UNIT 5  NEEDS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

Structure

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

All living organisms have certain needs for their survival. There are few needs, which are common in animals and human beings. These needs include water, food etc. There are few needs, which are specific to human beings, or the higher order animals such as chimpanzees. Needs are specific requirements of individuals which entails a necessity or an inclination to lessen, remove, or correct conditions of deficiency, disruption, or imbalance in relation to themselves. Needs, so defined, may be either physiological or psychological. In the context of a primary school child, we recognize the importance of both types of needs.

In this unit, we shall discuss the physiological and psychological needs, types of psychological needs, and factors affecting needs of children.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the concept of needs;
- differentiate between physiological and psychological needs;
- explain different types of psychological needs; and
- describe the factors affecting the development of psychological needs in children.

5.3 PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS

Physiological needs are also called biological needs. These needs are strong, persistent, internally motivating states of organisms. The corresponding tendencies or promptings to alleviate such states are 'drives'. An organic drive, according to Bigge and Hunt (1958), is a tendency to act in fulfilment of an organic need. That is, when a physiological need appears it produces a state of tension, which is uncomfortable. In order to relieve discomfort and restore a state of normalcy, an organism engages in appropriate behaviour — the manifestation of drive. It may be noted that some level of tension is normal to life as organic needs are never completely satisfied.
Physiological needs such as hunger, thirst and excretion of waste, are essential for survival. They lead us to a particular goal. For example, when we are hungry, we go in search for food, whether at home or in a hotel. During infancy, the source of food intake is breast-feeding. The role of the need for food and drink is in permitting continued metabolism and maintenance of chemical balances. There is need for satisfactory rest—activity to permit repair of fatigued tissue and thus promoting physical well-being. The protection of the physical organism from threats of the physical environment is also one the important physical needs. The need of a modicum of physical comfort and need for sexual release are other physiological needs. The physiological needs are indispensable and their satisfaction contributes significantly the well-being and survival of an organism.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

1. List any four physiological needs.

2. Describe the importance of physiological needs in children.

5.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

It was explained earlier that whereas physiological needs arise from actual organic deficiencies or requirements, psychological needs develop through organisms’ or persons’ interrelationships with various aspects of their environments. Thus, psychological needs may be termed as ‘experienced psychological deficiencies’.

Psychological needs do not arise within an organism or from an environment, but only through one’s interaction with his/her environment. It is only through perception and manipulation of environment that a person delineates tasks for him/herself i.e., the person develops tensions and needs. The intensity of tensions corresponds to the degree of needs, changing of goals or removal of barriers to a goal, as well as reaching a goal, can bring release of a tension. A task not completed give rise to a state of tension, but satisfaction of a need releases the tension. It is necessary for a teacher to understand various types of psychological needs of children in the classroom in order to make his/her teaching tasks interesting.
5.5 TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

The psychological needs are classified into the following types:

(i) Need for stimulation;
(ii) Need for physical care, nurturance and affection;
(iii) Need for affiliation;
(iv) Need for approval;
(v) Need for achievement; and
(vi) Need for power.

Need for stimulation: You might have heard people saying that they have got bored or a particular situation is quite boring. Have you ever tried to analyse the reasons for the same?

If yes, please write the reasons below:

Every individual requires an optimum amount of stimulation. This is true for all individuals. For infants, his/her parent’s smile, his/her words of appreciation, etc., are some of the sources of stimulation. It gives the child the feeling that parents are responsive to him/her and love him/her. The activities of running, hopping and other games stimulate the child. A toy, a book, a tree, a loud noise, the star, the river all stimulate the child. The whole universe is full of events, people and things, each one of which can be a stimulus. What the child, however, finds something stimulating and how s/he reacts to a particular event changes with age and his/her abilities and thinking become more complex as the child advances in age.

The child’s need for stimulation leads him/her to explore. We know that children are curious by nature and they want to explore everything. Exploration is the way the child learns about the world. It gives the child a sense of wonder about people and things. The play activities of children provide opportunities to think. They provide opportunities to know about the world. Children learn better during the course of play.
It is curiosity and a desire to explore that have led people to make discoveries. At no other age is this urge more apparent than in childhood. This urge is the starting point of all educational programmes.

Stimulation is essential for cognitive development. During infancy the caregiver and other adults talk to the child, tickle him/her, sing with him/her and play with him/her. Such playful interactions are the basis for learning. A stimulating environment during the preschool years, where the child gets a variety of experiences and opportunities to explore and adults who help him/her understand his/her experiences and answer his/her queries, facilitates the child's development.

**Need of physical care, nurturance and affection:** Physical care of a child is essential to ensure his/her survival. During infancy the child is totally dependent on the caregiver. s/he must be fed, clothed, bathed, attended to, provided a safe place for sleeping and resting and protected from harm and accidents. As the child grows older s/he learns to do many things on his/her own, s/he can eat by him/herself, take off clothes, walk and run. But even though s/he is learning to do some tasks of his/her own s/he still looks to adults for help in other tasks. For example, by age of five the child is familiar with his/her surroundings and can find his/her way without guidance. But when the caregiver takes the child with him/her to the market, the child has to be cared for at all stages, as the kind of care changes with age and setting.

Good health is the foundation for the optimal development of children. In order to maintain good health of the child, the parent must provide proper nutrition and the child must be protected from sickness and diseases as these can slow down his/her development. Unclean and dirty living conditions, unsafe drinking water and mal-nutrition can breed disease.

Love and nurturance are central to the development of a child. The parents should provide love and proper caring and they are responsive to them. During infancy, children tend to show dependency behaviour. The behaviour of other persons acquires reward value for the child through repeated association with satisfaction of his/her physical needs. As a result, the child desires the constant presence of the person who takes care of his/her physical needs (Normally the mother). S/he strives to gain her attention, help and affection because it is rewarding. If mother is not responsive to child, s/he will not be attached to her.

Love and nurturance lay the foundation for social and emotional development. During infancy, the infant develops an attachment to the person who looks after him/her. This attachment forms the basis for all later relationships. If the infant finds the experience with this person rewarding, s/he feels it is worthwhile to form relationships and begins to relate to other people. Every new relationship adds to the child's experience and influences his/her attitude toward others.

Nurturance also influences the child's feelings about him/herself. When the child is cared for s/he feels s/he is important to people around him/her and is recognized and accepted. This adds to his/her confidence. The feelings of confidence are important as they influence one's attitude towards success and failure. These feeling are important for another reason also. They influence the child's exploratory behaviour. It is only when the child feels confident about adult protection, s/he tries to do something new or different. A child who is confident that caregivers will come to him/her when s/he needs them will take a new step. The one who feels insecure will cling to parents. In short, mental and physical developments are mainly fostered by caregivers who provide a variety of experiences to the child.

**Need for Affiliation:** It is a general tendency of the child that s/he wants to affiliate with his/her parents and his/her siblings. During infancy, since children
feel insecure, they tend to affiliate with their parents. Children also tend to affiliate with siblings so that they may properly interact with them.

Need for Approval: Need for achievement, which is a combination of motive and incentive conditions, is an important determinant of school accomplishment. Children seek the approval of someone, be it parents, teachers or peers. This gives them rewards for their actions and it also helps them in judging an act being right or wrong. A child in the classroom wants to draw the teacher's attention and thereby approval of his/her actions may put his/her hand up, call out loudly "Sir" or jump up and down in his/her seat. During playing with their siblings they need approval from their teachers, parents or elders for any physical activity, and for victory.

Need for Achievement: The need for achievement refers to accomplishment. The individuals having this need tend to master, manipulate and overcome obstacles to achieve their goal. This need is essential for achieving something. Another characteristic is that people having this need prefer tasks of moderate difficulty level: they are neither attracted by extremely difficult tasks nor tasks with low difficulty level because a motive, known as fear of failure, operates in them. They are afraid of failing in extremely difficult tasks. Low difficult tasks do not attract them, as they do not provide any sense of achievement. Parents as well as teachers play a greater role in enhancing the achievement need of children. The development of achievement need starts from late childhood and may be a continuous process. This in itself is a very important motive, if properly utilized by the teacher, will drive the child to reach greater heights in schoolwork. It thus refers as achievement motivation and thus serves as an intrinsic incentive to learn. Intrinsic incentives like rewards and prizes are not as powerful as intrinsic incentives, such as constructive participation of children in appropriate curricular activities.

Need for power: As the child grows older, his/her needs become more complex. The child develops need for power; that is, s/he wants to control others. The development of need for power starts from late childhood. During play, the child tends to show power on their siblings.

5.6 FACTORS AFFECTING NEEDS OF CHILDREN

You have read in the previous unit that there are number of things like food, dirty water, pollution which affect proper physical development in children. Similarly, for all round development of a child it is a must that adequate care, love and affection, peer and/or sibling interaction and other appropriate social and psychological environment is equally important. If children have been deprived of one or more of these during developmental years, their growth and development may not be optimum. These are known as factors. Some of the main factors that affect the needs of children are given below:
1. **Deprivation**: Deprivation particularly parental deprivation inhibits the development of needs. For example, if a child has been deprived of love and affection, s/he will not develop such types of needs.

2. **Previous learning**: Previous learning is a major determinant in the development of needs. The previous learning influences the development of needs to a greater extent.

3. **Expectation**: Child’s expectations and teacher’s expectations play a significant role in the development of needs. For instance, suppose a child in the class is not able to have ‘his/her need for approval’ fulfilled; s/he may try to push him/herself into the limelight and catch his/her teacher’s attention.

4. **Dependency**: A child, who is more dependent on these parents, cannot take any decision independently. Such children are low achievers in later life than those who are less dependent on their parents.

**Independency and parental approval** are important determinants of need achievement. Independency is important in determining the high achievement motivation. It is generally seen that independency is positively correlated with high achievement. If parents always approve their children to respond in a good manner, it will enhance achievement need among children.

The fulfillment of needs of the child will ensure his/her optimal development. If a child is not provided good physical care, it can develop sickness and disease in the child. In extreme cases, this may result in some handicap, such as loss of sight or hearing. A malnourished and sick child has low energy and gets tired easily. S/he does not take interest in her/his surroundings and develops a tendency to irritate. This has a negative influence on his/her overall development.

Similarly, when the child lacks opportunities for exploration and has no affectionate caregivers, some disturbances in his/her personality may develop.

If a child is not able to form an emotional bond with his/her caregiver in the first few months of life, his/her social development may not be proper. His/her cognitive, language, and physical development may also be slowed down due to lack of stimulation. When the child lags behind in development, it may lead to low self-esteem and lack of initiative.

Parental rejection or disapproval may also cause a problem in later life of the child as these inhibit the development of certain needs.

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**Check Your Progress**

**Notes**: a) Write your answer in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

5. What are the different factors affecting the need of children?

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5.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have described that needs refer to lack of something. Needs can be categorized as physiological and psychological needs. Physiological needs such as hunger and thirst are generally fulfilled in children. The child also needs physical care, love, affection, stimulation, and parental approval. All these needs of children must be met simultaneously to ensure their optimal development. Usually, needs are met by the family, mainly by the mother of the child. The family provides a good environment for the proper development of a child. The importance of school is equally significant in this regard. In school, the teachers can do a lot in the fulfilment of the need of children. The teachers should try to create congenial environment in the school so that there is scope for proper satisfaction of the needs of children.

5.8 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Distinguish between physiological need and psychological needs.

2. Describe various types of psychological needs.

3. Observe a ten year old child. Classify his/her needs into different categories of psychological needs.

4. Discuss your observations in the academic counselling session at the study center and prepare a report.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Hunger, thirst, excretion of waste, sleep, rest.

2. Physiological needs are necessary for the well being and survival of an organism.

3. Psychological needs develop through individuals' interrelationships with various aspects of their environments.

4. Need for stimulation, need for physical care, nurturance and affection, need for affiliation, need for approval, need for achievement and need for power.

5. Deprivation, previous learning, expectation and dependency.