

MASLOW'S SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND ITS CONFLICTING THEORY TENDING TOWARDS INDIAN ETHOS

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ABSTRACT

Maslow's hierarchical theory of motivation is a ranked structure of human stimuli for satisfying various physiological and psychological needs towards self-actualization and further to move beyond with metamotivation. Numerous researchers are found to be using the concept of self-actualization making it synonymous with self-realization in tourism paradigm by explaining the involved processes of lifting the real-self to the level of ideal-self. But these theories are disputed by some scholars by stating that self actualization is different from self realization based on the Eastern philosophies which prompted the author for their detailed probe into traditional Indian scriptures. It is noticed during the analysis that Bhagavad Gita extensively dealt with the aspects of self realization which is found to be a distinct phenomenon from the concept of self actualization and observed to be outside of realm of human motivation. The studies revealed that all the experiences that are likely to happen from the events in future can be seen in advance by transcending one's own self from the Maslow's hierarchy of needs through a twofold path.

Keywords: Stimuli, Motivation, Actualization, Realization, Transcendence

INTRODUCTION

Maslow (1943) proposed the hierarchal theory of motivation, originating from the urge of the human stimuli, for satisfying various physiological and psychological needs towards self-actualization. These tendencies of human needs are categorized (Maslow, 1967) into two groups by terming them as deficiency needs (D needs), being needs (B needs) towards self-actualization (Goble, 1970). Later, humanistic psychologist Rogers (1951) adopted the concept by stating that self-actualization is man's general tendency to attain one's own full-potential while formulating his nineteen propositions. Continuing the discourse, Rogers added that human personality is composed of two selves, namely, the Real Self and the Ideal Self, that are corresponding to what a person actually is and what a person could be capable of, respectively. These concepts related to self actualization are schematically presented in Figure 1 (See Appendix A).

It can be observed from the Figure that the lower-order needs are categorized under the deficiency needs, while the higher-order needs are grouped into being needs to be fulfilled to move towards self-actualization. It can be further observed from the right side of Figure 1 that real-self is representing both the deficiency and being needs whereas the ideal-self is directly corresponding to self-actualization and beyond, towards the summit. On the other hand, the various elements that are relating to tourism paradigm are represented in the left side of Figure 1, by describing the travel of a tourist from the origin to the destination. It can be further observed from the Figure that both the deficiency and being needs represent the cognitive parameters, whereas the situational forces referring to the experiences at the

destination are led by the emotive function. Elaborating the concept of self-actualization, Maslow clarified that each level of need is dominantly persistent till it is satisfied and once it is satisfied then it ceases to exist by categorically stating that the urge for self-actualization can never be satisfied.

It is noticed that the term self-actualization was originally introduced by Kurt Goldstein (1934) in biology, to indicate the tendency of the organism's innate motivation to actualize as much as possible which was subsequently extended (Rogers 1951) to humanistic psychology as explained in the above. However, Fritz Perls (1992) argued in this context, regarding the risk of confusing self-actualizing with that of self-image actualizing which was later clarified by Maslow himself (Glasscoe, 2011). Further, Paul Vitz (1994) categorically added that self-actualization should invariably be related to the exemplary people alone, based on their moral norms.

Advancing all these concepts, Gnoth (1997) corroborated these theories in tourism studies by stating that the inner innate-desire, or a motive of a person, is responsible for the process of motivation in the form of a 'felt need' for actualizing the experiences, which sets the stage towards self-actualization. However, some scholars (Dumazedier, 1967; Krippendorf, 1987; Parker, 1983) from the West have connected free time and holidays to the concept of self-actualization or self-realization to redress the stresses and strains from the work-a-day life and/or to develop mind and body to its full-potential. Subsequently, Grunow-Lutter (1984) explained the concept of self-realization by describing the process of lifting the Real Self to the level of the Ideal Self. He has further argued that the process as a state of dynamic relationship between the Real- and the Ideal-Selves after satisfying basic and deficiency needs. Thus, the synonymous usage of self-actualization with that of the self-realization that is found in these explanations is disputed by some scholars including Ajit K Das (1989). Hence, the phenomenological thinking conceived by different researchers on the concept of self, self-actualization and self-realization appears to be subjective and relative, based on their individual perceptions. In view of these inherent ambiguities prevailing in these concepts by specifically referring to Eastern philosophies and Maslow's paving the way towards metamotivation led the author to probe into traditional Indian-scriptures for their detailed investigation.

Indian Ethos towards Self Actualization

Ethos, collectively defined as the characteristic spirit and beliefs of people (Barman 2008), distinguishes one culture from the other. Indian ethos is drawn from the Vedic literature which is considered as timeless and unequalled heritage of human kind. Several saints have treasured and disseminated their knowledge and wisdom through ancient Vedic literature encompassing *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Upanishads* and *Puranas*. *Mahabharata* (Indian Epic Poetry 2012), which is at the crest of *Vedic* literature, bears the annotation, "What is not found here will not be found anywhere else". The essence of all these scriptures is found in *Bhagavad Gita*, which is a part of *Mahabharata* and is an apostle of life skills towards self-actualization and self-realization. Furthermore, *Bhagavad Gita* is of great assistance in unfolding the purpose of one's life by involving various acts and activities related to different objects and situations and their related needs.

According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, ratiocination of any human activity is triggered by the intellect of the mind (Bhargava Teja, 2011) which is constituted by three *gunas*, (tendencies) namely, *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, and which are activated by the senses. The sense organs act

as antennae through which the activities of the world creep into the human mind and disturb the mental pool. This is summarized in the following verse of the scripture.

*traī-guṇya-viśhaya veda nīstrai-guṇyo bhavarjuna
nīrdvandvo nītya-sattva-stho nīryoga-kṣhema atmavan*

Bhagavad Gita, 2-45

Three tendencies (or Trai gunya) in life for establishing firmly in steady wisdom and be rooted in the knowledge of the Self.

However, cognitive attributes, by the influence of situational forces from the external world, are found to be responsible (Bhargava Teja, 2010) for letting lose the flood of stimuli in the sense organs for invoking the said three tendencies. It is interesting to note from the scripture that self-realization is a state of steady wisdom where a person's intellect goes beyond the confines of the body and mind and hence of these three tendencies. This is indicated in the following stanza of the Bhagavad Gita.

*yada te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati
yada gantasi nirvedam srotavyasya srustasya ca*

Bhagavad Gita, 2-52

When intellect crosses the mire of delusion then one shall attain an insight towards all that one has seen and yet to be seen

However, the will power of the mind, which has a capacity to control itself, is ordinarily influenced by the sense of doer-ship or ego, thereby, preventing the individual to realize the real-state of the self, which a person is capable of exerting for experiencing to its full potential. To experience such a state, a person has to transcend one's self, through the process of lifting the Real Self to the state of Ideal Self, and, further, go beyond or outside the realm of human motivation as indicated in the following declaration.

*śruti-vipratipanna te yada sthāsya nīscala
samādhav ācala buddhis tada yogam āvapsyasi*

Bhagavad Gita, 2-53

When intellect is perplexed then one has to be steady in the mind then one shall attain self realization

At this stage, which is known as steady wisdom where one can visualize all the experiences that are likely to be experienced well in advance by transcending one's own self without physically going through the process or performing any activity. In a nut shell a person is in a position to foresee even the future. This is indicated in the following verse.

*prajāhati yada kaman sarvan partha mano-gatan
atmany evatmana tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajnas tadocyate*

Bhagavad Gita, 2-55

When a person satisfied in the mind in the Self by the Self, then wisdom actualizes that can judge that which is beyond self.

Towards achieving the supreme state of awakening through the process of self-transcendence or self-realization, the *Bhagavad Gita* ordained a two-fold path, through its declarations by denoting (a) a path of action for the gross body and (b) a path of knowledge for the subtle body for realizing one's own self as quoted in the following stanza.

*loke 'smin dwividhaa nishthaa puraa proktaa mayaanagha
jñānāyogena sāṅkhyānām karmayogena yoginām*

Bhagavad Gita, 3-3

Path of Knowledge and the Path of Action
One for intellectual makers and other for peripheral doers

Further it is found from the scripture that the path of action is prescribed for those who are driven by lower physiological needs to satisfy and stop at the basic need, at the peripheral level. On the contrary, the path of knowledge is prescribed for those who need to go beyond self-actualization, by chronologically satisfying the physiological needs followed by satisfying the psychological needs, for attaining Maslow's state of self-actualization and, further, to go beyond towards self realization through the process of metamotivation. Further, the mandate of the scripture elaborates that these two paths are to be practiced in succession, which act complimentary to one another on the human plane. A schematic model is designed and developed for conceptualizing the metamotivation by incorporating all these concepts and formulations by mirroring the Maslow's model and is detailed in the following section.

Mirroring Maslow's Actualization for Tourism Paradigm

Self-concept results from individual human characteristics of I and me which are relating to various aspects of human life and their relationships. Western theories described (Rogers, 1959 and 1961) self as an organized consistent concept of a specific entity at any given moment and are changing form (Hothersall, 2004) of gestalt. Further, the qualities of I and me are found to be responsible for triggering human tendencies (Bhargava Teja, 2010) by giving rise for satisfying the urge by actualizing the self. Therefore, the self-concept is represented in the modern literature through three (Kent, 2007) components that are involving ideal-self, public-self and real-self. Earlier studies revealed that the coordination of these selves (Bhargava Teja 2009) is an essential prerequisite for actualizing the leisure experiences in the tourism paradigm. Towards this, a schematic diagram is designed and developed, by integrating the traditional concepts with the modern theories and representing the same by mirroring the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The conceptual diagram is presented in Figure 2 as a mirror of Maslow's chart (See Appendix B).

It can be observed from Figure 2 that the mirror of Maslow's hierarchy is ascending from Real Self driven by actions of the individuals, following the triggering from the sensuous organs and moving towards Ideal Self for entering into the arena of self-actualization. Further, it can be observed from the Figure that the Real Self constitutes lower physiological needs and are led by higher psychological needs towards self-actualization, each of which triggered, respectively, by five sense organs and five action organs, as indicated in the Figure at their corresponding and respective levels.

Further, it can be observed from the left side of the Figure that the path of action and the path of knowledge are liberating the human from the realm of motivation towards the apex point A after achieving one's own full-potential. The line passing through the point at apex A is indicated as a broken line which represents the line of transcendence (Viktor Frankl, 1959). At this point, the Ideal Self is lifted from the confines of human-motivation to a state of self-realization.

Furthermore, the process involved for evolving the state of self-realization from that of Maslow's self-actualization can be described as a dynamic and continuous process in between them, which are indicated with dual-direction curved arrows with imaginary lines separating the realm of human-motivation and beyond. Interestingly, the transcending process

is observed to be happening after actualizing deficiency and being needs by the coordination (Sharpe, 1985) of both sensuous and action organs towards self-realization.

At this stage of equipoise, the individual is stated to be not affected by external stimuli and its influences, and continues to act with self-knowledge by being seated (Glietman and Resiberg, 2004) at the summit point 'A' where one can foresee all levels of needs. The scriptural analysis denotes that self-actualization is different from self-realization. Where the former refers to achieving one's own full-potential within the realm of human-motivation and the latter corresponds to a supreme state of wisdom which is outside the area of human motivation and a state in which one can comprehend all the things that are likely to happen in future, well in advance.

DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Kurt Goldstein originally coined the term self-actualization in biology to describe an organism's innate motivation to actualize as much as possible. But Maslow used the term self-actualization to describe human stimuli for satisfying various needs towards self-actualization and, further, to move beyond in human endeavours. However Rogers added that human personality comprises of two selves, namely, the real-self to describe what one is, and the ideal-self--what one could be capable of. Subsequently, Grunow Lutter while adopting these concepts in the tourism paradigm attempted to use word self-actualization making it synonymous with the word self-realization which was later disputed by some scholars from the West. These differential opinions proposed by various researchers on the self-related concepts, by particularly pointing out on Eastern philosophies, prompted the author to probe into ancient Indian scriptures.

These studies revealed that *Bhagavad Gita*, is the source for abundant references on the concepts of self- and self-realization, along with vivid explanations on the requisite qualities and the process required to be a self-realized person. Further the traditional scripture declares that self-realization is outside of realm of human motivation and suggested a two-fold path, one for satisfying the peripheral needs at a biogenic level and the other to achieve one's own sensuous potential to its full extent and, further, to move beyond to achieve the state of self-realization by self-transcendence. Furthermore the stage of self-realization is described by the scripture as a supreme state of awakening that exists outside the realm of human motivation, at which the individual is able to see the future well in advance. The scripture goes on to show that the lower action organs are involved for satisfying the biogenic needs for the real-self while higher sensuous organs are striving to achieve for ideal self towards one's own full-potential, which is observed to be corresponding to the concept of Maslow's self-actualization.

The analysis of the studies revealed that the two-fold path prescribed for achieving self-realization is observed to be complimentary to each other by declaring the process of lifting the real-self to the level of ideal-self, and moving beyond. These mechanisms are conceptualized and modelled to demonstrate the entire process of evolution of self-realization in transcending one's own self from self-actualization to self-realization. The model resolves the ambiguities that are prevailing in the various existing theories and formulations are concerned with self, self actualization and self realization.

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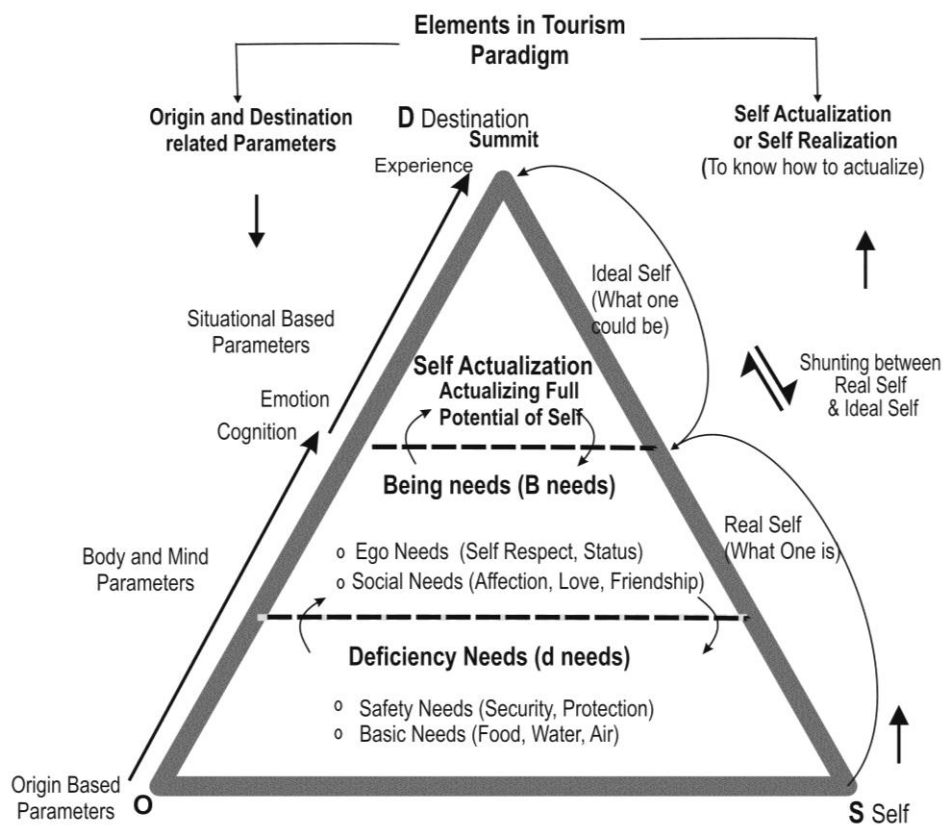
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APPENDIX A FIGURE I



APPENDIX B FIGURE II

