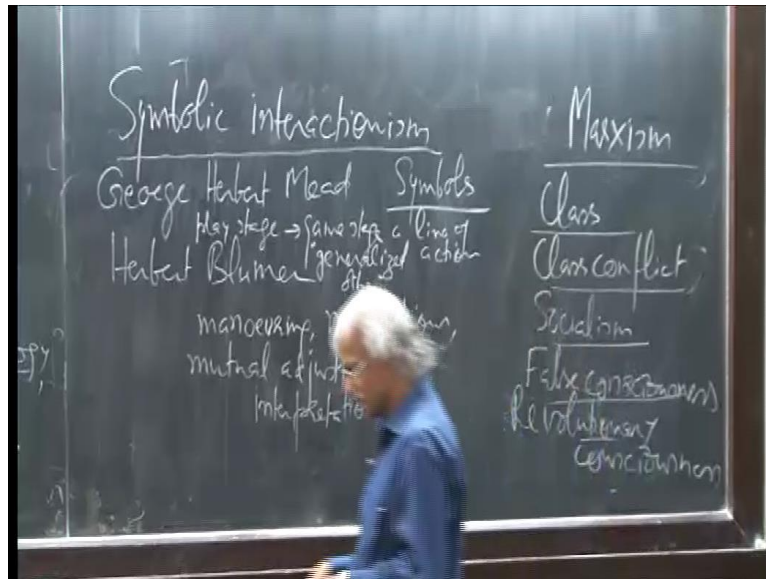


**Introductory Sociology**  
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**Lecture - 37**  
**Introductory Sociology**  
**Perspectives in Sociology - II**

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I think very interesting, more interesting, actually I personally find these ideas, more interesting than the ideas of functionalist and Marxist. Marxist, I do not think that there is

anyone in the class was never heard the name of Karl Marx and was never come across terms like class, class conflict, socialism, false consciousness and revolutionary consciousness. I will explain them gradually, but now I want to concentrate more on these two things, which are seemingly interconnected, but slightly different there is a difference of stress I emphasis. One is ethno methodology, one of the latest perspectives.

Now, in ethno methodology in 1967 Harold, Harold Garfinkel g a r f i n k e l Harold Garfinkel, an American sociologists, produced a book studies in ethno methodology. His aim was to understand the methodologies that, scientist including social scientist use. And what he find that, actually they one central concept of sociology has been order, society order, regularity pattern, institutions. Garfinkel is not interested in order, because Garfinkel thinks, that order does not exist. The world is chaotic, there is no order, and then how do we perceive an order in society?

For Garfinkel, this is the most important or more interesting question. Is it possible that all of us perceive existence of an order in society while actually there is no order? To explain what he has in mind, let me give example of one counseling experiment, it is a long story, but in short he did a counseling experiment among students. He told student that a great counselor is coming and you can discuss all kinds of problems of yours, problems of education, problems of money, and problems of conflict with parent family or anybody, problem with girlfriends, anything. All kinds of problems you can discuss with your counselor, and counselor will sit in another room, you will sit in another room. The connection will be made through intercom, and there is only one condition, that you will put your question in a manner, which can be asked. You will put your question in a manner which can be answered in yes and no. You will frame your question in such a manner that your counselor will say either yes or no.

So, students were sitting in one room and counselor in the other room, they were connected through intercom. His students were asking, they were framing their question, putting their questions in their own manner and counselor was saying yes or no. All kinds of questions, his students ask all kinds of questions, and the counselor answered them in yes and no. And it was found that most of the students were satisfied with the, with the answers of the counselor. Somebody may come, and say will you that, I do not like my studies, if I like painting then should I not quit my engineering education and go for painting? And the counselor may say, yes or no.

Yes will, yes will mean that, yes you leave engineering, and go for painting. No will mean, that no you continue your engineering subjects, and forget about painting. Then if the counselor says yes, you go for painting, and then there may be another question. And again the answer will be yes and yes or no, all the students were satisfied. The actually there was no counselor and yes and no answer; answers were arranged in a random fashion, completely random. Yes, yes is and no is, were arranged in completely random manner. So, the then the issue is that actually when there is no order, and you can check the, you can yourself do this kind of experiments.

Actually there is no order, yes and no, yes no, yes no, no, no yes they were arranged in random manner, but students were satisfied, irrespective of the kind of questions they asked students seem to be satisfied. Why did this happen? You can ask to yourself. Why did this, why should such a thing happen? Garfunkel's answer was that our understanding of anything is interpretive. And the manner in which a social scientist or a scientist works from the manner in which men in the street work. There is a lot of taken for granted, as in case of interactions communication among street men, there is lot of taken for granted in sciences also; likewise in construction of order, equilibrium this or that.

There is lot of taken for granted without taken for granted, communication is not possible. If I ask you, how are you? Invariably, you say, I am fine, thank you, how are you? Actually you may be running fever, and still you will say I am fine. You may be suffering from monetary losses, and still you say, I am fine, thank you. May have an f grade and still you say I am fine, thank you. Because these are the taken for granted, this is taken for granted, this is part of our etiquettes, that how are, when I meet you, how are you? This is part of taken for granted that I will ask how are you? Actually I am I may not be worried at; I may not be concerned about your welfare at all, go to hell. You may happy or you may be unhappy, you may fine; you may not be fine. I am least bothered, and still I ask, how are you? And you say you may be fine; you may not be fine and still you say I am fine, thank you. How are you?

Suppose, I want to, adopt a more scientific attitude towards this. And somebody ask me, how are you? And I ask, with respect to what? With respect to what, is it about my stomach or my brain or about my financial condition or about my grades or my relationship with my brother or my roommate or about the conflicts I had with some

friends, on the playground yesterday. If somebody says, like this then you will say he is mad. Actually most of our explanations and theories are also like that, taken for granted.

If in high school, a teacher says, that there are these laws of motion. One of them is  $v$  equal to  $u$  plus  $a$   $t$  then student has a right to ask, what is  $V$ ?  $V$  is the velocity, after time  $t$ . What is  $U$ ?  $U$  is initial velocity,  $a$  is acceleration,  $t$  is time. What is acceleration? Somebody can legitimately ask, what is acceleration? And the teacher says that acceleration is the change in speed. What is change in speed? And the teacher says that speed at 2 points of time may not be same, it may be different. What is speed? Speed is distance divided by time, distance covered divided by time. What is distance? Suppose, somebody asks, what is distance? At some stage, questions and answers become absurd, meaningless, and at some stage without asking further, you become satisfied, because it is taken for granted. In sciences also same thing happen, taken for granted.

Actually there is no order, rules laws, underlying laws, now why in some context, in some societies, at some points of time, how things taken for granted, become taken for granted that is a different story, but there is lot of role of taken for granted. So, when somebody asks us how are you? We do not question in back, we do not say with respect to what. If you say with respect to what then he will say, I was just trying to be polite. I am least worried about how you are go to hell, taken for granted.

Similarly, if you ask a sociology teacher, what is functionalism? He may say that, functionalism is about equilibrium. What is equilibrium? Equilibrium means, that the relationships between two things are fixed. What is fixed? Something, which does not change so so often and so easily. What is change? At some stage your question become meaningless and teacher cannot answer. There is lot of taken for granted, the term, ethno methodology itself has been derived from ethno, botany, ethno ethnography means things which belong to specific cultural groups. So, in science also, there is a kind of ethno methodology. You see, what it is trying to say, that you are trying to discover, reality, unearth reality, understanding you are trying to unearth reality.

According to Garfinkel, there is no reality, because to unearth reality, you always fall back on some pattern, which is taken for granted. Somebody says that I did a marvelous study of fertility, and I found that the average number of children in India is this, standard deviation is this, skewness is this, kurtosis is this. Behind making such a

statements I am already assuming that the fertility follows a normal distribution. There cannot be any study, there cannot be any unearthing of reality, any discovery, which is not based on taken for granted. Garfinkel, an, that is the meaning of reflexivity, that you are looking for data, but for analyzing your data, you always fall back upon a theory. You claim that you are going to make a theory, but in arriving at a theory, you are already making use of a theory.

That is reflexivity, you can, you are never you are, you are never producing any new theory, any new law, because in discovery of laws, your discoveries are rooted in taken for grantedness of patterns and laws of society, or your academic community. Now if you apply this concept, to social order, it means, then what you call order. Actually is all perceived, under certain conditions, you construct certain images of an order, it is your construction. And that means, the order or the ideas of order, are as much dependent on what is ordered, as on those people who are constructing the order, so ethno methodology.

Indexicality means, that meanings are rooted in the discourse or the language, because you cannot explain meaning of anything, without referring to language. To explain meaning of one word, you refer to other words and the meanings of the words to which you refer, are part of a socio cultural system taken for granted. This explains, why students in the ethno methodological experiment of Garfinkel, found their interaction with the hypothetical counselor, quite meaningful and useful. Because yes and no of the counselor both yes and no, were interpreted in the light of what our students already had in their mind taken for granted.

So, counselor says yes, you leave engineering. And you start painting, may be our student has seen the three idiots, and interpreted that yes in that manner. And if the counselor said no, you should not; maybe our student was under the influence of his parents. And then you also associate some amount of maturity, credibility, trust, understanding expertise of the counselor. I have seen that we say something to our children, and they do not accept. And when they find the same thing from their friends or TV, TV channels then they accept, because they do not trust their parents, children do not trust their parents.

So, children will trust their friends more, their peers. So, there are. So, many in construction of meaning there are. So, many things, if I use the word round, and you and you want to know, what is meaning of the term round. Independent of the context in which the term round is used, you cannot understand the meaning of the round. If you want to check consult dictionary, you will find 80 meanings of the word round, but what is exactly the meaning of the term round, when I uttered this sound, when I uttered this word, round depends on taken for grantedness of discourse in a given socio cultural context.

In introductory course in sociology, we will not be able to go very deep into these things, but what I want to say, that Garfinkel questions, the very existence of any kind of order in society. And for him, understanding of how we construct an order, in our mind is more important than the order. And in this respect, we are no different from men in the streets even social scientist or scientist are not different from those in the street, lot of things taken for granted. So, indexicality means that the meanings of things, words, things, ideas, relationships abstractions are rooted, in a given socio cultural context, which and in those ideas, which are taken for granted. Meaning of one idea is derived from other ideas which are taken for granted. Actually this is; this is the reason, why our communication, often fails, communication between friends, between two generations, between two religious communities. If I say that God is only an idea, and that shows that God does not exist that God is only an idea.

God is only, a like any other idea. It is an, it is a human product, it is a product of human mind, at certain stages of evolution, and a certain idea of God develops. And suppose, I am I am talking to a devoted Hindu or a devoted Muslim. I may think that I am making a great statement, and I am may think that I am making a true statement. And like anything else like the ideas of beauty, morality, law. God is also an idea and the idea change, I may live like a Marxist, and I may be a Marxist. That our ideas are associated with the patterns of relationships in society, between the powerful classes and powerless classes, but my friend who is a devoted Hindu or a devoted Muslim, Will never appreciate my idea. We quarrel, we express our differences, for my Muslim friend this very idea, that God is only a human imagination, is very sinful.

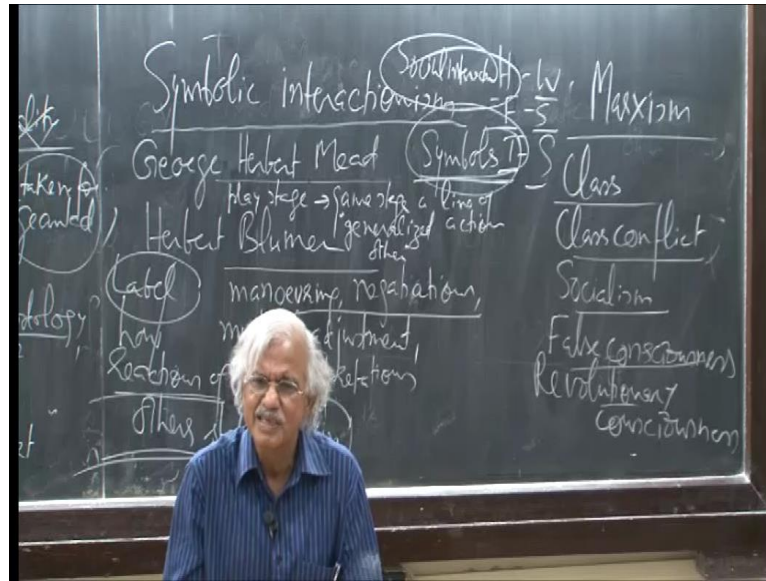
And I do not have a good future, after my death, on the Day of Judgment, I will be sent to hell, to go heaven on the Day of Judgment. You have to believe that there is an

almighty God or my Vedantic friend will not understand me at all, he will say Brahm, is the real reality and all other things which, which are other than Brahman are illusory. Why do our communications fail? Because the taken for granted. There is so much of taken for granted in our mind, that we do not understand each other.

We can communicate with each other, only when the content of taken for granted is same for all the parties. So, a conservative Muslim can smoothly talk to another conservative Muslim, and a conservative Hindu can easily communicate with the conservative Hindu. But when a conservative Hindu is talking to a Marxist, they will not understand each other, and at some point communication will fail. So, the issue of what is right, whether God exist or does not exist. To Garfinkel, this is a useless question. The real question is, that how do, some people have one meaning of God, and other people have other meanings of God, how are these meanings created, in the process of social interaction. All our meanings, all our interpretations of things are rooted in other taken for granted ideas or our culture, social setting, socio cultural milieu, our economic understanding, economic thinking.

And reflexivity means, when we try to develop a law, actually our, our innovations, our discoveries, are all rooted in our axioms, assumptions, and postulates, all they not exactly the same. But when Kuhn said, in his structure of scientific revolution in 1972 that science does not show any linear growth in knowledge, accumulative, cumulative growth of knowledge, rather knowledge develops in different paradigms of perspectives. He was also making a similar kind of a statement. So, this is ethno methodology.

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Now, I must also say something about symbolic interactionism, something very similar. Ethno methodology and symbolic interactionism will have many things similar. The most important proponents of symbolic interactionism are George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. Herbert Blumer's question is, how reactions of others shape something deviant primary deviance, secondary deviance. When an act which is commonly performed by many people is noticed and labeled as deviant by some powerful people, some agencies of social control may be administrators, may be police, may be parents, may be wardens, executives it becomes primary deviance. But after a person has been labeled as a deviant, reactions of others, what are reactions of others? Herbert Blumer is more interested in that deviance secondary deviance that deviance, which has been caused not by individuals own reasons, but because of reactions of others.

Somebody is falsely implicated in some criminal act and spends five years in jail, there have been cases in which people have been executed, they have been given capital punishment and years later it was found that actually the whole proceeding against them was false. Falsity is always a possibility in all criminal proceedings, falsity or a possibility of falsity cannot be ignored. But suppose somebody has spend 5 years in jail and he was actually falsely implicated in something he comes out, nobody will give him a job, because he has been labeled. A label of a criminal has been attached to him secondary deviance.



Now, when the person does not get his suitable employment, after coming out of the prison, may be for his survival, he will have no option other than joining a group of deviance, he has to survive. So, he may join a group of thugs, thieves, robbers of people indulging in criminal petty criminal activities, he has to survive. These people are more interested in how reactions of others create a situation even something like pain. You can never separate the real pain of anything, a physical ailment illness disease sickness, a legion or a psychological problem, a crisis situation, pain of some crisis from the pain, which is created by reactions of others.

Imagine that somebody's husband dies younger of his 25, 24 and her husband dies in a road accident or may be heart attack. Now she suffers from pain and with psychological why me only tremendous pain. But is the pain dependent totally on the fact that her husband has died or the pain is also depend, dependent on how the reactions of others are. Will the pain of a young women, who has lost her husband at the age of 24 25 be same in America, in India and in India, in Delhi, in a tribal society, pain of such a women, in modern society and in traditional primitive society be same. Symbolic interaction is will say like phenomenologist theories of knowledge, that actually this is socially constructed.

In a society, in there is always a pain, that you lose your friend, your husband, your brother, your parents, you lose there is a pain. It is a painful thing, there is a loss their emotions are attached. But in a condition like India, when women from neighborhood will come and say you are completely ruined, what will happen to your life now, you are left alone there is meaning in life, what will you do, your whole family is destroyed, you do not know, what kind of pain you are inflicting on the person.

I remember a friend of mine, he was I think a lab assistant in chemistry, a very social person, very good person and his daughter had committed suicide, I will never forget that thing. So, as soon as I came to know about it, I went to him, I did not know, how to, how will I establish communication with him. At that time, when his daughter had committed suicide, he was such a courageous person and very mature person. When he saw me he on his own he started talking he said Sharma Ji do you understand what I want to say, that anything that we have in our mind is actually the product of social interaction. And it is very difficult for us to separate the real content of something from the effect of reactions of others. This is what symbolic interaction is saying, whether it is deviance,

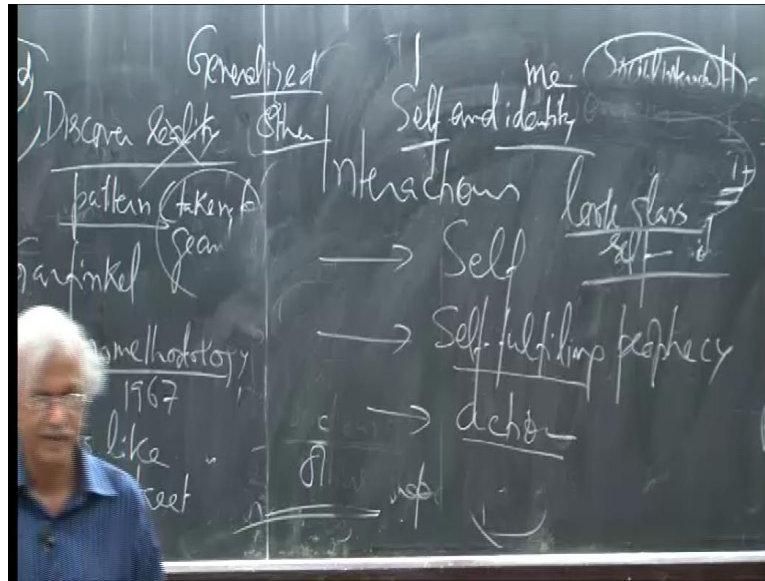
whether it is pain, whether it is our self image, good or bad, functional or dysfunctional, it is heavily dependent on reactions of others.

So, George Herbert Mead was one of those people, first time he said that things of this world are like symbols and symbols not only tell us, what they are, but also suggest a line of action. When we say that this is a chair is a symbol chair maybe wooden chair, cane chair, steel chair, what is chair? So, chair does not depend on the material of which this is built, but chair is a symbol which suggests a line of action. Functional sociologists are more concerned with role and assume that there is a social structure in society, positions role and their quite objective. But they say that they provide only broad guidelines.

Actually in all relationships, there is a scope for maneuvering, negotiation, mutual adjustment and interpretation. For structuralists, husband and wife, father and son are sets of roles, teacher and student. And positivists or empiricists or functionalists focus on their relationships between (( )) father-son, husband-wife, teacher-student. Symbolic interactionist will say that actually, it, it the role of husband father or teacher may only provide a broad guideline, a line of action. But actually what kind of relationship will exist will depend on lot of maneuvering, negotiations, mutual adjustments, interpretations and all roles and relationships are negotiated.

To to prove their point, they will say that all teachers are not same, all students are not same, all husband we talk of nuclear family, joint family and roles, and relationships. But relationship between husband and wife is not same for all husbands and all wives. So, what is the difference? The difference lies in social interactions. Meanings of the roles, meaning of the role of father, meaning of the role of son, meaning of the role of teacher student, husband and wife .These are meanings and meanings depend on lot of things. Meanings depend on your biologic biographical situation, your age, your social identity, your education, your gender, your many things. Meanings are not fixed, meanings are negotiated. So, meaning of everything then is inseparable from social interactions.

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So, for symbolic interactionist, first thing is social interaction and from interactions developed the concept of self and through self fulfilling prophecy, action, social interactions, self, self fulfilling prophecy and action. So, in order to understand somebody's action, you have to understand this concept of self. They make a distinction between self and identity or I and me, identity is the others understanding of me. For my self-image I depend on how others understand me actually myself is nothing but my image that, that I find about me, in reading of others reactions towards me. So, this others means society becomes a looking glass self for me. Looking glass, self is a looking glass, self for me. And another term for the same thing is generalized other, generalized other stands for society.

There have been a lot of studies in psychology of health, of pain, of affliction risk, coping behavior, coping strategies. In case of different diseases, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, HIV, which show that the understanding of severity or the understanding of pain is not a simple function of biological factors. It is social, pain is always social, thresholds of pain can vary from person to person; one person can bear more pain than others. Or a person can be stoic, ascetic or a person can more easily weak, when he or she suffers from pain threshold maybe less. This symbolic interactionism gives more importance to social interactions.

In so the major difference between functionalism or Marxism and symbolic interactionism will be, that to look at social reality in a more objective scientific manner and to divide reality into roles, relationships, correlations, facts, patterns, values and to create regression, coefficients and measurements and indicators that is to follow one kind of approach. In this approach, interactionists want to go deeper into the meanings that people attached to their action that without understanding their meanings you cannot understand their action. And meanings are not fixed, they are part of biographical situation, as you wish, as you age as your interaction stage, you become more mature, we say you become more mature, but the thing is that your meaning stage.

Your understanding of education today is not same as your understanding of education was, when you were in a primary school. Your relationship with or your understanding of God, today is not same as it was when used to visit a temple along with your mother and it will not remain same, as you will reach your after 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, your images of religion will change. And what will happen to your images of religion will depend more on with, what kind of people you are interacting. In what circumstances you are, what are your life circumstances, you live happily or you suffer?

I would although, I cannot say that I am a follower of Acharya Rajneesh, but I remember one statement that he once made that those people who are happy, successful, affluent, who are contented, who are satisfied with life. Everything, that they wanted to have in life, they have got they will become peace, because these people want to thank someone. I like this Acharya Rajneesh saying that, those people who have achieved everything in life, they want to thank somebody and they become peace. They believe in God and people who suffer; who are in misery; who have lost everything in their life maybe somebody's son died, somebody's husband died, somebody lost his property in a illegal battle, or maybe somebody developed a terminal disease like cancer, HIV or the stroke they become atheist (( )) whether or atheist.

Whether Acharya Rajneesh is right or not, but I am giving this example to convey the point made by symbolic interactionist that our meanings are heavily dependent on our experiences and interactions with others. You are so in one situation, when you are happy your interactions are fulfilling and you got everything in this life, in this world in society, whatever society expects you to have in life, you have them. So, you want to thank somebody and you become Ethist and when you have lost everything, you become

an atheist. So, our images our understandings of self you say it very easily (( )), I think like this I and when you say I think like this I firmly believe in this I I have no second opinion in my mind. You think that you are propounding some absolute truth, but actually you are thinking is nothing but a reflection of your interactions with others.

Outside your interactions with others, there is nothing, there is nothing concrete outside interactions empty. Abstracted from social interactions, our meanings are empty. Our meanings are meaningful only in a given socio cultural milieu in a given context of interaction. That is where, it is called symbolic interactionism, interaction is interaction with others and all the images meanings things which we have in mind, desires expectations, standards of evolution values, what is good, what is bad, what is ugly, what is beautiful, that is all the result of social interaction.

In some situations, people may feel that to be beautiful may be to be fair. In our country where you have both all types, black fair, whitish all kinds of people. In our country now, we think that to be beautiful is to be fair and we may need spend lot of money on creams, which promise to make them fair. But is this also the case in Africa, where everybody is black is there no concept of beauty in Africa. Africans also have a concept of beauty. So, everything our concepts of our concepts of truth and falsehood, beauty, ugly, good, bad, moral, immoral, right, wrong they are all dependent on social interactions.

In this respect, social interaction is also having one point in common with Marxist that our consciousness is determined by our social relations. If you reduce all relations to economic relations, you become a Marxist. And if you do not reduce all relations to economic relations and you take into consideration, all types of relations, and then you are a symbolic interactionist. So, images all kinds of meanings and images are dependent on social interaction. Now, this is symbolic interactionism has been of great importance in examining secondary deviance. It is a, I think you will agree with me, that it is a very humanistic philosophy, because it does not lay blame for deviance, on any single person. It is say the deviance is a product of social interactions, whether it is deviance of money or anything, moral character, any kind of deviance that is a product of social interactions.

So, if we have to take any remedial measure, you know most of the time in our society, when we talk of remedial measures, we focus on the person who has deviated from the

norms of society. While symbolic interactionists will say that remedial measures means remedying all the conditions in which the person lives. Remedial measures cannot be confined to one person alone. This morning, when I was watching TV, this idea of symbolic interactionism and deviance and these things was going on in my mind and they were showing something of Ganga. And I felt that people are spending their life in jail for petty crimes.

Most of those who are if you visit a jail and if you conduct a survey of inmates of jails, you will find that 70 80 percent of all the inmates have been jailed for petty crimes, 10 rupees, 20 rupees some conflicts, conflict over land with their neighbor, quite often with their cousins or brothers and those who are harming society so much. Now, by polluting rivers, by hiding their income from income tax, by taking bribe, by companies coming together and fixing prices, white collar crimes they are all living life of a normal person, clean normal, honorable powerful and moral and maybe quite often the life of a virtuous person.

So, of you may be responsible for ruining life of thousands and lakhs of people and permanently for years. And is still you are considered to be a virtuous man, because you have given much by earning money from your (( )) .You have constructed a temple (( )) street child. Symbolic interactionist will not lay blame on particular persons, it will lay blame on social interactions, (( )).