees towards their work result in better performance. An employee who feels that he is not taken care of by the organisation will show a poor performance because of his negative attitude. By providing rewards, by encouraging their efforts, by attending to their problems, administrative authorities can transform, wholly or partially, the negative attitude of employees. No doubt, there will be obstacles in the path of attitude transformation, but these can be addressed rationally. Therefore, the duty of the management is to identify these barriers and find out the ways of overcoming them and effectively changing the attitudes.

#### *Types of Changing Attitudes*

The changes in attitude can be classified into the following two types:

1. **Congruent Change:** Congruent change means, though the original attitude is not changed completely, yet the intensity of feelings of the attitude is adjusted. For example, a person who wastes money in gambling may gamble less through the impact of counseling. A negative attitude may persist but its intensity can be reduced.
2. **Incongruent Change:** A change in attitude from a negative direction to a positive direction is known as incongruent change. For example, a person who has been disliking his boss, starts liking him.

#### *Barriers to Changing Attitudes*

There are a number of barriers that prevent people from changing their attitudes. Briefly, these are as follows:

**Prior commitment:** Sometimes a goal-seeker who is committed to work will not show interest to change his course of action

**Strong commitment:** Sometimes commitment towards work will not permit the employee to change his attitude.

**Publicly expressed attitudes:** A person cannot change his attitude, once his attitude is recognised by the public and accepted by it.

**Low credibility:** It is the tendency of employees not to respond to the changes suggested by a senior because they do not have trust in him.

**Degree of Fear:** If high level warnings are not given by the employer, then there will be a low level of fear. On the other hand, if high level warnings are given, then they complain that their employer is threatening them. So sometimes it is difficult to change the attitude of employees by creating fear.

**Insufficient Information:** Sometimes people do not show interest in changing their attitudes until they understand that their boss is not satisfied with their attitude and this can affect their progress.

**Lack of resources:** when there is a gap between the needed resources for the fructification of programmes and the availability of resources, it becomes difficult for the organisations to change employees' attitude.

**Improper reward system:** An inadequate reward system in the organisation also changes the attitude of employees. For example, lack of transparency in the reward system may be a factor in hardening of attitudes towards the organisation.

***Ways of Changing Attitudes***

Attitudes can be changed by different ways which are stated as follow:

- Insufficient information develops negative attitude and we can address it by providing new information that will help to change the attitudes of employees.
- Attitudes may change through direct experience.
- By resolving discrepancies between attitudes and behaviours.
- Through persuasion of friends and peers.
- Since a person's attitudes are influenced by his peer or inference groups, one way to change the attitude is to modify one or the other.
- Fear can also change attitude.
- A situational change can transform attitude.
- Well established attitudes tend to be resistant to change, but flexible attitude may be more amenable to change.

In addition to the above techniques, communication between the employer and the employees, fun activities which help interaction between them, and involvement of the employees in the process of planning and development programmes can also influence the attitudes of employees.

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What are the characteristic features of committed people?

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2. Explain the different types of employee's attitude.

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### 3.6 CONCLUSION

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Attitudes are important because they can guide thought, behaviour, and feelings. Thus, attitude change occurs when a person goes from being positive to negative, from slightly positive to very positive, or from having no attitude to having one. Positive changes help in the improvement of the performance. Thus, the biggest challenge before an organisation is to convert negative attitudes towards work and work plan into positive orientations towards profession and performance.

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### 3.7 GLOSSARY

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- Attitudes** : Attitudes are logically hypothetical constructs (i.e., they are inferred but not objectively observable), they are manifested in conscious experience, verbal reports, overt behaviour, and physiological indicators.
- Job satisfaction** : it is a feeling of contentment that an employee derives from his/her job. Job Satisfaction is all about an individual's feelings about the work, work environment, pay, organisation culture, job security and so on
- Commitment** : It is an act of binding ourselves to a course of action. An employee needs commitment to his role and organisation.
- Employee Attitude** : The performance of an employee in work reflects is determined by several factors, but more particularly by his attitude. Persons with positive attitude will perform in a better manner than those who are having negative attitude. It is the responsibility of the managers to monitor and transform the attitudes of their employees.

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### **3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES**

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#### **Check Your Progress 1**

**1. Your answer should include the following points:**

- Positive attitude
- Negative attitude
- Neutral attitude
- Sikken attitude
- Affective (emotional), Behavioural (conative) and Cognition (information)

**2. Your answer should include the following points:**

- Hierarchy of needs
- Motivator-Hygiene theory
- Dispositional approach.

## Check Your Progress 2

### 1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Controversial
- Loyal
- Dreamers
- Tough
- Happy

### 2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Fulfillment seekers
- High achievers
- Clock punchers
- Risk takers
- Ladder Climbers
- Paycheck Cashers