

# The Incorporation of Maslow's Motivational Theory in the Stories of Ruskin Bond

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## **Abstract**

*Every human endeavor has a motivation and in fact he/she performs more with this motivation than anyone else, because every act is motivated with some sort of desires, it may be companionship or hostility or yearning for something. Ruskin Bond may not have purposely implied this motivational theory but then we are trying to study his characters from the point of view of this motivational theory, for we feel that the human being is somehow stimulated by certain inclinations. The sole aim of Bond's writing the short stories is to amuse the readers. He is a keen observer of life .He understands the desire which encourages the human to do a particular action that he takes in his life. It may be derived from the longing, it may be derived from certain friendship, may be enmity .So without knowing the Maslow's Motivational Theory, we find the psychological incorporation in the stories. The innocent acts of children can be studied through motivational behavioral theory. The closeness of Ruskin's characters to Maslow's psychological input of children and human behavior is very obvious. His observation of life is so profound that any reader can identify with his characters. His stories are neither fairytales nor fantasies. He is not escapist. He knits his stories through his keen perception of human lives. Therefore the purpose of this research paper is to highlight the forceful and considerate sketch of human life in the writings of Bond by applying the Maslow theories of Motivation whose study of human behavior has been recognized world-wide. We can find this theory at work in Bond's stories like The Woman on Platform no.8, The Coral Tree, When the Guava are Ripe , Dust on the Mountain, The Kite, The Girl from Copenhagen etc*

Every human endeavor has a motivation and in fact he/she performs more with this motivation than anyone else, because every act is motivated with some sort of desires, it may be companionship or hostility or yearning for something. Ruskin Bond may not have purposely implied this motivational theory but then we are trying to study his characters from the point of view of this motivational theory, for we feel that the human being is somehow stimulated by certain inclinations. The sole aim of Bond's writing the short stories is to amuse the readers. He is a keen observer of life .He understands the desire which encourages the human to do a particular action that he takes in his life. It may be derived from the longing, it may be derived from certain friendship, may be enmity .So without knowing the Maslow's Motivational Theory, we find the psychological incorporation in the stories. The innocent acts of children can be studied through motivational behavioral theory. The closeness of Ruskin's characters to Maslow's psychological input of children and human behavior is very obvious.

Human beings have their own world of pride and prejudice, fear and affection, love and hatred, obsession and sharing. With an apt motivation, love and support even the most dumb and abnormal being can achieve the success in his life which is least expected from him. Bond not only sympathizes with the issues of insecurities, of yearning for love and compassion but also figures out in his simple humorous style the so called “Life and Death” issues. Maslow, the American psychiatrist while conferring the theories on human-behavior lays emphasis on the right motivation and displacement at the right time to evade the serious personality flaws which might arise in an individual as he turns into an adolescent and later into an insatiable youth.

We actually draw an inference that in reality Bond may or may not know the theories but he is very close to them. His stories are the perfect example of human life, therefore they entice to human heart, not only to children but also to every human being because they become the mirror of life. The well-psychologist Feldman asserts regarding motivation:

Psychologists who study motivation seek to discover the particular desired goals – the motives-that underlie behavior. Psychologists assume that such underlying motives steer our choices of activities. While motivation concerns the forces that direct future behavior, emotions pertain to the feeling we experience throughout our lives. The study of emotions focuses on our internal experience at any given moment. All of us feel a variety of emotions: happiness at succeeding at a difficult task, sadness over the death of a loved one, anger at being treated unfairly. Because emotions not only play a vital role in motivating our behavior but also act as a reflection of our underlying motivation, they play an important role in our lives. (Feldman, *Understanding Psychology* 308)

The psychological meaning of Motivation depicts forces determining behavior of the biological, emotional cognitive or social forces that activate behavior. Motivation can be employed as a notion to delineate the factors within an individual which provoke, maintain and channelize behavior towards the concerned goal. Arun creates relationship with a strange lady at platform no. 8 at Ambala Railway station in the story *The Woman on Platform no.8*. Similar relationship is shown in *The Coral Tree* where a little girl befriends the narrator.

All these manners and actions directly are connected with human psychology that imply that Motivation is the psychological frame of mind concerning with the human behavior .This psychological state affects behavior of any person. It means to stimulate the hidden qualities of a person that are encouraged by positive attitude. It is an internal cerebral state of person that provides reasons to take a specific action.

Motivation has been studied for many years drag out beyond the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result a number of theorists have propounded their own conclusions and consequently a wide variety of motivational theories have developed. Among them the theory of Maslow is of great significance when it comes to comprehending Motivation in developing human relationship. Maslow’s

Hierarchy of Needs is the theory in psychology that Abraham Maslow suggested in his 1943 paper '*A Theory of Human Motivation*'. The conceptualization for Maslow's hierarchy of needs was derived from Kurt Goldstein's 'Organismic Theory of Personality'. Maslow clarified the motivation based on the diverse needs of person. According to him, human needs are the only aspect from where a person gets motivation for doing specific behavior. He recognized human needs mainly in five levels. It suggests a succession of needs through which people move as they fulfill their wants and desires. The first four lowest levels are assembled together as 'deficiency needs' and related to physiological needs and the top level is called 'growth needs'. Deficiency needs must be fulfilled initially, and once these needs are satisfied, one seeks to meet growth needs and seeks 'self actualization'.

Physiological needs are the basic elementary needs of organism like eating, drinking, sleeping, breathing, sex, temperature that allow keeping a constant body temperature, and so on. When one of the most basic level needs is unfulfilled, this need will immediately get the highest priority, it comes to take over the person. Such biological needs are preemptive, in the sense that they push all other needs into the background. The completion of these needs is absolutely essential for survival. It is not possible to live without these needs excluding sex. Every individual strives to satisfy these needs primarily. Bond's characters like Ranji, Koki and Teju in the story *When the Guava are Ripe*, Arun in *The Woman on Platform no.8* are the examples of the utilization of these needs. In this regard, Incentive Approaches sometimes play a crucial role. They are when a luscious dessert appears on the table after a filling meal; its appeal has little or nothing to do with internal drives or the maintenance of arousal. Rather, if we choose to eat the dessert, such behavior is motivated by the external or the maintenance of arousal. Rather, if we choose to eat the dessert, such behavior is motivated by the external stimulus of dessert itself, which acts as an anticipated reward. This reward, in motivational terms, is an incentive.

Besides Maslow the great psychologist, Sigmund Freud also speaks about physiological needs in human beings. He has his unique perception which has become an evitable element while analyzing human personality. According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, a human personality comprises of the three elements i.e., the id, the ego and the superego. These elements are responsible for the complex human demeanor.

The id according to Freud is a very basic component of human personality. The idea of id pivots around the pleasure principles it is concerned with gratification of biological drives. The suppression of these wants and needs may lead to anxiety and stress that is if a person is hungry or thirsty he immediately wants to eat or drink. Such needs are referred as bio-genic needs arising from a psychological state of tension, such as a hungry or any kind of discomfort.

The focus of Bond's stories especially on children is based on bio-genic needs. His observation of human psyche is not based on Maslow and Freudian theories yet even naïve reader can observe the implications of the profound psychological theories which Bond handles

with ease and grace depicts human behavior with a touch of humor as he understands the idiosyncrasies of human behavior. He is like a god who smiles at human imperfections and without giving a solution, simply states the complexity of human life arising through biogenic forces in grand in human personality.

The next need is the need to be free from physical danger and to feel safe with the knowledge that physiological needs are being met. When all physiological needs are satisfied needs for security and safety become active. Adults have little awareness of their security needs except in times of emergency (such as in floods tsunami, earthquake or widespread rioting) or in case of loss of employment or death of close family members. Children often display signs of insecurity and the need to be safe. If they feel threatened in school, for example, they may not be able to gain academically. These needs include obviously the lack of physiological needs or any threat to one's health or security in general. Mainly these needs are the security of body, family, employment, resources, morality, health and property.

The urge for security is a very important: we want to feel secure economically and emotionally. An individual needs to feel secure in the affection of another or believe that he is in favor with his parents, relatives neighbors, teachers and class-fellows or associates-he has a desire to belong to somebody-he has the need to be secure against the loss of status, friends loved one, property, fortune and income. A feeling of insecurity which follows the non-satisfaction of this motive may lead to a variety of emotional disturbances and maladjustments. In this way people need physical and emotional safety. In the story *Dust on the Mountain*, through the young protagonist named Bisnu, Bond has dexterously employed these needs... there would be nothing to store away for the following winter. Money would be needed to buy supplies in Tehri, some thirty miles distant. And there was no money to be earned in the village. (The Ruskin Bond Children's Omnibus, 133)

The most distinctive feature of human life is its social character. All human beings have to communicate with other human beings in order to continue to exist. Aristotle, the great philosopher, remarked that 'Man is a social animal'. A completely isolated individual is purely hypothetical. He rarely, if ever exists alone. His daily life is largely made up of participating in groups. When physiological and security and safety needs are satisfied, one develops desire to be loved, to be accepted and to belong. These are the fundamental motivators for taking care of family and offspring. They represent the need for friends, family and "affectionate relation with in general". Maslow referred these needs to: "Our deeply animal tendency to herd, to flock, to join, to belong" (Hall, 449)

Social needs are those which have some social significance, which operate in our relationship with people. These needs are more complex than the physiological needs. Love and belonging needs are more common among human beings than in animals, whereas physiological needs are common both humans and other animals.

The necessity of love and belonging is accomplished by living in a family or a group or community. These needs impel a child to establish relationship in the universe. Bond's stories like *Most Beautiful*, *Sussana's Seven Husbands*, *A Case for Inspector*, *A Job Well Done* etc, relate to child-stranger and other different relationships formed on such delicate and sensitive issues.

The story, *Most Beautiful* deals with the struggle and complexity of mentally and physically challenged child Suresh who wishes to be accepted in the society. The story highlights the child 'craving to lead a normal life' and the tortures that he has to undergo for being a retard.

The mother of Suresh loves him fondly and tries hard to bring her son up like normal child; on the contrary, his father neglects him engrossing himself with his business affairs. This attitude further worsens the condition of the child and adds on the hurdles in his normal development. The psychological factor is traced such as Negativism and Displacement, playing a part in the story. Suresh in *Most Beautiful* cultivates a negative tendency towards life and exhibits against discriminatory treatment on the part of his father.

Suresh develops the tendency that can be termed as Negativism in psychological language. This negative tendency carries him away from his parents and sours his relationship with them. The narrator, however, develops a friendly relationship with Suresh after saving him from a gang of huddling making mockery of Suresh's disability. Once the child finds a benefactor, he becomes comfortable and shows normal progress like any other boy. Meeting with the boy frequently the narrator could observe a sea change in his deportment. As he puts it:

After that, I went to the boy's house about twice a week, and we nearly always visited the stream. Before long Suresh was able to swim a short distance. Knowing how to swim-this was something the bazaar boys never learnt-gave him a certain confidence, made his life something more than a one-dimensional existence. The more I saw Suresh, the less conscious was I of his deformities. For me, he was fast becoming the norm. (Bond, *Time Stops at Shamli and Other Stories*, p.70)

Bond's autobiographies, *Scenes from a Writer's Life* and *The Lamp is Lit* disclose that he has been very sensitive to human relationship throughout his life. Bond's trauma of losing a parent at an early age contributes to his brooding nature. He admits: "I lost my father quite early and then had to go to my remarried mother. I had to adjust a lot, which I managed pretty well. . . (Sandhu )

Bond's life has been marked by the conspicuous absence of lasting relationships. He belongs to broken family; his father died when he was ten years old ; his friends were lost either in life or in death ; love eluded him. The result of all these factors has been an insecurity that has been with the writer since his childhood.

After the first three categories of needs are satisfied, the need for esteem emerges. This deals with needs for both self-esteem and the esteem a person gets from others. Human has a need to receive respect from others. When these needs are satisfied, one feels self-confident and valued as a person; when they are frustrated, one feels inferior, weak, helpless and worthless.

In Maslow's thinking, esteem relates to the need to develop a sense of self-worth by recognizing that others know and value one's competence. Moving to a higher level of the pyramid of needs people feel the need to be heard, to be appreciated, to be wanted. These needs of the ego are related to the status. Their fulfillment involves economic status as means of attaining social status generally. Hence, the fulfillment of economic needs come before the social expression of one's ego.

It is the need to acquire the respect and status from others in society. Esteem needs are the longing for achievement, confidence to confront the world, freedom, independence, the craving for reputation and attention, prestige, recognition and importance. It may be divided into internal esteem factor and external esteem factor. Self-respect, achievements, autonomy are associated with the internal factors and status, recognition etc with the external esteem factors.

Maslow describes Self-Actualization as a person's need to be and do that which the person was 'born to do', Self-Actualization needs realize one's highest and complete potential through different forms of social, professional, intellectual and cultural artistic activities. It is the level of needs placed at the final sequence of human needs and aspiration.

Once these four sets of needs are fulfilled a person is able to strive for the highest-level that is need of self-actualization. Self-actualization is a state of self-fulfillment in which people realize their highest potential in their own unique manner. Although Maslow first suggested that self-actualization occurred in only a few famous individuals, he later expanded the concept to encompass everyday people. For example, a parent with excellent nurturing skills who raises a family, a teacher who year after year creates an environment that maximizes students' opportunities for success, and an artist who realizes his creative potential all may be self-actualized. The important thing is that people feel at ease with themselves and satisfied that they are using their talent to the fullest. In a sense, achieving self-actualization reduces the striving and yearning for greater fulfillment that most people's lives and instead provides a sense of satisfaction with the current state of affairs.

The story *Kitemaker* is all about a grandfather and his grandchild. The grandfather who has become useless over the years and he is worthless while narrating the story to the grandson he realizes that at one point of time he was the best kite-maker that gave him worth that he was something called actually the self-realization. These needs are sometimes seen as signs of restlessness. If a person is hungry, unsafe not loved or accepted, or lacking self-esteem, it is very easy to know what the person is restless about. However it is not always clear what a person wants when there is a need for Self-Actualization. Although the research has been trying to validate the observation of Maslow's theory while evaluating the stories of Bond. It is difficult to measure self-actualization objectively, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is important for two reasons: "It highlights the complexity of human needs, and it emphasizes the ideas that until more basic biological needs are met, people will relatively remain unconcerned with higher-order

needs. If people are hungry, their first interest will be obtaining food; they will not be concerned with needs such as love and self-esteem.”(Feldman, *Understanding Psychology* 314)

These needs entice an individual to build relationships in the universe. All kinds of relationship that an individual develops in this world are an act towards the acquirement or accomplishment of his/her basic physiological and psychological needs. Ruskin Bond brings to fore this sort of the child psychology via a cobweb of human relationship in his short stories. Bond wants to convey to his readers that his stories are windows to real-life events, emotions and situations of people’s daily lives. The stories also provide an insight into the author’s personal life .The relationship which Bond dexterously delineates in his short stories are in fact, a representation of his own personal experience, the human beings that he envisages around him ,and even at times his own self : “I felt distanced from family and could find happiness only in the homes of friends or between the cover of books.” (Bond, *Scenes from a Writer’s Life* xvi)

Bond is credited as a writer for his unimpeachable portrayal of human psyche. His stories pertinently illumine the demeanor of human minds and the influences which tickles their cerebral depths arousing them to maneuver their acts which are foreseeable and indisputably the vital issues to them.

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