

Although researchers and managers in Industry had assumed for long inter-relationships between need-gratification and the motivation of employees, researches in this area were few and findings lacked consistency. McGregor (1960) reported that the opportunity to participate in the functioning of organizations tend to gratify the esteem and autonomy needs of employees and affect their motivation towards organizational objectives. Herzberg *et. al.* (1959); Likert (1959) and Beer (1966) found little evidence of a definite relationship between need-gratification and motivation. Nevertheless the evidence was substantial on the point that employees while attempting to achieve organizational goals, strove for gratification of personal needs, even if the two were incongruent. The magnitude of the distance between the personal needs and organizational goals determined the magnitude of need-gratification and motivation in terms of the perception of job incentives. Needs were sort of intrinsic to the employee, the gratification of which formed the foci of all manifest behaviour in the organization. Incentives were those extrinsic variables on the job which if appropriately understood and meaningfully perceived, could spur and sustain coordinated individual activities contained in the form of motivation. The relationship between the two was intricate and the two operated on the individual in a very subtle manner affecting his organizational behaviour.

In an organization it was important both to understand the levels of need-gratification of employees and obtain a knowledge

of the perception of job incentives. If larger number of employees did not report meaningful perception of the given set of job incentives, it might be interpreted as indicative of perceptual gap in the need-gratification and low motivation towards achieving organizational goals. The organization may, therefore, require its managers to propose and try alternative job incentive schemes which may meet the needs better and thus enhance employee motivation.

The present research hypothesized that, since need-gratification remained of concern to all employees, (a) the perceptual gap in need-gratification and the perceived importance of psychological needs should be reflected in the perception of job incentives; and (b) the effect should vary by age, number of dependents, income, unionization and the position in the organizational hierarchy.

These hypotheses were tested empirically on the basis of the data obtained over four groups of employees in a medium size industry in the private sector.

Sample:

1. Fifty workers who had participated in the functioning of the organization at one time or another as members of plant panchayat, works committee, provident fund committee etc.
2. Fifty workers who had never participated in the functioning of the organization;
3. Twenty-eight foremen;
4. Seventeen assistant plant superintendents.

* Dr. (Mrs.) Sushila Singhal is Assistant Professor, Z. H. C. E. S., S. S. S., Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110 057.

The two groups of workers were selected by the stratified random sampling procedure and represented 10% of the population. The groups of foremen and assistant plant superintendents included the available personnel.

VARIABLES AND TOOLS

Need-gratification was defined as the fulfilment of various psychological needs in a hierarchical order starting with the most basic need-type and moving upwards as explained by Maslow. It was measured by using a need-gratification questionnaire developed on the lines of porter's questionnaire (1974). The questionnaire included items on physiological, safety, social, esteem, autonomy and self-actualization needs.

Job incentives, each represented on a separate card, were as follows: Adequate income, Job security, Competent and sympathetic supervisor, Good working conditions, Opportunities for promotion, Opportunities for advanced training, Congenial work-group in case of workers and Congenial team work in case of foremen and assistant plant superintendents, other facilities such as medical, canteen, cooperatives etc. Age, income and family size were treated as stratifying variables. Each group was further subdivided into three groups of high, medium and low on the basis of age, income and number of dependents. The cutting points between the two categories were established at scores where the sharp variations were noticed. The percentage of cases in middle category was larger in each case approximating to 46% of the tested group.

Procedure of Administration, Scoring and Analysis: Each employee was tested individually in the counselling room of the factory. After recording the personal informa-

tion on the bio data form, each individual was given the need-gratification questionnaire and asked to respond on a 5-point scale indicating how much of the specified psychological need he felt as 'being' met and how much of it 'should' be fulfilled by his job. The subtraction of his response 'being' from 'should be' provided the score for the perceptual gap in need-gratification. After the completion of the need-gratification questionnaire, each individual was presented the set of cards displaying eight job incentives and asked to rank these in order of importance as he perceived these. Means, standard deviations and correlations were computed for the different psychological needs and job incentives and mean ranks obtained by using the mean scores. As a result of differences in the direction of ratings while in case of need-gratification the least-gap was assigned the highest rank, in case of job incentives the highest rank was assigned to the most preferred one.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptual Gap in Need-Gratification. The mean ranks on different psychological needs revealed least perceptual gap in the gratification of safety needs for all four groups of employees. The needs which were not met adequately or met with considerable difficulty in general, were the physiological, autonomy and self-actualization needs. The gratification of higher order needs was important to all employees, once they were able to satisfy their lower order needs marginally (For details see Singhal: 1974).

Mean Ranks of Job Incentives

Data on mean ranks for job incentives revealed that both groups of workers and assistant plant superintendents gave first preference to opportunities for promotion.

while foremen gave first preference to competent and sympathetic supervisor. It appeared that workers and assistant plant superintendents both were very keen on opportunity for promotion, considering it as the road to higher status and increased salary, which was more or less true. The relatively higher preference of the worker for opportunity of promotion appeared to be a little unrealistic, but was probably a reflection of his desire for higher order need-gratification in the present society. The money had been symbolic of power and status and continued to be a motivating force. Contrary to the workers the preferences of the foremen appeared to be more realistic for they being in the middle management level accepted their position in the organization as critical in reality. They favoured a sympathetic and competent boss who could direct them specifically, understand them well and might not develop a sort of punitive attitude towards them, while they also realized that the implementation of programmes would depend on the cooperation of workers.

The second most important preference of both groups of workers and foremen was for the opportunity for training. Apparently both recognize the need of training as prerequisite to skill development. The assistant plant superintendents ranked good working conditions as the second most preferred incentive, indicating that once the lower order needs were gratified the good working conditions become basic to better output. This was perceived as relatively less important by other groups of employees since they were more confronted with necessities of life. The third preferred incentive was competent and sympathetic supervisor in case of participative group of workers with whom they desired open and healthy interpersonal relationships. The non-participating group of

workers and assistant plant superintendents ranked job security as the third most preferred incentive. This was expected in case of the former but not in case of the latter group since these had participated in organizational functioning and should have had greater identification with the organization than the other three groups.

The foremen ranked opportunity for promotion as the third meaningful incentive, which was understandable as a sort of objective to be accomplished through other incentives, namely, an able and sympathetic supervisor and opportunity for training. All the four groups unanimously ranked other facilities such as medical, canteen and co-operatives etc., as the least preferred incentive. Apparently, these were expected by employees as additional returns from the job rather than as a job incentive.

Gap in Need-Gratification and Job Incentives

The computation of correlations between the perceptual gap in need-gratification and job incentives revealed only a few significant relationships, and that too mostly in relation to worker groups.

In case of foremen, the only significant relationship was observed between perceptual gap in safety need and competent and sympathetic supervisor ($r = .39$, $p < .05$), indicating that though foremen felt safe on the job, they perceived a good and kind supervisor as important guarantor of security in the long run. It might also be interpreted as their conscious admittance of the human relations problem. In case of assistant plant superintendents again, a significant relationship was observed between safety and job security ($r = .52$, $p < .05$). This was contradictory to the finding of least perceptual gap in the gratification of safety need. If the assistant plant superin-

tendents had their safety need gratified, they should not have ranked job security as high.

The non-participating group of workers' large perceptual gap in physiological and autonomy needs was found transformed into a high preference for job security. It might be observed therefore, that the thwarting of basic needs beyond a threshold point could induce psychological feelings of insecurity, irrespective of one's position in the hierarchy of the organization.

It appeared from the data that employees may sometimes resort to compensatory mechanism, though in a selective manner, in case the desired level of need-gratification was not experienced. The gap on physiological need-gratification led to enhanced preference for good working conditions ($r = .34$, $p < .05$) merely as a sort of compensation. The preference for good working conditions was affected by the gap on esteem need ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). The inadequate feelings of respect and recognition were sought to be compensated through the desire for opportunities for promotion. The lack of opportunities to participate in the organizational functioning and the feeling of not being able to do what one would like to do led the non-participating group of workers to rank congenial work group considerably higher than the participative group of workers who had attached little preference to it. For the non-participating group of workers, group support and group acceptance were meaningful and basic, since their identification with the organization was not high. The workers' sense of safety was negatively associated with preference for other facilities such as free medicine, cooperatives etc. ($r = .64$, $p < .01$). The participative group of workers' perceptual gap on physiological needs did not result in enhanced preference

for congenial work group ($r = .06$). Rather it affected their preference for good working conditions ($r = .37$, $p < .05$). This could probably reduce some of their tensions arising out of the gap on physiological needs. The perception of good working conditions was also affected by the limited opportunity to work according to one's desire. The perception of other facilities such as medical, canteen and cooperatives etc., was negatively affected by all psychological needs confirming the earlier proposition that these facilities were preferred, but not desired. These served as a perpetual reminder of the worker's low position in organizational hierarchy. The participation in the functioning of organization led to greater identification with the job and the workers did not feel deprived of respect, recognition and assertion. This was reflected in the positive and significant relationship of job security with esteem and autonomy needs.

An interesting feature of the participating workers was that even though they felt their social needs met to a reasonable extent, their relationship with the supervisor remained important to them ($r = .32$, $p < .05$). Many of the workers who participated in organizational functioning were considered as the management men. These supported their supervisors since it was to their advantage. The magnitude of social need gratification was related to the opportunity for promotion ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). A certain amount of gap on physiological needs was also sought to be bridged through good interpersonal relationships at the job, the relationship with congenial work group being significant at .05 level.

Need Importance and Job Incentives

The correlations between the importance of different psychological needs and the

perception of job incentives were significant in few cases only.

In case of assistant plant superintendents the importance of physiological needs affected the perception of adequate income negatively ($r=.54$, $p < .05$), indicating that although the group perceived gratification of physiological needs on the job as quite important, mere high salary was not adequate attraction. Apparently for this group the gratification of higher order needs formed the foci. The only need, the importance of which affected the perception of job security and competent and sympathetic boss significantly was the safety need ($r=.56$, and $r=.50$, respectively). The r was positive in relation to job security suggesting the faulty attitude of equating job security with safety on the job, since their job involved mainly supervisory functions, no other risks being associated with it. The same was true in case of foremen, the r being significant at .05 level in both cases ($r=.38$ and $r=.33$). In case of foremen, safety correlated negatively with competent and sympathetic boss ($r = .30$ NS) indicating that their safety on the job depended on the pleasure of the boss. The importance of safety needs was also found to bear negative association with adequate income ($r=.30$, $p < .05$) and opportunity for promotion ($r=.48$, $p < .01$), revealing that a high salary and good social status were quite important at the bottom level of the management. The gratification of higher order needs was important, but it depended to a sufficient degree on the working conditions in the organization. The foremen observed that if the working conditions were healthy and satisfying one could realize his worth ($r=.40$, $p < .05$). This might be the result of lack of participation in organizational matters. The lack of formal education and the workers' position in the hierarchy imbibed in them a

negative feeling of self-actualization. In case of participating workers the ratings on need importance correlated positively with the perception of job incentives in general (the range of r being between .05 to .50), providing support to the hypothesis of the influence of importance of psychological needs on the perception of job incentives.

Age, Number of Dependents, Income, Unionization, Perceptual Gap in Need-Gratification and the Perception of job Incentives

In the present research, age was found to affect the perceptual gap in the gratification of physiological, autonomy and self-actualization needs of the group of participating workers ($r=.42$, $p < .01$; $r=.32$, $p < .05$, $r = .32$, $p < .05$, respectively). Apparently, the older workers perceived a wider gap in the gratification of these needs than the younger workers, which was expected because of the increased liabilities of the former group. This finding was also supported by the data on the number of dependents ($r=.40$, $p < .10$; $r=.30$, $p < .05$ and $r = .40$ $p < .01$, respectively).

The elderly group of workers also placed higher emphasis on job security ($r=.33$, $p < .05$) and congenial work-group ($r = .39$, $p < .01$). In the group of non-participating workers the older workers differed from the younger ones on safety needs, but did not rank job security very high ($r = .13$, NS). These, perceived good working conditions as important to safety, the relationship between the two being significant at .05 level. As the workers grew older their preference for good and sympathetic boss gradually lowered down, ($r=.32$, $p < .05$).

In case of foremen, though the age was found to be associated with perceptual gap

in need-gratification, the relationships were not significant. The differences were further accentuated by the increased liabilities resulting from the increased number of dependents. Those who had more dependents perceived a wider gap in the gratification of social needs ($r=.39$, $p < .05$). For the group of assistant plant superintendents, the age was found to correlate negatively with perceptual gap in the gratification of all types of needs, but significant only in case of autonomy need ($r=.47$, $p < .05$). Apparently the elderly one enjoyed greater independence and assertion. By the number of dependents, the results were not very much different than the other groups. Those with large families felt wider gap on physiological ($r = .44$, NS), safety ($r = .50$, $p < .05$) and social needs ($r=.63$, $p < .01$). The elderly assistant plant superintendents did not perceive adequate opportunities for promotion in the organization. Here also those who had larger families emphasised good working conditions ($r = .46$, $p < .05$).

Income did not correlate positively with perceptual gap in the gratification of any need for any of the tested groups. However, among the participating workers those who received higher salary still emphasised salary and better prospects of training, ($r=.41$, $p < .01$; $r=.33$, $p < .05$). On the contrary, the non-participating workers preferred congenial work-group. In case of foremen income bore no relationship to any of the job incentives. The income of the assistant plant superintendents correlated negatively with adequate income ($r=.68$, $p < .01$), job security ($r=.56$, $p < .05$), opportunities for training ($r = .49$, $p < .05$) and congenial work group ($r=.47$, $p < .05$).

Unionization was found to be ineffective in influencing either the perceptual gap in need-gratification or the perception of job

incentives. The only need category affected by unionization was the social need ($r=.26$, NS) which was expected since union served as the source of the gratification of need of affiliation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research examined if the magnitude of need-gratification and the importance of psychological needs were associated with the perception of job incentives and if this relationship varied by age, number of dependents, income, unionization and position in the hierarchy. The data were obtained over four groups of employees at three levels in a medium-sized industry by using a need-gratification questionnaire and a list of job incentives. Results revealed that safety, in general, was the most gratified need and gaps of increasing order occurred in physiological, autonomy and self-actualization needs. The two groups of workers and the assistant plant superintendents ranked opportunity for promotion as the most preferred incentive, but the former gave first preference to the competent and sympathetic supervisor. Other important job incentives were opportunity for training and good working conditions. The magnitude of need-gratification had little impact on the perception of job incentives and many of the relationships were confined to the worker groups only. The relationship between need-importance and the job incentives was meagre, but supportive of the impact of the importance of psychological needs on the perception of job incentives. The age and number of dependents appeared to be effective indicators of differences in need-gratification and the perception of job incentives, but the effect of income was not very pronounced in the present sample. Unionization made difference in the gratification of social needs mainly.

REFERENCES

- McGregor, D.
1960 *The Human Side of Enterprise*, New York, McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Herzberg, F., B. Mausner, B. B. Snyderman
1959 *The Motivation to Work*, New York: Wiley.
- Likert, R.
1959 "Motivational Approach to Management Development", *Harvard Business Review*, 37, 4, 75-82.
- Beer, M.
1966 *Leadership, Employee Needs and Motivation*, Columbus: Ohio State University Bureau of Business Research Monograph No. 129.
- Singhal, S.
1974 "Perceptual Gap in the Need-Gratification of Industrial Employees", *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 34, 4, 351-358.