

**Non-monetary incentives no less critical for sustaining motivation of govt employees!**

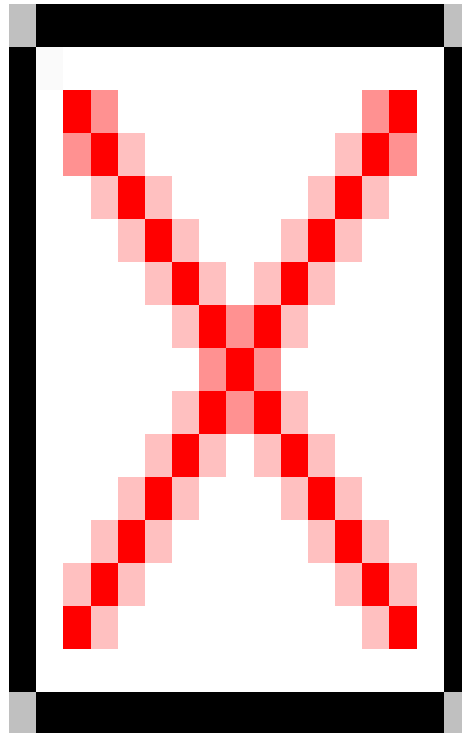
**Motivation and Incentives in Government Organisations - Mantra for Success**

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**By Shailendra Kumar, Editor**

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know and admire one senior Govt official, working as the head of a leading organisation in the Government of India. His trackrecord has always been that of an ace and insightful investigator. He is a born motivator for junior officials working in his organisation. He does not mind sidestepping ranks when it comes to encouraging a talented young officer who has the potential to deliver the good. He also takes extra pain to send his juniors abroad for better exposure to the concerned subject whenever an invitation comes his way or an opportunity is offered by the global system. He prefers interacting with all his staffs down to the level of peon and drivers. He sits next to his driver and chats about his family and children. He goes to office seven days a week, not only to clear the piles of files but to read and make empirical notings on them, to ensure higher efficacies for the organisaiton.

Now, the question is how to measure his motivation-level? An officer who works in a public organisation which treats a high quality worker and a sabotager equally when it comes to rewarding them officially, can there be a set of incentives to raise his motivation level further? NO is perhaps the answer to it. Such a highly self-motivated and public good-oriented official cannot be further motivated by any incentive except by perhaps adding more responsibility on his shoulder and offering him more challenging tasks in relation to greater goals of national importance and institutons of democracy.

However, such species are rare in any organisation. Most workers in both private firms as well as govt organisations often look for incentives to keep themselves motivated. And, thus, the words like motivations, incentives, performance, efficiency and organisational goals become some of the key tools which public administration thinkers and policy-makers often use to assess the *raison de tre* of a public delivery mechanism. And this happens to be the theme of this comprehensive book. And the relevance of this theme could not have been better timed to re-emphasise the telling impact of non-monetary incentives in sustaining the motivation-level in govt organisation for delivering the public good.

In the background of rapid-fire collapse of financial and other institutions of the market economy which ruled the global thinking of various schools of experts that had begun to see all the virtues in privatisation and only ills in govt-run organisations, it has become more important to take a close look at the existing structure and motivational mechanisms of public organisations.

For a privately-held firm or a company, profit is the prime mover. Since the organisational goal is very clear, providing monetary incentives helps further the profit-making cause of the organisation. What makes it complicated for the public organisation is the conspicuous absence of profit-making element. Govt departments like Income Tax and various public utilities handling agencies have a different set of goals. For some, providing quality service is the goal. For many, collecting revenue on behalf of the State is the goal. But multiplicity of goals further adds to the complexity of a govt organisation.

For a private sector entity, competition within the four walls of the market economy becomes a disciplining force. If one does not perform and fails to reach closer to the profit-level stipulated, one may not survive for long in the market. But such a disciplining force is non-existent in the case fo Public organisations.

In this background, keeping the moral high and motivating govt officials to work in harmony with the goals of their own organisations become a major challenge. There are some who look for pure monetary incentives to perform well. There are dozens who look for more of personal satisfaction and recognition by the organisation. But the majority looks for a cocktail of both - monetary as well as subjective satisfaction. This is where the policy makers need to focus on devising innovative schemes to help individual officers give their best to their organisations.

The author has done a very comprehensive case study of the Income Tax Department which also has a very complicated command system with minimal incentive elements engrained in the system. I am sure the CBDT topbrass would like to take benefit of this Study done by one of its officers who has given the best of his perspicuity and 'digging skills' to come out with a set of recommendations which can help improve the efficacy and efficiency of the large edifice of direct tax administration in the country. Even the DoP&T bosses may like to take a cue from this book which is lucidly written and nicely packaged to lend you a feeling of 'reading a story book'. I would personally recommend this book which deserves a place in all public libraries where ordinary readers spend some quality time, reading quality work of researchers.