

## Hierarchy of needs in *Button Button* by Richard Matheson

Amit Chaturvedi

Research scholar, Awadhesh Pratap Singh University, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, India

### Abstract

The story explores the real life's requirement of a normal person. The story through the character analyzes the natural instincts and the life's basic safety requirements of life. The main protagonist is a female character named Norma. The thesis analyses the protagonist, Norma's requirement of daily life. The story itself explores and analyses the basic human requirements using a hierarchy chart. According to this theory, person's feeling for future safety requirements are stronger than love needs. Humans have strong sentiments for its family, parents and beloved. They make every effort and can bear pain to earn comforts for them. Still the theory of Hierarchy of Needs stress on the fact that people's priorities are the protection and safety in future as the future is uncertain, ambiguous and undefined. No one knows what lies in the womb of the future. So it's the nature of the humans that their whole life revolves around ways to secure future. So the special feeling of love takes the backseat. The uncertain future makes the people work hard towards prioritizing their requirements for life. Uncertain future makes people insecure, under-confident and doubtful.

**Keywords:** human requirements, hierarchy of needs, future safety, uncertain future

### Introduction

This research explores how Richard Matheson relates the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in his short story. This research explores through the Hierarchy of Needs, which defines the priorities of human being. This chart clear states that future safety is much more important than other feelings like love for a man. In a common scenario, it is supposed that man's first priority is love for the family and dear ones. It is a 5-level model of human needs and portrayed as a pyramid. From the base to the progressive system upwards, the necessities are physiological, security, love and having a place, regard and self-realization.

Javid Anwar and Basri Sattar digs through Norma's character for her decision making for money and betterment of life as well. Norma as a simple housewife long for good apartment, hefty money, a car and vacation trip to Europe. Norma tries to fulfill her basic psychological needs. These needs are noted in the research by taking the verses from the original text. Norma is presented as a normal human being who wants all the materialistic comforts which can make her life easy, cozy and luxurious.

The 5 Levels of Maslow's hierarchy of Needs represents the human behavior and it motivates human beings to work towards fulfilling those needs in an order. People work hard to get this fulfilled and then goes to the second, third and so on. As a humanist, he was of the view that we have an inherited aspirations to be self-actualized. A series of few more basic needs should be fulfilled like food, safety, love, etc.

One more website reviews the Button Button collection and states that there are some implications of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory for Managers that as per the physiological needs, the managers must make appropriate salaries for their respective employees with which they could purchase things for to fulfill their needs.

The same way, as per the safety needs goes, managers must arrange proper security and safety needs so that they can

work in a secure environment and same as the social needs, the respective managers must promote organized social events and teamwork.

It states that these needs come with some limitations itself. All employees are have different needs and are not governed by same set of needs. It all depends on the strength or power of the unsatisfied needs. This theory cannot be applied on a starving artist. An artist will not compromise on his achievements and his efforts for recognition. For an artist recognition of his work is most important than anything else.

The website strange horizons states that the collection of short stories in Button Button give a good sample of his work and in a general sense represents a meticulous stress on the fiction genre. The website states that though his ideas are original in content but they are seminal to the genre.

The writer of the story, James Matheson, provides a chart that represents the Hierarchy of Needs of a human being. In this chart, he states that humans have the nature of finding security for the future which is uncertain and is the prime concern for humans. He even states to the extent that love comes only after the priority of future security. If a person is in love with someone but if he cannot provide the financial security and materialistic happiness then she could leave him and goes to the person who could fulfill all her requirements and provide her luxurious and secure life. In this context, Maslow's book conceivably represents well known contemporary work on human needs. Maslow proposed hierarchical pyramid which makes a priority list of human needs expanding to the top as transcendental needs and physical needs are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy chart. In fact, in Motivation and Personality, he arguably was of the viewpoint that when parents fail to provide a safe and nurturing environment the children of that family develop a deep feeling of insecurity. In this statement, Maslow seems to be the best psychological theorists and analyst of human minds and behavior.

Mohammed Javed Anwar and Basri Sattar state in the research posted in IJOHNM that

*“Maslow's order of necessities is a persuasive hypothesis in brain research including a five-level model of human needs, regularly portrayed as progressive dimensions inside a pyramid. From the base of the progressive system upwards, the necessities are: physiological, security, love and having a place, regard and self-realization. Needs let down in the chain of command must be fulfilled before people can take care of requirements higher up. This five-organize model can be separated into lack needs and development needs. The initial four dimensions are regularly alluded to as inadequacy needs (D-needs), and the best dimension is known as development or being needs.”*

I feel that the researchers, Javid and Basri, took and used too much reference texts from the original book which in turn made the research very short. By doing this, their research seem to finish in haste. Though they tried to explore the human basic nature of materialism and finding the ways to make their future safe and secure.

Where they explore the basic nature of humans who prioritize their requirements for living a life in a better way and secure environment. They also analyze the love people have for their loved ones, like the character Norma did. Though she argues for a better life, a lot of money; good house; and a car, she still loves her husband to mention this researchers took verses to mention this feeling of love also. I think, it is we, all human beings have nature of finding security and safety of the future and we cannot deny this fact that we somewhere in our lives look for our security because the future is so uncertain. So, automatically consciously or unconsciously we create a hierarchy of our needs. We, as human being, prioritize our basic requirement for livelihood.

### Conclusion

This research though tries to analyze and explore the basic human nature and their priorities still it lacks the research findings. The researchers, Javid and Basri must have brought more findings through more phrases, words and sentences whereas they only copied the text verses from the original and mentioned in their research. I agree that one or two place we must mention the original phrases but usage of too much of original verses reduces the originality of the research findings. Hierarchy of Needs sheds light on the priority list of the human being. This list has some role of social pressure and the society in which the people spend their lives. There is no doubt that people work towards making their future safe and secure yet it has some concealed pressure of the society and the family who are unsure of their future lives. In the world full of cut throat competition people are running fast and fighting to get ahead from one another. In this rat race, somewhere the true feeling of love lags behind and feeling of securing life takes the driving seat. Perhaps this inculcated the emotion of making a priority chart which reflects the human nature and its prioritizing behavior.

### References

1. Maslow Abraham Harold. Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper and Row New York, 1954
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation\\_and\\_Personality\\_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation_and_Personality_(book))
3. Anwar M, Sattar B, Anwar M. Maslow's hierarchy of needs in “button button” by richard matheson. Ijohmn (International Journal Online of Humanities). 2018; 4(6):10. Available at: <<http://ijohmn.com/index.php/ijohmn/article/view/76>>. Date accessed: 12 March. 2019. doi: <https://doi.org/10.24113/ijohmn.v4i6.76>.
4. The 5 Levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
5. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4136760>
6. The review on the Button Button short stories by Strange Horizons.
7. <http://strangehorizons.com/non-fiction/reviews/button-button-by-richard-matheson/>
8. MSG, Management of Study Guide states in its words Button Button
9. <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/maslows-hierarchy-needs-theory.htm>