MAD- 2020
Day – 44
ETHICS

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Question:

What is attitude? How and to what extent does it determine our actions?

Answer:

Attitude is psychological tendency expressed by evaluating an entity with some degree of favour or disfavour.

Our attitude allows us to

- make judgments about events, products or people

- determine which behaviours to engage

Thus, it directly influences our actions. For example, our attitude helps us decide which people to approach or avoid, which products to buy or not and so on.

To what extent will our attitude influence actions depend on the strength of our attitude?

- Cognitive component: It involves a person's belief/knowledge about an attitude object. If a person faces cognitive dissonance about a particular object, that will decrease the strength of an attitude in influencing actions.

- Affective component: This involves a person's feelings/emotions about the attitude object. For example, a person may have fear as a stronger emotion than compassion. Such a person is likely to avoid a homeless guy on a street rather than helping him with money or food.

- **Behavioural (or conative) component:** Daryl Bem's theory of self-perception emphasises that individuals sometimes infer their attitudes by thinking about how they behaved with respect to the attitude object in the past. Thus a past repetitive experience may strengthen an attitude and determine ones actions.

Attitude–Behaviour consistency

The principle of consistency reflects the idea that people are rational and attempt to behave rationally at all times and that a person's behaviour should be consistent with their attitude(s).

- Whilst this principle may be a sound one, it is clear that people do not always follow it, sometimes behaving in seemingly quite illogical ways; for example, smoking cigarettes and knowing that smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease.

- There is evidence that the cognitive and affective components of behaviour do not always match with behaviour.