

COURSE : M.A (SOCIOLOGY)

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PAPER TITLE : MODERN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

SEMESTER : II

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MULTIPLE REALITIES

READING : CHAPTER II "INTERACTION AND MEANING  
IN FAMILIES" IN DAVID CHEAL'S FAMILIES IN TODAY'S WORLD : A  
COMPARATIVE APPROACH

THIS READING IS A CASE STUDY OF FAMILIES IN TODAY'S WORLD  
FOR SUPPLEMENTING THE THEORY OF "SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF  
REALITY" BY PETER BERGER AND THOMAS LUCKMAN. SOCIETY  
CREATES REALITY WHICH PROVIDES MANY DIFFERENT POINTS OF  
INGRESS AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING A SOCIALLY  
INTERMESHED REALITY. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE ARE MULTIPLE  
REALITY SYSTEMS IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE WHICH IS THE BASIS OF  
ANY SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS EVEN IN THE TIMES OF SOCIAL  
DISRUPTIONS.

## SEPARATION AND TOGETHERNESS :

- ❑ Through ongoing interactions in the family, reality of the family life gets constructed which gives meaning to their lives in togetherness. This kind of interaction also defines the expectations that one has of the other.
- ❑ Here, private life of the family is created through constant interaction rather than having it structured for them.
- ❑ Marriage is a context wherein one constructs, maintains and modifies a sense of reality which can be meaningfully experienced. Every individual needs constant validation of his or her sense of reality of the world and their definition of the situation in which they find themselves
- ❑ Social construction of the family life fills the gap of the definition of the family provided by Murdock where he does not include marriage relationships in which the partners live apart for some of the time.

- Since it is known that sense of reality constructed in relationship like marriage requires the proximity of the partners to the relationship, but in a marriage where a spouse might not live in proximity because of some compulsions such as career goals makes this reality more problematic. It is found that because of the certain life style which makes the proximity difficult, couples accepted a view of the marriage as intimate and emotionally close, but in practice it is hard to maintain.
- In such a process of the social construction of reality, couples call attention to is not the details of the everyday life , but rather such type of communication between spouses deepen their intimacy and their sense of involvement with each other. It means that in spite of the separation, couple try to create a sense of proximity for constant validation of emotional bond.
- David Cheal refers some of the family studies, where it was found that it is easier for those couples who were apart during the week, but who got together on a regular basis on the weekends to re-establish the marital conversation than couples who got together less frequently or o an irregular basis.
- This shows the importance of having a common residence, a shared space for maintaining the meaning of marriage, which is in fact constantly created in everyday life. In fact, family is often identified with the home.

## HOME AND FAMILY :

- ❑ In a traditional society family was the unit of production and the consumption, but in the modern society family only performs the role of the unit of consumption. Therefore, the concept of home as a private sphere of nuclear family is associated with the separation of family and work.
- ❑ The concept of home is identified with the realm of experience associated with togetherness and happiness. Women had to take the responsibility to maintain the home as a sanctuary of family life.
- ❑ The ideal middle-class home came to be identified with life in the suburbs, away from the pressures and distractions of city life.
- ❑ By the latter part of the twentieth century, the identification of family and home had become part of a traditional family ideology . It was found that people's principal image of their homes was family, children, love and affection.

- Home ownership plays an important role as a unifying principle in married life. It is also a proof of the success of the couple which gives a sense of property.
- There is a contradiction in the ideology of home where women are associated with the confines of domestic sphere, whose activities are seen as central to providing a satisfactory home life. But they must usually work outside the home in order to help pay the mortgage. In contemporary version of family life, women tend to be employed outside the home in order to improve the family's standard of living and maintain a desirable family lifestyle.
- As there is separation between family life and the work in the capitalist society, it has developed supportive practices such as family-oriented Christmas rituals and so on in order to strengthen family relations, which was not the case in traditional society where family life and work were not separated from each other.
- Since household remained the unit of production as well as consumption, work time and family time were quite undifferentiated.

Thank You !