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Study Material

B.A. Part - I

General Psychology

EMOTION

The word emotion has number of meanings. Candland (1968), is of the view that, if not all, but most of the people this is a main characteristic. The word emotion is extracted from the word 'Emoveo' of Latin language which means out and moves (to move). It is a subjective feeling and the experience of emotions varies from person to person. In Psychology, attempts have been made to identify basic emotions. It has been noted that at least six emotions are experienced and recognised everywhere. These are: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. Izard has proposed a set of ten basic emotions, i.e. joy, surprise, anger, disgust, contempt, fear,

shame, guilt, interest, and excitement with combinations of them resulting in other emotional blends.

Emotions vary in their intensity (high, low) and quality (happiness, sadness, fear). Subjective factors and situational contexts influence the experience of emotions. These factors are gender, personality, and psychopathology of certain kids.

Theories of Emotion

① James-Lange Theory:

One of the earliest-physiological theories of emotion was given by James (1884) and supported by Lange, hence, it has been named the James-Lange theory of emotion. The theory suggests that environmental stimuli elicit physiological responses from viscera (the

internal organs like heart and lungs), which in turn, are associated with muscle movement. For example, starting at an unexpected intense noise triggers activation in visceral and muscular organs followed by an emotional arousal. In other words, James-Lange theory argues that your perception about your bodily changes, like rapid breathing, a pounding heart, and running legs, following an event, brings forth emotional arousal. The main implication made by this theory is that particular event or stimuli provoke particular physiological changes and the individual's perception of these changes results in the emotion being experienced.

Road accident \rightarrow Increased heart rate \rightarrow Fear
 perspiration

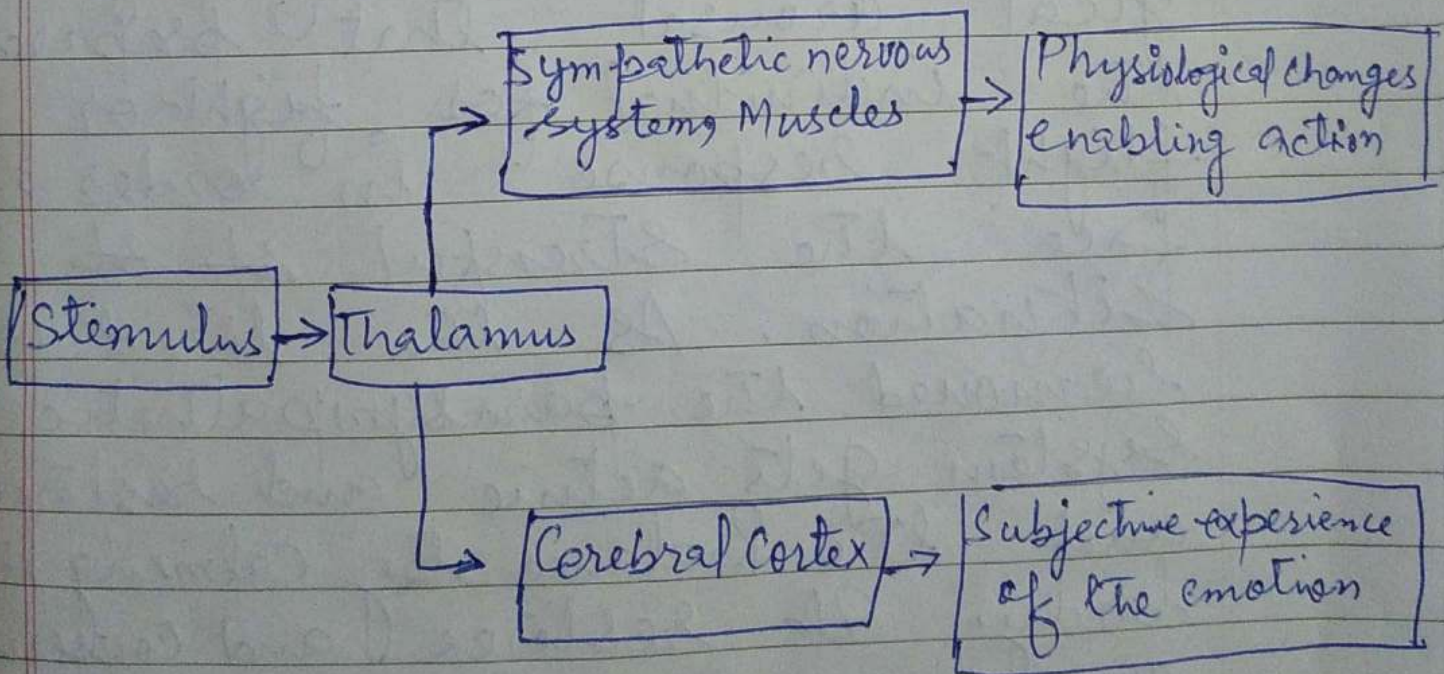
Stimulus → specific Physiological changes → Perception of Physiological changes → Emotion experience

However, this theory faced a lot of criticism and fell in disuse.

Cannon-Bard Theory:

This theory was proposed by Cannon (1927) and Bard (1934). The Cannon-Bard theory claims that the entire process of emotion is mediated by thalamus which after perception of the emotion-provoking stimulus, conveys this information simultaneously to the cerebral cortex and to the skeletal muscles and sympathetic nervous system. The cerebral cortex

then determines the nature of the perceived stimulus by ~~ref~~ referring to past experiences. This determines the subjective experience of the emotion. At the same time the sympathetic nervous system and the muscles provide physiological arousal and prepare the individual to take action.



The ~~ANS~~ ANS is divided into two systems, sympathetic and

parasympathetic. These two systems function together in a reciprocal manner. In a stressful situation the sympathetic system prepares the body to face the situation. It strengthens the internal environment of the individual by controlling the fall in heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar, etc. It induces a state of physiological arousal that prepares the individual for fight-or-flight response in order to face the stressful situation. As the threat is removed the parasympathetic system gets active and restores and the balance by calming the body. It restores and conserves energy and brings the individual back to a normal state.

Though acting in an antagonistic manner, the sympathetic

and parasympathetic systems are complementary to each other in completing the process of experience and expression of emotion.