

Graph of $f(x) = |x|$.

(ii) Discuss the continuity of $f(x)$ at $x = 0$.

Solution : We know that for $x \geq 0$, $|x| = x$ and for $x < 0$, $|x| = -x$. Hence $f(x)$ can be written as,

$$f(x) = |x| = \begin{cases} -x, & x < 0 \\ x, & x \geq 0 \end{cases}$$

(i) The graph of the function is given in Fig 20.9

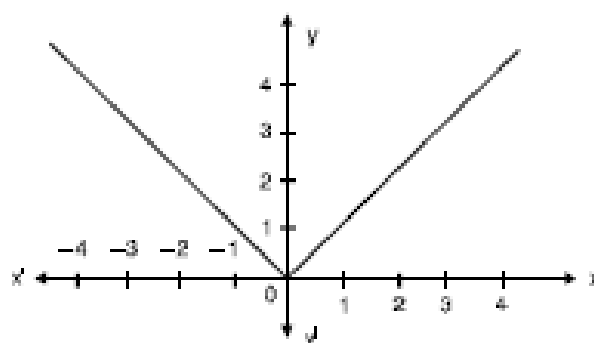


Fig. 20.9

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(ii) Left hand limit} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} f(x) \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} (-x) = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Right hand limit} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} f(x) \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Thus, } \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} f(x) = 0$$

$$\text{Also, } f(0) = 0$$

$$\therefore \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} f(x) = f(0)$$

Hence the function $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = 0$.

Examine the continuity of $f(x) = |x - b|$ at $x = b$.

Solution : Let $f(x) = |x - b|$. This function can be written as

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} -(x - b), & x < b \\ (x - b), & x \geq b \end{cases}$$

$$\text{Left hand limit} = \lim_{x \rightarrow b^-} f(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} f(b - h)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} [-(b - h - b)] \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} h = 0
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{i}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Right hand limit} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow b^+} f(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} f(b + h) \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} [(b + h) - b] \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} h = 0
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{ii}$$

$$\text{Also, } f(b) = b - b = 0 \tag{iii}$$

$$\text{From (i), (ii) and (iii), } \lim_{x \rightarrow b} f(x) = f(b)$$

Thus, $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = b$.

$$\text{If } f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{\sin 2x}{x}, & x \neq 0 \\ 2, & x = 0 \end{cases}$$

and whether $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = 0$ or not.

$$\text{Solution : Here } f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{\sin 2x}{x}, & x \neq 0 \\ 2, & x = 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Left hand limit} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} \frac{\sin 2x}{x} \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin 2(0 - h)}{0 - h} \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{-\sin 2h}{-h} \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \left(\frac{\sin 2h}{2h} \times \frac{2}{1} \right) \\
 &= 1 \times 2 = 2
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{i}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Right hand limit} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\sin 2x}{x} \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin 2(0 + h)}{0 + h} \\
 &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin 2h}{2h} \times \frac{2}{1} \\
 &= 1 \times 2 = 2
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{ii}$$

Also $f(0) = 2$ (Given) (ii)

From (i) to (iii),

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} f(x) = 2 = f(0)$$

Hence $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = 0$.

Example 10 : If $f(x) = \frac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1}$ for $x \neq 1$ and $f(x) = 2$ when $x = 1$, show that the function $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = 1$.

Solution : Here $f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1}, & x \neq 1 \\ 2 & , x = 1 \end{cases}$

Left hand limit $\lim_{x \rightarrow 1^-} f(x)$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} f(1 - h) \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{(1 - h)^2 - 1}{(1 - h) - 1} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1 - 2h + h^2 - 1}{-h} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{h(h - 2)}{-h} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} -(h - 2) \\ &= 2 \end{aligned}$$

Right hand limit $= \lim_{x \rightarrow 1^+} f(x)$ (i)

$$\begin{aligned} &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} f(1 + h) \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{(1 + h)^2 - 1}{(1 + h) - 1} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1 + 2h + h^2 - 1}{h} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{h(h + 2)}{h} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} (h + 2) \\ &= 2 \end{aligned}$$

.....(ii)

Also $f(1) = 2$ (Given)(iii)

\therefore From (i) to (iii),

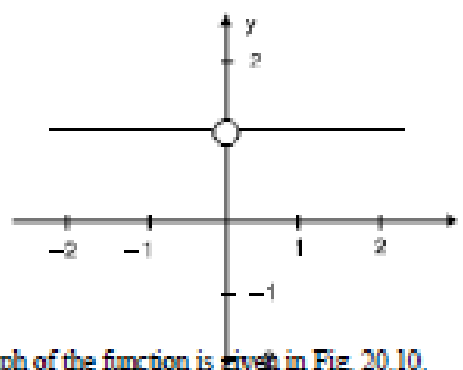
$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 1} f(x) = f(1)$$

Thus, $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = 1$.

Find whether $f(x)$ is continuous at $x = 0$ or not, where

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{x}{x}, & x \neq 0 \\ 2, & x = 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Solution : } \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} f(x) &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{x}{x} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} 1 = 1 \\ \text{and } f(0) &= 2 \\ \therefore \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} f(x) &\neq f(0) \end{aligned}$$



Hence $f(x)$ is not continuous at $x = 0$. The graph of the function is given in Fig. 20.10.

Clearly, the point $(0,1)$ does not lie on the graph. Therefore, the function is discontinuous at $x = 0$.

Signum Function : The function $f(x) = \text{sgn}(x)$ (read as signum x) is defined as

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} -1, & x < 0 \\ 0, & x = 0 \\ 1, & x > 0 \end{cases}$$

Find the left hand limit and right hand limit of the function from its graph given below:

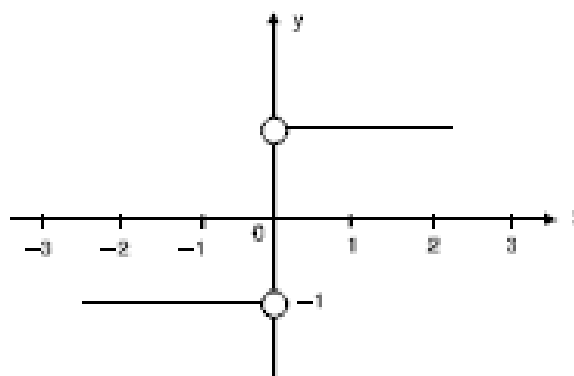


Fig. 20.11

From the graph, we see that as $x \rightarrow 0^+$, $f(x) \rightarrow 1$ and as $x \rightarrow 0^-$, $f(x) \rightarrow -1$.

Hence, $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} f(x) = 1$, $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} f(x) = -1$

As these limits are not equal, $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} f(x)$ does not exist. Hence $f(x)$ is discontinuous at $x = 0$.