5.1 INTRODUCTION

All children have some basic physical and psychological needs. Fulfillment of these needs is important for their overall and optimal development. When children are deprived of these needs, it affects their physical, emotional, social and mental development. These children often dropout or fail in school because of the nature of school experiences they undergo. It is, therefore, important to provide them with a favourable learning atmosphere in school and need-based education that is relevant for these children in order to make them grow into effective and optimally functioning adults.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:
- recognise the basic needs of children;
- understand the effects on the development of a child when these needs are not fulfilled;
- identify the causes and effects of school failure on the deprived child; and
- help a deprived child in a school setting.

5.3 BASIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN

In Unit 2 we have discussed the various problems associated with the growth and development of children. In this unit, we will focus our attention on some basic needs of children and what happens if they are not fulfilled. In other words, what happens when there is deprivation of basic needs in children.

Let us look closely at the basic needs of children. What do children need when they are born into this world and how do these needs change as they grow?

A general answer to the question “what are the basic needs of children?” is often “food, clothing and shelter”. Is that all “education” is about? Let us look systematically into the basic needs of children. These can be divided into physical, psychological and educational needs. Physical needs refer to proper food, good health, protection against illness and time to play, sufficient clothing and adequate shelter. Satisfaction of psychological needs refer to feeling of love, affection and a sense of security, and
these are generally granted in the early years through the family members. All these needs are interrelated. They interact with one another and leave their imprint on growing children.

Before you read further, take a piece of paper and write down the needs of children which you are aware of. Once you have done that, read on and see for yourself the needs which you might have missed.

Needs of growing children include:

**Physical needs**
- proper food, clothing,
- protection from pain, sickness,
- time to play

**Psychological needs**
- to be accepted as a unique individual
- emotional satisfaction
- constant reassurance
- affection
- help in regulating emotional responses
- help in accepting his or her own sex
- help in learning how to behave with other people

**Educational needs**
- education that does not arouse fear
- help in studies
- warm and understanding atmosphere at home and in school
- sense of achievement
- encouragement for new learning
- education to meet life’s challenges

Now that we know what the basic needs of children are, do you think you are fulfilling all these needs of children under your charge? If not, how do they affect them. What are the consequences of deprivation of needs in children?

### 5.4 DEPRIVATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

What is deprivation? Deprivation is what a child needs to have but is unable to have. For example, children in many families do not get nutritious food to eat will be weak and may suffer from malnutrition, ill health, and may become prone to infection and disease which will in turn affect their physical functioning and development.

The above example refers to deprivation at the physical level. There can also be social deprivation, which has been equated with “failure to provide opportunity to have experience”, “deficiencies in experiences and conditions in learning”, “insufficient satisfaction of basic psychological needs’ like love, affection and a sense of belongingness; and a condition in which certain external (environmental) and internal (physical) factors merge to narrow a person’s behaviour or alternatives for achieving self-fulfillment”. Therefore, deprivation can be considered as a prolonged process.
relative to a social setting and represents a broader spectrum (area) of environmental and organismic variables (factors) which constitute the basic sources of experiences to the living organism. It is insufficient satisfaction of basic needs for a prolonged period.

Deprivation occurring through unstimulating environment can result in poor performance in learning or academic achievement. The dropouts or failure in school is one of the consequences of deprivation and lack of stimulating environment at home.

Irrespective of socio-economic status, in families where children get opportunity to learn, are motivated and encouraged to think on their own, solve their own problems, such children will mature into fully functioning adults.

The effects of social deprivation are seen in many forms: poor development of the individual's intellectual development and learning; process of socialisation and interpersonal relationships. The most damaging effect of social and cultural deprivation has been on the intellectual development of children in terms of inadequate intellectual development, language deficit, perceptual and learning deficit and deficient learning and concept formation.

The normal progression from dependence to independence is apparently impeded in those children who do not receive a normal amount of affection, attention and love in their early years. As a result, they find it difficult to develop feelings of autonomy and independence, without which they simply do not become good task oriented individuals. Given this relationship between feeling of autonomy and independent thinking, the teacher should help children develop feelings of autonomy as much as to help them intellectually master new cognitive tasks essential for academic achievement. It is often seen that children from deprived backgrounds use the classroom to satisfy their emotional needs for attention more than they do to master the basic academic curriculum.

It is further seen that impoverished conditions of life produce a kind of personality pattern that results in various kinds of inadequacies in behaviour. The roots are traced to parental interactions and the general process of socialization which children in a deprived environment undergo.

The environment of the deprived child has greater incidence of stress and strain and lack of satisfaction of basic physical and psychological needs. All these experiences combined together produce anxiety. This anxiety, when it becomes a part of the personality of a child, has negative effect on the learning ability of the child.

As a teacher you must be interacting with the children from different social backgrounds in your class. Do you find any differences in the learning abilities and behaviour pattern of these children? If yes, then try and list these differences before you read further.

Teachers often comment that, "this child is poor in studies because the parents of this child have strained relationship; or because the parents do not have time to teach the child..." It is important here that as teachers we should label a child, but in turn try and give extra help to such a child because s/he needs it. We will now go into the differences in performance and behaviour of children from the non-deprived and deprived environments and how it affects school performance of a child.

- Superior educational environment, greater opportunities for cultural advancement of non-deprived children over the deprived accounts for differences in academic performances.
- Child rearing and disciplinary practices adopted by the parents of deprived children are responsible for their being low in achievement, training and independence.
- There are differences in social environment and value orientation of parents from the deprived and non-deprived groups, with the parents from the non-deprived groups emphasizing and helping children to master and analyse a task, reason independently and to function logically on these aspects, while the deprived children lack this opportunity in their environment.

- Cognitive skills of deprived children are progressively retarded, whereas that of the non-deprived children develop faster due to the environmental stimulation in terms of the learning opportunities available. The differences in cognitive abilities between non-deprived and deprived children increase year by year. These children are thus at a less advanced level of intellectual skills as compared to the non-deprived, suggestive of a lag (not maintaining a pre-established pace) in cognitive development.

What can you as a teacher do for such a child? Indeed, looking after and teaching deprived children in the school is made very much easier if their signs of hostility, lack of motivation to learn, inattentiveness and restless behaviour can be accepted with tolerance and regarded as the result of natural causes.

The influence of other children on the child with emotional difficulties is considerable. It is possible for the more stable children and the established group to exert a beneficial and sometimes powerful influence on the more distressed and maladjusted child. Children want to feel valued for their own sake as individuals. Many children may become increasingly deprived if they have no suitable outside friends.

One can thus conclude that:

- social, psychological and educational deprivation affect the behaviour right from the early childhood;
- the socio-cultural environment, in which the child grows up, is highly influential in determining the kind and degree of his/her experience;
- the ease of acquisition of new knowledge and cognitive skills like problem-solving is based (to a large extent) on the prior experience and knowledge of the individuals; and
- the opportunities available for learning and the extent of motivation determine the level of academic achievement in a child.

Check Your Progress

Note: Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

1. Please tick mark (✓) the appropriate category in which the following needs fall into:
   i) Child needs a well balanced diet.
      Physical/ Psychological/Educational
   ii) It's important to love and make the child feel secure and wanted.
      Physical/ Psychological/Educational
   iii) Child needs to have a good health for proper development.
      Physical/ Psychological/Educational
   iv) A child is curious to know about things around him.
      Physical/ Psychological/Educational
   v) Child needs to be protected against physical abuse.
      Physical/ Psychological/Educational
5.5 SCHOOL FAILURE AND THE DEPRIVED CHILD

It is important to be aware of the quality of interaction between the teachers and the deprived children. Very often these children are labeled as lazy, untidy and good for nothing. These children have very limited interaction with their teachers. Often these children had to sit in awkward positions, either at the back or at the side of the classroom, far from the teacher's direct view. The negative perception held by the teachers are also transmitted to other children and in the process those deprived children get isolated.

Rani was one of those children.

Downgrading the loser: Researchers observed that children who were judged as being poor learners, lazy, untidy, misbehaved, and who were consistently punished no matter what they did to try to improve or change. These children experienced a very limited type of interaction with their teachers. Following are some of the typical teacher behaviours in this context:

Teacher: “Rani come!” (Rani walks to the blackboard and is asked to write ‘9’. She is left-handed. She writes a ‘2’ and the teacher says that it is wrong.)

Rani then writes ‘4’

Teacher: Alright, four and then five. (Rani writes ‘3’ slowly with her left hand. The teacher had wanted a ‘5’).

Teacher: “That is not a five. What number is that?

Children: (in chorus): Three.

Teacher: (With annoyed tone): “Go on, then, write ‘5’ you slow head.” (Rani looks at the blackboard and does not write anything. Several seconds go by).

Teacher: “Sit down you lazy bones, and watch what someone else does.” Several children: (shouting): “1!” “1!”

Teacher: “Radha, you are so quiet. Come here. “(Radha goes to the blackboard and the teacher holds her hand as Radha attempts to write the number ‘5’. However, she writes it backwards.)
Teacher: “No, that number is reversed.” (She erases it and then holds the child’s hand and helps her write it correctly. She then helps Radha write the number ‘9’, which is the correct sum of four plus five).

It was obvious that Radha and Rani received different treatment: one was a caring type of help; the other, rejection. What the teacher thinks about Rani was recorded in an interview with her.

“She is an awful girl, she does terrible things. Yesterday a boy brought a packet of biscuits to eat. I don’t know how Rani managed to get into the room and steal the biscuits, but she did. When we asked her about it she admitted she had done it. She doesn’t deny things. The other day, in front of everybody, she took a banana from a friend’s bag and ate it. The problem is that her mother does not believe me when I tell her”.

The other children also had something to say about Rani:

Children: (to the observer) “She is lazy!”

Observer: “Why is she lazy?”

Child: “Because she is untidy. Her books are dirty. Look!” (She opens a book and shows it. Rani, who is present, snatches it away).

Failure for parents means their child repeat a class or eventually dropout of school. Some parents attribute failure not to the school, but to their own handling of the situation. Though in some exceptional cases you do have a mother who complains: “The teacher is not good. She calls my son ass”. I think they have caused a trauma in him. Rakesh came up to me one day, crying: ‘I am an ass, mama, I don’t want to go back to school!’

Many parents prefer to say that their child is doing poorly because they have no time to help in studies, or that the child is probably dull or mentally deficient.

The children themselves rarely perceive where their problems lie. They acknowledge that the school is an important place for them and that the mistakes lie within themselves. The successful children, as observed in the classrooms, are those who apart from doing well academically have better home conditions and have learnt “the rules of the game”. They know when to put on a questioning face when the teacher requires it, or to avoid asking questions, especially those that might embarrass the teacher. Children learn through experience that to be successful they should ask procedural questions: “What are we going to write? How many lines should we have?”. Successful children also provide a service for the teacher, to wipe the blackboard or pass a book.

Let us now look at how do the teachers themselves understand the problem of failure? Too often they are quite unaware of how their teaching reinforces the failings in a child. Given that they teach deprived children, teachers consider background factors to be a major cause of poor learning. In some cases, however, they are not well aware of the specific home problems children have and treat them as if they did not exist. In one case a teacher constantly punished and ridiculed a girl who did not do her home work, not knowing the child had to work to support a disabled father.

School failure is a common experience for the deprived children. By the time they are in third grade they are approximately a year behind other children academically: by the sixth grade, 2 years behind; by the end of junior high school, they may be as much as 3 years below grade level.

Middle-class parents encourage and reward academic progress, whereas lower class parents place more stress on obedience and rigid regulations. In introducing their children to a school situation, lower-class parents stress disciplinary demands, while middle class parents stress acquiring of cognitive skills. Moreover, most lower class parents typically have a limited educational background, and therefore, cannot serve
as a model of educational achievement or help their children with their homework. The lower-class children do not have peers who can be models of academic success. In fact, while middle class children gain prestige and status from school success, lower-class children are likely to be rejected by their peers if they do well in school. In brief, a lower-class child does not usually find much outside support from friends or family for doing well in school.

Another disadvantage suffered by deprived children is that the schools they attend are often physically deteriorated and are deficient in essential physical facilities such as play grounds, proper class rooms, teaching material and essential books. The schools are often overcrowded and understaffed, and even the teachers have a tendency to favour the middle-class children in their classes. It may be due to the criteria adopted by most of the schools in assessing teacher's effectiveness as the scholastic achievements of the children. Sometimes it seems as though the teachers fail to understand the differences in background, experience, and values of lower-class children, and they expect these children to fail in school. This can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as they devote more of their teaching time to the middle-class children, acting more as disciplinarians with their lower-class pupils.

Providing deprived children with decent physical surroundings, educational facilities, and dedicated skillful teaching is not the complete solution to their problems. These children must also be motivated, their own interests must be used as basis for teaching programmes. The particular assets and aptitudes of deprived children should be taken into account in planning the curriculum. For example, a child from a rural area may know little about poetry but may possess complete knowledge about, say, the fine art of cutting and collecting wood and building a steady, warm fire. Thus, giving a composition to be written, on how to build a fire would be a much more meaningful assignment for this child than an assignment to discuss the meaning of a short poem. To be sure, at some point it might be good to introduce the child to poetry, but the initial task can be what it interests the child. Teachers should start the teaching process by using the knowledge and abilities the child already possesses and take it from there.

The most important thing that schools need to provide is an atmosphere that makes learning a rewarding and relevant experience. How can a child possibly succeed when faced with so many setbacks in a traditional programme—no family nor peer support for academic achievement, disadvantages in background, and teachers who expect failure? And failure in school will certainly contribute to a low self-concept. By providing an environment in which the deprived children can learn, the school can contribute to the development of self-confidence, self-respect, and a sense of cultural identity.

These improved programmes need to be introduced early in the child's experience, preferably at the pre-school level or even earlier, and to continue throughout the entire educational career. Finally, if school programmes for the deprived children are to work, they should gain the confidence and involvement of parents and the community.

A last word for the teachers: Let there be an atmosphere of warmth and kindness in a class room; let there be more freedom for the child in your class; and try and handle disruptive and aggressive behaviour more gently and more positively. You as teachers need to believe and have trust in your students' ability to learn; and make use of innovative, flexible approaches to the development of reading and other skills. Take advantage of every opportunity to enhance the child's self-esteem and pride in his/her cultural identity, and try to involve parents in their children's education. If you as a teacher are able to reach out to these deprived children who come to you with a hope to learn, your task as a teacher would be fulfilled; otherwise millions of such children will enter adulthood unprepared to lead reasonably happy, self-sustaining and productive lives.
Check Your Progress

Note: Compare your answer with those given at the end of the block.

2. Match the following:
   a) Poverty  
   b) School failure  
   c) Repetitive learning  
   d) Labelled as a dull child  
   e) Ridiculed by teachers  
   f) Student partiality  
   g) Authoritarian teacher  
   h) Disturbed child  
   i) Maintain interest of the child in the school
   
   i) Fear in the child  
   ii) Problems at home  
   iii) Need based education  
   iv) Malnutrition  
   v) School drop-out  
   vi) Lack motivation to learn  
   vii) Lack motivation to attend school  
   viii) Lack of clarity  
   ix) Rivalry in children  
   x) Lack of understanding

5.6 LET US SUM UP

The main points to remember are:

- Children have some basic physical, psychological and educational needs which should be fulfilled for their sound development.

- Partial or full deprivation of these needs affects the overall development of a child.

- Deprived children need special attention in school to promote learning and to acquire cognitive skills essential for academic achievement in school.

- Teachers need to be warm and understanding of the background limitations of deprived children and they should help them in adjusting to the demands of the school.

- Teachers must help in reducing drop-out and failure experience of these children.

- Education in schools should be based on the needs of children to make educational experience meaningful.

5.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Conduct a Parents-Teachers Association meeting on the theme "Needs of Children" and create awareness in parents of the basic needs of children and how they can fulfill them in the family.

2. Identify children from deprived background in your class. Talk to them about the problems they have at home and school and suggest remedial measures.

3. Identify children with low academic performance. Motivate other children to interact with them and help them with their problems in "each one teach one programme" to help build a positive relationship among children from different social backgrounds.