



PATNA UNIVERSITY
M.A (PSYCHOLOGY) SEMESTER-1
ADVANCED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (CC2)
TOPIC: SOCIAL PERCEPTION

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SOCIAL PERCEPTION

- Social Perception is the process through which we seek knowledge about others. Through this, we come to know and understand other people around us. But what is more significant in this information processing is the role played through our emotions, motives in distorting this information so as to suit our needs, goals, and aspirations.
- Social perception can be done through two ways-
- Attribution- We can know about the cause of other's behavior through the process of attribution. Attribution can tell us about other's motives, intentions and traits.
- Non- verbal communication- Non-verbal communication makes use of facial expressions, eye contact, body postures and movements.
- Social perception is an important component of social competence and successful social life. Knowledge about others is essential for accurate predictions of their future behaviour. The specific ways in which we perceive and understand others, strongly shape our evaluations and relations with these persons.



- According to David Krech and Richard S. Crutchfield there are two major determinants of Social perception- structural factors and functional factors
 - Structural factors are those factors driving solely from the nature of the physical stimuli and the natural effects they evoke in the nervous system of the individual.
 - The functional factors are those which derive primarily from the needs, moods, past experience and memory of the individual.
 - Social Perception covers four areas-
 - **1) Attribution-** It is a complex process through which we attempt to understand the causes of other's behaviour. In attribution, we observe others' behavior and then infer backward to causes- intentions, abilities, traits, motives, and situational pressures- that explain why people act as they do.
 - **2) Non-verbal communication-** It is concerned with communication between individuals involving an unspoken language of facial expressions, eye contact, body gestures and postures.
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- **3) Impression Formation-** Impression Formation is the process through which we develop our beliefs and evaluations of other people. Through this, we combine diverse information about other persons into a united impression of them. Forming impressions about others is an elaborate cognitive process. The initial or first impressions about others are very important.
- **4) Impression Management-** It is also called as self-presentation. Impression management consists of various methods and efforts that individuals use to produce a favorable impression about himself/herself on others. We often attempt to influence others by projecting ourselves in ways which will present us in a favorable light. We often behave, act, dress and express ourselves in ways that produce favorable impressions on others. Impression Management is a skillful activity.



- Being competent in social perception includes three domains of competence:
- Knowing that other people have thoughts, beliefs, emotions, intentions, desires, and the like
- Being able to read other people's inner states based on their words, behavior, facial expression and the like and
- Adjusting one's actions based on those readings.
- A socially competent person can make note of other people's facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, gestures, words etc and on the basis of these clues, make reasonably accurate judgments about that person's state of mind, emotions, and intentions. Socially competent people then use these inferences about other people's inner states to make good decisions about how to behave socially.

