
UNIT 5 MOTIVATION: CONCEPT AND THEORIES*

Structure

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand what motivation is, and why it is necessary;
- Differentiate between Intrinsic motivation and Extrinsic motivation;
- Understand the Hierarchy of Needs theory, ERG theory, Herzberg's two factor theory and Theory X-Theory Y;
- Understand the concept of selfless action as advocated in the Bhagavad Gita; and
- Understand how to apply the concepts of 'motivation' at the workplace.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Motivation is the driving force behind one's actions. The force can come from within the individual or from outside. Motivation stimulates people to act in such a way as to accomplish their goals. For example, when a student burns the midnight oil to come first in the class, the 'desire to be recognised as an outstanding student' is the motivation behind the act of reading late into the night. In an organisational setting, motivation helps to remain committed to the job and to improve performance.

5.2 INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

The difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation can be clearly appreciated if we understand “why we do things?” We can say that we are intrinsically motivated if we are not prompted by obvious external rewards. When we do a thing simply because we enjoy doing it, we can say that we are intrinsically motivated. A small kid running around aimlessly in the garden is doing so because he enjoys doing so. There is no other external reward that has been promised to him for running in the garden. The reward is the task itself! Information for information’s sake, and art for art’s sake, are all connected with the idea of intrinsic motivation. For example, if a student is reading a book on history for the sheer love of history and simply to satisfy his curiosity, he is intrinsically motivated, whereas if his aim is to score high marks in the exam and become the class topper so that he can bag a prize, he is extrinsically motivated. If a person sits by a riverside and sings for his own pleasure, he is intrinsically motivated, whereas if he is, in fact, seeing it as a practice session for an upcoming singing competition, then it might be the prizes on offer that is motivating him, and if it is so, it is extrinsic motivation. When you are intrinsically motivated the desire comes from within and your act is not ‘aimed at’ bagging any external rewards. However, this does not mean that there will not be any rewards for an act or behaviour that is stimulated by intrinsic factors. It can generate positive emotions, sense of competence etc. For example, even if it is for the sheer love of the game that you play chess against a computer, constantly playing chess with the computer will sharpen your skills and you get a sense of accomplishment.

Extrinsic motivation comes from factors external to the individual. The most common extrinsic motivation is that of an external reward. When you are intrinsically motivated you do something because it is inherently rewarding (let’s say inherently enjoyable) whereas extrinsically motivated acts lead to a separately distinguishable outcome like prize money, grades, fame or wage hike. A manual labourer working in a factory might not be enjoying his job, but the external reward in the form of wages is what is motivating him to do the task that may not be inherently enjoyable. When we want children to behave in a certain way, we offer them rewards like toys or chocolates. These are examples of extrinsic motivation. It is not necessary that the external rewards are always tangible like a wage hike or a cash prize. Even intangible rewards like praise are also considered as external rewards.

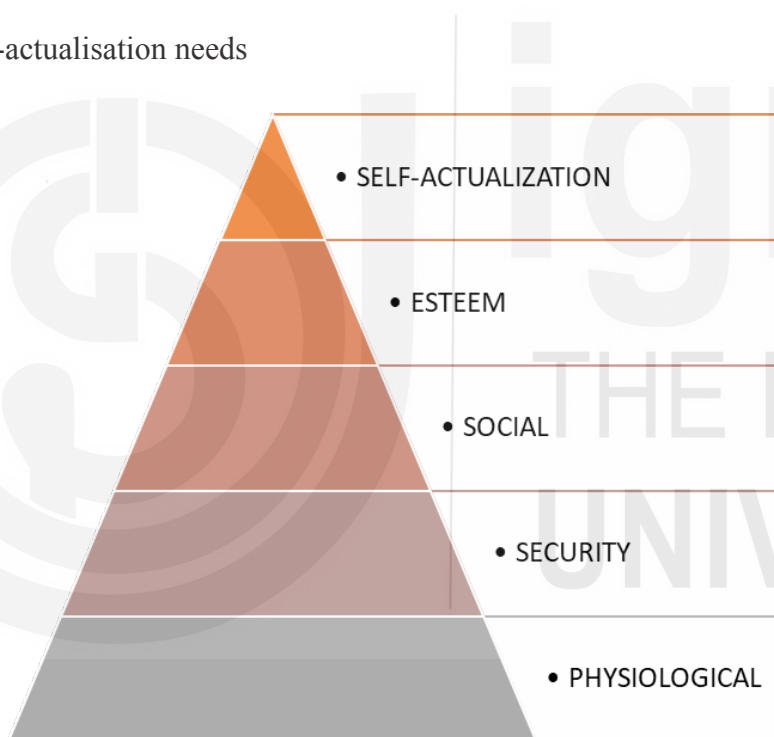
It is difficult to clearly separate intrinsic motivation from extrinsic motivation, yet where two co-exist, one of them might become more prominent. When Thomas Alva Edison started undertaking scientific experiments during his teen age years, it was done to satisfy his inner curiosity. That was a case of intrinsic motivation, but when he started gaining success in his experiments and people started recognising his achievements and contribution, he continued with his inner urge of creativity which was amply backed by external support and inspiration. Thus, a synthesis of internal and external motivation emerged in his journey of excellence. Success can lead to higher motivation which, in turn, reinforces the resolve to excel in one’s pursuits.

When we look at the lives of great men such as Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. C V Raman, Leonardo da Vinci, William Shakespeare, Goswami, Tulsi Das, Prof. APJ Abdul Kalam and Mother Teresa, we notice a powerful combination of internal and external motivations.

5.3 HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY

According to the Hierarchy of Needs theory propounded by the famous psychologist Abraham Maslow, human needs can be arranged in a hierarchical order in the shape of a pyramid starting from basic needs to more advanced needs. As per this theory, human needs can be classified into five categories:

- i) Physiological needs
- ii) Safety needs
- iii) Belonging and love needs (Social needs)
- iv) Esteem needs
- v) Self-actualisation needs



Need Hierarchy

According to Maslow, when one need-level is satisfied, the individual strives to get the next higher level need satisfied. The need for food, water, air etc. comes under the category of physiological needs. These are universal in nature in the sense that all human beings experience hunger, thirst etc. It is reasonable to assume that unless this need is satisfied, it is very unlikely that the person will aim at the satisfaction of higher levels needs. Once physiological needs are satisfied, a person moves up to the second level in the hierarchy. At this level, safety and security needs get precedence. The individual will feel the need to be protected from dangers. He will yearn for both physical and financial security. He would want to be protected against ill health, injuries, accidents etc. Physiological needs and safety needs are often collectively called 'basic needs'.

The next level is that of social needs (belonging and love). People feel the need to love and to be loved, and to be accepted in the social group they belong to. This social group can be a fairly large one like a religious group or a small one like one's family. If this need is not satisfied, people may feel lonely and depressed. At the next level, 'esteem' needs get aroused. These needs are related to ego-satisfaction. People, who feel this need, strive for obtaining respect and recognition from others. They try to accomplish things and get recognised for their accomplishments. Even self-esteem and self-respect are part of this category of needs. The topmost level of human need is self-actualisation. According to Maslow, "What a man can be, he must be. This statement points to the need for realisation of a person's full potential. For example, an artist might want to realise his full potential as an artist. For an athlete, his self-actualisation needs will be related to his athletic skills.

According to Maslow, there is a hierarchy as far as feeling and satisfying different human needs are concerned. But many researches point out that such a rigid structure may not be entirely representative of the true process. According to them, there can be considerable overlaps between the five levels. In other words, even before one class of need is 'completely' satisfied, an individual may try to fulfill a need at the next level.

When Swami Vivekanand was travelling in different parts of India to spread the message of his guru Swami Ram Krishna Paramhansa, on many an occasion, he had to forego meals, but he was focussed on his mission and thus carried on with it in spite of occasional starvation. Here was a case of sacrificing the fulfilment of psychological needs for the sake of the satisfaction of self-actualisation needs. One can see similar instances in the lives of Vincent Van Gogh, Madam Curie, Mahatma Gandhi, Jai Shankar Prasad and others.

It is important to note that Abraham Maslow, in his book *Eupsychian Management* (1965), clarified that his notion of 'hierarchy' of needs was not rigid and essentially it was the concept of a series of needs which allows any specific need to precede or follow a higher level need. This makes Maslow's theory considerably pragmatic and not rigid. A series of needs may not have a tight sequence, thus allowing every need an opportunity to change its place in accordance with the situational exigencies.

5.4 ERG THEORY

Clayton Paul Alderfer, an American psychologist, further developed Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory by proposing what is known as the ERG theory. ERG stands for Existence needs, Relatedness needs and Growth needs. E, R and G represent different needs from the lowest level to the highest level. In this sense, it has similarities with the Hierarchy of needs theory, but there is an important difference between the two: As per the ERG theory, more than one level of needs can be activated at the same time. The existence needs as per the ERG theory correspond to the first two levels of the Hierarchy of needs theory: Physiological needs and Safety needs. The relatedness needs of the ERG theory are somewhat similar to the 'Belonging and love' needs (social needs) and to some portion of the Esteem needs of Maslow's theory. The remaining portion of the Esteem needs (the self-esteem part) and the self-actualisation part of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory are grouped as Growth need in the ERG

theory. An implication of ERG theory to organisational behaviour is that if a higher order need is not satisfied, a person might try to get a lower level need satisfied in its place. For example, if an employee is neither able to derive job satisfaction from his work nor is he able to enjoy a comfortable relationship with his supervisors, he might demand higher wages.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory.

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2. Discuss ERG theory.

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5.5 HERZBERG'S TWO FACTOR THEORY

The two factor theory proposed by the famous psychologist Frederick Herzberg is also known by the names of dual factor theory and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg determined the factors responsible for job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction by interviewing more than 200 accountants and engineers. He found that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are two distinct and independent aspects and that the factors causing satisfaction are not the ones, the lack of which causes dissatisfaction. Factors like recognition, challenging work and other aspects that are intrinsic parts of the job are the ones that lead to satisfaction. Herzberg called these factors motivators. These factors help a person to move from a no-satisfaction state to a satisfaction state.

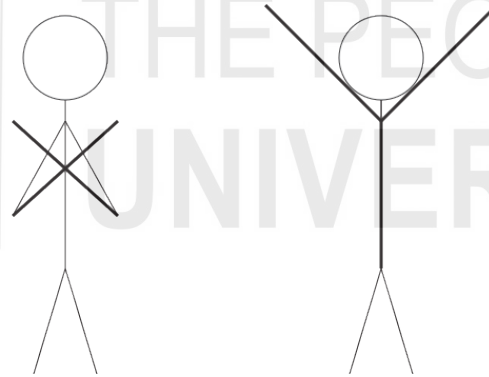
Herzberg also found that the dissatisfying factors are mainly contextual in nature. In other words, they are mainly pertaining to the environment in which the person is operating. Herzberg called these factors hygiene factors. Working conditions, company policies, job security, behaviour of supervisors etc. are examples of hygiene factors. These are not motivational in nature, in the sense that even when hygiene factors are very favourable, a person's job satisfaction need not be high. All that we can say is that the job dissatisfaction levels will be low. But grievances related to hygiene factors can cause a person to move from a no-dissatisfaction state to a dissatisfaction state. In other words, job satisfaction is not the exact opposite of job dissatisfaction. These are two somewhat unrelated concepts. The opposite of job satisfaction is no job satisfaction, and

that of job dissatisfaction is no job dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg, “the factors that led to satisfaction (achievement, intrinsic interest in the work, responsibility, and advancement) are mostly unipolar; that is, they contribute very little to job dissatisfaction. Conversely, the dis-satisfiers (company policy and administrative practices, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, and salary) contribute very little to job satisfaction”.

5.6 THEORY X – THEORY Y

Douglas McGregor in his work, *The Human Side of Enterprise* suggested two contrasting views about human beings: a negative one called Theory X and a positive one named Theory Y. Theory X postulates that the average human being inherently dislikes work and will avoid it if he can. Therefore, employees must be directed or even forced by supervisors for performing job tasks. However, according to Theory Y, it is assumed that employees can view work as being natural, just like rest or play, and hence an average employee can learn to accept, and even seek responsibility.

To draw a parallel between McGregor’s theory and Maslow’s need hierarchy theory, we may note that Theory Y assumes that higher order needs are the dominating ones and that Theory Y assumptions are more valid than those of Theory X. According to Theory X strict supervision, external rewards, and penalties are required to extract performance, while Theory Y focuses on aspects like job satisfaction and proposes that workers need not be put under direct supervision. Managers should be able to gauge the situation and should use strategies from Theory X and Theory Y as per requirement.



A person refusing to work (“X”) and a person cheering the opportunity to work (“Y”)

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Theory X and Theory Y are not totally opposite or exclusive to each other. They are ideal type constructs and conceptually distinct entities. However, in practice, one finds a mix of the two in applied situations. In fact, there is a continuum from Theory X to Theory Y and all organisations are placed at one point or the other of the continuum. It is difficult to imagine an organisation that is entirely ‘X’ or totally ‘Y’. Further, a manager may have to shift from Theory X to Theory Y or vice versa, depending on the persons to be motivated and situation to be addressed. Such flexibility is an essential attribute of good management.

5.7 BHAGVAD GITA– SELFLESS ACTION

Selfless action is considered a great virtue. The crucial theme of the *Bhagawad Gita* is the theory of ‘Selfless Action’ (*Nishkama Karma*). Lord Krishna urges us thus: “Let there be no motive for the fruit of action, nor should you desire to avoid action due to its unpleasant fruits. He adds “You have the right to the actions, but are not entitled to its results”.

When we are selfless, we are less concerned about ourselves, but more about others. Hence, selfless action is the one which we do out of a sense of duty, for the benefit of the society. Actions become selfless only when we are acting for the betterment of others, without expecting any personal benefits.

However, quite often, the supposedly selfless actions are motivated by a desire to attain moksha (ultimate freedom attained through liberation from the cycle of rebirth) or other similar higher order objectives. This means that the person is expecting results for the self which is against the concept of ‘selfless action’. A truly selfless person has no desire at all, not even the desire for liberation. He might attain liberation, but that is not the explicit aim of his actions. He gets on with his duty for the sake of fulfilling his duty, without desiring any reward whatsoever. That is when the actions become completely and truly selfless.

As mentioned in Speaking Tree.in, this Gita advice is eternal since it is relevant for all times, including the modern age. It is the best mindset to possess (a mindset that enables to do your duty without expecting rewards) when immersed in work. Going about performing our duties, while not being concerned about whether we will be recognised for the work, is the best option, even in an organisational setting. It is in fact the only option in most situations, because, more often than not, the results are not in our hands. All that we can do is to put in our best efforts. It is worth noting that Gita advocates against inaction as well.

5.8 APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPTS AT THE WORKPLACE

It is not enough to simply know the concepts behind motivation. A good manager should be able to use them to good effect at the workplace in order to inspire his team members and to make them perform to their full potential so that the organisation and the employees can reap rich rewards. Following are some of the inducements that are generally provided to employees so as to motivate them and to inspire them on to perform better:

Good pay: If an employee is paid less than what his job is worth, he will be de-motivated and might even quit the organisation. On the other hand, if he is paid more than what he is worth, he will be greatly motivated, but such a pay is not sustainable in the long run from the organisation’s point of view. Thus, there should be a very fine balance as far as the right pay level is concerned. Moreover, rates of pay in the outside job market too need to be taken into account in fixing a pay that is just right to motivate the employees and which can be sustained in the long run.

Variable pay: It is generally believed that if the pay is fixed, there is very little incentive to perform par expectations of the employer. Variable pay addresses this issue to a great extent, as you will receive higher pay if you perform better. This obviously can motivate employees to invest more time and energy in the job. There are several types of variable pay structures. For example, some employers pay the employees on a 'pay per piece' basis. This system will motivate the employees to perform better as they will be paid more if they produce/sell more pieces. However, this system may not be suitable for all kinds of jobs. Some employers base their pay on the 'perceived' merit of their individual employees. In this system, the employer does an evaluation of the employees and decides what each is worth, and then pays accordingly. This method is a bit less objective than the 'pay per piece' system. However, it is suitable for almost all job roles for which proper assessment can be done. This method too can motivate the employees since they will tend to see a link between the level of their performance and the rewards that they receive. This approach is continuation of the tradition of Scientific Management propounded by F W Taylor. However, a lurking risk in this regard is an undue emphasis on the quantity rather than the quality of products and services.

Employee stock options: Many companies offer a fixed number of shares of the company to their employees at below market rates. Most employees use this opportunity to buy the shares, as the same is being offered at a discount. Once they buy the shares, they become 'owners' of the company in one sense, although they continue to be employees. It is in the direct interest of a shareholder to ensure that the company performs well. When the company performs well and is perceived by the market to be a potential performer in the future as well, the share price of the company is likely to go up. Consequently, the value of the shareholdings of all shareholders including the employees who purchased shares under the employee stock option plans will go up. In India, an excellent example of this approach is Infosys under the leadership of N R Narayan Murthy. It has been a plus factor in the exceptional growth of this IT giant.

Job rotation: If a person continues in the same job for a very long time period, the activities become rather mechanical and consequently, he will not be sufficiently motivated to perform better. Moving employees from one job to another will ensure that boredom is kept at bay, and that motivation is sustained.

Job enlargement and Job enrichment: Jobs can be expanded in two ways: horizontally and vertically. Job enlargement is the horizontal expansion of a job role through which certain aspects that were earlier not a part of the job role are made a part of the role. This prevents boredom and sustains interest in the job. Job enrichment is the vertical expansion of a job, through which the employees are provided with more freedom, power and authority to decide the manner in which the task is to be completed. In the case of job enlargement, authority and power are not increased; it is just that more tasks are added to the job role. In both cases, the job role definition undergoes a change. By contrast, the job role is not changed in the case of job rotation; only the person donning the role changes. All these are expected to avoid situations where employees lose their morale, feeling that their work is too mundane and routinised.

Recognition: Recognition is something all of us crave for, and employees are no exception. Recognition systems can be completely informal (like a pat on the back or a quick ‘Thank You’) or it can even be given a very formal structure.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the underlying concept of Theory X – Theory Y.

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2. What is ‘selfless action’ as propounded by Bhagavad Gita?

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5.9 CONCLUSION

Motivation urges employees to improve their performance at the work place through hard work and smart work. When they do their jobs effectively and efficiently it is the organisation that ultimately benefits. Therein lies the importance of motivation from the organisation’s stand point. Having said this, there is a limit to the quantity of tangible rewards that an organisation can offer to its employees. Smarter organisations create the same effect through the wise use of intangible rewards like recognition, greater freedom in decision-making, empowerment etc. However, it is to be noted that not all potential inducements are perceived in the same manner by all the receivers, like for example, freedom or challenges. It is generally believed that there is no such thing as ‘freedom without responsibility’. And there are a considerable number of people who dislike responsibilities and challenges. Even for those individuals who aim at higher order needs like self-actualisation, it is not clear whether they would look to satisfy the need as part of their job roles or outside the workplace. Hence managers need to identify what motivates their team members. Motivation is one of the key tools used by great leaders to make their teams perform to their full potential.

5.10 GLOSSARY

Job Enlargement : Job enlargement is the horizontal expansion of a job role through which certain aspects that were earlier not a part of the job role are made a part of the role. This prevents boredom and sustains interest in the job.

Job Enrichment : Job enrichment is the vertical expansion of a job, through which the employees are provided with more freedom, power and authority to decide the manner in which the task is to be completed.

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5.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- When one need level is satisfied, the individual strives to get the next higher level need satisfied.
- As per this theory, human needs can be classified into five: Physiological needs, Safety needs, Belonging and love needs (Social needs), Esteem needs and Self-actualisation needs.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- ERG stands for Existence needs, Relatedness needs and Growth needs.
- E, R and G represent different needs from the lowest level to the highest level.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Theory X postulates that the average human being inherently dislikes work and will avoid it if he can.
- Theory Y, it is assumed that employees can view work as being natural, just like rest or play, and hence an average employee can learn to accept, and even seek responsibility.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

**Motivation: Concept
and Theories**

- Selfless action is considered a great virtue.
- When we are selfless, we are less concerned about ourselves, and more about others.
- Actions become selfless only when we are acting for the betterment of others, not expecting any personal benefits

