

Employee motivation at work place : A study of Herzberg's theory

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Abstract: *Employee motivation has been one of the most complex issues in every organization. Therefore, understanding what motivates people is of paramount significance for managers and leaders as it differs from one individual to another depending upon their need fulfillment. This article aims at discussing the significance of employee motivation at work through motivation theories developed by Herzberg and Abraham Maslow – the two well known theorists on motivation. In this context, 'Need Hierarchy Theory' of Abraham Maslow deserves special mention. According to him, 'Once a need is satisfied, it stops working as motivator and the next need one rank higher starts motivating'. This article further reviews 'Two Factor Theory of Motivation' developed by Herzberg in which he has divided his factors of motivation into two categories called 'hygiene factors' and 'motivating factors'. According to him, hygiene factors can de-motivate or cause dissatisfaction if they are not present but do not very often create satisfaction when they are present. Herzberg's research proved that people will strive to achieve 'hygiene needs' because they are unhappy without them but once satisfied the effect soon wears off. Therefore, attention to hygiene factors prevents dissatisfaction but does not necessarily provide positive motivation. This fact, unfortunately, is not understood by poorly managed organizations that hygiene factors are not the real motivators but prevent dissatisfaction and revolt, if provided. Herzberg's theory of motivation indicates that achievement and company policy have significant impact on the overall level of employee job satisfaction and suggests that managers need to focus more on these factors to better motivate employees.*

Key Words: *Hygiene factors, satisfiers, dissatisfies, maintenance factors, motivators, Maslow's Model, Maslow's Triangle, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Webster's dictionary defines 'motivation as something inside people that drives them to action'. Therefore, motivation may be used as one of the management techniques to achieve extra ordinary results through tapping the full potentials of employees at work. The main purpose of this article is to highlight the significance of motivation at work place and help managers and leaders to identify things they need to do in order to successfully motivate their employees to perform at their best and establish a good image for the organization in the market and society as well.

Before discussing about employee motivation, it is imperative to throw some light on the importance of the management of human resource which is considered as the most important, complex and delicate factor of production. Of all the "Ms" in management (such as Men, Money Material, Machines and Method of work), the most important "M" stands for Men i.e. human resource. The management of Men is the most difficult and challenging task as each individual is unique and requires special treatment. Moreover, it is the human resource through which all other 'Ms' such as money, machines, materials, marketing etc. are managed. It is rightly said that, "machines are important in the production process but the workforce behind the machines are more important" as they transform raw materials into finished products.

The importance of human resource can better be felt by the remark of Shri Dhiru Bhai Ambani, the former chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd. He said in one of the Annual General Meetings that, "People are assets you can never show on a Balance Sheet". It means an asset whose value cannot be determined in terms of money. According to Peter F. Drucker, "the function of management is to manage managers, workers and work". Human resource is a highly productive corporate asset and the overall performance of companies depends upon the extent to which it is effectively developed and utilized. Employees have a capacity to grow and develop, if suitable opportunities are offered. They give positive response to monetary and non-monetary incentives, training opportunities, favorable work environment and motivation.

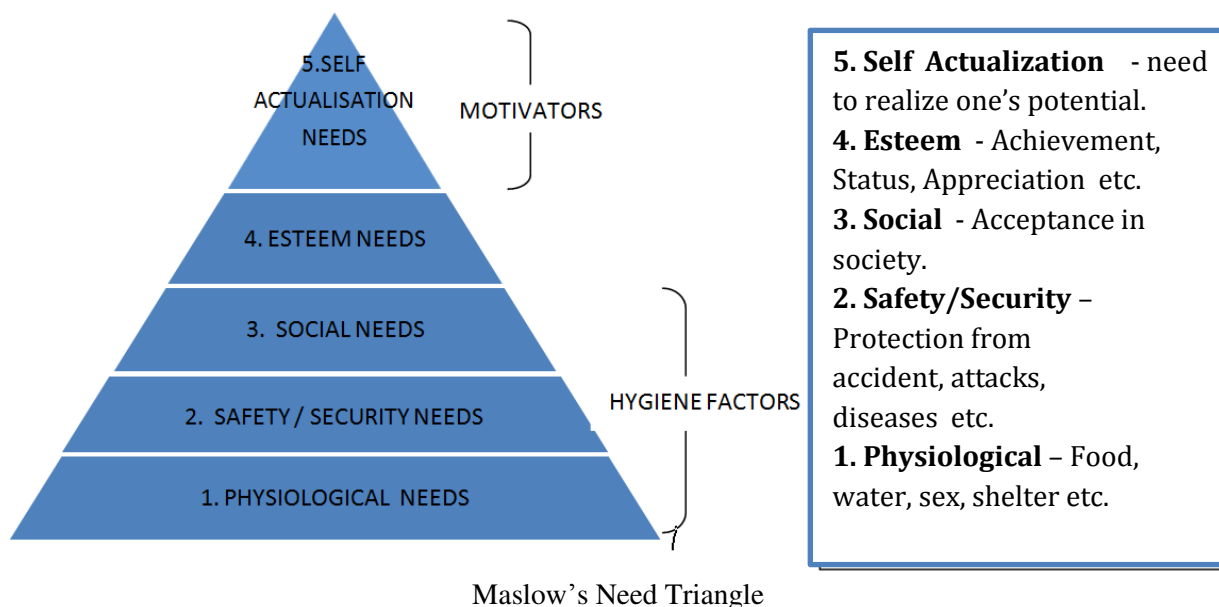
Motivation of employees has been the focal point of leaders and managers in every organization. It is mainly because of the behavior of employees at work. Unmotivated employees do not like to use their full capabilities to achieve the target /goal set by the leaders. They avoid the work place as much as possible, try to leave the organization

whenever they get a chance and produce low quality work. Contrary to this, motivated employees are consistent in their performance and produce high quality work as they love to work and enjoy the work place.

Since employees are the most valuable asset for an organization, therefore, management of men at the workplace should be the primary function of management at all levels. Successful organizations consider their average employees as the main contributor to the growth of the company as they are the real source of quality and productivity gains. The hypotheses of these organizations to success lie in satisfying their employees as it develops sense of belongingness and motivate them to stay longer. This also induces them to bring novel ideas to improve the quality of the company's product or service and make strong commitment to work harder to achieve extra ordinary results.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Employee motivation is one of the most complex issues in every organization. Therefore, understanding what motivates people in all walks of life is fundamental to all who wish to become a member of the management team. Herzberg, distinguished Professor of Management was one of the best known of all the theorists on motivation. His ideas on motivation in the Hygiene – Motivation theory were particularly useful to help the average manager understands what motivates people. According to Herzberg's findings, for adequate work place motivation , it is important that leadership understands the active needs of an individual employee. Herzberg was influenced by the writings of Abraham Maslow, who developed the Need- Hierarchy Theory. Maslow's model indicated that fundamental and lower order needs like physiological and safety needs have to be satisfied in order to pursue higher-level motivators along the lines of self fulfillment (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow's Need Triangle, once a need is satisfied, it stops acting as a motivator and the next need one rank higher starts to motivate. The leadership, here, has to understand which need of a particular group would work as motivator during a particular period of time. An effort has been made here to establish relationship between Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and Hygiene-Motivation theory developed by Herzberg through Maslow's Triangle.



In addition to recognizing the importance of need-hierarchy in the process of motivating employees, Herzberg brought a new dimension in his research and developed a two factor content theory which is popularly known as Motivation – Hygiene Theory. He divided his factors of motivation into two categories called Hygiene factors and motivation factors. The hygiene factors can de- motivate or cause dissatisfaction if they are not present, but do not very often create satisfaction when they are present. Herzberg's research proved that people will strive to achieve 'hygiene needs' because they are unhappy without them, but once satisfied the effect soon wears off. The important fact to remember here is that attention to these hygiene factors prevents dissatisfaction but does not necessarily provide positive motivation. Unfortunately, poorly managed organizations do not understand that hygiene factors are not the real motivators but prevent dissatisfaction and revolt, if provided .Examples of Hygiene needs (or maintenance factors) in the work place are ; company policy, relationship with supervisor, working conditions, salary, company transport, status, security, medical reimbursement for the family, relationship with subordinates , personal life etc. However, motivation factors do motivate or create satisfaction and are rarely the cause of dissatisfaction. He suggested that individuals are encouraged by motivators more than the maintenance factors. Motivators include achievement, recognition, work itself, accountability, advancement and providing fulfillment from the profession such as awards, accomplishments or individual development.

The most important part of the Herzberg's theory of motivation is that the main motivating factors are not in the environment (not around the job) but in the intrinsic value and satisfaction gained from the job itself. Therefore, to motivate an individual, a job itself must be challenging, having scope for enrichment and be of interest to the job holder. Motivators, (also called satisfiers) are those factors directly concerned with the satisfaction gained from a job; such as the sense of achievement, the level of recognition by both colleagues and management, the level of responsibility opportunities for advancement and status provided (Herzberg, 1968). A lack of motivators leads to over concentration on hygiene factors, which are those negative factors which can be seen and therefore form the basis of complaint and concern.

A question about the role of money commonly arises while discussing the Herzberg's theory of motivation, it is appropriate to mention here that he considered money as motivator at lower level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs but it tends to have a motivating effect on staff that lasts only for a short period of time. At higher levels of hierarchy, praise, respect, recognition, empowerment and a sense of belongingness are far more powerful motivators than money.

Herzberg concluded that employees must be motivated to experience job satisfaction but that unacceptable working conditions can only result in a lack of satisfaction. The presence of sufficient maintenance factors prevents employment discontent, whereas adequate motivators may direct occupational contentment. When salary occurred as a factor in lows, it revolved around the unfairness of the wage system within the organization. In contrast, salary was mentioned in high streams (events causing satisfaction) as something that went along with a person's achievement on the job. It was a form of recognition; job satisfaction meant more than money; it meant a job is well done; it meant that the individual was progressing in his work (Herzberg, 1968). According to him salary is a factor which belongs more in the group that defines the job situation and is primarily a dis-satisfier.

3. CONCLUSION:

From the foregoing discussions, it may be concluded that motivation is an internal force which drives employees towards extra ordinary performance. It is based on growth needs and its benefits accrue over a long period of time. Therefore, employees should be awarded with the challenging tasks for which they deserve and can assume the responsibility. If employees are not properly motivated, it may have adverse effect on the productivity and organization's overall efficiency may decline. Contrary to this, employees who feel motivated and get the opportunity to rise in their career will never show destructive attitude on the job, will try to stay longer and work harder to satisfy stakeholders, customers and themselves.

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