A Study on Employee Motivation towards Achieving the Organizational Goals of Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka

S.P. Abeygunawardena, P.N.M. Gamage, T.G.V.H. Dharmawardana, and D.N. Kaluarachchi

Abstract—This study focuses on the relationship between employee motivation and goal achievement, specifically relating to the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL). The foremost intention of this study is to clarify the relationship between the two stated variables and their impact on each other while contributing to bridging the knowledge gap on the above-stated research area. Hence, the study has been carried out specifically addressing five main divisions of MASL with the use of Stratified and Cluster sampling. Further, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s two factor theory has been used in relation to the motivation models ensuring the right delivery of clarity. The primary data collection sources, questionnaires and structured interviews have been used in line with the secondary data collection sources to gather data. Finally in concluding a positive relationship between employee motivation and goal achievement was identified.

Keywords — Employee, Motivation, Goals, Extrinsic

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no other resource in an organisation to equalize the value involved in the human capital. Since it is unique by nature, the human capital requires more attention and consideration for its proper functioning. Employees’ are the most important and a dilemma to manage as their nature will not remain the same from individual to individual. This only living resource of the organisation is the most emphatic input in the process of achieving the optimum productivity and ultimately the success of achieving organisational goals. It is undoubtedly a distinct priority of an organisation to keep their employees satisfied in order to obtain their total dedication in achieving organisational objectives. It is vital an unenviable task for semi government organisations of this nature to keep their employees happy as they are not considered good employers in general. As it is, this research will initiate in exploring the relationship between employee motivation and achievement of organisational goals of the semi government organisation, the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL). Not like other resources (machines, machinery, Methods) HR can be used to improve an organization’s productivity.

Human resources are unique in comparison to other resources because they have the ability to think, innovative skills, feel and react and having the ability to organize as teams and unions. When the organization utilises its Human

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

For any organization the Human Resource (HR) is the most important factor, unlike other resources machinery etc.

S.P. Abeygunawardena is with the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka, (corresponding author to provide phone: 0094717243744; e-mail: sharmi567@gmail.com).

P.N.M. Gamage is with the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka. (e-mail: pavithragamage@gmail.com).

T.G.V.H. Dharmawardana is with the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka, (e-mail: vidulahasaranga@live.com).

D.N. Kaluarachchi is with the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka, (e-mail: dhananjii.niru@gmail.com).

resources in a proper manner, it can achieve its goals and objectives within a stipulated time frame.

An employee contributes to achieving organizational goals only if he/she is motivated. The word “motivation” is derived from the word “motive”. A motive can be identified by studying employee expectation and needs. Most of the time there is a stimulus behind the word motivation [1].

According to Michel J. Jucius, motivation is “the act of stimulating someone or oneself to get a desired action, to push the right button to get a desired course of action” [2]. This definition simply elaborates persuading someone to achieve a goal. According to this definition the desired course of action is the organizational goals and provision of the right key (right motivational factor such as overtime payments, salary adventures, promotions, vehicle permits etc.) to the employee to achieve organization goals.

According to Ruthankoon and Ogunlana (2003), the word “motivation” was derived from the Latin term “movere” which means “to move”. This definition explains how to provide something to a person to drive him/her to do something [3]. The goal achievement and survival of the organization heavily depends on the motivation level of the employees. Therefore, the management of the organization needs to correctly identify as to what should be provided the employees to increase their current working level. The management of the organization needs to provide the right motivational factor to the employees, in order to achieve organizational goals within a timeframe.

Considering the significance of the motivation, it ensures better utilization of resources, reduces wastage, minimises problems like labour turnover, absenteeism and grievances, Improves cooperation and team spirit, lessens conflicts and misunderstandings between employer and employee whilst increasing skills among employees [2].

There are no shortages of motivation theories that managers can use to motivate their employees and these theories are really useful to apply to monitoring the motivation level of employees in the organization. Motivational theories can be divided into two categories namely Content theories and Process theories. Content theory enables to identify specific factors that encourage and motivate people. There are four theories included in the content part they being Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Herzberg’s two factor theory, McClelland’s PAA needs and Alderfer’s ERG (existence, relatedness, growth) theory.
The other category of motivation is the Process theory. This enables to identify the aspect of motivation. These theories address the whole process and answer how a person gets motivated rather than explaining what factors really motivate a person. There are some theories under the process theory namely Vroom’s expectancy theory and Adams’s equity theory [3].

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a famous motivation theory in the world wherein he has explained that people have a complex set of five needs starting from Psychological needs (lowest) to Self-actualization needs (highest).

The premise of this ascending hierarchy is that once a lower level need is fulfilled it will lose the power of motivating the behaviour and only the next higher level of need will be able to do it. Psychological, and safety needs are lower level needs and social, esteem and self-actualization are higher order needs. Higher order needs are satisfied internally and lower level needs are fulfilled externally. All people satisfy their lower level needs before satisfying their higher order needs [4]. The hierarchy of needs are depicted in fig. 1.

According to Herzberg theory there are two categories namely, hygiene factors and motivation factors as shown in fig. 2. Hygiene factors associated with the job context and there are factors which cause dissatisfaction among employees; such as working conditions, quality of supervision, interpersonal relationships, salary and policies. The management can satisfy their employees by attending to these factors in an acceptable manner. These factors are insufficient to motivate or satisfy employees to a maximum.

The other parts of the theory are motivational factors such as recognition, achievement, personal growth, responsibility and the work itself. Non fulfillment of these factors could dissatisfy the employees and their fulfillment gives them satisfaction unlike hygiene factors [2].

According to this theory the factors leading to job satisfaction are separate and different from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. Therefore managers who seek to eliminate factors that create job dissatisfaction can bring about peace but not motivation; to motivate employees there should be motivation factors.

Both Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s two factor theories can be easily applied to study the motivation.

Fig. 2. Herzberg’s two factor theory [6]

Those two theories are accepted worldwide and are also very popular and belong to the content theories of motivation indicating what motivates employees.

III. METHODOLOGY

Stratified sampling technique and cluster sampling technique were used to gather information as it was not feasible to consider the whole population of more than 800 employees for the research purpose. Therefore, the Moragahakanda-Kalugaga development project, Technical services division, Physical planning division, Finance division and the Administrative division were identified as clusters, whilst it was further classified in to a subpopulation which also can be identified as ‘strata’; thus each division is classified in to three levels based on their hierarchical strategy namely; corporate, managerial and operational and 10% from each of these levels were considered for the sample which amounted to 5 from Corporate, 72 from managerial and 394 employees from the Operational level.

Instruments such as structured interviews and questionnaires have been used to gather data. Questionnaires were forwarded to the five divisions as a pilot test prior to distribution among the sample and based on the pilot run result, three questionnaires were designed based on the hierarchical strategy Corporate, Managerial and Operational; meanwhile the operational level questionnaire was translated in to the Sinhala language to avoid any confusion.

Data were presented using tables and graphs with the help of Microsoft excel. Further, the Likert scale was used in interpreting data which arrived through scale questions whilst mean, standard deviation were calculated in order to get more meaningful information.

Considering the validity and reliability, the pilot run helped in clearing misunderstandings and misinterpretations and as a result of using two instruments for the procedure of data collection, the information discovered by interviews were verified through the questionnaire and vice versa. Further, for the intention of getting more accurate results, the sample was chosen through cluster sampling and each cluster was again fragmented into three strata based on hierarchical strategy.

The assumptions such as the sample used were clearly representing the population, the employees having given truthful information without any hesitation, no invisible intervention for the employees in providing trustworthy facts were used to support the research in order to get more precise results.

Since the life span of the project was limited to about three months the work load were allocated among the research team members depending on their capabilities in order to align with the research deadlines and considering the scope and limitations. Structured interviews were designed with
more accurate questions that covering majority of areas the study should cover. At the same time the questionnaires were designed with more closed ended questions and a few open ended questions and both English and Sinhala in order to pursue the employees to provide truthful and accurate information.

IV. RESULTS

A. Motivational Factors

As shown in the following fig. 3. 80% of the corporate level employees have signified foreign training as the number one motivational factor, whilst 60% has classified project allowances as motivational factor number 2. Promotions have been categorized at number three with 80% approval with professional qualifications at number four with 60% consent whilst vehicle permits has been given fifth place.

As displayed in the fig. 5. facility to work on holiday with payments and overtime payment have been ranked the first and the second whilst housing loans and promotions hold third and fourth place and the Facility to career development takes the fifth place.

B. Divisional Goals

The Moragahakanda project is a multipurpose reservoir project. The main feature of this project is the construction of a massive reservoir across the river Ambangaga at a place called Moragahakanda and is responsible for all constructions and supervision of work under the project.

The Technical service division is responsible for all engineering aspects and maintenance work in completed of works of the Mahaweli programme.

The Physical Planning division is responsible for planning villages, towns and road network and settlement areas in the Mahaweli project areas.

The Finance division is responsible for the financial control and distribution of funds for the various projects and activities.

The Administrative division is responsible for the overall Administration of the employees, promotions, transfers and disciplinary procedures.

C. Motivation and Achievement of Organisational Goals

1) Work: Considering the satisfaction levels of the employees, the corporate level and managerial level employees also satisfied about their work though the level of satisfaction in the managerial level is lower whereas the operational level employees are concerned with the 36% of them stating they are dissatisfied.

Considering the training aspect, the corporate level employees and 78% of the managerial level have marked as “yes” indicating they get the required training, but 76% of the operational level employees have intimated “no” which means they are not afforded the required training.

Although 60% of the corporate level employees had marked that they can handle the work load, most of the managerial and operational level employees indicated that they cannot handle the work load and thus is 89% and 78% respectively.
However, considering the tasks, most of the employees are clear about their tasks as 98% of operational level, a total 100% of managerial level and corporate level employees marked as “yes”.

Most of the employees are proud to say about their job. However, the operational level employees have a lower level of pride compared to the managerial with the corporate level and corporate level employees showing the highest percentage of 100%.

Considering the opportunities for career development, only 56% of managerial level employees have marked as “yes” and 76% of operational level employees have marked as “No” whilst the corporate level employees show the highest percentage.

Further, Corporate level employees have the decision making ability and Managerial level employees also occasionally can involve in decision making, however it seems that the operational level employees have no ability to make decisions.

57% of operational level employees think that they are given work according to their qualification. However, most of the managerial and corporate level employees think that they are given work according to their qualifications which is 89% and 100% respectively.

2) Remuneration: It seems that no one is satisfied about the salary and except for the operational level employees, all other employees think that they do not earn the same as other people in similar jobs. Further, all employees think that the salary increases are not decided in a fair manner.

3) Promotions: Most of the operational level employees think that they do not have an equal chance of being promoted and 36% constitutes to agree with it whilst 31% strongly agree with it. However, managerial and corporate level employees are considered moderate.

38% of the operational level employees strongly disagree with the statement that promotions are given in a fair manner whilst the managerial and corporate level employees have a moderate view on this statement.

52% of operational level employees agree with the statement that political interferences are involved. Most of the managerial and corporate level employees hold a moderate view on this statement too.

4) Recognition: 48% of operational level employees disagree with the statement of that their contributions are recognized whilst 43% of them have a moderate view on it and most of the managerial level employees amounting to 78% have moderate view on the statement. Further a 60% of corporate level employees do agree with the statement.

52% of operational level employees disagree with the statement that good work has been rewarded of while the managerial level employees have a moderate view of 89% on the statement whilst 60% of the corporate level employees agree with the statement.

5) Working Conditions: Most of the employees think that the working hours are reasonable. 98% of operational level employees and 100% of managerial and corporate level employees are in agreement with this statement.

Considering the satisfaction of the working conditions managerial and corporate level employees are happy with it but 64% of operational level employees are not.

6) Supervisor: 79% of the operational level employees have a moderate view on the statement of he/she is satisfied easily and 56% of managerial and 60% of corporate level employees are in agreement with the statement.

Considering the question Does he / she support you if there are problems?, 74% of operational level employees hold a moderate view whilst 78% of managerial and 100% of corporate level employees agree with the statement.

79% of operational level employees have a moderate opinion on the statement of he / she is convinced and persuaded. Most of the managerial and corporate level employees agree with the statement amounting to 67% and 60% respectively.

7) General Aspects: 74% of Operational level employees think that they have job security and thus it is 100% when it comes to the managerial and corporate levels.21% of the operational level employees have considered changing/resigning the job whilst no one has considered to change or resign the job in the managerial and corporate level.

The table I depicts the values of mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variance relating to information gathered through using “yes”, “no” questions whilst the table II depicts the information gathered by using the Likert scale.

### TABLE I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Coefficient of variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work (6)</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration (7)</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Conditions (10)</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General (12)</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Coefficient of variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion (8)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>-7.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition (9)</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>-10.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (11)</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8) Relationship Between Employee Motivation And Achievement Of Organizational Goals:

### TABLE III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Factors</th>
<th>Employee Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 No motivation at all</td>
<td>Salaries are not provided on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 No motivation at all</td>
<td>Poor working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Not motivated</td>
<td>Job description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Not motivated</td>
<td>Job security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Avoid demotivation</td>
<td>Pears- social factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Avoid demotivation</td>
<td>Working conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the data gathered through questionnaires and interviews it is identified that when the level of motivation increases the achievement of the organizational goals is also high. Therefore there is a positive relationship between employee motivation and achievement of organizational goals.

V. DISCUSSION

The motivational factors provided by MASL to its employees’ is an amalgamation of extrinsic and due rewards. Extrinsic rewards refers to project allowances, facility to work on holidays with payments, overtime payments, vehicle permits, housing loans, car loans and salary advancements. whilst due rewards are foreign training, promotions, facility to obtain professional qualifications, recognition of professional qualifications and post graduate qualifications for salary increases plus promotions and facilities to career development through higher studies. Those related to the self-esteem and self-actualization needs in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs can be identified.

According to the prioritization of motivation factors it is evident that a majority of both Corporate and Managerial level employees consider due rewards specifically addressing foreign training as the main source of motivation. Thus, from the corporate level employees’ point of view they are more interested in the due rewards when compared to the managerial level employees. However when it comes to the operational level employees they are more conscious about extrinsic rewards.

As the motivation factors or the requirements of human beings differ from one another, goals and responsibilities of divisions also differ. Therefore, the five main divisions operate with diverse goals and responsibilities whilst contributing to the ultimate goal achievement of MASL thus a clear understating about divisional goals is essential in performing ones duties and responsibilities. Moreover this is equally applicable for every organisation in fabricating a good rapport between employee motivation and achieving goals.

Considering the influencing factor of ‘work’, a majority of the employees representing corporate and managerial levels have indicated their satisfaction in relation to the appropriate training facilities whilst a majority of operational level employees have indicated their dissatisfaction. In terms of ability in handling the work load both managerial and operational level employees’ abilities have been pointed out and even the corporate level employees have indicated their inconvenience. Further, the open chance of climbing the career ladder does not represent a good image in terms of operational and managerial level employees when compared with the corporate level. The decision making ability of operational level employees is very low with no autonomy at all when compared to the other two levels.

The factors discussed above such as training facilities, decision making, career development and allocation of work based on recognition of qualifications corresponds with the self-esteem level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs since it relates with matching the skills and abilities of the employee to the job. Considering the ‘remuneration’ all employees who represented the population are dissatisfied with the salary and managerial and corporate level employees believe they are not paid the same as other people in similar jobs. The operational level employee hold a negative image in view of promotion considering the equality on being promoted, fair conduct of providing promotions and influence of political interference. In relation to ‘recognition’ concentrating on contribution is recognised and good work has been rewarded, MASL stands below the position of moderate. The promotions and the recognition can be identified in relation to the motivational factors of Herzberg’s two factor theory.

Considering the working hours and the working conditions most of the employees are contented whilst only the operational level employees are dissatisfied with the latter aspect. The influencing factor of ‘supervisor’ has convinced and persuaded operational level employees when compared with the other two levels. However in relation to the supervision MASL its stands in-between moderate and agreement with implying a good sign. Considering ‘job security’, MASL holds a positive image with enhancing employee confidence. Thus, these three aspects merge with the hygiene maintenance factors of Herzberg’s two factor theory.

When considering the international framework of researches similar researches on motivation [7], [8], [9]-[10] have been done referring to the public and private sector. In accordance with “Motivation in public organization” [11], two independent variables of quality supervision and participation are positively related to the dependent variable, motivation. Further, it has been found that participation has a stronger relationship level than quality supervision with motivation and all the tested variables positively correlated.

Therefore, it has been identified that the level of motivation increases when the achievement of goals is also high thus depicting a positive relationship between employee motivation and goal achievement with the moderate position held by MASL on employee motivation.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be identified in order to enhance the existing level of performance and position of employees’ and MASL itself.

The response made by operational level employees in relation to the training aspect has evidently shows the need for increasing the provision of training in accordance with job requirements since all three levels of employees are equally important in achieving the organisational goals.

In terms of career development operational level employees should also be provided with an open chance to ascend the career ladder in equality to other two levels whilst avoiding the discrepancy and ensuring the reflection of fairness and transparency of the process.

Considering the autonomy in decision making operational level employees should be provided with a further level of self-independency ensuring the chance of being involved in
decision making to a certain level relating to their own job roles, resulting in enhancing the level of employee motivation.

The working conditions or the atmosphere of the working place relation to the operational level employees should be changed in a way to enhance their level of commitment to the job as observed by the research team in exemption to the information revealed by the employees since it influences the employee morale. Political interference involved in the promotions as specifically revealed by the operational level employees should be avoided by enhancing the transparency of the procedure involved in promotions whilst ensuring equality among employees.

In accordance with the response made by the majority of employees representing all three levels the dissatisfaction caused on salary was evident. MASL therefore should give its’ due attention on this without giving any chance to result any confusion.

Finally in terms of recognition, good work and the contribution of employees’ should be appraised in a better way to increase the level of satisfaction and motivation in turn resulting in ultimate goal achievement of MASL.

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