

Nicholas Stout

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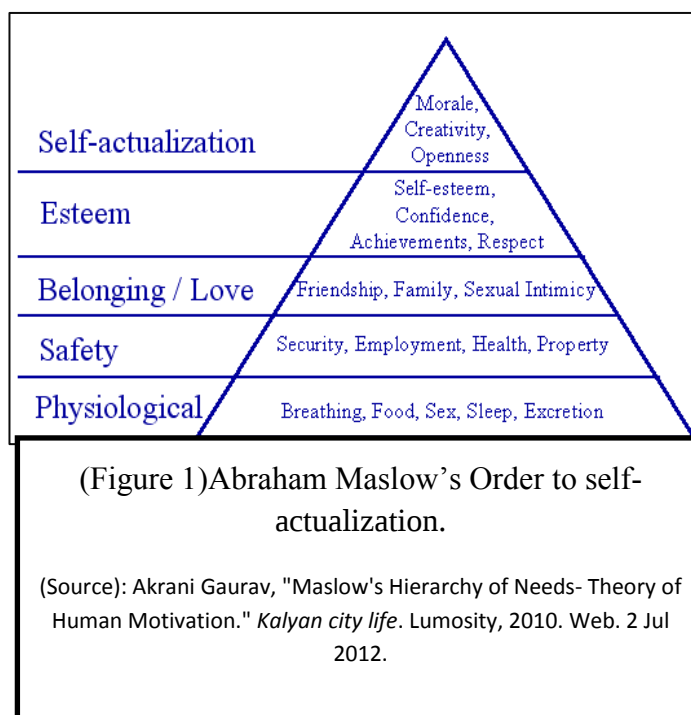
Professor Argyle

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Poverty and Pollution

India is home to the longest river in the world, the Ganges, with hundreds of thousands living off the water. The river is also considered sacred, with even more Hindu coming to bathe in her loving embrace. Consequently, for many that could mean illness or death. With obvious pollution in the river many still bathe and drink from the Goddesses water. In reality, the Indian government has bigger issues then pollution “such as poverty that must be answered,” claims Dr. Saha, a scientist from the “Air Lab” at India’s Central Pollution Control Board. Dr. Saha claims that India must first be able to balance the dismal poverty line before tackling pollution (Timmons, and Vyawahare). According to Abraham Maslow, a 20th Century psychologist, he suggests people must progress through several levels of basic need in order to fully harness their true potential or be able to care about such topics as pollution.

Abraham Maslow states people are motivated by human need and are driven by five levels until they become self-actualized (see Fig. 1). Starting at the bottom of the pyramid is the basic *Physiological* needs for food, air, warmth, and shelter. The next course of the pyramid is *Safety*, such as freedom from fear. Continuing up is the third level *Belonging/Love*, for example



family and friends. The fourth level *Self-Esteem* is recognition and respect. *Self-actualization* at the pinnacle of the pyramid and if we reach this level we are capable of harnessing selflessness. Abraham Maslow says only 2% of the population ever actually achieve self-actualization (Abraham Maslow). In order for India to resolve the pollution issue, people in India must find a balance between *Belonging/Love* and *self-esteem*.

Many think pollution in India is an international problem. These people understand the need to educate the locals about the long and short-term consequences of pollution; furthermore, the benefits of keeping the Ganges River clean. People must be able to obtain food and shelter before even caring or thinking about wanting to make a difference. According to Maslow, we must be above the second step to care about others. This means, that if we are scavenging for food and shelter our whole lives we are only thinking of one thing, ourselves.

Saul McLeod is a Psychology Lecturer at Wiggin and Leigh College and designer of the website SimplyPsychology.org. Mr. McLeod argues that the Maslow theory is “falsified” in

context to India, because Indian's are capability of sustaining "higher-order needs such as love and belongingness." Saul McLeod explains that India suffers from poverty and many people are capable of understanding their true potential (McLeod). Perhaps, many from India do reach Maslow's *Self-Actualization*, and struggle to make a change. However, it is important to remember that Maslow claims that only 2% of the population achieves *Self-Actualization*, that is worldwide not just India.

Scientists from the western hemisphere have attempted to educate villages along the Ganges River about the pollution problems, making several return trips, only to find that many of the villages had resorted back to unsanitary practices. Sadly, India has 37% poverty, which means many people in India are struggling to eat, and find shelter that is warm "37.2% of India Is in Poverty by Criterion of Consumption". In India many hungry and devoted Hindu pray in and drink the polluted water of the Ganges River. Explain to them pollution, the effects and what they should do about it, when they are suffering from hunger pains it's hard to focus or even acknowledge other's needs.

India's Hierarchy of Need: Made in India

In order for India to make the necessary changes required to address the pollution of the Ganges River they must first address countless other issues. The pollution problems are escalating throughout the world. Many steps can be taken to preserve the planet for many generations to come. However, in order for India to take action they must first triumph over poverty. When Indian's struggle to find shelter, food, and warmth, we can't expect them to care about pollution (see fig. 2). If people are interested in aiding India in cleaning up the Ganges River, they must be willing to aid the Indian workforce. When poverty is narrowed, the Indian

people will have accomplished a step to understanding the pollution issue and be able to take action as a whole.



(Figure 2) Indian people line up to receive food rations. Many Indians are suffering from poverty.

(Source): "Voice against Corruption in UP." N.p., n.d. Web. 04 July 2012.
<<http://voiceagainstcorruptioninup.blogspot.com/2011/05/voice-against-corruption-in-up.html>>.

Americans understand that western companies have already started moving to India. However, how many of those companies are doing it for profit, not because they want to help change the pollution or aid the poverty stricken population. Many of those companies are only trying to widen their profit margins. Or even worse, pawning off the pollution problem they have helped create in many western countries. It is always important to research a company's environmental projects or charities that they contribute to each year. Always see if the companies are making an effort to minimize their emissions and focusing on returning the environment to its original habitat. People who support the International market should force these companies to be aware of the pollution problem in India.

One step, is buying products that support Indian stability and financial growth. The world market for consumer goods is consistently growing and changing. India manufactures make many quality products, especially shirts and leather. If we have a choice to buy foreign or domestic we should buy domestic. However, if it is two foreign competitors, one is made in India and they're environmentally responsible, buy Indian. With more jobs and exports, India will stabilize and people will begin to want to take local action, because they are no longer driven only to eat and breathe.

Finally, with India nourished and loving themselves they will be able to focus on family. When the family aspect of life is satisfied and people start to feel love and respect. This is the time for scientists and world educators to step in and play the part that they have wanted to for years. As India becomes stronger and healthier, they will become conscious of the decisions they have made. Moreover, realizing they can accomplish anything as a force, standing together India will unite behind each other and move to force the government to take action.

Now the government of India will be able to make changes as well. Indians must pay Stamp Duty on almost everything they buy. The Stamp Duty is an attempt by Indian government to collect money from local people, for example Americas Internal Revenue Service. A local person is authorized on behalf of the government to collect payment for the stamp. This privileged person is not a paid government official; therefore, they must find a way to make a living and they do so by setting the price of the stamp. With the stamp as a tool and freedom to charge any price to any party, many Indians become discouraged by such challenging obstacle courses. In western way of life, that is corruption. With a system so corruptible, many locals struggle to follow such laws. Furthermore, people see the government as weak because of the poverty crises. Strange enough, the Indian government can make laws against pollution but cannot enforce them. Keep in mind, that the most important thing to remember it is not America.

The American people must take drastic steps in order to redirect our uncertain future that we are heading. To change the world we must take the first step in a positive direction. Americans need to move forward and try to balance our own poverty ridden country. Remember Maslow theory claims only 2% of the world population achieves self-actualization. Finally, if we want to make a change in the world next step would be participating in local elections, the voter turnout in America is sad. We can elect officials based on what we think is the most pressing

issues. We can even campaign for our favorite candidates. After they are elected, contact them often to make sure they are still working on solving those issues. Lead by example and the world will follow and if they don't, at least we focused on making positive changes in our way of life.

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