

UNIT 94 – UPSC - Moral and political attitudes

Laws:

Moral attitude:

Moral attitudes are grounded in moral beliefs of “Right” and “wrong” action. Moral attitudes are stronger than moral principles.

It has been well documented that ethical values are the highest among all types of natural values. Moral values include Goodness, purity, truthfulness, humility of man rank higher than genius, brilliancy, exuberant vitality and the beauty of nature or of art, than the stability and power of a state.



It is established in studies that moral values are always personal values. They can only inhere in man, and be realized by man. Person responsible for his actions and his attitudes, for his will and striving, his love and his hatred, his joy and his sorrow, and his basic attitudes, can be morally good or bad. A man will have personality radiating moral values if he is humble, pure, honest and affectionate. As long as a man unseeingly disrespects the moral values of other persons, as long as he does not differentiate the positive value which inheres in truth, and the negative value which is proper to error, as long as he does not comprehend the value which inheres in the life of man, and the negative value attached to an injustice, he will be incompetent of moral goodness. Family, society, religion and education contribute a lot in shaping those moral convictions. Positive implication of moral attitudes are that these attitudes tangled with strong emotions. Therefore averts deviant behaviours among normal societies due to fear of social ostracization e.g. child molestation, incest.

Qualities of Moral Attitudes:

1. Reverence
2. Faithfulness

3. Veracity
4. Goodness

1. Reverence: It is the ability to hold moral values, to sustain them, and to respond to them, is the foundation for realizing the moral values of man. These marks can be found only in the man who possesses reverence.

Reverence is a feeling or attitude of great respect towards others touched with awe; veneration. It is the attitude which can be labelled as the originator of all moral life, for in it man first takes a position toward the world which opens his spiritual judgements and enables him to grasp values.

Reverence is the vital presupposition for all deep knowledge above all, for the capacity to grasp values. Reverence is the assumption for every response to value, every abandonment to something important, and it is, at the same time, an essential element of such response to value. The essential attitude of reverence is the basis for all moral conduct toward our fellowmen and toward ourselves. The basic attitude of reverence is the presupposition for every true love. A similar reverence is obvious in justice toward others, in consideration for the rights of another, for the liberty of another's decisions, in limiting one's own lust for power, and in all understanding of another's rights.

2. Faithfulness or Constancy:

Among the attitudes of people which are basic for his whole moral life, faithfulness is another important feature of moral attitude. Faithfulness is the concept of dependably remaining loyal to someone or something and putting that loyalty into consistent practice, regardless of extenuating situations. The more faithful, the more constant a man is, the more substantial will he be, the more capable of becoming a vessel of moral values, a being in whom purity, justice, humility, love and goodness will dwell lastingly and will radiate from him to the world about him. This loyalty in the true sense of the word is a fundamental moral attitude of man. It is a necessary concern of all true understanding of values, and it is a component element of every true response to values, and consequently of the whole moral life. The prominent importance of faithfulness will stand out in a special way against the background of human relationships.

3. Veracity:

Truthfulness is another of the basic suppositions for a person's moral life. A dishonest person not only exemplifies a great moral disvalue, but he is crippled in his whole personality; the whole of his moral life; everything in him which is morally positive is threatened by his untruthfulness. The deceitful man lacks reverence toward values. He assumes a lordly position over being, he deals with it as he pleases. This attitude implies an element of arrogance, of disrespect and impertinence.

Veracity is fidelity or constancy and the awareness of responsibility, a basis of whole moral life. Like these other virtues, it bears a high value in itself, and like these is also indispensable as a basic presupposition of a personality in which genuine moral values may flower in their plenitude.

4. Goodness: Goodness is the central characteristics of moral values. Among the different moral values, there is none which represents more completely the entire reign of moral values, than goodness. The goodness of a man does not limit itself to generous intentions toward one particular person whom one loves. When it is said, someone is good, it means that person continually manifests this open benevolence, that his attitude toward every man has this loving, this generous

character. For goodness, like every other virtue, is not limited to a particular temporary attitude, but it is a basic attitude and position.

Goodness flows from a conscious response of love. It is the most intensive moral life, and not inertia and dullness; it is strength and not weakness. The good man does not allow himself to be made use of because he lacks the strength to resist, but he serves freely and humbles himself eagerly.

While the other fundamental attitudes, such as reverence, faithfulness, awareness of responsibility and veracity respond to the world of values as a whole, goodness not only responds to this world of values, but it is the reflection of the whole world of values in the person.

To summarize, moral attitudes encourages a person towards Altruism, volunteerism, social service. Negative impact of moral attitude are that person can use such attitude to defend violence behaviour and insanity and still society will accept it because moral attitude is a strong emotions. It motivates a person towards riots, massacre and terrorism. Since moral attitude is tied with strong sentiments, people do not get along with those who do not share their moral attitude.

Political attitudes:

Political values are important when they frame political behaviour. Political attitudes are the approaches of people to the areas of public life covered by political psychology such as views on nationalism, political conservatism, political liberalism, and political radicalism. Political attitudes fall on a range between extremely liberal and extremely conservative. Abundant of scholars stated that Political Attitude means the beliefs and values which underpin the operation of a particular political system. These attitudes were seen as including knowledge and skills about the operation of the political system positive and negative judgments about the system. These attitudes decide how people participate, whom they vote for and which political parties they support. The factors which make attitudes are family, gender, religion, race, ethnicity and region. Political attitude tells us which party someone vote for, what kind of political ideology someone prefer most, which social, economic, cultural, international policy someone prefer etc.

Factors that shape political attitude:

Family: Family is generally the first and most persistent factor which influence on young people's mind for shaping political opinions. Despite family incongruities and generation gaps, children tend to grow up and have the political attitude similar to their parents. Though there are generation gaps it is understandable that children tend to vote the way their parents do. If a family is more politically active the child is more expected to hold the same principles and attitudes. As children grow older, other influences crisscross the family and naturally their attitudes tend to diverge from those of their parents.

Religion: Religious principles often affect the way people vote. Religion is the faith of the people in values and beliefs. The recent experiences have revealed that the religious right has supported more conservative candidates for public office in more favour of the Republican Party than to the Democratic Party. Associates of the "Religious Right" differ in their political attitudes from everyone else. The religious right tends to support to be more conservative. This tendency is more clearly associated with social issues such as gay rights, cow protection than with economic issues or foreign affairs.

Race and Ethnicity: It has been established that for the past half century, African Americans are affiliated to Democratic Party than any other identifiable group. Some professionals believe that this loyalty is fading. It is very obvious in several studies that Asian Americans tend to vote conservative, but there is still a lack of concrete evidence to prove this.

Economic pressures: Many scholars affirmed that economic pressures are prime stimulus for choosing a particular political position, and, indeed, this does appear to be an important factor. People who are doing well in society usually do not want it to change. On the contrary, the poor have little to lose materially and much to gain from progressive change. Or so it can be supposed. Economics is not the only factor in the choice of political beliefs, however. Age: Age is also important factor in developing political attitude. Usually, the young are more likely to be liberal than the aged. This is possibly because the older generations have a vested interest in the status quo that the younger generations have not yet acquired. Young people lack not only wealth, but also a sense of commitment and belonging.

Psychological factor: Some people are also more psychologically suitable for liberalism or conservatism than others. To be a liberal, one must have a comparatively high tolerance for disorder.

Nature of People: This is determining factor in shaping political attitude. If person believes that people are essentially bad, selfish, and aggressive, then one is likely to lean to the right of the spectrum. Anyone who thinks that people are innately evil will tend to rely on strict laws and firm punishment for violators in the belief that such measures are necessary to control errant behaviour. On the other hand, people who consider their colleagues to be essentially well meaning and sensible will lean toward the left. They will try to avoid inhibiting human liberty by “needlessly” severe laws, and they will try to reason with lawbreakers.

Gender: It has been observed in our social structure that females tend to develop political attitude according to their husband or other family members but in many cases it is observed that they have a different political views. Generally women tends to be liberal as they want equal rights, equal pay, more opportunities etc. But their political views also depend on religion, family, and class. Wherever chief minister is women (Like Jayalalita, Mamta Banerjee), women are more motivated to vote for their parties. In present situation, women also started voting for parties who support “women’s issues,” such as women protection, women reservation, equal pay, and equal legal rights.

The study of political behaviour have political attitudes as its major element. Research in political science has since that date been focused on empirical research on political behaviour and institutions. Political attitudes have a prevailing function since they are a predictor for vote choice. Lane (1959) highlighted the importance of political attitudes in a larger segment of attitudes and beliefs. He connected political attitudes of respondents directly to other psychological factors.

Process of formulation of political attitude:

For smooth functioning of the society and system and to maintain concord and co-ordination within the society, every society plans the effective governing of its people. Every society develops few mechanisms or agencies such as the state, the government, the political parties and election or selection of representatives. The political attitude formation guide how people nurture their political beliefs and how they pass on their values to others from one generation to the next.

Political attitudes formulation process is an indispensable element of a political system. Political attitude formulation and political attitude move parallel.

Political attitude formulation is a learning process by which an individual attains orientations, beliefs, values and norms and behaviour patterns in political system. Political attitude formulations decide the pattern of socio-political behaviour. Political attitude formulation is a psychological concept as it is concerned with the society in general and with individual in particular.

According to Easton and Dennis, there are four stages in the process of political attitude formulation.

1. A child identifies authority through particular individual such as parents, policemen and the president of the country.
2. There should be a differences made between private and public authority.
3. The understanding about impersonal political institutions such as national legislature, judiciary and voting behaviour is developed.
4. Difference between political institution and person engaged in the activities associated with those institutions so that idealized images of particular persons such as the president or the congress.

Functions of political attitude formulation:

1. **Maintaining Political Culture:** Maintaining of political culture is vital function of political attitude formulation in stable conditions. This function is performed by having communication between political cultures from a generation to another generation. But in present situation, the political socialization does not always act for maintaining political culture.
2. **Alteration of Political Culture:** Modification of political culture is an important function of political attitude formulation.
3. **Building Political Culture:** Creating political culture is performed by means of process of political attitude formulation. Every society needs to create new political culture with the establishment of new political system.
4. **Foundation of Present Pattern of Political System:** There is no scope for difference of opinions of opposition into totalitarian state whereas if we see there are in number of opportunities for difference of opinions and opposition in open societies.
5. **Continuity and Change:** There is continuity and change in attitude formulation and this is an important factor of the process of attitude formulation.

Political attitude formulation is continuing process and it is achieved through several institutions and agents. Individuals pass through several stages before they completely get socialized. Various agents of political attitude formulation can be categorized into five groups.

1. Interpersonal agencies-family and peer groups.
2. Organizations-schools, religious institutions and workplaces.
3. Mass media-newspaper, TV and radio.

4. Specialized political input structures-the legislature, the executive, courts and the bureaucracy.

In general, this gamut exemplifies that what someone believes about social issues and government's role in society. In present scenario, liberals, who are most likely to be in the Northeast and the West Coast, have generally believed that government should play a more active role in supporting the economy and be less involved in foreign matters. Conservatives, who tend to live in America's middle and southern regions, tend to consider the economy needs less government support and more aggressive foreign policy. On social issues, liberals tend to support non-traditional changes, like allowing same-sex marriage, whereas conservatives favour maintaining tradition and are more likely to cite Christianity as an influence on their views.

Role of Political attitude and ideology is important in determining ethics in politics because:

1. Political ideology is edge service. In society, there is a need of healthy political attitude for constructive politics. It will lead to more working hours of assemblies and Parliament which is ethical demand of constitution and people.
2. Ethics in politics are determined mainly by how near party is to people and how fast grievances are addressed. Both are litmus test for Political attitudes, while each is claimed in political ideology, but having positive political attitude is important.
3. Positive Political attitude strengthens Ethics in politics which is important as it attracts youths toward politics and re-establishes faith in democracy in difficult times when nation needs.

To summarize, political attitude is belief and action system that decides an action based on electoral gains. Political attitude on positive side can lead to showing zero tolerance toward corruption, pro-poor, welfare for weaker sections, listening to public grievances, but on negative side political attitude can take shape of regionalism, communalising public to polarise them during election. Political Philosophy is basis of Political party for which it stands. It is like internal constitution of party. Every political party has healthy and pro-people political ideology but hardly do they follow it because for electoral gains, political attitude of individual politicians comes into action and hence bribery, lobbying, fake protests, walkout, insensitive defamation on other parties and perks politics comes into play.