MOTIVATION AND BEHAVIOUR

MOTIVATION

Motivation is the will to do, and the will to do well. Motivation may be self-directed, or one may be motivated by others and by the environment, and one can motivate others as well. What motivates the self and how can one motivate the others? Since the entire emphasis of motivation is on one’s or other’s action or good performance it is worthwhile to see what performance (which is essentially behaviour) depends upon. Performance depends on two factors. (1) The first is competence, which comes from knowledge, skill and experience and is an acquired character. (2) The second is motivation or the willingness to do the job well.

Self-motivation is the ability to change one’s behaviour to strive for better performance. Motivation of others is the ability to influence the behaviour of other people in such a manner as to get them to do what you expect them to do, because the person motivated enjoys doing it. The entire stress is on change in behaviour. Thus it is pertinent to understand human behaviour. Not only to determine the ‘whys’ of past behaviour but to some extent to predict, to change, and even to control future behaviour.

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour is ‘need’ based and goal oriented. The basic unit of behaviour is an activity. In fact all behaviour is a series of activities. As human beings we are always doing something: walking, talking, eating, sleeping, working and the like. Why do people engage in one activity and not another? How can we understand, predict, and even control what activity or activities a person may engage in at a given moment? To predict behaviour one must know which motives or needs of people evoke a certain action at a particular time.

Motives:

People differ not only in their ability to do but also in their will to do, or motivation. The motivation of people depends on the strength of their motives. Motives are needs,
wants, drives, or impulses within the individual. Motives are directed towards goals, which may be conscious or sub-conscious.

Goals:

Goals are outside an individual; they are sometimes referred to as “hoped for” towards which motives are directed. These goals are also called incentives, which may be tangible rewards, such as increased pay or intangible rewards, such as praise or power.

Motive Strength:

All individuals have several needs and all of them compete for their behaviour. The need with the greatest strength at a particular moment leads to activity. Satisfied needs decrease in strength and no longer motivate behaviour to seek goals to satisfy them. In the figure 1 Motive B is the highest strength need, and therefore it is this need that determines behaviour.

Figure 1: The most potent motive determines behaviour
(Motive B in this illustration)

Probability of Success:
People are not highly motivated if a goal is seen as almost impossible or virtually certain to achieve. Goals should be set high enough so that a person has to stretch to reach them but low enough so that they can be attained. Thus, goals must be realistic. The degree of motivation and effort rises until the probability of success reaches 50 percent, then begins to fall even though the probability of success continues to increase.

**Figure 2. The relationship of motivation to probability of success**

The strength of motivation thus depends on the incentive, motive strength and the probability of success.

**Hierarchy of Needs:**

We have seen that behaviour at a particular moment is usually determined by the strongest need. It is thus significant, that one must have some understanding about the needs that are commonly important to people.

Abraham Maslow developed an interesting framework that helps explain the strength of certain needs. According to Maslow, there seems to be hierarchy into which human needs arrange themselves, as illustrated in figure 3 overleaf.

**Figure 3 Maslow’s hierarchy of Needs**
Maslow postulated two conditions. The first states that, the lower order needs must be satisfied to some extent before the higher order needs become activated. The second is the notion that a satisfied need is no longer a motivator of behaviour.

The physiological needs are the basic human needs to sustain life itself - the need to breathe, eat, sleep, reproduce (sex) etc. Until these basic needs are satisfied to the degree for the sufficient operation of the body, the majority of person’s activity will probably be at this level, and the other needs will provide little motivation. This is the case with those people in our country who live in extreme poverty.

Once physiological needs become gratified, the safety, or security needs become predominant. These needs are essentially the need to be free of the fear of physical danger and deprivation of the basic physiological needs. In addition to the present, there is also a concern for the future.
When the lower order needs are satisfied to some extent the higher order needs become important. The lowest among them are the social needs which refer to the need to belong and to be accepted by various groups, and to have meaningful relation with others.

After individuals begin to satisfy their need to belong, they generally want to be more than just a member of their group. They then feel the need for esteem – both self-esteem and recognition from others.

Once esteem needs begin to be adequately satisfied, the self-actualisation needs become more prepotent. This is the need to maximise one’s potential, “what a man can be, he must be”. For what one can, the sky’s the limit and success is the opportunity of a life time. A proper appreciation of the concept of self-actualisation is the basis for self-motivation. To actualise his potential, a musician must play music, a general must win battles, a professor must teach and a scientist must invent/discover. Perception of what you must be determines what you will be.

Higher Order Needs:

It may be generally agreed that in the ICAR organisations the lower order needs (physiological and security needs) of the individuals are met. Let us thus examine the other needs in greater detail.

Social needs (Affiliation):

People need affiliation to have their belief confirmed. They seek not just any company but with those who are “in the same boat”. People from the same region, or those speaking the same language may come together in a group, just as the hard workers and the loafers may form different groups. People form informal groups because of boredom, insignificance and lack of competence they feel. This is not a universal need as we sometimes find ‘loners’ who feel secure and competent enough.

Esteem needs (Recognition):

Two motives related to esteem are prestige and power. People with a concern for 
**prestige** want “to keep up with the Joneses”. Prestige is a sort of unwritten definition of 
the kinds of conduct that other people are expected to show in one’s presence: what 
degree of respect or disrespect, formality or informality, reserve or frankness. The ability 
to induce or influence behaviour is power. There are two kinds of power positional and 
personal. While the former comes with the position one occupies, the latter comes from 
personality and behaviour.

**Self Actualisation:**

Two motives that seem to be related to self-actualisation are competence and 
achievement. **Competence** implies control over environmental factors – both physical and 
social. It is a desire for job mastery and professional growth.

**Achievement:** Some people have an intense need to achieve; others, perhaps the 
majority, do not seem to be as concerned about achievement. A high need for 
achievement may be acquired by studying the characteristics of the people with a high 
need for achievement. The characteristics of these people are:

a) They are moderate risk takers – not gamblers or conservative people
b) They are more concerned with personal achievement than with rewards of 
   success.

c) They want concrete feedback
d) They like to take personal responsibility

e) They tend to be innovative.
f) They usually demonstrate some interpersonal competence.
g) They are oriented towards the future.
h) They tend to be mobile.
i) They are not completely content.

**Satiffaction of the needs in a job situation – Motivated Behaviour**
A job situation must be so structured (or so perceived) that a person must be able to satisfy his different needs in his work environment. Only then will he be motivated for better performance.

The salary is a means to provide for the satisfaction of physiological and security needs, however money is a peculiar motive as it may satisfy all the different levels of needs.

The security of needs of employees may be influenced positively through pension plan, insurance programmes, and the like, and influenced negatively by arousing fears of being fired, demoted or transferred. The social needs may be fulfilled by allowing people to form groups whose objectives are in line with the goals of the organisation. In a scientific organisation these may take the shape of seminar groups or tea time discussion groups. Scientists recreational activities may also be encouraged as they not only have a motivating influence, but they also provide a balance between work and play. A well-rounded programme of recreational activities improves boss–subordinate relations, increases efficiency, encourages group spirit, and makes for healthy satisfied scientists.

The satisfaction of esteem need is related to the fulfillment of two motives—prestige and power. The importance of each job must be clarified to impart certain prestige to the person doing it. Imagine a well-run Institute with demotivated labourers or technical staff. Each job is important and essential, and a sense of pride must be associated with it. The need for power is universal, though its intensity may vary from individual to individual. Delegation of authority in a job situation may be a way of providing for the satisfaction of this motive.

The need for self-actualisation is composed of the need for competence and the need for achievement. An organisation must recognise competence and provide for achievement in its work situation to satisfy this need. The jobs of scientists are ideally designed for self-actualisation. Here competence may be demonstrated by matching one’s ability and skills against the environment in a contest is also high where the work
provides for an accomplishment at the successful conclusion of an investigation and the acclaim it may provide, both at the national or international level.