

Air - Fresh, clean air is needed for life. But exhaust fumes emitted by vehicles, smoke emitted by factories, smoke that gathers inside houses due to the lack of chimneys as well as cigarette smoke results in air pollution. Inhalation of this polluted air increases the risk of falling ill. Thus, the first basic human need is clean air.

Water -Water is necessary for human survival. A bigger part of the earth is covered with oceans. Although there is sea water in abundance we cannot use it for our day-to-day needs. Usable water is available only in the water resources such as rivers, inland reservoirs, ponds and springs. This water too can get polluted due to various reasons. Using polluted water is harmful. Everyone has to contribute to and take responsibility for having clean water.



Figure 2.1

Food -Food provides us with the nutrition that is required for energy, growth of the body and protection from disease. We should therefore consume a clean, healthy, balanced diet that consists of all the nutrients in required amounts. Today various types of chemicals are used in the production of food. Since such chemicals are harmful to health, you have to be careful in choosing food.



Other needs

Let us go back to the discussion on people of ancient times. After air, water and food, which were their basic needs, gradually they thought of fulfilling other needs.

For instance, people of the Stone Age used a cave or a tree burrow as a house to get protection from rain. They learned to make tools with stones or animal bones. They used these tools to hunt animals for food.

They covered their body with leaves and animal skins which provided protection from bad weather. Thus their lifestyle underwent changes little by little.

They became skilful at generating fire by striking two stones or rubbing two sticks together. This discovery led to great changes in their lives. Earlier they used to eat raw meat, but with this, they got used to burn meat and eat it. They improved their life step by step with inventions, experience and creativity, such as preserving meat by using honey etc. and preparing tidier and better clothes.



Figure 2.2

The man of the Stone Age passed the nomad Age and stepped into the Agricultural Age and then the Industrial Age. In parallel with this progress of the social system, man's need for houses diversified.

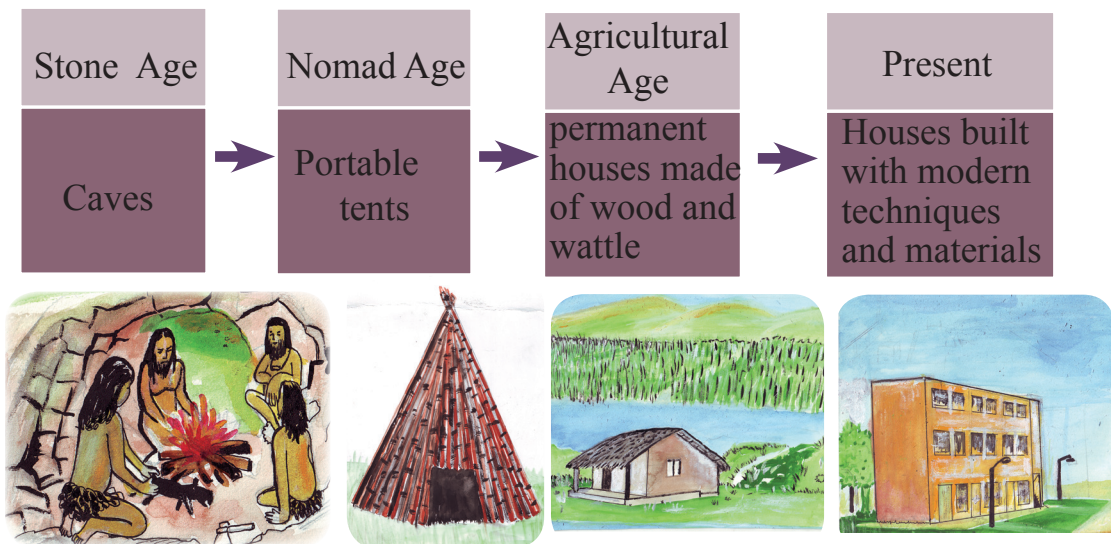


Figure 2.2 - Evolution of human dwellings-from the rock cave to the modern house

Thus, the society becomes more complex, man began to have other needs in addition to his basic needs. These other needs can be physical

needs such as houses, clothes, tools, vehicles etc. as well as mental and social needs like protection, love, education and recreational activities such as entertainment and sport.



Needs and desires

For a healthy life we must fulfill our basic and other needs. In addition, we also have desires. Desires are things that are not essential for life, but what we like to have. Some desires related to things that are really not necessary for us, or it may relate to unnecessary additional option of a necessary item. It may be produced in such an attractive way with components added to it which are not really required. Our desires are unlimited. We always desire to change what we have. But we should endeavour to control our desires and spend a better life.

E.g. the following are two advertisements displayed at two book shops.

A perfumed eraser of
rainbow colours – Rs 20/=

A big eraser to erase easily
and fast – Rs. 20/=

Both erasers do the same function. Which eraser do you prefer? If you buy the perfumed one, you will be spending extra money unnecessarily. Now, do you understand that you will waste money if you are attracted towards such features. It is useful to have the talent to identify what gives best value for money.

However, one person's desire can be another's need.

E.g. imagine you loved a winter coat that you saw in a TV advertisement.

It is just a desire for you. But it is an



Figure 2.4

essential item for someone living in a cold country.

So if you can match your desires with your needs, you will be able to spend a better life. Also, craving for certain desires can be harmful to you.

E.g. if you eat toffees and chocolates often as you have a desire for them, you can develop cavities in your teeth. It might also make you a victim of diseases such as diabetes.



Responsibilities and duties in fulfilling needs and desires

We like to fulfill both our needs and desires. While the fulfillment of needs should be given priority, our desires too can be fulfilled if the required resources are available. But since the desires are unlimited, you must make sure that fulfilling them does no harm to you as well as others.

Factors to be concerned of in fulfilling needs and desires:

1. Suitability to one's health
2. Ability to cope with the economic status of one's family
3. Not harming or offending others
4. Not breaking social norms and morals
5. In accordance with the law of the country.



Figure 2.5

For instance,

- you should select the types and amounts of food to suit your health.
- Fulfilment of your needs and desires should not be a burden to the family's economy.
- You must prioritize your needs and fulfill them accordingly.
- You should not trouble your parents often to fulfill your desires.



Figure 2.6

Imagine you like loud music. But if your family members or neighbors do not like that, it can be a nuisance to them and damage your relationship with them.

- It is important to remember that you should not act against the law.

E.g. if you do something illegal such as stealing, when you do not have money to accomplish a desire, that is clearly wrong.

- You must take wise decisions in fulfilling your needs.

Everything shown in the media is not essential. They may be mere desires. Goods/ services are attractively presented in advertisements and promotions in order to increase their sales. You should have the ability to identify your needs and select them correctly.

- Even if you have strong desires you should only choose what is essential-even if you have the financial capacity.



Figure 2.7

As mentioned earlier, clean water is a limited resource. Therefore, it should not be wasted. You should make it a habit to close the taps after using. Thereby we can contribute to preserve water.

So our duties and responsibilities should be:

- Prioritizing our needs
- Leading a simple life style without being a slave to desire
- Using available resources wisely without wasting them
- Making wise decisions, without getting carried away by advertisements
- Reusing things which are reusable
- Recycling things that can be recycled
- Sharing
- Being law-abiding.



Figure 2.8

Let us put it into practice

Prepare a list of items bought to your home during the past week /month and categorize them as to whether they are items needed or desired. Accordingly, find out how much has been spent on desires during this period.

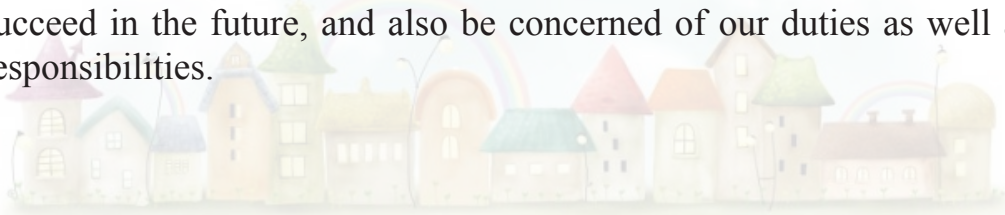
Goods	Price	Need	Desire



Figure 2.9

Now we know....

The basic human needs are air, water and food. In life, we have to fulfil the basic needs as well as other needs such as housing, clothes, protection, love, education, rest etc. In addition to them, we have desires. In order to lead a healthy life, we should be talented in controlling needs and desires from childhood itself. Nevertheless, in satisfying them, we should be concerned of our health, others' rights, social norms, moral values and the law. We should prioritize needs and desires in order to succeed in the future, and also be concerned of our duties as well as responsibilities.



Let us test our knowledge

1. Name the basic needs of humans.
2. Mention three other needs in addition to their basic needs.
3. Mention four factors that you should consider when fulfilling your needs and desires.
4. Mention five responsibilities and obligations you should consider when fulfilling needs and desires.