

Paper –CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Paper Code-MC-01, Unit-II

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Topic- Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory

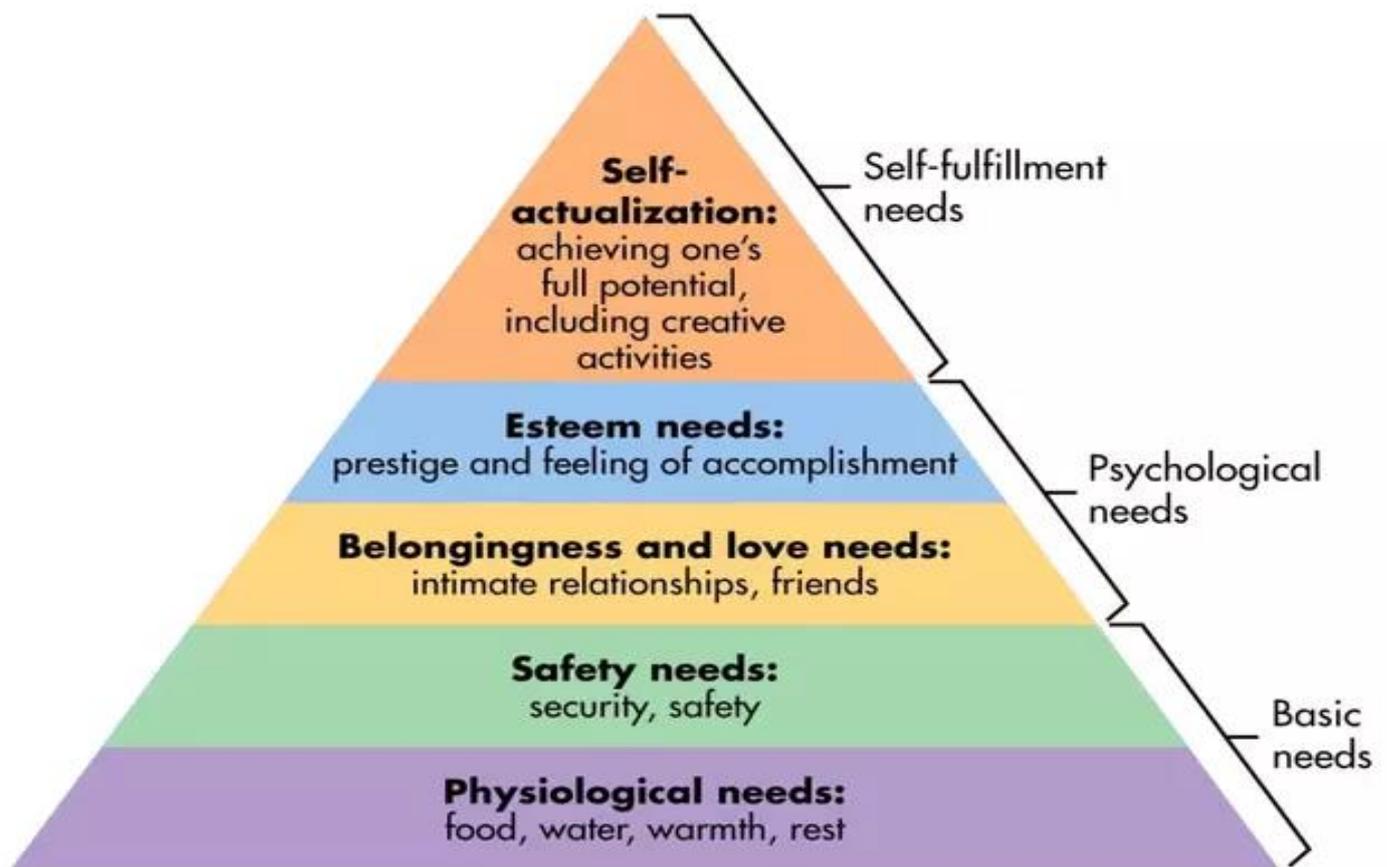
Abraham Harold Maslow in the year 1954 proposed the need Hierarchy theory of Motivation. This theory says that

- a) Human Behaviour is influenced by their wants and desires.
- b) Any unsatisfied need acts as a motivator
- c) Needs are hierarchical. d) People can move from lower needs upper needs.

Maslow identified five levels of needs which are the source of motivation,

These needs are

- 1) Physiological Needs:** These are lower level needs. They include food, air, water, shelter and other bodily needs.
- 2) Safety Needs:** Once physiological needs are met, another set of needs called safety needs becomes the motivating factor. It includes needs for protection, a secure and stable environment. In the organizational context it includes job security, safe working conditions, pension scheme, provident fund etc.
- 3) Social Needs:** This is the third level of the hierarchy of the needs. It includes respect, affection, friendship or interaction with people.
- 4) Esteem Needs:** The next level in Maslow's hierarchy is esteem or ego needs. These needs arise when we want to be appreciated for what we can do. These needs include self-respect, personal achievement, status, recognition and attention.
- 5) Self-actualization Needs:** When all the earlier needs are fulfilled people move to next level of need that is self-actualization needs. These needs represent self-fulfilment which includes growth and achievement. Thus, Maslow classified these needs into higher and lower level needs. After satisfying the lower level needs a person moves to higher level needs.



Maslow's need hierarchy theory has been criticized on the following arguments

- a) It is difficult to interpret and operationalize the concept of need hierarchy.
- b) This model is based on relatively small subjects.
- c) The need classification model is artificial and arbitrary which cannot be given in a five-step hierarchy.
- d) The same need will not lead to the same response in all the individuals.
- e) The concept of need is introspective in nature which cannot be tested objectively
- f) Individuals differ in the relative intensity of their various needs. In spite of all the criticism the need priority model is useful because of its rich and comprehensive view of needs. The theory is relevant because needs are important for understanding behaviour. It can be accepted due to its immense intuitive appeal. It has survived and is widely used in understanding the need - motivation concept.