

# MOTIVATION AND WELLBEING AMONG DALIT YOUNG ADULT WOMEN

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The present study '**Motivation and Wellbeing among Dalit Young Adult Women**' was designed to explore the understanding of women from Scheduled Caste, about their community, along with societal influences affecting their own lives. The present work has significance for understanding of how motivation and well-being are two very significant terms in the context of purpose of human life. The study further explored motivation can be intrinsic and extrinsic in nature and well-being is the state of being happy mentally and physically. Both terms identified are significantly effective on human being. A person gets motivated to achieve their goals and after achieving their goal once feel satisfied. This satisfaction leads to a state of mind known as 'wellbeing'. That is why, it was very crucial to look into the motivation and well-being reciprocally.

The sample comprised of 60 Dalit women in the age group 30-45 years working for more than 10 years on permanent jobs in government educational institutions of Delhi. The women had got their employment through availing of Scheduled Caste reservation. Purposive sampling technique and snowball method were used for recruiting the sample of 60 teachers. College teachers were contacted through common friends and through the Delhi University Scheduled Caste Association. The study used a mixed method approach applying both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analyses.

Thus, the study divided into two phases:

- First phase involved contacting all 60 participants individually and getting their demographic profile. The Flourishing Scale and the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving were also completed by each participant.
- In the second phase 30 participants were interviewed and the Diagrammatic Representation of Life Course tool was administered for a deepening understanding of their life experiences.

## I. Introduction

To understand why people, behave to something, one should understand the motivation. It is not the only cause of certain behaviour or else always the most importantly, part of the picture. It is process which energizes, direct and sustains human behaviour. Motivation works as inner drive which directs a person toward achieving their goal. Motivation is a component of most human activity and the literature on the topic is vast (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). Motivation is a combination of three choices i.e., what to do, how much energy to expend on activity, and how long to continue expending energy. There are two important aspects of the motivation. Firstly, it varies across and within individuals and secondly, it seems to combine with ability to produce behaviour and performance (Motowidlo, 2003).

Motivation is complex internal set of process, can be personal differ from individual to individual and goal directed. Goals are clearly the major psychological mechanism associated with it. There are various factors work behind motivation and these dynamics are varying person to person needs. According to Green (1994) in psychology, motivation refers to a process with three distinct functions: initiating, directing and energizing individual behaviour. According to him, in terms of specific behaviour, four things are usually mentioned. First, motivation focuses attention on particular issues, people, task elements, and so on. It has a riveting directional aspect. Second, motivation produces effort. People work harder when they are motivated. Third, motivation results in persistence. The higher the motivation, the longer we will sustain our effort. Fourth, motivation results in what we call task strategies, patterns of behaviour produced to reach a particular goal (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003).

## II. Theoretical perspective

The first set of motivation theories centred on the notions of drive, instinct and activation. They linked motivation with arousal and discharge and generally conceived of them as forces that put considerable pressure on the organism, directing it towards fulfilment. The original conception, fundamental for later models of motivation, took inspiration from biology and the natural science. Freud took the notion of instinct or drive and made it the cornerstone of a psychological system meant to explain all forms of behaviour, 'normal' and pathological alike (Jovchelovitch and Glăveanu, 2012).

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several well-known theories of motivation emerged based on the classification and hierarchization of human needs. This approach is perhaps best illustrated by the famous 'pyramid of human needs' created by Abraham Maslow (1970). Potentially one of the most familiar theories of motivation all the time, Maslow provided a hierarchical classification of human needs including basic physiological needs (like hunger or thirst), safety needs, the need to belong, needs related to self-esteem and finally at the top of the pyramid, the need for self-actualization.

Cognitive theories of motivation focus on the role of cognition in motivation and have flourished in a psychological environment where the cognitive predominates, betraying the unending fascination of western psychology with the model of the person as a rational decision maker. Weiner (1992) suggestion that cognitive perspectives on motivation are constructed around a God like metaphor: the sovereign individual in full control of his actions and capable of knowing it all. This clearly implies the adoption of agent-causality in contrast to simplistic event-causality, moving away from the idea that people are mere puppets pushed and pulled by the power of motives, be they needs or desires (Jovchelovitch and Glăveanu, 2012).

## III. Social identity theories and motivation

Social identity theory, promising as it did to address such important questions as the relationship of the individual to the group and the origins of intergroup conflict, while simultaneously keeping faith with orthodox methodology, provided an attractive political and scientific riposte to some of these critics. According to Turner, social identity theory seeks to explain such discrimination as attempts group members to make sense of and derive some positivity from an otherwise novel and slightly bizarre situation. A second reason for studying social identity theory is rapid endorsement by the social psychological research community stems from its clever combination of cognitive and motivational processes into a single explanatory account. The theory proposes that intergroup behaviour is always preceded by some social categorization activity. A third factor behind social identity theory's success was that it offered the prospect of resolving one on the classic conundrums of group psychology, namely the relationship between the individual and the group (McLeod, 2008).

Social identity can be used to describe the structure of individuals, as they are defined by categorical memberships and the character of intergroup relations and lastly the relationship of the individual to the broader social structure. Social identity theory divides the world into "them" and "us" based through a process of social categorization. Social identity theory put people into social groups such as in-group (us) and out-group (them). Social identity theory states that the in-group will discriminate against the out-group to enhance their self-image (<http://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html> accessed on 22-05-15).

Social identification theories raise the issue of motivation. The issues are why do people choose to identify with particular category and what function does that identity serve for them once they self-identify in that way (Deaux, 2000). An example of this can be perceived, Stephen Carter, a law professor at Yale University who reflected on this process: 'To be black and an intellectual in America is to live in a box. So, I live in a box, not of my own making, and on the box is a label, not of my own choosing'. The personal decision in such a case is twofold: first, whether to accept the labelled box, and second, whether to accept the meaning socially represented as the contents of that box. There can be similarities noticed in between the above statement and with position of Dalits in Indian society.

## IV. Motivation in context to the human experience

Dewey's theory (1934) of experience is fundamentally based on a theory of motivation, since not only experience is said to begin with an impulsion, but also to run its course towards fulfilment. This dynamic is crucial and the journey from impulsion to fulfilment in any experience is being shaped by the relation between doing and undergoing. The self-acts on the world (doing) and experiences the results of its action (undergoing) in a permanent cycle that constitutes the texture of our existence as living creature. Obstacles create tension and emotion, indispensable ingredients for every experience. Doing and undoing, our connections to the world of objects and of others, are never dispassionate and mechanical, otherwise we would not talk about experiences but about routines, monotonous and unconscious movement. Motivation as experience involves full engagement with body and world, a psychological state that is made of the complex transactions between body, self and world and phenomenologically experienced as a totality.

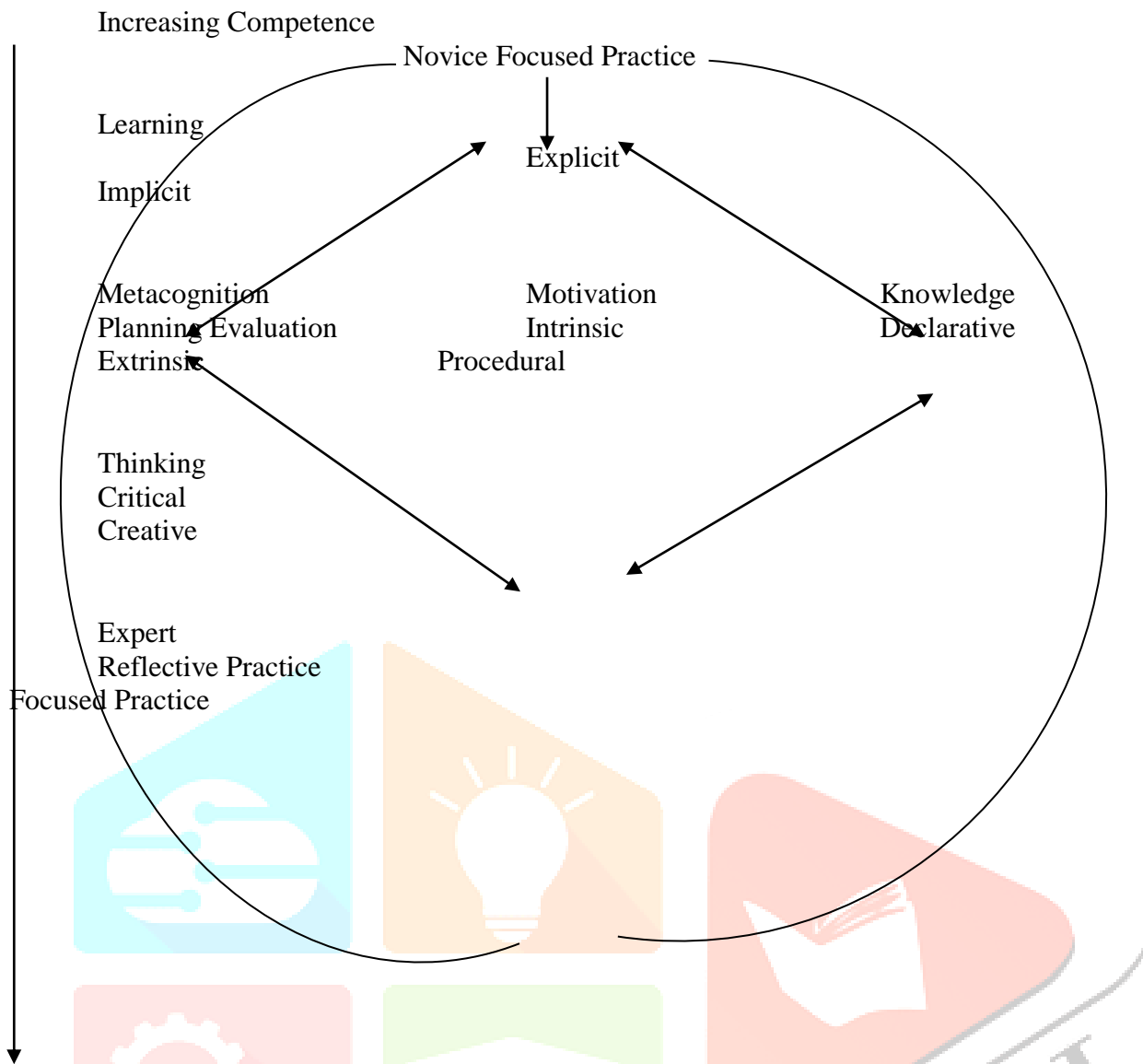


Figure 1: The development of abilities into competencies, and competencies in expertise (Cited in Dewey, 1934)

Figure 1, depicts the relationship between action, motivation and representation. Actions (doing) starts with impulsions, and the 'resistance' of the world towards the intentions of the self (undergoing) generates emotions, and most importantly, prompts the representational work of meaning-elaboration and sense making, of trying to understand oneself and the surrounding environment: 'not without resistance from surroundings would the self-aware of itself' (Dewey, 1934, P. 62). Representations guide motivated action on their path towards fulfilment, towards *full* experiences. But equally important, representations are also formed by this motivated action; without the desire to engage with others and the world there is no representation.

The line of thought was in fact not unique in psychology at the beginning of the last century, and it is certainly in dialogue with many other foundational theories such as Freud's (the pleasure and reality principles), James's (consciousness) and Mead's (self as a social structure). It also informs current research on the relation between emotion and motivation, conceptualized as dependent 'on the relationship between the organism and its environment' (Parkinson & Colman, 1994). In fact, if there is any limitation to Dewey's solid theoretical construction, it lies in the fact that he left the notion of 'world' or 'environment' insufficiently theorised, especially in what the social world is concerned (Jovchelovitch and Glăveanu, 2012).

## V. Motivation and representation

To represent, is a fundamental process of all human life and the emergence and circulation of representations establishes the ways in which we understand the world and the contexts in which persons, communities, and societies interact with each other. Social representing (both as a process and its product), and any process of knowledge formation for this matter, is never 'disinterested' or 'unmotivated'. There is investment of both individuals and groups in the construction of representations about self, others and the world, and only by integrating the motivational aspect into this phenomenon can we come to realize what 'drives' us to build, promote, actively support or contest certain representations in the public sphere. As such representation and motivation can never do without each other.

Representation is an action of mind in society (Vygotsky, 1978). It is a mediating construct between subject, other and object that develops both ontogenetically (in individual minds) and socio-genetically (in public sphere). It is both a practice and an outcome: as a practice it is act of substitution that engages arbitrary tokens (symbols) to make present what actually is absent, as when the child evokes the actual animal who barks, plays or bites. As outcome, representation is a socio-cognitive system with power to signify, to invest and render meaningful persons, things, relations, and words, as when we see a picture, construct beliefs about ethnic groups, madness, and climate change, or dream about social change.

Human being cannot exist in a world that remains completely strange and alien to them. In order to function and act as humans we need to understand the world and to appropriate it, which is precisely what the symbolic function enables. It is because we are able to represent, to build representations and communicate them, that we can invest the world with meaning and share a reality in which we cooperate with others for the achievement of common goals. It is a basic form of motivation, the epistemic drive, that 'moves' us towards making sense of the world, together with other people, through the elaboration of representations. This process is 'hot' from the start, relying as it does on human interaction; 'the road from object to child and child to object; lies through another person' (Vygotsky & Luria, 1994, p. 116).

In the 'how' of motivation, social representations stand as an important milestone, providing meaning and the considerations against which and within which actors act and 'move'. Culture and larger social representations mould motivation by intervening in action, shaping its course and the expression of impulses. Motivated action is constituted by a succession of doings and undergoing, of acting based on the original impulsion and of taking in the 'resistance' of the environment. These representations impact on the expression of our needs – for social stimulation, status, affiliation, indeed even our most basic needs are negotiated by the intervention of representational structures. For example, we all experience hunger, but the way we satisfy this thrust depends on what we know can be eaten, on how and when we know it is appropriate to eat, etc.

#### **VI. The complexity of human motives**

Traditional motivational theories have very often worked within monological frameworks that separate the body from the brain and mind, the 'inside' from the 'outside', the self from the world. In this context, motivation has been depicted as 'force' from 'inside' that 'moves' individuals. This movement is also considered as organised and consistent. Individuals are said to be motivated by one motivation at a time (the one that becomes 'activated') and to pass to another type of motivation once the first has been satisfied. In a hierarchy of needs model, it could even be 'predicted' what kind of motivation would follow, considering its strength and place in the hierarchy. Human action, as a reflection of this succession of activated motivation, obtains certain regularity, a certain organization in time.

#### **VII. The social as motivation**

The ontogenetic history of motivation begins with the relationship between self and environment, between a subjective sphere and the 'objectivity' of the outside world. The dialects, between a subjectivity, through intersubjectivity, to the constitution of objectivity is a paramount for the development of the symbolic function and for the development of motivation, for the emergence of the child as an agent, a desiring social actor. Coming out of this relation, and being expressive of it, are the first forms of the imagination found in symbolic representation, in pretend-play and alter in adult artistic and cultural experience. Motivations are fundamentally embedded in the dynamic of public sphere, as different groups will be motivated to create different representations and to challenge the representations of other groups about the same object.

The construction of representations and knowledges about the future by different groups and communities is simultaneously a cognitive, social, and emotional process with deep motivational roots. Cognitively we construct projects, visions about the future and the world to come. Socially we build utopias, common ideals of how the world should be in time to come. Emotionally we are nurtured by a feeling of hope, perhaps the strongest motivator for the production of projects and utopias, the emotional bond that hold groups and communities together and 'moves' them towards collective forms of action (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 114).

## VIII. Fostering motivation

Environment are never completely open to the needs and desires of persons and that is why, when engaging with outside, we have to go through a process of doings and underdoing's, of facing obstacles and suffering ruptures. Environments are neither fully congenial to the straightforward execution of our impulsion, nor fully hostile and destructive, they demand action and, in doing so, facilitate development and maturation. Growth psychologically, biologically and physically, involves a degree of pain and a degree of pleasure. Overcoming the rupture between self and the world and finding a direct route for the expression of our impulsion through total immersion in an activity comprises the optimal motivational state. Sociality and our connections with persons and objects are what allows us to achieve this state, which has been captured through Csikzentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow (particularly as described by young people today as 'being on the zone' and Winnicott's (1971) concept of the potential space. The concept of potential space is a 'third-area of living' that merges child and world, subjective experience and the objectivity of the outside environment. The potential space of action, constructed through the synergy between the embodied mind and its context of living, is central to the distinctiveness of human action in the world, it reminds us that human behaviour carries the potential for meaning, for becoming motivated action.

## IX. Women and Caste

Motivation plays a central role in the development of identity course. Women belong to lower caste community needs to encouragement and supplementary supports to motivate themselves, as women always been to vulnerable circumstance. There has been a 'gender line' drawn between 'we' the men and 'they' the women. The line drawn between the gender is not only divides people into two opposite categories, it also implies a hierarchy: men are seen as strong, rational and superior, and women as weak, emotional, and inferior. Thus, women have the burden of bearing these negative role models in their day to day lives, real or imagined (Kumar, 2010, p.81).

Gender oppression can be seen as a widespread phenomenon. The existential experience of Indian women has specific sociological, religious and historical parameters that set them apart from women in other culture. The socio-cultural treatment of women varies constantly from region to region and from community to community, because the situation of women is determined by many factors- some of them invisible- like traditions or conventions. But one thing is common for all women across caste and class i.e., they carry out the burden of their families and lead subservient lives no matter what their professions may be (Kumar, 2010). Unfortunately, the caste system operates with gender oppression subtly but surely. That can be the reason, women who comes from the less privileged sections, such as Dalits and Adivasis are doubly vulnerable.

Arun (2007) explained the three key phases of the process of identity formation are conflict, symbolic reversal, and identification. By conflict he means a struggle, in which a group of people competes with one or more groups with a view to achieving objectives either by violent or non-violent means or by both. He has referred the definition of Ricoeur (1986), "any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates in addition to another meaning which is indirect, secondary and figurative which can be apprehended only through the first (cited in Arun, 2007)". This definition extends the meaning of 'symbols' also to cover 'myth', which is an elaborated and extended form of symbols, elaborated in the form of a story in a particular context.

### 3.1 Methodology

The tools used for data collection were: An Interview Guide designed to obtain insights on the reservation policy. The Diagrammatic Representation of the Life Course (Bhargava, 2005) was used to elicit narratives of the life experiences, including important episodes. The tool has a participatory and descriptive method for collecting information about participant's life journey. The Flourishing Scale (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2009) is a seven-point scale was used for evaluating the participant's self-orientation towards life. The use of wellbeing paradigm was obtained on both positive and the negative aspects from their perspectives. The Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (CIT) (Diener, Su, & Tay, 2014) is a five-point scale that explores the relationship of participants with the community, their engagement, mastery of skills, autonomy, meaning of life, optimism and subjective wellbeing. This tool was used to analyse the wellbeing of participants in the context to their psychological resources and strengths.

### 3.2 Discussion

Motivation plays a very significant role in an individual's life. Motivation is very much essential for a person to identify herself/himself in the society. This paper talks about the needs for motivation and fostering motivation. Paper also highlights the critical environment required to motivate an individual. Measuring of motivation is not simple as there are no adequate methods of assessing it. Motivation could be a reason for drastic change in a person's life. People who belong to disadvantaged groups need to be motivated due to lack of awareness of their fundamental rights. The circumstances for these groups are, most of the times, not conducive that they can acquire a better status in the society. Sometimes the other developed groups work as a barrier towards the improvement of their status of living.

Motivation cannot be fostered in anybody with force. A person needs to have certain characteristics, which work in favour of an individual's ability to get motivated. According to Atkinson (1964), the theory of achievement motivation or in other words, theory of achievement-oriented performance attempts to account for the determinants of the direction, magnitude, and persistence of behaviour in a limited but very important domain of human activities. It is only applied when an individual knows that his performance will be evaluated (by himself or by others) in terms of some standard of excellence and that the consequences of his actions will be either a favourable evaluation (success) or an unfavourable evaluation (failure).

Focusing on women in this paper determined the crucial circumstances of women in the society, which get worse if women belong to disadvantaged groups. Being a woman and coming from a disadvantaged group, both factors act together as obstructions for a woman to acquire elevated status and identity in the society.

Outcome of research revealed that motivation is a powerful process, it actually gives a vision towards goal achievement. Reservation identified as a significant motivation factor, provided support financially, opportunities to break the caste barriers, increasing their living standards and being an independent woman in society. Other than reservation, mother, father, friends, sibling, cousins, husband, in-laws, teachers, and working colleagues were identified as motivational factors and support. Through these findings, without their support, these women would not have been able to achieve their current status and not be able to 'shine' in their community. Finding showed that these supports were substantial throughout the life span of the participants. There was sustainability in the performance of participants maintained by and only because of motivational supports.

Wellbeing is a happy state of mind, this term is associated with money, happiness, financial status, having good physical and mental health. It can be concluded that wellbeing of participants was good due to the fact that they had secure jobs, good financial status, living in high quality houses, they can even afford to live in higher status localities, and children were going to good schools and colleges. Flourishing Scale revealed that these women are leading purposeful lives and their social relationships are supportive and rewarding. Women participants were occupied and engaged in doing daily chores. They felt that their work contributed to the happiness and wellbeing of others. Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (CIT) revealed finding that participants were having sense of belongingness and involvement with the community, state and country. They were fully engrossed with their work and energetically engagement in, mastery of skills, autonomy, meaning of life, optimism and subjective wellbeing were measured in context to their life satisfaction, positive and negative feeling in daily life. Mostly participants are satisfied with their life, positive and negative feeling varied with the surroundings they were confronting in their everyday life.

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