

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: A Critical Evaluation

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### ABSTRACT

Needs are the core factor in the evolution of human beings on this Earth. The psychology of the human mind is enormously influenced by needs. It motivates one to achieve his goal. The whole world is running around to fulfil the needs that have been extracted from the human mind. In this regard, Abraham Maslow proposed in 1943 a hierarchy of needs where he explained human needs ranging from lower-order needs to higher-order needs. Once the lower-order needs have been met by human beings, a tendency is urged within them to meet the higher-order needs. The objective of this paper is to evaluate Maslow's hierarchy of needs. A descriptive survey methodology has been used by the researcher. The study is based on secondary sources of data.

**Keywords:** *Needs, psychology, human, mind, hierarchy*

**M**otivation is a driving force that emerges internally to satisfy the needs of living organisms. Needs are the wants that each living organism wants to survive on this earth. Both needs and motivation are dependent on each other. For example, someone's motive may be the need of his or her life. Hence, human psychology has a different perspective regarding needs, motivation, desires, etc. Human needs have no limitations, and everyone has different needs from others. But the common fact is that everyone is tied to their goal or motive due to their desires or needs.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow, father of humanistic psychology, developed a motivation theory in his paper titled "**A Theory of Human Motivation**," published in Psychological Review in 1943. He elaborated that man's behavior is controlled by both internal and external factors. He also emphasizes that humans have the unique ability to make choices and exercise free will. His studies have led him to believe that people have certain needs that are unchanging and genetic in origin. He categorized needs into two types, i.e., basic needs and growth needs. Basic needs are lower-order needs, and growth needs are higher-order needs. He placed all these basic and growth needs in a hierarchy, which is termed **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objective of this paper is to evaluate the Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

In this study descriptive survey has used. The secondary sources have been used to conduct this study.

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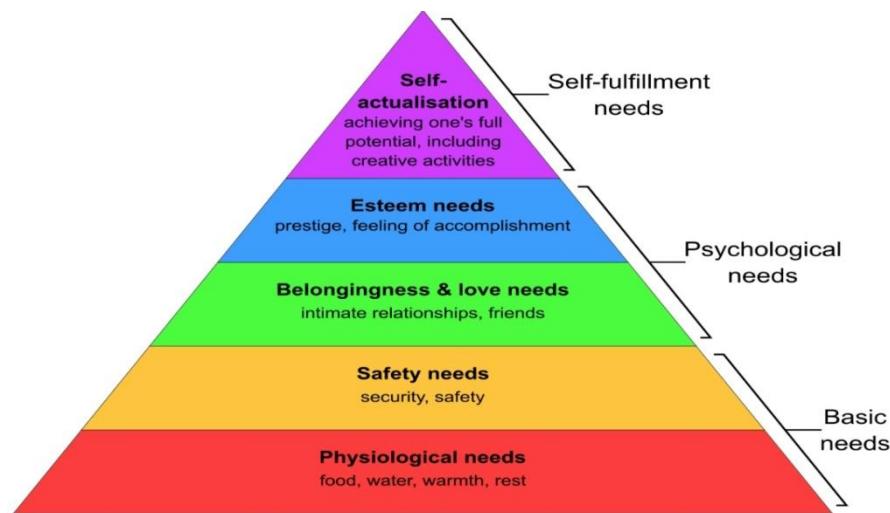
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### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

From the study including articles, and books, the researchers has explained the study following ways-

### MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS:

Abraham Maslow has observed the struggle of human life and categorised into two parts i.e. basic needs and growth needs. Basic needs are mainly physiological needs such as air, water, food and other biological needs, safety, love and esteem and self- actualisation is the growth need. A person can achieve self-actualisation after the fulfilment of basic needs. For example, if a man is hungry first he tries to get food rather than thinking about love / belongingness. After food, he must think about the safety or security that why he searched for a safe place / shelter. When he gets a safe place to live then he searches for company. He felt need of love and care from family, work place, and society. He searches emotional security from his beloved one. Hence, love and belongingness can also be referred as social needs. After meeting emotional security a person needs to get respect from others. He wants to achieve his goal and protect his self -identity in society. He wants to develop an identity in society. Such type of need is called self-esteem needs. After achieving status, he reaches to that level where he actually needs to understand his potential. He needs to uplift himself to a higher position. At this point, he wants to understand his own thought process and use his experiences for better future. That's why, self-actualisation is termed as growth need. Hence, Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be shown with the help of following diagram-



Source- [simplypsychology.org](http://simplypsychology.org)

From the diagram it has been seen that physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest) and safety needs have categorised as basic needs, belongingness and love needs (intimate relationships, friends) and esteem needs (prestige, feeling of accomplishment) have categorised as psychological needs and self-actualisation (attainment of potential) has categorised as self-fulfilment needs. All the above mentioned needs are explained as below-

#### 1) Physiological Needs

To sustain a life in this universe, physiological needs are of the utmost importance. These needs are termed basic needs. These needs include food, shelter, clothing, rest, air, water, sleep, and sexual satisfaction. These basic human needs (also called biological needs) lie at the lowest level in the hierarchy of needs, as they have priority over all other needs. These needs cannot

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be postponed for long. A hungry person, for example, is just not in a position to think of anything else except his hunger or food. According to Maslow, 'man lives by bread alone,' when there is no bread. Therefore, every individual first thinks about the earning of bread and butter.

### **2) Safety Needs**

These are the needs connected with the psychological factor, such as fear of loss of job, property, natural calamities or hazards, etc. Every individual wants a secure future, like a career with a handsome salary, a life insurance policy to keep his family safe after his demise, a crime-free society, etc. After the meeting of physiological needs, the safety needs come. In the Maslow hierarchy of needs, if physiological needs are satisfied, safety needs replace them. They begin to manifest themselves and dominate human behavior. Safety needs act as motivational forces only if they are unsatisfied.

### **3) Belongingness and Love Needs**

Belongingness and love needs are referred to as social needs, as these needs are related to the social life of an individual. After accomplishing the physiological and safety needs, the need for love and belongingness has emerged in human beings. Every human being needs belongingness, affection, and love from their work group, family, friends, and romantic relationships. To sustain a social life, one needs affection, care, and love from his family and friends. He desires to stay in a group. He wants to be accepted by the society where he lives. This is treated as a basic social need of an individual. He needs friends and interaction with his friends and superiors in the group, such as fellow employees or superiors. Social needs occupy the third position in the hierarchy of needs.

### **4) Esteem Needs**

This type of need is directly concerned with the ego of an individual. After being accepted by society and getting care and love from near and dear ones, an individual wants a great position in his life. He wants to be respected by all. He can do anything to protect his ego and respect. He is in such a position that he wants to become a self-sufficient person and wants to boost his confidence by engaging himself in competence tasks. Thus, esteem needs are twofold in nature. Self-esteem needs include those for self-confidence, self-respect, competence, etc. The second group of esteem needs is those related to one's status, reputation, recognition, and appreciation by others. This is a type of personal ego that needs to be satisfied. The organization can satisfy this need (ego) by giving recognition to the good work of employees. Esteem needs do not assume motivational properties unless the previous needs are satisfied.

### **5) Self-Actualization Needs**

Self-actualization needs include the realization of personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth, and peak experiences. This is the highest of the needs in the hierarchy of needs advocated by Maslow. Self-actualization is the desire to become what one is capable of becoming. It is a 'growth' need. A worker must work efficiently if he is to be ultimately happy. Here, a person feels that he should accomplish something in his life. He wants to utilize his potential to the maximum extent and desires to become what one is capable of becoming. A person desires to have challenges and achieve something special in his life or in the area of his specialization. Though everyone is capable of self-actualization, many do not reach this stage. This need is rarely fully satisfied.

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### MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

Abraham Maslow was the first person to explain the needs of a human being by forming a pyramid consisting of lower-order needs and higher-order needs. His theory on human needs and motivation is very simple and relatable to everyone. Despite being simple and relatable to every living organism, it has faced much criticism. This paper, therefore, made a small attempt to highlight the following points:

- The first thing that has been observed is that it's overly simple. Human behavior is not that simple, as has been described by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs. The human mind is a complex one, and every person's needs are not uniform. There are some people whose intention is only to get food and shelter. They have no concern about self-esteem. They even do not know the terms self-esteem, ego, etc. Hence, this theory cannot be applied uniformly.
- This theory states that when an individual accomplishes lower-level needs, he only proceeds to meet higher-order needs. But this is not always true. Those who are hungry for self-actualization are focused only on meeting their goal. Though physiological needs are required, like food, water, and shelter, their focus is to achieve their goal. They worked hard to meet their goal, not to satisfy their hunger. In this context, Maslow's belief, i.e., that higher-order needs follow lower-order needs, is a complete nuisance.
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs is qualitative and subjective in nature. He did not use any scientific approach in this theory to define the nature of self-actualization needs. Therefore, it is not regarded as a reliable approach.
- This theory needs to refer to other motivating factors like expectations, experience, and perception. These factors play a prominent role in human life, but Maslow completely ignored these factors in this theory. Without these factors, human motivation cannot be possible.

### CONCLUSION:

Maslow's view on human needs has some criticism, yet it has implications for practical life. One can try to understand human behavior with the help of this theory. For example, a daily worker has only one need, i.e., to arrange his livelihood. By observing his behavior, we can easily assume his needs. Therefore, it is the easiest form of theory to understand human behavior and to motivate the individual towards a set goal. If a manager sets weekly, quarterly, or half-yearly goals, he will use this theory to manage his workers. Hence, this theory is not yet scientifically feasible to this hour. It can be said that this theory has favored some aspects of life—food, air, water, sex, love, society, and self-attainment—and ignored other aspects like expectation, perception, and experiences that may help in the attainment of growth needs. Hence, this paper made a tiny effort to understand Maslow's theory on needs and motivation.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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