

## MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY: LINKAGE WITH SELF REFLEXIVITY

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### ABSTRACT

Maslow's theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' is one of the most popular psychological theories on motivation. But with the passage of time, it has found its application in many other areas of scientific research. In today's world, particularly during the times of the on-going pandemic, life has become very difficult. Practicing of self reflexivity may be expected to help in this case. When a person will look at everything through other's eyes that will help her/ him to relate to the problems of others and thus act accordingly. So, an effort was made in this research to establish a relation between the said theory and the concept of self reflexivity. A basic research methodology was followed in this research. Secondary data was collected from various sources. It was finally concluded that there exists a direct relationship between the theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' and self reflexivity. Thus, the investigator recommended young people to develop the habit of practicing it. Strategic level personnel (ones who are trying to meet the complex needs) were suggested to help young counterparts learn the methodology of practicing it.

**Key Words:** Hierarchy of Needs, self reflexivity and COVID-19.

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Author, Anamitra Roy is a generalist from education and research. He has more than 11 years of work experience across geographies and job profiles. With 11 international publications, Roy is an alumnus of St. Xavier's College (Kolkata), CMC, TASMACH, University of Wales (U.K.) and NIPM. At present, he is working as an education entrepreneur. He has attended 9 webinars, 2 E-Paper workshops, 1 international workshop, 3 international conferences, 1 national seminar, 6 certificate programs and 1 national workshop.

**INTRODUCTION**

Abraham Maslow propounded theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' in 1943. This was propounded in a paper named 'Theory of Human Motivation' in the journal 'Psychological Review'.<sup>1</sup> In this theory, Maslow pointed out various types of basic needs like physiological needs, safety needs and social needs. These were followed by more complex needs like esteem needs and self-actualization needs. This theory is based on an explanation of how man moves to another set of needs, when one set gets satisfied. These needs are represented in a pyramidal model where the basic needs appear in the bottom. And, with an upward movement the more complex needs are reached at.

The theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' was principally framed with an objective to study human motivation. But with the passage of time, it found its applications in many other avenues of scientific research. Kaur (2013)<sup>2</sup> emphasized its application to study job satisfaction, organizational performance and behaviour. Jerome (2013)<sup>3</sup> linked the application of this theory to organizational culture, HRM and achievement of results in the attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

There is something common between job satisfaction, organizational performance – behaviour – culture, HRM and achievement of results. In all these factors, the person concerned has to work with others (most of the time). While working with others, it is essential to look at everything from the point of view of those persons' also. This is called self reflexivity.

Popoveniuc (2014)<sup>4</sup> wrote that in social and psychological sciences, 'the (self-) reflexivity of a particular knowledge (theory/matter) over the knowledge that produced it (discipline itself/researcher) forms the main epistemological and methodological debate over the meaning and the condition of possibility for the scientific objectivity in the field'.

Torres (2019)<sup>5</sup> put importance on self reflexivity by linking it to self-awareness.

Thus, there can be a linkage between the theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' and self reflexivity. In today's world there is a need to establish this relationship. With growing complexities due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, a change has come in the lives of the professionals. Hoff (2021)<sup>6</sup> commented that usually professionals are seen as leading stable, secure and independent professional lives, but the pandemic (COVID-19) has made life more challenging for them.

Under the circumstances, such establishment of the said relationship may be expected to help professionals understand themselves and their surroundings in a much better way. It may help the professionals to frame strategies for maintenance of their professional careers.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of this research is to establish the relation between Maslow's theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' and the concept of self reflexivity.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

McCombes (2019)<sup>7</sup> was of the opinion that basic research aims to develop knowledge, theories and predictions, while applied research aims to develop techniques, products and procedures.

This research seeks to establish a relation between the theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' and self reflexivity. A study of relevant literature revealed that there have not been prior researches in this area. Thus, it aims to establish the relationship and create new knowledge. From that perspective, it can be concluded that it followed a basic research methodology.

**DATA**

The data required for the research was collected from secondary sources like journal articles.

**ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

Maslow's theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' speaks about human needs. Human needs can easily be linked to human psychology. Thus, it also speaks about the psychology of people at various stages of their lives. This psychology has an impact on the way they look at themselves and their surroundings. People, in the early phases of their life are busy meeting the basic needs. This is the phase when they are working at the floor or operational level. Most of the work has to be done by their hands. It is not the phase when they are assisted by the work environment by providing them with too many assistants. This is the phase of life when people rarely get time for themselves. They are always busy and have to reach the deadlines given to them by the mid/ senior level managers. Thus, people at this stage of their lives have fewer opportunities to look at themselves and everything else, whether through their eyes or through someone else's eyes. In this phase, they have to do the job by themselves and not through others. They have to play the role of doers. It is the phase when they have to impress the reporting authority, mingle with peers and prove that she/ he is the next rising star. This is the phase when they do not know much about where the career is going to take them. That is why; professionals face challenges in maintaining work-life balance.<sup>8</sup> Thus; self reflexivity does not have much chance at this phase.

As people climb the ladder in the organizational hierarchy, their basic needs get satisfied. Thus, when they climb the ladder and reach the strategic levels, their needs become more complicated by nature. Maslow referred to these needs as the complex needs. At this phase, a person is not worried about food, clothing, shelter and medicines. These needs have already been satisfied. She/ he are assisted by others. There are listeners around her/ him. It's her/ his duty now to get the job done through these assistants and listeners. She/ he are no more a doer. She/ he are a strategist. She/ he are leading others. Now her/ his focus shifts. Since, other people are working for her/ him or under her/ his guidance; therefore she/ he has some time to think. The strategist can use this time to think about own self and surroundings and while doing so she/ he can exercise self reflexivity. It is at this phase of life that the strategist has time to dream, to ponder, to watch, to experiment and to use her/ his already gathered experience in professional domain. Thus, she/ he can afford to become a thinker. Such thinking habits may help her/ him in looking at everything through her/ his eyes and through other's eyes. In this stage of life, the work environment is less demanding. A person, who has reached this phase, has to primarily play the role of a mentor. Thus, she/ he can start to spend less time working and donate some time to doing those things that she/ he enjoys outside work.<sup>9</sup> Thus; self reflexivity reaches the highest volume at this phase of life.

### CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

While meeting the basic needs of life, in the initial phase, a person has less time and opportunity for self reflexivity. Self reflexivity becomes an easy reality while meeting the complex needs at the later phases. Thus, it can be concluded that people working at floor/ operational levels will find it difficult to practice self reflexivity, while those at strategic level will find it easier to practice it.

Generally, ages of floor/ operational level personnel are from 20 to 45 years, while ages of strategic level personnel are more than 45 years. Thus, age can also become a factor in practicing self reflexivity.

Thinking can be linked to self reflexivity. At the floor/ operational level when people are aged about 20 to 45 years, then the work environment is very demanding. Thus, opportunity to think about everything is much lesser in this phase, than the phase as a strategist, when the person is aged more than 45 years.

Thus, the summing up of the conclusions reveals that there is a relationship with needs mentioned in Maslow's theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' and self reflexivity. In the theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' as an upward movement of the needs is made across the pyramid, the chances of exercising self reflexivity increases. This makes the investigation reach the final conclusion that there is a direct relation between the said theory and self reflexivity.

This research was pursued on the basis of secondary data. It has acted as a platform for more expansive researches on this avenue. Primary data could not be collected due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, another conclusion is that a more expansive study may be pursued on the basis of primary data and secondary data, to reach to more concrete and detailed conclusions. That can be done after the pandemic comes to an end or reduces its intensity.

Self reflexivity is very difficult to practice in the initial phases of life as a professional. To make it a reality, it is being recommended to young professionals to develop a habit to practice it. Time management and prioritization techniques may be used by them. Moreover, those who have reached the strategic levels should mentor the young generation. The strategists are being recommended to maintain this as a part of their daily routine. In their effort to mentor the younger generation, they should emphasize to them the benefits of self reflexivity, teach them how to practice it and show them the way to register the results of practicing self reflexivity. Thus, if a relation has to be built between the phase of basic needs (as mentioned in 'Hierarchy of Needs') and self reflexivity, the strategic level professionals are being recommended to play a very effective role.

If the strategists, who are trying to meet the complex needs, want to increase the volume of self reflexivity practiced in their lives, they must look at the good results that they have already obtained in their lives by doing so. A revisit to a past triumph will keep them motivated to practice more of self reflexivity.

During the times of the COVID-19 pandemic, work from home options and other problems of the pandemic have made life very difficult for all. That's why, now it is more evident that people at the strategic level use self-reflexivity to understand the anxiety and fears of the floor/ operations level personnel. The floor/ operations level personnel must use self reflexivity to get a glimpse of the logic behind the requirements of the strategists.

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