INTRODUCTION

The functional relationship between emotion and memory has always been considered as a very important area of enquiry in Psychology. The problem is directly related to the general principles of learning and, thus, refers to an area of basic theoretical significance. A very large amount of literature is available which shows the extent and diversity of research works conducted in this area. And yet, even after about fifty years of experimental research, the problem has not permitted any definite conclusion. This has been partly due to the inherent complexity of the problem itself and partly due to the obvious difficulty involved in studying human emotions under controlled laboratory conditions. The efforts of experimental psychologists have resulted in a host of ambiguous and conflicting reports. Moreover, due to considerable lack of experimental rigour and methodological sophistication, most of the earlier studies appear to be confusing and unreliable with respect to their designs as well as procedures.

However, from a theoretical standpoint, it would seem essential that a clear conceptual framework with respect to the functional relationship between affectivity and retention be established. Only in terms of such a framework it would be possible to observe the exact effects of variation in the affective nature of experiences (the independent variable) on the retention of such experiences (the dependent variable). Once, after empirical verification, a general theoretical principle is established, the existing relationship between the independent and the dependent variables could be explained. This, perhaps would also help us predict as well as control, in future, the nature of the response variable as indexed by retention measures, given the exact conditions of the observable stimulus variable (the material or experience to be learned and retained). The aim of the present study is to propose such a theoretical framework that can explain the empirical findings in this area. Here a preliminary approach to the empirical study of retention as a function of affective intensity has been attempted.