CHAPTER III

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE MORALE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a complete picture of employee morale in the context of the textile industry. It deals with conceptual explanations of Employee morale, Nature of morale, Characteristics of morale, Features of morale, Approaches to morale, Assumptions in the understanding of morale, Individual and group morale, Types of morale, Importance of morale, Factors influencing employee morale, Measurement of morale, and Effects of morale. As such this chapter is purely descriptive in nature.

3.2 EMPLOYEE MORALE

Human resource is considered to be the most valuable asset of any organization. It is the sum of inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills represented by the talents and aptitudes of the employed persons who comprise of executives, supervisors, and employees. It may be noted here that human resources should be utilized to the maximum possible extent in order to achieve individual and organizational goals.

The attitudes, feelings and emotions of employees play a vital role to determine their performance and behaviour. These in turn determine the success and growth of the organization. It is for this reason that personnel experts as well as line managers now keen attention to the issues of motivation and morale in industry.
Morale is a very widely used term. It generally refers to *esprit de corps*, a feeling of enthusiasm, zeal, confidence in individuals or groups that they will be able to cope with the tasks assigned to them. A person’s enthusiasm for his job reflects his attitude of mind to work, environment and to his employer, and his willingness to strive for the goals set for him by the organization in which he is employed. Morale is a synthesis of superiors, his organization, his fellow-employees, his pay and so on. Feelings, emotions, sentiments, attitudes, and motives—all these combine and lead to a particular type of behaviour on the part of an individual or his group; and this is what is referred to as employee morale. It represents the attitudes of individuals and groups in an organisation towards their work environment and towards voluntary cooperation to the full extent of their capabilities for the fulfillment of organisational goals.

### 3.3 APPROACHES TO MORALE

Morale is generally referred to as “willingness to work”. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction create the problem of low morale among the employees. Good motivation leads to high morale. It being a psychological concept, it is not easy to define it precisely. Different authorities have variously defined morale. Different definitions of morale can be classified into three major approaches.

1. Classical Approach
2. Psychological Approach

3.3.1 CLASSICAL APPROACH

Robert M. Guion defined morale as the extent to which individual needs are satisfied and the extent to which an individual perceives that satisfaction stemming from total job satisfaction. According to this approach, the satisfaction of basic needs is the symbols of morale. If the basic needs of the employees are satisfied their morale will be high.

3.3.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

In the words of Jucious and Slender, “morale is a state of mind and emotions affecting willingness to work which in turn affects individual and organisational objectives”. According to this approach, morale is a psychological concept i.e., a state of mind. Emotions are affect the willingness to work which in turn affect individual and organisational objectives. Accordingly the attitudes and willingness to work is morale. Morale is a mental condition or attitude of individuals and groups which determine their willingness to cooperate.

3.3.3 SOCIAL APPROACH

Morale is a social phenomenon which enables the men to live in a society or group in pursuit of a common goal. According to Blackmanship, morale is the feeling of togetherness. There is a sense of identification with and interest in the elements of one's
job, working conditions, fellow employees, supervisor, employer and the company. Broadly speaking, morale is;

1. a stimulation of the feeling of togetherness

2. an identification of group interest and that of the interest of the enterprise, fellow employees and the requirement of the job; and

3. the creation of an atmosphere in the organisation conducive to the achievement of the enterprise.

Morale is an indicator of the attitude of employees towards their jobs, superiors and the organization’s environment. It is a collection of employees’ attitudes, feelings and sentiments towards these variables. Morale is a by-product of the group relationships in the organisation. It is a mental process, which, once started, permeates to the entire group creating a mood which results in the formation of a common attitude.

**3.4 NATURE OF MORALE**

Generally, the term ‘morale’ is used to describe an overall climate prevailing among the members of a group. It is not an absolute concept which can convey a specific meaning. Like the word ‘health’, the word ‘morale’ by itself does not convey any favourable or unfavourable meaning. Morale is an elusive thing. It is not easy to define, control or measure. But it exercises a potent influence on the human relations climate in an organization. It has to be qualified with a degree, as high morale or low morale. Thus,
morale is the degree of enthusiasm and willingness with which the members contribute their efforts towards the organisational goals. If the enthusiasm and willingness to work of a group are high, we will say the morale is high and vice versa. Therefore, morale has to be qualified like the word ‘health’. Just as good health is essential for any individual, high morale is necessary for any organisation. Managers cannot establish high morale once and then forget about it for several years. High morale is to be built and maintained by continuous efforts.

Morale is multi-dimensional in nature in the sense that it is a complex mixture of several elements. It recognizes the influence of job situation on attitudes of individuals and also includes the role of human needs as motivational forces. Morale is mostly regarded as a long-term phenomenon. Raising morale to a high level and maintaining it is a long-term measure such as gimmicks, contests or one-shot actions.

3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF MORALE

Morale is a feeling, somewhat related to *esprit de corps*, enthusiasm or zeal. For a group of employees morale, according to a popular usage of the word, refers to the over-all tone climate or atmosphere of work, perhaps vaguely sensed by the members. If employees appear to feel enthusiastic and optimistic about group activities, if they have a sense of mission about their job, if they are friendly with each other, they are described as having a good or
high morale. If they seem to be dissatisfied, irritated, cranky, critical, rustled and pessimistic, they are described as possessing a poor or low morale. It is a mental condition or attitude of individuals or groups which determines their willingness to co-operate. Good morale is evidenced by employee enthusiasm, voluntary conformance with regulations and orders, and willingness to co-operate with others in the accomplishment of an organization’s objective. Poor morale is evidenced by surli ness, insubordination, a feeling of discouragement and dislike of the job, company and associates. Morale is a group concept with five components:

(a) A feeling of togetherness, i.e., of belonging to a group and not being isolated

(b) A clear goal which will be the target of production set before them

(c) There must be an observed or perceived progress towards the attainment of the goal, i.e., expectation of success

(d) Within the group each member feels that he has a meaningful task to perform and

(e) A supportive or stimulating leadership.

3.6 FEATURES OF MORALE

➤ Morale is a state of mind. It reflects mental health.

➤ It is the aggregate of attitudes, feelings, emotions, sentiments, etc.
Morale is of two types.

- Individual morale—which means a person's attitudes towards life, and
- Group morale, which implies the collective attitudes of a group of persons.

Morale is a relative term. It may be high or low.

Morale influences human behaviour and performance.

Morale is a psychological feeling.

Morale is intangible. It cannot be increased directly.

Morale is a contagious phenomenon. Individuals transmit their attitudes to each other.

### 3.7 Assumptions in the Understanding of Morale

The following basic assumptions about people are significant because they are tied up closely with an understanding of what morale is:

(i) There are psychological uniformities which obtain among all tribes, nations and races.

(ii) Each psychological uniformity has a range through which it varies. Some variants are characteristic of particular groups of people and form a part of their culture.

(iii) Everyone is disturbed by the following general stresses: (a) Threats to life; (b) Discomfort arising from pain, heat, cold, fatigue and poor diet; (c) Loss of the means of subsistence, whether in the form of money, job, business or property;
(d) Deprivation of sexual satisfaction; (e) Enforced idleness; (f) Isolation; (g) Threats to children and other members of the family and to friends; (h) Restrictions on movement; (i) Dislike and ridicule to which one may be exposed, and rejection by other people; and (j) Capricious and unpredictable behaviour on the part of those in authority on whom one’s welfare depends.

Personnel management carefully analyses these different items of morale because employees vary greatly in their ability to face a situation of stress, and because it is capable of determining the impact which good or bad morale will have on the attainment of organizational objectives. By taking the necessary steps in time, it may improve the attitudes and morale of its employees.

3.8 INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP MORALE

Morale may be concerned with an individual. An individual’s morale is related with knowing one’s own expectations and living up to them. If one is clear of one’s own needs and how to satisfy them, one’s morale is high. Whereas an individual’s morale is a single person’s attitude toward life, group morale reflects the general esprit de corps of a collective group of personalities. Group morale is everyone’s concern and it must be practiced continually, for it is never ultimately achieved and is constantly changing.
Group morale and the morale of the individual are interrelated but not necessarily identical. They have an effect on each other. It is conceivable that an individual’s own personal perception of existing conditions as they relate to himself may be high, and the group’ perception of conditions may be low, or vice versa, but more usually the two share common feelings.

3.9 TYPES OF MORALE

Morale is generally referred to as
1) High morale / Good morale.
2) Low morale / Poor morale.

3.9.1 High morale / Good morale

High morale exists when the employee’s attitude is favourable to the total situation of a group and to the attainment of its objectives. It is represented by the use of such terms like, spirit, zest, enthusiasm, loyalty, honesty, dependability, resistance to frustration etc.

Possible effects of high morale:

1. Higher performance
2. Better quality of work
3. Job satisfaction
4. Cheaper goods and services
5. Lower cost
6. Higher profits
7. Better wages
8. Employment stability
9. Low absenteeism
10. Low labour turnover
11. Employees’ initiative, regularity and punctuality.
12. Good discipline
13. Fewer industrial accidents
14. Stability and growth of the organisation
15. Sound industrial relation

3.9.2 Low morale / Poor morale

Low morale exists when attitudes inhibit the willingness and ability of an organisation to attain its objectives. If employees seem to be dissatisfied, irritated, cranky, critical, restless, and pessimistic they are described as having poor or low morale. Effects of low morale are:

1. Apathy and non-involvement
2. Fatigue and monotony
3. High labour turnover
4. Work stoppages
5. High rate of Absenteeism
6. Disciplinary problem
7. Restriction of output
8. Increased grievances
9. Labour unrest
10. Strike
11. Wastage and spoilage
3.10 IMPORTANCE OF MORALE

Morale is a vital ingredient of organisational success because it reflects the attitudes and sentiments of organisational members towards the organisation, its objectives and policies. These attitudes and sentiments largely affect productivity and the satisfaction of individuals. Morale is the total satisfaction a person derives from his job, his work-group, his boss, his organisation and his environment.

According to Napolean, “In war, morale conditions make up three-quarters of the game, the relative balance of manpower accounts for the remaining quarter”. Morale is equally important in management. High morale means willing cooperation and loyalty to the organisation. Employees with high morale take greater interest in the job, feel a sense of identity with the organisation and take pride in it. High morale is an index of sound industrial relations. It helps the management in overcoming labour-turnover, absenteeism, indiscipline, grievances and other labour problems.

High morale exists when employees’ attitudes are favourable towards their jobs, their company and their fellow employees-favourable to the total situation of the group and to the inhibits the willingness and ability of the group to attain the company’s objective. Thus, the morale of employees should be high to achieve the organisational objectives efficiently and effectively. A high
morale reduces absenteeism, labour-turnover, wastes and disharmony.

Employees with high morale like their jobs and co-operate fully with the management towards the achievement of the goals of the organisation. It results from job satisfaction and generates job enthusiasm; high morale indicates a manifestation of the employees’ strength, dependability, pride, confidence, and devotion. All these qualities of mind and characters taken together create high morale among the employees.

Low morale indicates the presence of mental unrest. Mental unrest not only hampers production but also leads to the ill health of the employees; low morale exists when doubt and suspicion are common and when individuals are depressed and discouraged, i.e., there is a lot of mental tension.

Signs of low morale are generally not noticed till it is obviously low or when something has gone amiss. By the time the management recognizes the fact that morale has deteriorated, it is faced with one crises or another. Perceptive managers are, therefore, constantly on the lookout for clues to any deterioration in the morale of the employees.

3.11 FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE MORALE

Employee morale is a very complex phenomenon and is influenced by many factors on the shop floor. For example, the job, the supervisor, the company, and the working conditions obtaining
in it as well as its policies; the group and inter-personal relations prevailing in that group; salary and other benefits; the employee’s family and home life; his social and community life; the policies and attitudes of the top management to its employees and trade unions—all these influence employee morale to a certain extent. Factors influencing employee morale can well be divided into two groups namely organisational factors and personal factors.

3.11.1 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

1. THE ORGANISATION

The goals of the organisation influence the attitudes of employees greatly. If the goals set by the management are worthwhile, useful and acceptable, then employees develop a positive feeling towards the job and the organisation. Likewise, a clear structure with well-defined duties and responsibilities encourages people to work with confidence. The reputation of the company is another important factor worth mentioning here. Persons working in a reputed organisation experience feelings of pride and a spirit of loyalty.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANISATION

Employees are highly motivated and their morale is higher if their individual goals and objectives are in tune with organisational goals and objectives. The commonness of purpose will result in high morale. Employees want to be a part of the organisation which has a worthwhile purpose in which they can believe.
3. ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

Organisational structure has an impact on the quality of labour relations, particularly on the level of morale. Large organizations tend to lengthen their channels of vertical communication and to increase the difficulty of upward communication. Therefore the morale tends to be lower. Against this, a flat structure increases the level of morale.

4. THE NATURE OF WORK

A meaningful and satisfying job helps to improve employee morale. In such a job each member of the group understands clearly how his specific task contributes to the attainment of group goals. Morale tends to be low when the job provides no challenge and satisfaction and job standards are considered too high. Many jobs of a routine or specialized nature make for the boredom of the employee, for obsessive thinking and alienation. Dull, monotonous, repetitive work affects employee morale adversely. On the other hand if an employee is asked to do something interesting and challenging, his morale may be high.

5. WORK ENVIRONMENT

The building and its appearance, the condition of machine tools available at work place, provisions for safety, medical aid and repair to machinery, etc. have an impact on employees morale. Morale is a direct function of the conditions in the workplace.
Clean, safe, comfortable and pleasant work conditions are morale boosters.

6. WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical work environment, job security, wages and other allied factors exercise a significant influence on employee morale. When the wages are fair, job is secure and there are opportunities for promotion, job satisfaction and morale are likely to be high.

7. REWARDS

Employees expect adequate compensation for their services rendered to the organisation. A good system of wages, salaries, promotions and other incentives keeps the morale of the employees high. One of the requirements of high morale is the possibility and opportunity of progress in any concern. All employees should be given an opportunity to progress and to earn high wages without any discrimination.

8. LEADERSHIP

The actions of the management exercise a tremendous influence on the morale of employees. High rates of turn over, for example, indicate that the leadership is ineffective. Competent, dependable and fair-minded leadership can build and maintain high morale. Such a leadership can win the confidence of employees through sympathetic and friendly behaviour. Lines of authority and responsibility are clear and communication system is effective.
The actions of managers exert a strong influence over the morale of the workforce. Fair treatment, equitable rewards and recognition for good work affect morale greatly. Employees feel comfortable when they work under a sympathetic, caring leader in place of one who is authoritarian, dictatorial and domineering. Negativism, inconsiderateness and apathy are not conducive to the development of a good work climate.

9. SUPERVISION

The nature of supervision can better tell the attitudes of employees because a supervisor is in direct contact with the employees and can have better influence on the activities of the employees. There should be an impartial, helpful, and capable team of supervisors and managers and their sympathetic attitude towards their subordinates.

10. FELLOW EMPLOYEES

Man, being a social animal, finds his work more satisfying if he feels that he has the acceptance and companionship of his fellows. If he has confidence in his fellow employees and faith in their loyalty, his morale will be high. Poor attitude of co-employees influences others. Imagine working with a person who talks about the negative points of an organisation all day long. Such a person can make each workday an unpleasant experience for others. He can cause co-employees to think negatively and even if they don’t, such an attitude is certainly not a morale booster. The confidence
of an employee in fellow employees influences morale. When an employee is confident that his co-employees are loyal to him and will provide advice and assistance whenever necessary his morale is likely to be good. A feeling of togetherness (group cohesiveness) and common goals tend to raise employee morale.

11. CONCEPT OF SELF

How employees perceive themselves influences their attitudes to the organizational environment. For example, the morale of individuals who lack self-confidence or who suffer from poor physical or mental health is generally low.

How the employee looks at himself (the self-concept) also influences morale greatly. For example, individuals who lack self-confidence or who suffer from poor physical or mental health frequently develop morale problems. Further, how the employees’ personal needs are satisfied can significantly influence their morale. Salary, fringe benefits, DA rates, allowances, may affect employee morale in a positive or negative manner, when they compare themselves with others doing similar jobs. Employees can become disgruntled when they feel that their pay and benefits are not in line with the current industry rates or are not keeping up with rising prices.

12. THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The satisfaction which an individual obtains in his job is largely the result of the extent to which different aspects of his
work situations are relevant to his job-related value systems—such as opportunity to learn a job, steadiness of employment, supervision, pay, co-operativeness or otherwise of the co-employees, working conditions, cleanliness, working hours, communication, recognition; individual adjustment and group relationship outside the job. If the job factors and the satisfaction they bring are perceived to be favourable to the employees, morale will tend to be higher than if the factors seem unfavourable. If the job gives an employee opportunity to prove his talents, and develop his personality, he will certainly like it and he will have high morale.

13. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REWARDS

If the employee looks to the future and perceives opportunities for satisfaction and for attainment in the rewards and conditions that lie ahead, morale will tend to be high. If, on the other hand, the rewards and opportunities for the future appear to be bleak, morale will tend to be dampened.

3.11.2 PERSONAL FACTORS

The sex, age, education, intelligence of the employees, occupational level, family life of an employee, monthly income, marital status etc., determine his morale. An employee’s self concept, habits and family relations exercise a significant influence on his morale. For some people, it appears most jobs will be dissatisfying irrespective of the organisation condition involved,
whereas for others, most jobs will be satisfying. Personal variables like age, educational level, sex, etc. are responsible for this difference.

1. **THE EMPLOYEE’S AGE**

   Till recently it was believed that there was a “U” shaped relationship between age and morale. Morale was thought to be highest when people started on their job, but subsequently declined until people reached their twenties. Then morale began to rise again. But today’s belief is that age and morale are directly related and that, other things being equal, older employees seem to have higher morale, because perhaps younger employees are more dissatisfied. They are a “new breed” with higher expectations than their elders. Studies have reported that employers, therefore, hire employees of somewhat higher age, for they perceive in them these qualities: (i) stability that comes with maturity; (ii) a serious attitude towards job; (iii) more reliability, less absenteeism, and proven steady work habits; (iv) a sense of responsibility and loyalty and (v) less tendency to be distracted by outside interests or influences.

2. **EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

   An inverse relationship has been found between educational level and employee morale. In other words, the higher the educational level of an employee, the lower his morale because he compares his own attainments with those of others. The higher he
thinks should be the high morale he is. With occupational level held constant there is a negative relationship between the educational level and morale. The higher the education, the higher the reference group which the individual looks to for guidance to evaluate his job rewards.

3. SEX

There is as yet no consistent evidence as to whether women are more satisfied with their jobs than men, holding such factors as job and occupational level constant. One might predict this case, considering the generally lower occupational aspirations of women.

4. MARITAL STATUS

The general impression is that married employees and employees who have more dependents tend to be more dissatisfied with greater responsibilities. But such employees may be more satisfied because they value their jobs more than unmarried employees.

5. OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

The occupational level of the employee also influences his level of morale. For example, executives are on the whole more satisfied than managers; managers are more satisfied than subordinates; and so forth.
6. EXPERIENCE

Morale tends to increase with increasing years of experience. But it may decrease after twenty years of experience particularly among people who have not realized their job expectation.

3.13 THE EFFECTS OF MORALE

Since morale manifests itself in the attitudes of employees, it is important to find the results of high morale and low morale. The effects of morale are given below:

MORALE AND PRODUCTIVITY

One of the most unpredictable effects of the level of morale is its impact upon employees’ productivity. The reviews of the research studies do not show a direct relationship between morale and productivity. Productivity sometimes is high with high morale, but at other times may be low even when morale is high, and vice versa. There can be four combinations of morale and productivity.
1. High morale–High productivity

High morale reflects a predisposition to be more productive if proper leadership is provided. This situation is likely to occur when employees are motivated to achieve high performance standards through financial and non-financial rewards.

2. High morale–Low productivity

The situation arises when employees spend their time and energy in satisfying their personal objectives unrelated to the company’s goals. Faulty machinery, lack of training, ineffective supervision and restrictive norms of informal groups can also lead to low productivity on the part of employees with high morale.

3. Low morale–High productivity

Low morale cannot result in high productivity for a long period. However, this situation can occur for a temporary period due to fear of loss of job, exceptionally good supervision and machine paced work in which only a part of employees’ capabilities are used.

4. Low morale – Low productivity

This is a normal relationship. In the long run low morale is likely to result in low productivity.

Thus, there is a complex relationship between morale and productivity. This is because morale is only one of the factors influencing productivity.
3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter explains the various aspects regarding employee morale, nature of morale, characteristics of morale, features of morale, approaches of morale, assumptions in the understanding of morale, individual and group morale, types of morale, importance of morale, factors influencing employee morale, measurement of morale and the effects of morale.
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