

**CHAPTER - II**  
**THEORETICAL CONCEPT AND THEORIES OF**  
**JOB SATISFACTION**

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- 2.2 Meaning and Definition of Job Satisfaction
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## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Job satisfaction is one of the important factors that have drawn attention of the organization as well as academicians.<sup>1</sup> In view of the rising competition as a result of globalisation, managers have placed great importance on the construct of job satisfaction. This may be due to the findings of many studies that job satisfaction is a significant determinant of organizational commitment. Highly satisfied employees will exert extra effort and contribute positively to the effectiveness and efficiency of their organizations. Job satisfaction will lead to better performance and the employees will be more committed towards their organization. Hence, the theoretical concept of framework is presented to have the conceptual clarity about job satisfaction.

## **2.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Job satisfaction refers to an individual's complex attitude towards his job. It is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job value. According to Vroom (1964) the term 'job' refers to workers' immediate work task and work role in a particular work organisation.<sup>2</sup>

As a generic concept, satisfaction may be described in a behavioural perspective. Individual or organisational behaviour is

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<sup>1</sup> Prasad, L.M., *"Principles and Practice of Management"*, Sultan Chand & Sons, New Delhi, 2001, p. 618.

<sup>2</sup> Vroom, V.K., *"Work and Motivation"*, Wiley, 1964, p. 23.

believed to be goal directed. Each human action has a primary motivation and most actions are attempts to maximise satisfaction by fulfilling multiple motivations, some of which are identified by Maslow (Maslow, 1943). Accordingly the meaning of satisfaction in common usage, satisfaction occurs when one gets what he needs, desires, wants, expects, deserves or deems to be his entitlement.<sup>3</sup>

According to Hoppock (1935), “Job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person truthfully say I am satisfied with my job”.<sup>4</sup> Such a description indicates the variety of variables that influence job satisfaction. Blum (1968) conceptualised job satisfaction as “an attitude which results from a balancing and summation of many specific likes and dislikes experienced in connection with the job”. Vrom (1964) observes that job satisfaction is, “the positive orientation of an individual towards all aspect of the work situation”. Locke (1969) defines job satisfaction as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s or job experiences”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Noor Mohamed, A., “*A Study of Job Satisfaction among Nationalised Bank Employees*”, SMART Journal of Business Management Studies, Vol. 4, Issue No. 2, July-December 2008, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Hoppock R., “*Comparison of Satisfied and Dissatisfied Teachers*”, Psychological Bulletin, 1935, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Locke, E.A., “*The Nature and Cause of Job Satisfaction*”, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1979, p. 1300.

On the basis of these definitions it may be concluded that job satisfaction is a complex set of variables governed to a large extent by perception and expectations of the employees.

In the present study, job satisfaction is conceptualised as, “a positive attitude or a pleasurable emotional state which results from specific work related experiences”.

### **2.3 CONCEPTS OF JOB SATISFACTION**

A clarification of the concept of job satisfaction presents a better understanding on the issues in job satisfaction. It further illuminates many dimensions on job satisfaction.

#### **2.3.1 Job Satisfaction and Job Attitude**

Attitude represents a persistent tendency to feel and behave in a particular way towards some object. Attitudes are not learned. They are acquired from several sources, the more important of them being direct experience with the object, associating one object with another about which an attitude had already been formed from family and peer groups, from the neighbourhood, economic status and occupations and mass communications. Job satisfaction represents a person's feelings towards his job.

### **2.3.2 Job Satisfaction and Job Attraction**

The concept of job satisfaction applies only to the outcome already gained by an individual whereas job attraction is concerned with “a hedonism of the future”.

### **2.3.3 Job Satisfaction and Morale**

Morale means the employee’s satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the work situation.

## **2.4 DIMENSIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION**

There are three important dimensions to job satisfaction.

1. Job satisfaction refers to one’s feeling towards one’s job. It can only be inferred but not seen.
2. Job satisfaction is often determined by how well outcomes meet or exceed expectations. Satisfaction in one’s job means increased commitment in the fulfillment of formal requirements. There is greater willingness to invest personal energy and time in job performance.
3. The terms job satisfaction and job attitudes are typically used interchangeably. Both refers to effective orientation on the part of individuals towards their work roles which they are presently occupying. Positive attitudes towards the job are conceptually equivalent to job satisfaction and negative attitudes towards the job indicate job dissatisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hoppock, R., *loc.cit.*, p. 12.

## **2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION**

High job satisfaction may lead to improved productivity, increased turnover, improved attendance, reduced accidents, less job stress and lower unionisation.

### **2.5.1 Productivity**

The relationship between satisfaction and productivity is not definitely established. The consensus, however, is that in the long run job satisfaction leads to increased productivity. But, four decades of research into this issue, unfortunately, does not lend support to this belief.

First, the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is weak.

Second, there is more evidence to suggest that job performance leads to job satisfaction and not the other way round. An employee who performs well in his job gets both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards which will lead to high satisfaction. A poor performer will feel worse about his incompetence and will receive fewer rewards. He will be less satisfied with his work experiences.

Third, there are some conditions under which high productivity more clearly leads to high job satisfaction. One condition is that the employees perceive that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are contingent upon their productivity. The second condition is that the extrinsic

rewards (pay, for example) may be distributed equitably. Inequitable distribution fails to convince the employee's close correlation between hard work and rewards.

However, the adage "a happy worker is a productive worker" is not always wrong. True, there may not be a relationship between job satisfaction and productivity; performance may be affected indirectly by absenteeism or turnover which is related (negatively) to satisfaction.

### **2.5.2 Job Satisfaction and Employee Turnover**

High employee turnover is of considerable concern for employees because it disrupts normal operations, cause morale problems for those who stick on, and increases the cost involved in selecting and training replacements. The employer does whatever possible to minimise turnover, making the employees feel satisfied on their jobs, being one each.

The connection between job satisfaction to employee turnover is established beyond doubt. It has been demonstrated that workers who have relatively low levels of job satisfaction are the most likely to quit their jobs and that organisational units with the lowest average satisfaction levels tend to have the highest turnover rates.

However, the withdrawal behaviour of employees is modified by certain factors. Loyalty to the organisation is one such. Some employees cannot imagine themselves working elsewhere, however dissatisfied they are in their present jobs. Availability of other places of employment also influence turnover. Even if greener pastures are available, an employee does not mind going in search of them, notwithstanding the present level of job satisfaction he enjoys.

### **2.5.3 Satisfaction and Absenteeism**

Correlation of satisfaction to absenteeism is also proved conclusively. Workers who are dissatisfied are more likely to take “mental health” days, that is days off not due to illness or personal business. As in turnover, absenteeism is subject to modification by certain factors. The degree to which people feel that their jobs are important has a moderate influence on their absences. Employees who feel that their work is important tend to clock in regular attendance. Besides, it is important to remember that while high job satisfaction will not necessarily result in low absenteeism, low satisfaction is likely to bring about high absenteeism.

### **2.5.4 Satisfaction and Safety**

Poor safety practices are a negative consequence of low satisfaction level. When people are discouraged about their jobs, company and supervisors, they are more liable to experience accidents. An underlying reason for such accident is that

discouragement may take one's attention away from the task at hand. Inattention leads directly to accidents.

### **2.5.5 Satisfaction and Job Stress**

Job stress is the body's response to any job related factor that threatens to disturb the person's equilibrium. In the process of experiencing stress, the employees' inner state changes. Prolonged stress can cause serious ailments such as heart disease, ulcer, blurred vision, lower back pain, dermatitis, and muscle aches to the employees.

Chronic job - dissatisfaction is a powerful source of job stress. The employee may see no satisfactory short term solution to escaping this type of stress. An employee trapped in a dissatisfying job may withdraw by such means as high absenteeism and tardiness, or the employee may quit.

Employees under prolonged stress stemming from job-dissatisfaction often consume too much alcohol, tobacco and drugs. These employees are costly to the management in terms of time lost due to frequent absences and increased payments towards medical reimbursements.

### **2.5.6 Unionization**

Job dissatisfaction is a major cause for unionisation. Dissatisfaction with wages, job security, fringe benefits, chances for

promotion and treatment by supervisors are reasons which make employees join unions.

### **2.5.7 Other Effects of Job Satisfaction**

It has been claimed that satisfied employees tend to have better mental and physical health and learn new job related tasks more quickly.

## **2.6 SOURCES OF JOB SATISFACTION**

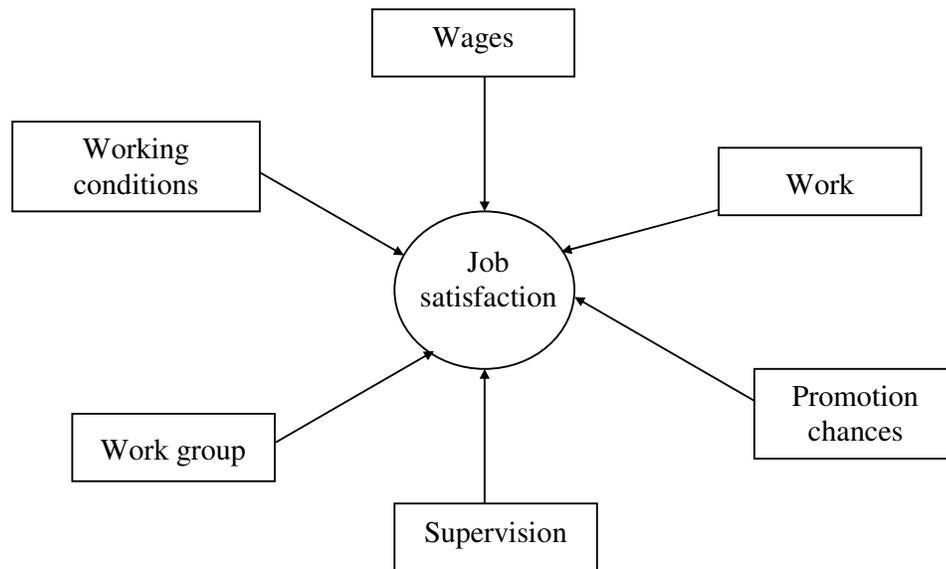
Several job elements contribute to job satisfaction. The most important amongst them are wage structure, nature of work, promotion chances, policies of the organisations, work group and working conditions.

### **2.6.1 Wages**

Wages play a significant role in influencing job satisfaction. This is because of two reasons. First, money is an important instrument in fulfilling one's needs; and too, employees often see pay as a reflection of management's concern for them.

Employees want a pay system which is simple, fair, and in line with their expectations. When pay is seen as fair, based on job demands, individual skill level, and community pay standards satisfaction is likely to result. What needs emphasis is that it is not the absolute amount paid that matters, rather it is one's perception of fairness.

**Figure: 2.1**  
**Sources of Job Satisfaction**



### **2.6.2 Nature of Work**

Most employees crave for intellectual challenges on jobs. They tend to prefer being given opportunities to use their skills and attitudes and being offered a variety of tasks, freedom, and feedback on how well they are doing. These characteristics make jobs mentally challenging. Jobs that have too little challenge create boredom. But too much challenge creates frustration and a feeling of failure. Under conditions of moderate challenge, employees experience pleasure and satisfaction.

### **2.6.3 Promotions**

Promotional opportunities affect job satisfaction considerably. The desire for promotion is generally strong among employees as it involves change in job content, pay, responsibility, independence, status and the like. An average employee in a typical government organisation can hope to get two or three promotion in his entire service, though chances for promotion are better in the private sector. It is no surprise as the ultimate achievement in his career is realised, he feels extremely satisfied.

### **2.6.4 Supervision**

There is a positive relationship between the quality of supervision and job satisfaction. Supervisors who establish a supportive personal relationship with subordinates and take a personal concern in them contribute to their employees' satisfaction.

### **2.6.5 Work group**

The work group plays a significant role in providing satisfaction to individual employees. It does so, primarily by providing group members, with opportunities for interaction, with each other. It is well known that, for many employees work fills the need for social interaction.

The employees derive higher satisfaction when the members in the work group have similar attitudes and values. Having people

around with similar attitudes causes less friction on a day to day basis. Co-workers with similar attitudes and values can also provide some confirmation of a person's self concept. "We are ok and you are ok".

### **2.6.6 Working conditions**

Working conditions that are compatible with an employee's physical comfort and that facilitate doing a good job contribute to job satisfaction. Temperature, humidity ventilation, lighting and noise, hours of work, cleanliness of the work place, and adequate tools and equipment are the features which affect job satisfaction.

### **2.6.7 Organizational polices and procedures**

Organizational policies include the basis for effecting promotions (seniority versus merit), transfer of people, foreign assignments, lay off and retrenchment appraisal and reward systems, motivational methods, skill based versus job based, pay and the like.

The other important factors are education, age and other factors. Other factors here means if the individual does not have favourable social family life, he may not feel happy of the work place.

## **2.7 MEASURING OF JOB SATISFACTION**

There are a number of ways of measuring job satisfaction. The most common ways of measurement include rating scales, critical incidents, interviews and action tendencies.

### **2.7.1 Rating Scales**

The most common approach for measuring job satisfaction is the use of rating scales. These scales fall into two general categories. One is called factor made scales, which are constructed for a particular setting or a project. The second set comprises standardised scales which, before their use, have been developed to establish group norms on the scales and to ensure reliability and validity of the measuring instruments. It is the tailor made scale which is frequently used in practice.

### **2.7.2 Job Descriptive Index (JDI)**

This scale measures the dimensions identified by Smith, Kendall and Hulin in the five point scale. The Job Descriptive Index has separate scales for satisfaction with pay, promotion, supervision, work and co-workers. It has been widely used by behaviour researchers over the years and provide a broad picture of employees' attitudes towards the major components of jobs.

### **2.7.3 Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)**

Another popular rating scale is the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. It has 20 factors. There are five questions to study, each of these 20 factors. Thus in total there are 100 questions in the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. They are

1.	Ability utilisation	11.	Moral values
2.	Achievement	12.	Recognition
3.	Activity	13.	Responsibility
4.	Advancement	14.	Security
5.	Authority	15.	Social service
6.	Company policies and practices	16.	Social status
7.	Compensation	17.	Supervision - human relations
8.	Co-workers	18.	Supervision – technical
9.	Creativity	19.	Variety
10.	Independence	20.	Working conditions

#### **2.7.4 Critical Incidence**

The critical incidence approach to the measurement of job satisfaction was developed by Herzberg and his associate in their research on the two-factor way of motivation. Employees were asked to describe incidents on their job when they are particularly satisfied or dissatisfied. These incidents were then content analysed in determining which aspects were closely related to positive and negative attitudes.

#### **2.7.5 Interview**

Personal interviews are yet another method of measurement of satisfaction. Employees are interviewed individually and the responses reveal their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

### **2.7.6 Action Tendencies**

These represent the inclinations people have to act or approach certain things. By gathering information about how they feel like acting with respect to their jobs, the job satisfaction can be measured.

## **2.8 THEORIES OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Job satisfaction has been treated as a complex set of variables. There have been various attempts to explain job satisfaction in different ways. A reflection on these theories will show that in the discussion it is very difficult to consider motivation different from job satisfaction, even though there are both theoretical and practical differences between the two concepts. Nevertheless, the two are closely related and as the procedures used in the analysis of work motivation are remarkably similar to those used in the studies of job satisfaction.

The various theories of job satisfaction are subsumed under two categories namely content theories and process theories. The former category emphasises the specific factors which motivate the individual towards job, while the latter category deals with dynamics of this motivational process. Even though criticisms were raised against these theories they represent foundation for the development of later theories. So any discussion of job satisfaction will be incomplete and inadequate if a glance at the contributions of the important theorists is not made. So a very brief evaluation of the important theories is attempted in the following section.

## **2.8.1 Content Theory**

The content theories are concerned with identifying the needs/drives that people have and these needs/drives are practiced.

### **2.8.1.1 Abraham Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory (1943)**

Abraham Maslow proposed his hierarchical theory of five important needs more than 68 years back in 1943. The theory gained ground over the years and because of its innate logic it became widely accepted and part of compulsory reading for every management student and Human Resource Professional. Over the years it has been questioned, analysed and thought by later thinkers to be inadequate in certain respects but there is no denying its basic merit in understanding human and employee behaviour in the workplace. His basic premise concerns the meeting of human needs which progressively move up the value chain as simpler and more basic needs are met.

Maslow's theory opines that indicated have five progressive sets of needs, the first set being purely physical needs, also called Physiological needs. These include all the needs a person needs first to stay alive like, food, water, air, the maintenance of body temperature and the necessity of voiding of natural human waste. It is only when this basic need set is satisfied that the next set of needs will be thought of for satisfaction.

The five need sets that are in sequential order are physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and belonging needs, status and prestige needs and actualisation needs. Humans work to satisfy these needs and as people and societies move up in life their need set also changes. This is true of all people, it could apply to the situations, individuals in progressively larger groups and also to whole countries as well. Growth of the individual or group causes the needs to shift upwards whereas the opposite causes downward movement in need fulfillment desire. The safety needs can be broken up into physical safety, family security, monetary security and employment security and love; belonging needs can be broken up into parental love, love between partners, sibling and children. It is easy to understand why these needs were classified as hierarchical, with physiological needs at the base and actualisation needs at the apex of a hierarchical pyramid.

Using this classification Maslow reasons that as a person moves up in life his need changes and if a person is unable to access needs appropriate to him he will basically be dissatisfied, even though he may not know it.

#### **2.8.1.2 Clayton Alderfers ERG Theory (1969)**

Alderfer reformulated Maslow's need hierarchy into three basic human needs simplifying it to make it more in tune with data obtained from empirical research. He kept Maslow's hierarchical

structure but reduced the levels to three on the basis that a certain overlap existed in the middle layers and call them Existence, Relatedness and Growth, in short ERG

Existence is the lowest level need which is concerned with physical survival and includes the obvious needs for food, water and shelter which can be satisfied through salary, fringe benefits, safe working environment and some measures of job security. Relatedness needs involve interaction with other people and the satisfaction they can bring in the form of emotional support, respect, recognition and sense of belonging. These needs can be satisfied on the job through co workers and off the job through friends and family

Growth need focuses on the self and includes need for personal growth and development which can be satisfied only by using ones capabilities into the fullest.

ERG theory sees different needs from different levels existing in a sort of continuum where while there is a hazy precedence for a lower level need, it can still very well exist in the presence of a higher level need.

#### **2.8.1.3 Frederick Herzberg Two Factor Theory (1959)**

Frederick has tried to modify Maslow's need Hierarchy theory. His theory is also known as two factor theory or Hygiene theory. He stated that there are certain satisfiers and dissatisfiers for employees at

work. Intrinsic factors are related to job satisfaction while extrinsic factors are associated with dissatisfaction. He devised his theory on the question: “What do people want from their jobs?” He asked people to describe in detail such situations when they felt exceptionally good or exceptionally bad. From the responses that he received, he concluded that opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction. Removing dissatisfying characteristics from a job does not necessarily make the job satisfying. He states that presence of certain factors in the organisation is natural and the presence of the same does not lead to satisfaction. However, their nonresponse leads to dissatisfaction. In similar manner there are certain factors, the absence of which causes no dissatisfaction, but their presence has motivational impact.

#### **2.8.1.4 Douglas McGregor Theory X and Theory Y**

McGregor proposed theory X and Y underlying the behaviour of employees.

Theory X holds that men who are basically lazy dislike work; one has to force him to do work. Later, McGregor noticed that these patterns of behaviour are the result of management action. An average worker can be motivated by low level incentives such as money, security and the like only for certain period of time. When a worker strives to achieve higher level needs and when management denies this, he becomes distrusted and adopts an apathetic attitude, which may be interpreted as laziness. So in Y theory McGregor postulates

that man is creative and has the power of self discipline to work. The important function of management, therefore, should be to make the best use of the creative potentiality of employees by providing adequate means for the satisfaction of their higher order needs. The implication of McGregor theory in the context of job satisfaction is that when there are opportunities in the job to satisfy the needs of workers at different levels, they will become satisfied.

#### **2.8.1.5 David McClelland's Needs Theory**

David McClelland's, an American behavioural psychologist who taught at Harvard and Boston, in his book on "The Achieving Society" in 1961 wrote of three basic human needs which motivated people to strive and succeed. These were the need for achievement, N-Ach, the need for power, N.Pow, and the need for affiliation, N.Aff. These need levels would vary from individual to individual and again from society to society. It was inconceivable that each individual would have the same levels for all three needs, which would vary with the background, society, culture and education of the individual.

McClelland's theory came to be known as the three need theory and is also referred to as the learned needs theory as it stipulates that most of these needs are shaped over time and depend upon the experiences of the particular individual. The results at the workplace depend upon a proper matching of job requirements and putting in a person with high achievement needs in a slot ideal for a person with

high affiliation needs is going to result in a mismatch and possible underperformance. People with high affiliation needs, for example, will be ideally suited in cooperative and people environments and tend to do very well in customer service and public relations.

## **2.8.2 Process Theories**

Sensing the fact that it is the motivation of an employee that contributes to the perception and experience of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of workers, the process theories attempt to trace the process involved in the development of different motivations. They explain the employee motivation from the initial energization of behaviour through the selection of behavioural alternatives, to actual effort. The important theories having relevance in the context of job satisfaction are mentioned in the following sections.

### **2.8.2.1 Vroom's Valence Expectancy Theory**

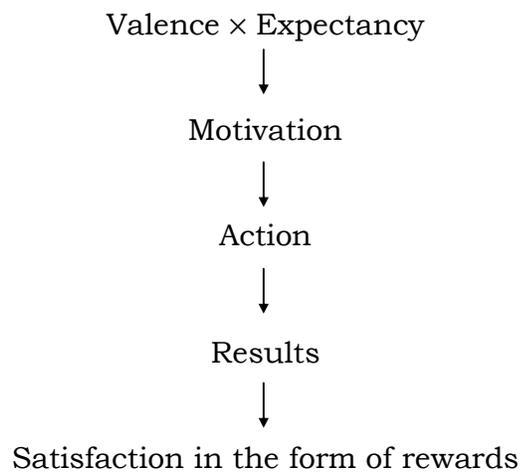
The most widely accepted explanation of motivation has been propounded by Victor Vroom. His theory is commonly known as expectancy theory. The theory argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a specific way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. To make this simple, expectancy theory says that an employee can be motivated to perform better when there is a belief that the better performance will lead to good

performance appraisal and that this shall result into realization of personal goal in the form of some reward. Therefore an example is:

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Valence} \times \text{Expectancy}$$

The theory focuses on three things:

- ❖ Efforts and performance relationship
- ❖ Performance and reward relationship
- ❖ Rewards and personal goal relationship



### 2.8.2.2 The Equity Theory

In the equity theory Adams argues that people are motivated by inequity and keep on comparing their efforts with that put in by others around them in the workplace as also the rewards being meted out to them.

Equity is likened to a perception of fairness involved between efforts and rewards given to co-workers in the work place. A fair situation where all employees are treated with equality obviously

envisages similar outcomes for similar inputs; and if some employees feel that others are being given higher rewards for similar work they will obviously hold back some of their efforts. In case an employee putting in hard work happens to see an inefficient and unproductive colleague being rewarded with the same salary may probably feel demotivated to put in the same level of work continuously. Motivation is thus very difficult without the establishment of fairness in the appraisal and reward process.

#### **2.8.2.3 Goal Setting Theory of Edwin Locke**

Instead of giving vague tasks to people, specific and pronounced objectives help in achieving them faster. A goal orientation also avoids any misunderstandings in the work of the employees. The goal setting theory states that when the goals to be achieved are set at a higher standard, the employees are motivated to perform better and put in maximum effort. It revolves around the concept of 'self-efficiency' that is individual's belief that he or she is capable of performing a hard task.

#### **2.8.2.4 Porter and Lawler Model**

Lyman W.Porter and Edward E. Lawler developed a more complete version of motivation depending upon expectancy theory. It relates to perception, effort reward and satisfaction. An employee's individual effort is dependent on the value of expected reward and the

perception of the effort involved in performing and obtaining reward. Thus performance is the result of effort, a person's abilities and an accurate role of perception. The performance or accomplishment will provide other intrinsic and extrinsic reward. The employees compare the perceived equitable reward with the reward actually received. This will result in employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If the difference between the perceived equitable reward and the actual reward is less the satisfaction is high. A failure to receive the perceived equitable reward will create a feeling of dissatisfaction.

## **2.9 SUMMARY**

Job satisfaction is an important issue to be addressed to get better result in any organisation. Different issues which are needed to be clarified for a research in job satisfaction are presented in brief in this chapter. Job satisfaction, job attitude and morale are the related terms clarified in detail. Job satisfaction affects productivity, employee turnover, absenteeism, safety, stress, unionisation and other issues. There are different measures for job satisfaction. They are rating scales, job descriptive index, minnesota satisfaction questionnaire, critical incidence, interview and action tendencies. There are several theories explaining job satisfaction. They are Abraham Maslow's need hierarchy, Clayton Alderfers ERG theory, Frederic Herzberg two factor theory, Douglas McGregor theory X and theory Y, David McClelland's

Need theory, Vroom's valence expectancy theory, Equity theory, Goal setting theory and Porter and Lawler model. The chapter vividly presents the above issues and makes of theoretical background for further analysis.