

# Necessities, comforts, and luxuries

People



Necessities, Comforts and Luxuries Necessities, comforts, and luxuries, are concepts whose meanings are dependent on the manner that human beings define “ needs.” Needs are defined as “ underlying internal forces that drive or guide our actions” (Jackson, et. al, 2004, 6). Based on this definition of needs, and the manner that human beings understand their needs through time, one can have a proper understanding of what necessities, comforts, and luxuries are in life.

Based on the definition of needs, necessities refer to the basic needs human beings require to survive. In this sense, necessities are non-negotiable, where its deprivation could lead to detrimental effects on human beings. On the other hand, comforts are those needs, which in light of necessities, allows man to live easier lives by making the satisfaction of necessities easier. It eliminates the danger of being unable to satisfy our necessities. In contrast to the concept of necessities as basic needs, comforts can be considered as construed needs, which focus on the conditions under which individuals feel that their basic needs are being satisfied (p. 7). Luxuries, on the other hand, are neither absolute in that its satisfaction or dissatisfaction does not affect man’s immediate survival, nor construed in that it does not make the satisfaction of basic needs easier to attain. In fact, as opposed to the concept of needs, luxuries are more related to the concept of wants and preferences, where upon satisfaction of man’s necessities and comforts, man then delves into the satisfaction of luxuries – his desires, preferences, and other material wants that provides him the uplifting feeling of superiority (p. 5).

Determining examples of necessities, comforts, and luxuries, however, are more difficult to come by, by virtue of the fact that the manner in which man

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views his needs changes through time, paralleling societal changes. Thus, perhaps in the 18th Century, these concepts were simpler, where necessities, refer to the most basic among human needs – food, shelter, and clothing. Comforts refer to a vegetable garden that provides at a regular basis, a sturdy house that provides adequate protection from the environment, and the ability to keep clothes clean and proper. And luxuries refer to a sumptuous dinner of exotic food and sweets, a mansion, or expensive and brand new clothes.

The advent of societal and historical changes such as the Declaration of Independence, or even the Scientific Revolution and all the gadgets and innovations that came along with it, also changed the way we view needs, and consequently necessities, comforts, and luxuries. These changes introduced new ideas such as freedom, democracy, and liberties, as well as inventions like electricity, the telephone, and automobiles. As a result, liberties became a necessity, where it is a right accorded to individuals as opposed to being a privilege of the rich in the previous centuries. The legal system, through the Bill of Rights, became a comfort that assured individuals of its freedom. And, the ability and freedom to travel became a luxury, enjoyed by those who can afford it.

Understanding necessities, comforts, and luxuries, therefore require an understanding of needs. Needs, which are important forces that drive and guide human actions, determines how man view what are necessities, what are comforts, and what are luxuries. However, because of the changes in history and society that affects the way man lives, man's definition of needs changes through time, and in turn, the definitions of necessities, comforts, and luxuries, changes as well.

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## References

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