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Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory of Motivation: Since motivation is highly complex, many researchers have studied about motivation from several dimensions and developed some theories. These theories help to develop understanding about motivation phenomenon. Among these, Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory is considered fundamental to understanding of motivation. Let us examine it in detail. Abraham Maslow, a well-known Psychologist in a classic paper published in 1943, outlined the elements of an overall theory of motivation. His theory was based on human needs. He felt that within every human being, there exists a hierarchy of five needs. These are:

(i) **Basic Physiological Needs:** These needs are most basic in the hierarchy and corresponds to primary needs. Hunger, thirst, shelter, sleep and sex are some examples of these needs. In the organisational context, basic salary helps to satisfy these needs.

(ii) **Safety/Security Needs:** These needs provide security and protection from physical and emotional harm. Examples: job security, stability of income, Pension plans etc.,

(iii) **Affiliation/Belonging Needs:** These needs refer to affection, sense of belongingness, acceptance and friendship.

(iv) **Esteem Needs:** These include factors such as self-respect, autonomy status, recognition and attention.

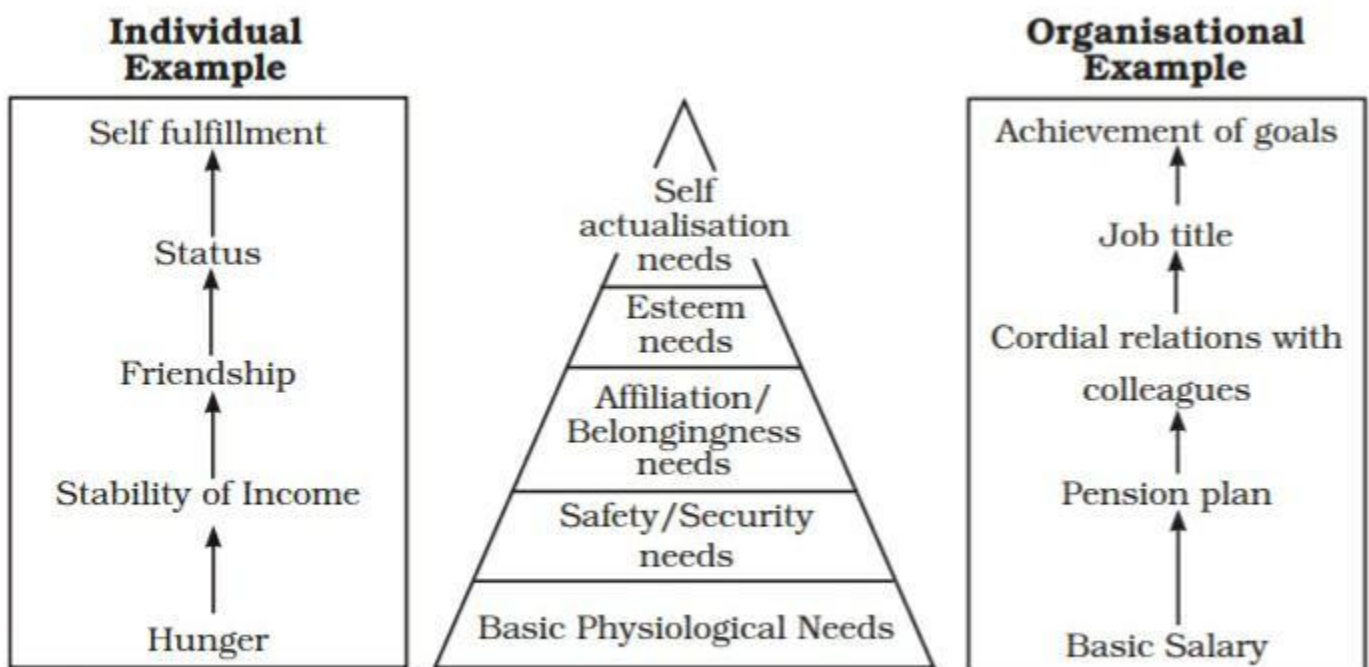
(v) **Self Actualization Needs:** It is the highest level of need in the hierarchy. It refers to the drive to become what one is capable of becoming. These needs include growth, self-fulfillment and achievement of goals. Maslow's theory is based on the following assumptions:

(i) People's behaviour is based on their needs. Satisfaction of such needs influences their behaviour.

(ii) People's needs are in hierarchical order, starting from basic needs to other higher level needs.

(iii) A satisfied need can no longer motivate a person; only next higher level need can motivate him.

(iv) A person moves to the next higher level of the hierarchy only when the lower need is satisfied. Maslow's Theory focuses on the needs as the basis for motivation. This theory is widely recognised and appreciated. However, some of his propositions are questioned on his classification of needs and hierarchy of needs. But, despite such criticism, the theory is still relevant because needs, no matter how they are classified, are important to understand the behaviour. It helps managers to realise that need level of employee should be identified to provide motivation to them.



 Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory