



DVA 1501 ass 04 - Assignment 04

Development Studies (University of South Africa)



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Introduction

Basic needs can be interpreted in different ways, but they can be viewed objectively in terms of minimum specified quantities of such things as food, clothing, shelter, water and sanitation, which are necessary to prevent ill-health, undernourishment and so forth (Streeten 1984:974). They also include other necessities required by a community such as public transport, health, education and cultural facilities (Hoadley 1981).

Without these, life will be very difficult and the lack of one basic need can result in the lack of another; for example, without adequate water, it will be difficult to live in sanitary conditions. The basic needs discussed in this assignment are: literacy, water, sanitation, work and food (hunger and nutrition).

Body

Definition of basic needs

A basic need can be defined as those things that a person cannot do without, for example, shelter, clothes, the air that we breathe or the water we need to quench our thirst, producing and preparing our food, bathing, cleaning and washing. Below are the examples in explanation form:

Water

Every human needs water to survive. That is the bottom line, but why? The human body weight is approximately 60% water. At birth the body is about 75% water, and it decreases over time. The human body makes use of water in all cells, organs, and tissues. This water helps regulate body temperature and also helps maintain bodily functions. Water is important for keeping body tissues moist. Water keeps parts of the body like our eyes or mouth hydrated and moisturized.

Shelter

Shelter is one of our basic needs: it is a place that can protect us from the elements, keep us warm and safe, and give us the encouragement to satisfy our other needs. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, shelter is one of the requirements for addressing our physiological needs (along with the need for food, water, air, sleep, sex). Maslow represented the human's physiological needs as the base of a triangle to show that meeting these needs are the most important in our lives. If these needs are not met, the individual may only be able to focus on meeting their physiological needs and not feel motivated to move towards self-actualization.

Food

It is a **basic need** as without it you won't survive. When you eat, especially a balanced diet, your body obtains the fuel and nutrients it **needs** to accomplish various bodily tasks. Your body **needs** minerals to make hormones, build bones and regulate your heartbeat and provide normal organ function.

clothing

Clothing is a very general basic need which we all require to survive. It is used to cover our body and protect it from extreme weather conditions. It is in use from the beginning of mankind and has improved and evolved down the ages. Ages back say 4000 BC people used to cover their body with the skin of animals. Clothes are meant for us to look good and they determine our culture, class and habits too. Clothes also need to be cared for because they reflect our taste and earn dignity in society.

Air

Air is important for living things. People **need** to breathe, and so do lots of other animals—and plants! Breathing is part of a process called respiration. During respiration, a living thing takes in oxygen from the **air** and gives out carbon dioxide.

Linking development and basic needs

Development means different things to different people. However, the most important aspect of development is to bring positive change. This implies the right to improvement and advancement of economic, social, cultural and political conditions. In other words, improvement of quality of life means implementing change that ensures every person a life of dignity or life in a society that respects and helps realise all people's needs and ensures their human rights.

These changes must include:

eradicating and alleviating widespread conditions of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable social conditions as well as improving human wellbeing by integrating social development, economic development and environmental conservation and protection.

Streeten (1984) and Hoadley (1981) mention food, clothing, shelter, water, sanitation, public transport, health, education, cultural facilities and security as the most basic needs people require in order to lead a dignified and fulfilling life. Can you picture a remote rural area that is hardly accessible by road, air or by telephone? People living in these areas may be able to access food and water and have shelter; but without access to schools and health centres, would you consider food, shelter and water as adequate for a well-balanced life? Such people would require other basics for their lives to be whole. Changes that will bring development into their lives such as access to healthcare will reduce mortality, especially that caused by preventable diseases.

What brings development is people's ability to access basics which would ensure they are not undernourished, they are secure in their homes, they have access to information through education and when their health fails, there is a health-care system that is able to cater for their ailments. In the study unit on development concepts, the world is divided according to a country or region's development status.

Development might mean different things to different people. However, in the basic needs approach, development is about improving and providing for basic needs in order to ensure the improvement of livelihoods and a life of dignity for the poor. Proponents of the basic needs approach believe that meaningful development and eradication of widespread poverty can be achieved through the provision of and access to basics and services. They argue that there are some needs which are more urgent than others.

The issue of poverty

☛ **Absolute poverty** implies that households are unable to meet the basic needs for survival. They are chronically hungry, unable to access health care, lack the amenities of safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford education for some or all children, and perhaps lack rudimentary shelter and basic articles of clothing like shoes.

☛ **Moderate poverty** refers to conditions of life in which basic needs are met, but just barely.

☛ **Relative poverty** is generally perceived to be a household income level below a given proportion of average national income. A person lacks the necessary resources to enable them to participate in the normal and desirable patterns of life that exist within a given society at a given time.

My own understanding about the basic needs

The hierarchy is diagramed as a pyramid starting at the bottom with basic needs that must be satisfied for an individual to be able to progress to addressing more secondary needs. It's understood that a person who has to struggle to survive doesn't think as much about or attain self-actualization as a person whose survival is relatively assured. The hierarchy of needs shows the general progression of pursuits for people once survival and comfort are assured into the spiritual, the creative and or intellectual. The levels of the hierarchy, starting from the base of the pyramid are:

1. **Physiological needs** - These are biological requirements for human survival. Examples include air, food, water, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex and sleep.
2. **Safety needs** – Examples include protection from elements, security, order, law and stability.
3. **Love and belongingness needs** – These are the first of social needs, involving the desire for interpersonal relationships and being part of a group. Examples of these needs include friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love.
4. **Esteem needs** - Classified into two categories:
Self-esteem, stemming from dignity, achievement, mastery and independence. The desire for reputation or respect from others, including status and prestige.
5. **Self-actualization needs** – Examples include realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment and seeking personal growth and peak experiences

CONCLUSION

Basic needs are the things we need in our day-to-day lives. Without them, our lives are incomplete, worthless, less dignified or not dignified at all, or we may sink into absolute poverty. Basic needs vary depending on who you are and where you are. People in many countries in the South struggle to satisfy their basic needs; this can be due to internal or external forces.

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