

Concept, Nature & Determinants of Attention

Semester: II

Introduction to Attention

- **Definition:**

Attention is the mental process of selectively concentrating on one aspect of the environment while ignoring others.

- It acts as a filter for sensory input and is essential for perception, learning, and memory.

Concept of Attention

- **Key Points:**

- Involves focusing cognitive resources on specific stimuli.
- Can be voluntary (goal-directed) or involuntary (stimulus-driven).
- Acts as a gatekeeper in cognitive processing.

Nature of Attention

- **Selective:** Filters irrelevant information.
- **Shifting:** Can move from one stimulus to another.
- **Sustained:** Maintains focus over time.
- **Divided:** Can be split among tasks (with limits).

Determinants of Attention

- **External (Objective) Determinants:**
 - **Intensity of Stimulus** – Brighter/louder stimuli grab attention.
 - **Movement** – Moving objects draw attention more easily.
 - **Novelty/Change** – Unfamiliar stimuli stand out.
 - **Size** – Larger items are more noticeable.
 - **Contrast** – Stimuli that stand out from the background.

Internal (Subjective) Determinants

- **Personal Factors:**
 - **Interest** – We attend more to things we care about.
 - **Motivation/Need** – Hungry person notices food signs more.
 - **Past Experience** – Familiarity affects what we notice.
 - **Mental Set/Expectations** – Preparedness influences focus.
 - **Emotional State** – Anxiety can narrow or distort attention.

Importance of Attention

- Crucial for:
 - Perception and learning
 - Academic and professional performance
 - Decision making and problem-solving
 - Mental health and well-being

Conclusion

- Attention is a fundamental cognitive process.
- It is influenced by both external stimuli and internal states.
- Understanding attention helps in education, therapy, and productivity.



Thank you