



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Science**

**THEORY OF NEEDS - HIERARCHY: A NEW OUTLOOK**

**KEY WORDS:**

**Smita B. Dandegaonkar**

M.Sc., M.A., M.Ed., PhD, SET(Education).

Human needs are never-ending as they say. Needs originate right from birth of a child, and are present till the life cycle ends for an individual. What are these needs? What is the nature of these 'needs'? It is paramount to answer these questions in order to understand the Human Behaviour.

The present study is one such attempt to answer above mentioned questions with the objective to classify the same with new outlook. Let us first of all see, what exactly is meant by the term 'NEED'? Need is an action demanding impulse, without satisfaction of which, an individual may not survive.

We are going to base this study upon two renowned theories, one of which is 'Maslow's Theory of Needs' Hierarchy' put forth in the year 1943 'A Theory of Human Motivation' paper and second one is Cleton Alderfer's theory known as 'ERG theory of Motivation'.

Maslow's theory of motivation can be shown in graphical form as follows:



Maslow has based his theory upon basic physiological needs of human being, and further escalated towards the ultimate point in the hierarchy called as 'SELF-Actualisation'. This hierarchy is generally mapped in the form of Pyramid indicating the rising importance of needs with respect to an individual.

- **Physiological Needs** – These are very basic needs without which there is no sustenance of Human being. These need include Food, Breathing, Water, sleep, homeostasis, sexual needs, excretion, clothing, Shelter etc.
- **Safety Needs** – This type of needs surfaces once all the basic physiological needs are satisfied. It involves safety of one's body, employment, family, property, etc. Unless these safety needs gets fulfilled, individual will cease to exist.
- **Need for Belongingness** – These needs are one step higher in the magnitude of human behaviour. Once the safety of all the important things is ensured, the Human being a social animal strives for love, affection from family, society, and friends.
- **Self-Esteem needs** – This type of needs help an individual to gain confidence, showcase self-esteem in achieving respect from others.
- **Self-actualisation** - This is a point in the hierarchy of needs, where individual bases his/her life on grounds of Morality, Spirituality, and Creativity. The individual is capable of solving problems with no prejudice and accepting the facts with objective view of the situations.

The Hierarchy of needs is always in increasing order of importance starting from Basic needs, to the ultimate point of Self-Actualisation

**Alderfer's Theory of ERG:**

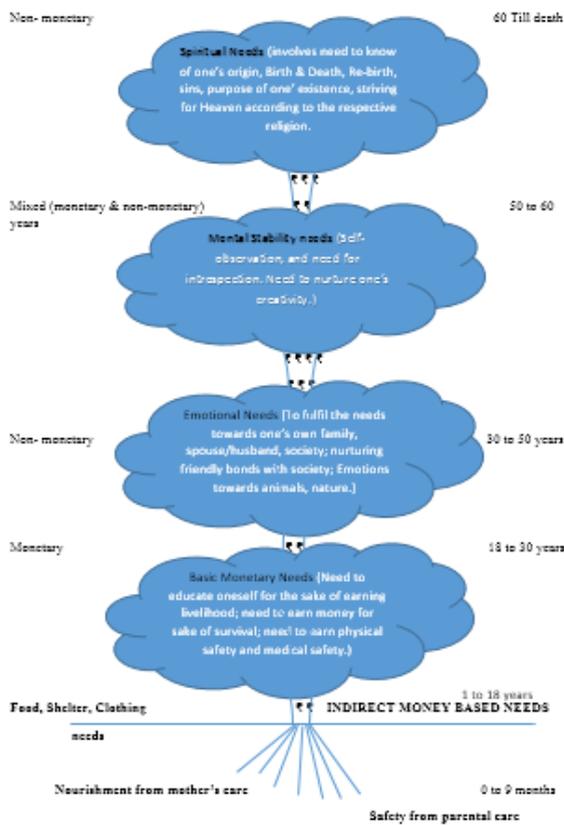


**Cleton Alderfer has re-categorized Maslow's Needs Hierarchy in to three parts:**

1. Existence Needs: - This type includes physiological and safety needs of an individual.
  2. Relatedness Needs:- This type consists of inter-personal relationships ( with family, friends, society, seniors), acceptance needs ( in a nutshell Maslow's Esteem & Belongingness needs)
  3. Growth Needs:- This includes self-development needs ( it is resembling with the Maslow's Self-actualisation needs)
- After careful study of these two theories, following observations can be made:

1. Physiological needs appear right at the bottom of the pyramid but later on they don't play any role in hierarchy. In fact it can be said that there existence lies & is associated with every type of needs experienced by any human being.
2. For any individual to gain his/her bread & butter, it is implied that he/she needs some education/skill as a background. But this need for education in skill development or theoretical education is nowhere to be found in the aforesaid theories.
3. To survive in this 22nd century, it is also very much necessary to earn livelihood in the form of Money/ equivalent. This also is not to be found mentioned directly or indirectly in theories presented by Maslow or Alderfer.
4. The general needs experienced by any individual can be either of 'Monetary nature' or of 'Non-Monetary nature'. This kind of classification is not considered while arranging the Hierarchy.
5. The association of different needs on different age of an individual, seems to be not considered while deciding the hierarchy.
6. Some of needs are experienced to gain some benefit to ourselves, and some needs are part of social causes. This type of segregation is not evident from the classification studied from the earlier theories.
7. Human needs starts right from the time of birth. This fact seems to be overlooked upon while stating the Theories.
8. After satisfying most of the needs in life, human beings experiences a stage wherein the end of line is in his sight and there & then one more kind of needs starts taking effect which are 'Spiritual Needs'. This school of thought has not been given much exposure in both the Maslow's & Alderfer's theories.

Taking in to consideration all the above points observed from the study, the author of this paper felt the need to re-arrange and reform the need's hierarchy with 22nd century context.



We have classified the needs by assuming 'average human life' to be 70years, as follows:

**a. 0 to 9 Months:-**

This category/class consist of needs right from Foetus stage to Birth. We can clearly see a tree of life emerging out of the figure shown above. This tree has its roots below the ground which is having a symbolical resemblance to a Pre-Birth stage of any person. Up to 9 months period, one is in this stage wherein, 'Nutrition' & 'Safety' are basic needs for an individual. These needs are taken care of by mother for the individual.

**b. 1 to 18 years (Adolescence):-**

This stage is also called as 'Indirect Money Based needs'. Now this stage contains the "BASIC NEEDS" that we are so familiar with i.e. FOOD; SHELTER; CLOTHING are considered along with Physiological needs (air to breathe, sleep, & excretion). The majority of needs are taken care by parents & individual generally doesn't spend the money himself, hence the name as 'Indirect Monetary Needs'.

**c. 18 to 30 (Pre-marital stage of individual):-**

We have classified these to be actual 'MONETARY NEEDS'. Such needs are experienced by any person from the age of 18 (emotionally independent stage of life) till time of death. The stage includes, Need of Education (for earning livelihood), Need for a Job (in order to fulfil Basic needs like Food clothing & Shelter), Need for obtaining Physical as well as mental safety etc.

Fulfilling these needs is very crucial for any person in order to survive. In absence of such capacity to fulfil the monetary needs, an individual will not be able to remain emotionally balanced, secured and achieve his/her potential to the fullest.

Although it is only stage from above model wherein we have explicitly shown the monetary angle involved for individual, it is to be noted that from this stage onwards, each stage of needs hierarchy will have a constant component in form of money.

**d. 30 to 50 (Marital Stage of individual):-**

Needs experienced by any person in this stage of life are more Emotional in nature. Hence, the category is also termed as 'NON-MONETARY Needs'. The category consists of need of belongingness, need to fulfil the needs towards family (husband/spouse, children), need to build bonds with society, neighbours, friends, elderly people, etc. Fulfilling of these needs is very critical for Human beings as we know that, Humans are a social beings. This promises good emotional health.

**e. 50 to 60 (Fag end of Career/Job):-**

'Mental Stability Needs' arise at the age of 18 onwards and continue till the end of life. These are mostly Non-Monetary needs but sometimes there is an angle of Money also, hence the nature of these needs is 'Mixed' kind. This type of needs includes Need to introspect oneself, Need to nurture Hobbies, creativity within oneself. Need of self-observation & introspection. One can gain Mental Stability, by achieving Self-Actualisation.

**f. 60 to End of life:-**

This is the last type of Needs which can be experienced by any person. 'SPIRITUAL NEEDS' as the name suggests are totally independent of Money factor. This type of needs include, 'Need to know the secret of Life-Death', 'need to know of almighty creator of world', 'Need to know of our origin', 'Striving to get to heavens as per religion', 'Need to know of concepts like Sins, Re-birth etc.' Usually this is the last type of need which can be generating at fag-end of life and last till actual demise of any person.

Apart from all these types of needs, there are BASIC NEEDS present at every stage & class of Needs.

If we attempt to further classify the aforesaid needs philanthropically, we can conclude that:

1. Basic needs are Self-centred
2. Emotional needs are both self as well as socialistic in nature
3. Last but certainly not the least, SPIRITUAL NEEDS do seem to be self -centric but contradictory to that, are mostly socialistic in nature as individual is more concerned about society around him/her.

Thus, 'Needs' form inevitable part of one's life span and perform a very important function of providing a Stimulus to live.