
UNIT 7 PROBLEM OF MOTIVATION AND INTEREST

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

All individuals have an inner drive or urge to learn something in this world. This drive or urge is also referred to as motivation. But without motivation no useful learning can take place. There is a need for creating a conducive environment for learning and motivating the children to learn. But how to motivate the children? Children are curious by nature. They have special interest in something or the other and they always want to learn new things. A teacher has to take advantage of all these facts in order to turn the attention of children to what he/she has to teach them in the classroom.

Motivation is at the heart of many of the important concerns of teachers.

- The trouble is that the children have no motivation.
- Children today don't seem to care about school.
- Why don't children pay attention?

As a teacher, if you have spent time in schools. You must have looked for answers to these questions. Is lack of motivation really at the heart of school failure? We will examine this question and several others in the following pages.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to :

- recognize the meaning of motivation;

- describe the concept of motivation from the behavioural, cognitive and humanistic point of view;
- infer the importance of motivation in learning;
- differentiate extrinsic from intrinsic motivation;
- list Maslow's seven levels of need and give a classroom example for each; and
- suggest ways of motivating learners in classroom teaching.

7.3 MOTIVATION

One finds Arun sitting at his desk during the Hindi period - a book lies open before him. but he is not looking at it - he rests his forehead on one hand as he gazes into the vacant space. Brijesh, on the other hand, is dejected, all his friends can swim well. He often gave some trials, he has failed - he has now decided never to try again.

Mrs. Celine is taking her last period of the day in Class IV. Children are busy packing their bags and getting mentally ready for the bell to set them free. Do you think they are listening to Mrs. Celine talking to them about moral science ?

Why do Arun, Brijesh and Class IV students behave as they do ? Can we say that it is the lack of desire which is the underlying factor ? How can we influence Arun, Brijesh or the Class IV children to begin and continue learning ?

7.3.1 What is Motivation?

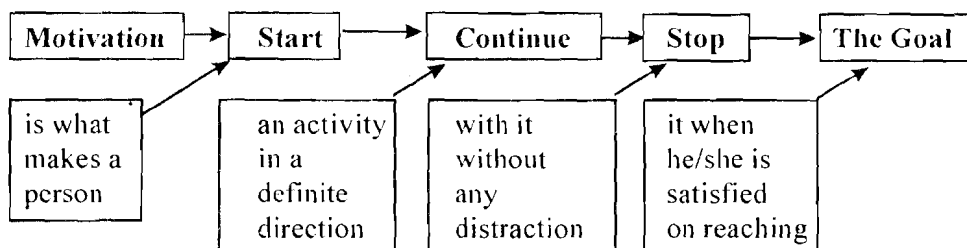
Situation A: Well friend, now you have picked up this learning material. What has prompted you to go through this? Have you been asked to do so by your senior or someone else? Does your job require you to do this? Or is it an inner desire or your curiosity?

Situation B: You hear people saying "We can take twenty horses to water, but cannot make even one drink the water", "What does this mean? Why doesn't the horse drink the water? Yes, you are right, it will drink when it is thirsty.

Situation C: You go home in the evening and ask your child to get dressed up. He does not stir. Then you tell him that you would take him to a cinema if he dresses up quickly. Now he is ready within five minutes.

- Why do you think he did not dress up in the beginning?
- What made him dress up very quickly later?
- Who has generated the will in him to dress up?

This sort of GENERATING THE WILL IN AN INDIVIDUAL TO DO SOMETHING IS MOTIVATION. Motivation is necessary for learning.



Motivation is usually defined as something that ENERGISES and DIRECTS behaviour.

- What causes a person to initiate some action?
- What causes a person to move towards a particular goal?
- What causes a person to persist in attempt to reach that goal? Psychologists have suggested many different answers based on such factors as instincts, desires, needs, incentives or social pressure.

Major explanation of motivation falls into two categories - BEHAVIOURAL and COGNITIVE. There is also a widely influential HUMANISTIC VIEW.

i) Behavioural View

The main proponents of the view are, Watson, Skinner and Thorndike, According to them, all behaviour is motivated. For example, staring out of the window, avoiding school work, etc.

What a teacher usually means when he/she says that the children lack motivation is that the children are not inclined to do that what the teacher has in mind.

Behaviourists view INITIATION, DIRECTION and PERSISTENCE as important components of motivation.

The **initiation** may be internal like hunger pangs or the external like the sight of food on television.

The **direction** - It is the previous learning that determines what direction the behaviour will take. For example, a hungry child walking towards a canteen or a sleepy child goes towards a bed.

Motivation caused by external events or outside rewards that have nothing to do with learning situation itself is generally called EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION. Extrinsic motivation is the motivation that arises because of external events or tangible rewards. For example, Grades, Points and other rewards, which increase, decrease or develop behaviour.

ii) Cognitive View

Jean Piaget, Bruner and Ausubel have propagated the cognitive view. Here, we see the importance of perception or cognitive factors such as expectancies, intentions, anticipations and self-evaluation.

- a) Expectancies — What will I get after doing this?
- b) Intentions — I want to finish this, so that I can do something else.
- c) Anticipation — This will take too long, so I won't do it.
- d) Self-evaluation — I am not very good at that, so I will avoid it.

This cognitive view of motivation is that people do not respond automatically to external events or physical conditions such as hunger but rather on perceptions of these events. For example, hunger was not noticed until you paid attention to it. In contrast to the behavioural view, the cognitive view emphasises INTRINSIC (Internal) sources of motivation such as satisfaction of learning and accomplishment. People are seen as active and curious, searching for information to solve personally relevant problems, ignoring even hunger or enduring discomfort to focus on selected goal.

Motivation in cognitive framework, is based on CHOICES, DECISIONS, PLANS, GOALS and CALCULATIONS SUCH AS SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

The explanation of success or failure plays an important part in achievement.

iii) Humanistic View

They (Freud, Maslow and Carl Rogers) emphasize factors like PERSONAL FREEDOM, CHOICE, SELF-DETERMINATION and STRIVING FOR PERSONAL GROWTH in motivation. The basis of the humanistic theory of motivation is hierarchy of needs. Each level of need must be at least partially satisfied before the next become important to an individual.

7.3.2 Importance of Motivation in Learning

Motivation is the process of arousing action, sustaining activities in progress, regulating and directing our energy towards specific goals. Establishing the specific goals and needs for learning is important for motivation. Teachers are generally interested in the following questions:

- What makes a student study certain subjects? That is, on what basis do the students select the subjects they wish to study?
- Why is the child interested in a subject?

The following are some of the functions of motivation in learning

- energizing the students in learning by organizing quiz or symposia in class with rewards at the end of the competition;
- directing behaviour;
- selecting behaviour;
- securing attention - by preparing interesting audio-visual materials as teaching aids;
- helping develop interest;
- helping acquire knowledge;
- helping in personality development; and
- developing social qualities - by encouraging group participation.

Check Your Progress

- Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with the those given at the end of the block.

1. Define motivation?
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2. List the various schools of thought explaining motivation and the names of the proponents of these theories?
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3. Write the significance of motivation in learning?
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7.4 TYPES OF MOTIVATION

Shankar was walking down a market street one evening. He saw a new toy displayed in one of the shops. He stopped and started observing all the details about the toy.

John spends his leisure time everyday in reading comics. One day, he was reading the English text book, though no one at the home had asked him to do so. On enquiring, it was learnt that he had to take a test in English the next day.

What could have prompted Shankar to observe all the details about the new toy ?
What is the source of motivation for John to read

- i) comics ii) the English text book

So you see motivation may come from within or outside. Thus motivation is basically of two types - INTRINSIC and EXTRINSIC.

The motivation that originates from within the individual is intrinsic motivation. The motivation which is induced by advancing incentives by others is extrinsic motivation.

In each of the following situations, state whether there is intrinsic or extrinsic motivation?

- a) When drawing competition was announced, Gopal came forward to participate.
b) Later, when it was announced that all the participants would be given certificates, Shankar also gave his name
c) Once the class teacher remarked to Susheela, "I think you will make a good singer." Henceforth, Susheela took to music as a hobby.
d) The teacher narrated the incident of Thomas Alva Edison before starting the lesson on electric bulbs.

From your experience as a teacher and/or as a parent, when do you find better learning taking place - when a learner is intrinsically motivated, or extrinsically motivated ?

The incentives used in extrinsic motivation are the MOTIVATIONAL DEVICES. They can be of a great variety. Though intrinsic motivation is ideal, the teachers find that they cannot do away with extrinsic motivation in the learning process.

Activity A

Observe four teachers during the course of their classes. Note down the various external devices used by them for motivating their students to learn.

This observation as well as your own experience would help you to answer the following questions on motivational devices:

- i) A student is highly irregular in submitting his assignments. How can you make him regular?
ii) Will the grades serve as external device for motivation ?
iii) Do you think writing positive comments on the assignments will help the students ? List three methods each for:—



a) group motivation

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b) individual motivation

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Further contemplating on extrinsic motivation, do you think external devices are always necessary, or, are there more other methods of motivating the students? During observation (i.e., Activity A), did you find instances of teachers motivating their students without advancing external devices? How did they achieve that?

Activity B

You enter the class everyday with just a piece of chalk and a duster. Today, you entered the class with a big carton (containing the material you require for your teaching). Observe the response of your students. The big carton which is something unusual though it may not contain anything, kindles the curiosity of your students.

Activity C

Observe the class in which the teacher demonstrates the "transmission of heat" and another in which chalk and talk are used to teach the same topic.

- a) In which class are the students better motivated? (Presume that all other conditions are equal in both classes.)

TEACHERS CAN CAPITALISE ON NATURAL CURIOSITY OF CHILDREN FOR MOTIVATING THEM TO LEARN.

- Linking the lesson to a life situation is a way of motivating the children to learn.
- Organising competition will also serve as a motivational device. But, we should not use it indiscriminately.

Activity D

Sita is very good in music, but Suguna is below average. You announce the music competition for the whole class. Observe the response of Suguna and Sita in particular.

- a) Does Suguna voluntarily come forward to participate in the competition?
- b) If she is forced to join the competition, how does she react ?

In case she participates, try to study her feeling when the result of competition is announced and she is nowhere in the picture. She may feel frustrated.

THUS, UNWISE USE OF MOTIVATIONAL DEVICES MAY LEAD TO UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES.

So, one must be careful in using motivational devices. In the previous example, what do you think will be a better alternative for motivating Suguna? You think and suggest.

Check Your Progress

- Notes:** a) Write your answer in the space given below.
 b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the block.

4. What are the types of motivation? Give at least two examples of each from everyday experiences.

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ii)

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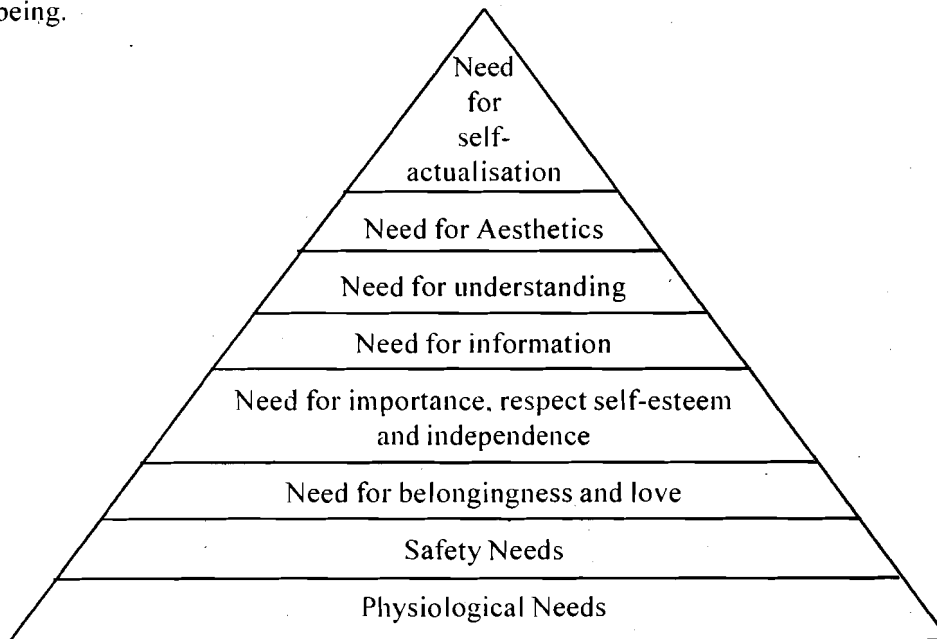
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7.5 MAKING MOTIVATORS WORK HARMONIOUSLY

7.5.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The basis of motivation, according to Maslow, is the role of needs.

A need can be defined as any type of deficiency in the human organism or absence of anything the person requires or think he/she requires, for his/her over all well-being.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

7.5.2 Implications to Learning

- The children desire to fill the **lower level needs** (such as give a few examples) may at times counter your own desire to have them achieve **higher level goals**;
- Children who come to schools hungry, sick or hurt are unlikely to be motivated to seek knowledge and understanding;
- If the classroom is fearful, unpredictable place and children seldom know where they stand, they are likely to be more concerned with security and less with learning ;
- Belonging to a social group and maintaining self-esteem within that group are also important to children.

For achieving the higher level needs a child's success in mastering a body of knowledge, or creating a beautiful object may well lead to increased motivation and setting of even higher goals.

7.5.3 Guidelines for Teachers

- a) Make sure that children have adequate chance to fulfill their needs for affiliation and belonging. For example, you can provide some time for peer interaction, possibly as a reinforcement for positive academic and social behaviours;
 - consider the need for improved social relationships when making group assignments;
- b) Recognize the possibility that the children come to school with different patterns of needs based on first experiences. For example,
 - children who are overly concerned with achievement may need help in relaxing; and
 - children who have a great need to avoid failure may need ways of demonstrating their learning privately.

- c) Help children take appropriate responsibility for their successes and failures, model positive self-criticism.
 - invite guest speakers who are willing to speak about their successes or failures.
- d) Encourage children to see the connection between their own efforts and accomplishments.



- discuss reasons for particular successes and failures.
 - avoid making quick judgments about the reasons for children's success or failure.
- e) Help children to set reasonable goals.
 - encourage children who set low goals to raise them a little at a time.
 - when children set unrealistically high goals, suggest alternatives.
 - f) Remember that use of moderately difficult assignments probably means different assignments for different children.
 - for children who are high in achievement motivation, you may occasionally want to use problems that are so challenging that the children will fail in their first attempt.
 - for children who fear failure, less difficult problems may be appropriate.

Check Your Progress

- Notes: a) Write your answer in the space given below.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the block.

5. Write Maslow's hierarchy of needs with suitable 'illustrations' from your experiences.

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7.6 STUDENTS' INTEREST AND MOTIVATION

One seemingly logical way to motivate children is to relate school learning experiences to the interest of the children. However, this is not always an easy or even a desirable strategy.

7.6.1 Discovering Students' Interest

As a parent or teacher, you can discuss students' interest in learning through the following devices:

- Ask students themselves either by using a questionnaire or by talking to them;
- You may give interest inventories listing a large number of activities and may be asked to rank these from most to least preferred;
- Teacher observation may help;
- Teacher may also watch for attentiveness during the classroom lesson; and
- Discussing the students' interests at home with their parents.

7.6.2 Developing Interest

Once you have some idea of what the students' interests truly are, you can select worthwhile activities outside the class. Students' interests can be used in classroom motivation.

7.7 IS EXCESSIVE MOTIVATION HARMFUL?

Meena was eager to complete the needlework before Friday. Her teacher had asked her to submit it on Monday. In a hurry to be praised by the teacher for having completed it before time, Meena did not realize that she had made wrong stitches.

Rahim was thoroughly prepared for his Hindi paper for the final examination. When he went to school, he was shocked to learn from his friends that they had the Mathematics exam. In his enthusiasm, he had not seen the examination date-sheet correctly. Meena and Rahim, the two had a strong desire and excessive motivation to be successful and be praised - in each case they overlooked the basic task of following instructions correctly. Excessive motivation may also result from too much emphasis on achievement and excellence standards laid down by the teachers.

Do you feel their excessive motivation should have directed them to take extra precautions to find out if they were following the instructions correctly?

You do come across children like Meena and Rahim. Let us reason out their probable reactions to failure.

1. In the first place, they may totally avoid similar situations and never attempt to complete assignments before the teacher gives directions. They will take extra pains to check examination dates;
2. They may lower their motivation level in order to ensure that they will be successful;
3. They may maintain their excessive level of motivation without bothering about success or failure.

Other than the motivation to out beat other children, what other reasons do you think could have aroused this excessive motivation in Meena and Rahim? Tick mark (✓) from the following the reasons you think are appropriate:

- desire for success;
- desire for reward;
- desire for attention from parents, teachers, peers, siblings; and/or
- to get relieved from work fast.

Let us look for ways to help Meena and Rahim direct their excessive motivation towards effective learning. Some suggestions are given below:

- they should develop the habit of finding out details about assignment work or the dates of examination.
- reduce the competitive spirit by encouraging them to interact more with peers.
- help them to work systematically using a time-schedule.
- help them to plan work according to priority.
- you can and other suggestions based on your experiences in this list.

7.8 WHAT CAN BE USED IN DEVELOPING MOTIVATION?

The following may be tried in your day-to-day classroom instructions and observe the effect of it in those situations. (You can add some more to the present list.)

- Clipping pictures from a newspaper - for a general knowledge class.
- Quotations from an old or a current source - on a social studies topic.
- Film clips - for a science lesson.
- Transparencies you make or purchase - for social studies.
- Charts or maps - for social studies.
- Demonstrations - for science experiments.
- Challenging questions or statements - for maths and science.
- Live specimens.
- Field trips.... for science.

- Data tables....
- Several events or happenings.
- TV programmes - for languages, science and social studies.
- Portion of a recorded or taped speech - for languages.
- Newspaper or magazine advertisements - for languages.
- Segments of the homework assignments.

7.9 MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES IN CLASSROOM TEACHING

- Begin the lesson by giving a reason to be understood;
- Tell students exactly what you want to accomplish;
- Have students set short-term goals;
- Use spoken and written praise;
- Use tests and grades judiciously;
- Capitalize on the arousal value of suspense, discovery, curiosity, exploration, and fantasy;
- Use familiar material for examples;
- Make students use what they have previously learnt;
- Use unique and unexpected content when applying concepts and principles;
- Use simulation and games;
- Minimize any unpleasant consequences of student involvement.

These one a suggested techniques and you can use these and/or other based on your contexts.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

6. Suggest 4 ways that you can use to identify the interest of your children .

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7. Do you think that excessive motivation is harmful? Give cases illustrations from your experiences as a parent/teacher.

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7.10 LET US SUM UP

Motivation means generating the will in an individual to act to learn. It is very important in the learning process. Motivation which originates from within the individual is intrinsic motivation. Motivation which is induced by advancing incentives is extrinsic motivation.

Grades, positive comments, competition and prizes are some of the motivating devices used in learning situations. Other ways of motivating the children are capitalizing on their curiosity; special interest of individual children; using and linking the lesson to life situation, etc.

7.11 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Discuss the role of motivational devices in learning process.
2. Explain how a clear understanding of the problems related to learners would enable the teachers and parents to get insight in facilitating the learning process.
3. Suggest five ways of interests in lessons on "Environmental Protection" by creating attractive settings. Ask children to make posters and bulletin board displays, magazine pictures to attract the news for "Environmental Protection".
4. List five conditions under which motivation may become a harmful trait in the classroom situation.