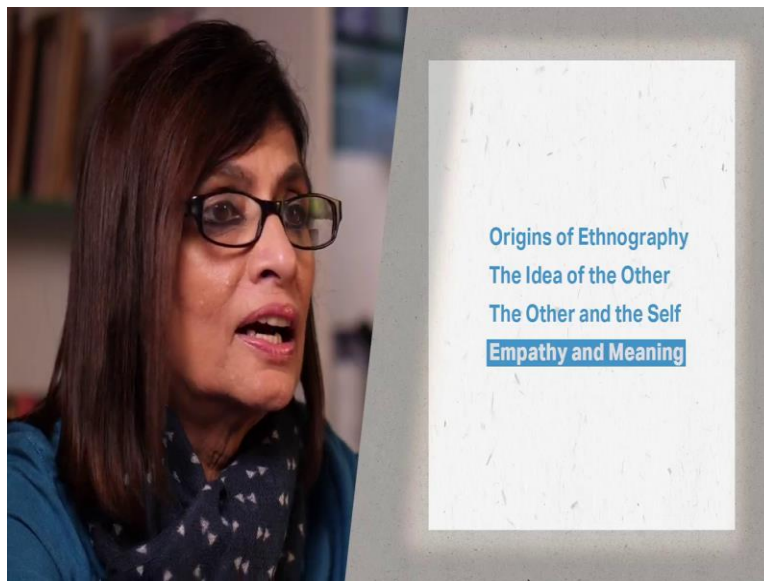


**Understanding Ethnography: A way to engage with the other**  
**Professor. Nina Sabnani**  
**IDC School of Design**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay**  
**Lecture No. 7**  
**Module 1: Conclusion**

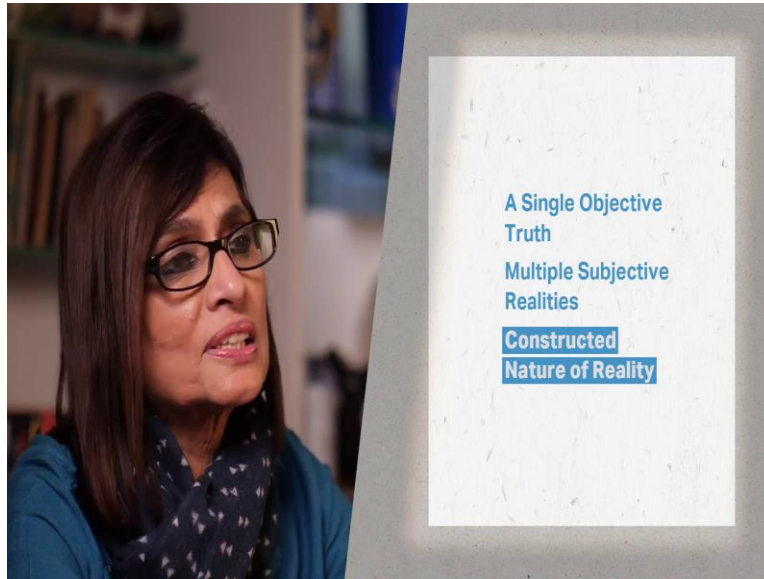
Before we close this module, let's take a look at all that we have covered. We travelled a rather long and winding road and dug around a bit in the history of ethnography, finding its parent disciplines of sociology and anthropology.

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We learned about *the origins of ethnography*- from the early travellers to the modern disciplines of sociology and anthropology, and the influences of these disciplines on contemporary principles of ethnographic research. We looked into some of the fundamental ideas that form ethnographic research: *the idea of the 'other', and* the relationship between *the other and the self, empathy and meaning*. We also discussed some complex questions that emerge from these fundamentals:

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*the subjectivity of the researcher;*

*the power dynamic between the researcher and the participant;*

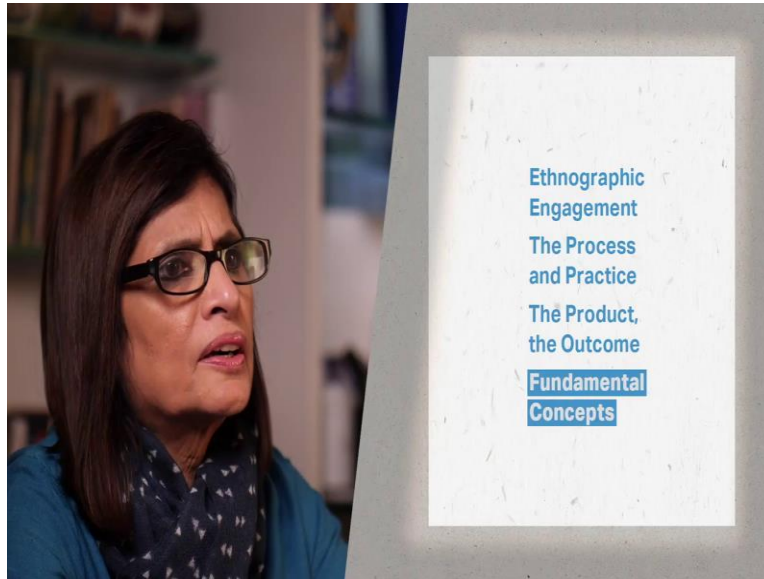
*the challenges of establishing empathetic relationships; and,*

*the difference between a single objective truth and many subjective realities.*

In our exploration of the concept of reality, we understood how reality is multiple and complex in nature, and how it is ***constructed by the context*** and ***multiple subjectivities***.

Through all of this, we came to see the importance of understanding the other. To design products and services that fit their needs and their worlds, we need to develop an empathetic and immersive understanding of their context.

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But how do we go about this engagement? Are there processes or even best practices? What are the ways in which people have worked with it? And what do we hope to learn through our engagements, anyway? To answer these questions, we need to unpack ethnography a little more. We have just about touched the tip of the iceberg and now need to engage with it at a deeper level. We need to see the various dimensions of the method to understand its process. This is what we will discuss in the next module.