

**Disability Studies: An Introduction**  
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**Lecture - 29**

**What is Deaf Culture? - An Interview with Dr. Michele Friedner**

**Hemachandran Karah:** Hello, welcome all today our theme is Deaf Culture. And to discuss the theme with me, we have Dr. Michele Friedner from University of Illinois at Chicago. Michele is an expert in deaf studies, but what is unique about her, is she has a foot in India and America, so both. She knows the deaf world from both the sides of the world. So, it is exciting to have her on board. Welcome Michele. Good to have you here. Please introduce yourself and then we can carry on from there

**Michele Friedne:** Well, thank you so much Hemachandran for inviting me to be here with you all. So, I am a medical anthropologist. And what that means is I am interested in people's medical and non-medical experiences and knowledge. And I am also interested in how people critique and work with and expand up on medical knowledge, and I am also very interested in people's experiences in general.

So, I do my research mostly in India, although I also work somewhat in the US. As I am a centre in charge and I also engage very much with the discipline of deaf studies and the discipline of disability studies. And here at the University of Chicago, I am in an interdisciplinary social science department is called comparative human development, and we have anthropologists, sociologists, developmental psychologists, and linguists among other types of scholars who are interested in studying the development and change over time and the live course.

**HK:** Wonderful, Michele; I do not want to get into the topic straightaway deaf culture, but I think some spade work is in order. Whenever I read deaf studies material, I come across this binary deaf and hearing people. What does that mean to begin with, Michele?

**MF:** So, first of all I am going to make things a little bit messy perhaps ok. And say that the concept of deaf culture is actually not a concept of deaf that which scholars introduce anyone ok. So, the reason why the concept of deaf culture came about in the 1980s by it was introduced by Carol Padden – P A D D E N is because there was an attempt to try to

think of ways to theorize and also to value deaf people's experiences as distinct experiences because of the use of sign languages you know.

And, because of the thought that sign languages introduced unique ways of being in the world through the views of a visual spatial language, and also because of the existence of deaf residential schools where different social cultural and more patterns, and way to behavior our past are you know are not transmitted you know. And so I think the concept of deaf culture to come back to your question was created as a way of marking deaf people are different from hearing people you know.

And, the reason why that was done I think is to show that deaf people's experiences do have value you know and that they are not just experiences that can be seen through the land of deficit or lack or deficiency ok. So, this binary of deaf and hearing I think stood it around that same time of trying to carve out a space for understanding deaf people's experiences as valid ok.

However, you know since the 80s I think we realized that deaf people's experiences are much more complex you know, and deaf people's experiences intersect with a lot of other categories of different of power of similitude. You know, so in India, you know we talk a lot about caste, and class, and religion, education level, geographic background, you know all of these things are there intersect with deafness you know. And I think it is really important to also hold on to the fact that increasingly and also there is a long history of deaf people working through sound you know.

So, in my research right now on deaf people who get cochlear implants or who work with hearing aids, I am interested in the category of the so called deaf hear or the deaf person who hears or the hearing deaf person, and I am interested in trying to move past that binary.

So, I think you know your question about this binary between deaf and hearing is a really important one, and I think it is one that deaf studies scholars and other scholars are increasingly working with. But I think again the goal of holding on to that binary is a way to carve out a space for talking about deaf people, specific unique and valuable experiences. Is that?

**HK:** Yes, it is great that you brought in Indian material realities such as caste and class, or while simultaneously talking also about special vocabulary surrounding deaf I mean informing deaf studies. I have in mind words like hard of hearing, congenitally deaf, late deafened, something like CODA all that. Can you ground us through those words, so that we get sort of linguistically familiar with the stuff about deaf studies or deaf world?

**MF:** So, I think so in the past there was a pretty strict binary made between lowercase d deaf and capital D deaf. With lowercase d deaf being people who are medically categorized as deaf and people who experienced hearing impairment. And, then capital D deaf was something that was seen and distinction to lowercase d deaf.

Capital D deaf was deafness you know as an identity deafness as a culture, deaf people as a linguistic minority you know but what was interesting now is that the person who came up with this distinction James Woodward W O O D W A R D recently said in 2016, James Woodward said, but I had known how this lowercase slash capital D deaf sort of writing was going to circulate it and become an orthodoxy I never would have done it. You know he himself...

**HK:** That is true of many things.

Yeah.

**MF:** Yeah he himself is not happy with the way that this has circulated, and had really said to erase complexity you know because if you think about it, there is complexity and there is an intense relationship between lowercase d and capital D deaf you know. And then there are people who are both and there are people who are neither and there are also many ways of being deaf as we know from (Refer Time: 08:54) and her co-editors in the in the massively, the massive volume many ways to be deaf which otherwise a great bug you know.

And so I think what is really important is holding on to complexity and the lowercase d capital D did not allow us to hold on to that complexity, and increasingly scholars are simply using the lowercase d you know to write about deaf people unless deaf people say you know I want you to use to capital D. You know so again it comes down to you know who it is that you are writing about, what the political and identity stakes on, and what you know what matters to people you know.

So, d lower case d, capital D are the two main concepts that I think you will see in terms of hard of hearing or hearing impaired, those are concepts that people do use to talk about people who have some hearing you know. So, there are some people who are medically deaf you know who have a flat audiogram who say you know I am hearing impaired, because they do not like the word deaf. You know in India increasingly people will not increasingly, but rather I should say decreasingly people in India use deaf and dumb or deaf and mute. You know and deaf and dumb is something that many deaf Indians very personal because they find it very derogatory and problematic.

**HK:** Are they still using it?

**MF:** Oh, they are.

That is in government offices and fliers that I mean people will use it. You know what I think it is also factually incorrect, because you know if we think of dumb as meaning mute, what is interesting I think is that deaf people actually do produce a lot of sound you know, and there is a lot of sound in deaf world surround getting people's attention we were clapping or stamping feet you know a lot of deaf people will and do vocalize you know. And so I think saying that people are deaf and dumb is factually inaccurate.

**HK:** Alright.

**MF:** Yeah.

**HK:** So, and words like CODA what do they mean in this sense?

**MF:** So, CODA which is found to be the C or K; so, CODA is a Child Of Deaf Adults or Children Of Deaf Adults; or the K is Kid of Deaf Adult. There is also SODA which is Sibling Of Deaf Adult like a brother or a sister of a deaf adult. What is really exciting is that there was a new CODA movement in India which is really picking up ground and which developed I think over the last few years. And I think this year in Delhi they held perhaps the first CODA event. And they made a great video showing and showcasing to the experiences of children of deaf adults.

And they talked about how they really value the fact that you know they grew up learning Indian sign language, and they grew up you know being able to move between

deaf world and some hearing world and not having deaf parents gave them a lot. And again it was just attempt to showcase this as a valuable and important experience.

**HK:** Wonderful. So, that makes us go to this special, very special reality the linguistic reality which is sign language. What is sign language, can I ask a question like that what is sign language?

**MF:** So, I am not a linguist, and so any answer that I give you is not going to be complete, but what I will say is that sign languages are natural, legitimate, valid, real and linguistically complex languages like any other language. That are not spoken languages, they use signs you know signs are not gestures, some signs are iconic meaning that they will look like the thing that they are bringing into the world or conjuring, but they are not all iconic.

Sign languages have their own complicated grammar, they have their own the complicated lexicon. And they are again I really want to stress that they are just as valid as any other language you know. Every country around the world more or less has its own sign language or sign language in India there is something called Indian sign language and there are many varieties of Indian sign language.

So, Kerala variety of Indian sign language looks quite different in some ways from where people in Delhi use. However, people from Kerala people from Delhi are able to communicate across difference and find shared lexicon. And, so I think it is really important to understand to know and to understand that Indian sign languages exist, sorry Indian sign language exist, and not there is now as of 2015 an Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center in Delhi that has been supported by the government.

And I thought Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center, there is a dictionary project and there are also offered to train and produce Indian sign language interpreters that will go out and do the much needed work of interpreting for deaf people in schools, workplaces, and public accommodations. Do that help?

**HK:** Yes, it does. Well, what I can see that sign language is intensely visual and a manual, I mean use of gestures and so on. But what is its nature is it you said its a natural language, then it should have a syntax, it should have dialects, you said sign language in

Kerala is different from. So, it has dialects, it has accents, it has registers difference built maybe the way youth sign is different from maybe how elders sign. And there should be a very rich difference it should have it should be engendered, it should have a rich dramatic component, literary component about it. Can you say more about that way Michele?

**MF:** I think everything said spot on you know and I think it is really important to, one thing that I want to say is that you know linguist have been trying to make a sort of bed between gesture and sign. So, colleagues at the University of Chicago who I work have been committed to saying this is gesture and this is sign, and there are two different things. And the post takes if that are important because they are trying to prove again that you know they were imitated American Sign Language. So, they are trying to prove that you know American Sign Language is you know a language that is different from gesture you know.

However, in India there has been an anthropologist and deaf that a scholar named Anneliese Kufters K U F T E R S. And she has done a lot of work with signing communities in Bombay. And what she shows is that there really is a continuum between gestures and sign.

You and that that Indians will talk about it as a continuum you know. However, again I think as you point out so eloquently, yes, you know these are complex languages, with their own syntax, with their own lexicon, with their own grammar you know there is a whole field of deaf phonetics. You know which is I think maybe only now taking on in India elsewhere especially I mean in the US we have American sign language poetry where we have beautiful poems and stories that are told and disseminated using American sign language.

And you know there was a sense that there are a lot of affordances associated with sign languages and that these are only now be getting to be exploited, although again there is a rich history of poetry into works.

I think that only makes me say that this sign language is a vivid demonstration or example to say that language should be and is much more than that which is vocally articulated, it comes in the form of gestures, pictures, music, vocally narrated stuff. And the through the whole body I mean body language I mean, so, language is much more

than vocally articulated stuff. I think that is the larger picture emerging from sign language apart from its particular importance to deaf people.

Yeah and I think you know there is also all kinds of benefits associated, but sign language I think in the you asked for example, and ask for about to know they teach baby, baby sign.

Because their signs that they will and can use signs before they can use spoken languages you know. And there is also a sense that growing up bilingual using spoken and sign languages, and it is very good for your brain you know when we sense that different parts of the brain are activated simultaneously you know. And so I think it is really important to think about what it is that sign languages you know ask us to think about language you know, and how do sign languages challenge how we think about language, and how does it force us to think about language differently.

One thing I also want to say is here in the US were seeing the emergence of what is called the pro tactile movement where there are deaf blind people were coming together, and they are collectively creating tactile sign languages you know. And these are not just tactile forms of American Sign Language, they are their own tactile languages.

**HK:** Wow.

**MF:** And that that is called the pro tactile movement.

**HK:** Ok.

**MF:** And the pro tactile people was really important is tact you know and there was just one deaf blind poet named John Lee Clark, C L A R K. And, he has written beautiful poems and also beautiful short stories about how the problem is what he called distantism. The people what you know want to come close together that people can touch things. You know when he goes to the supermarket for example; he cannot touch the food behind glass you know people who do not want to let them let themselves be touch and so on. So, that is also a really interesting movement.

**HK:** That is great Michele I never heard this. And it is, this is a very useful term to learn distantism. Because in the ocular culture on the one hand you have sign language

flourishing and on the other hand, you have tactile sign language flourishing which also challenges the supremacy of the ocular.

**MF:** Yeah.

**HK:** So, this is a very interesting development.

**MF:** Yes, I can send you some article actually about it if you like.

**HK:** Please do, please do, please do as a student of literature I will be deeply deeply interested in that. Well, asking about sign language, Indian sign language, what is the scene here Michelle?

**MK:** So, find we it so in 2015, the government, the central government opened the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center where creating sign language dictionaries and there are also training sign language interpreters so that thing really exciting. And, increasingly there are people where I think not there is a problem in Indian deaf schools and that deaf children are not given access to an exposure to Indian sign language and that is something that often comes much later. So, deaf young adults, they also deaf children will go to deaf schools or they will be taught through the oral method.

However, in many cases, they are sitting in very large classrooms without amplification that works for them, and without teachers who know how to teach deaf children well. And, so they are graduating they are finishing class 10 without actually being proficient in language until after they finish class 10, it becomes an issue of what do we do now. And to them they lock to vocational training programs where they learn skills like computers or data entry or this. So, they learn soft skills like hospitality skills to go and work in India's growing hospitality sector.

So, in these need vocational training programs they will also learn Indian sign language there. When they were younger they can and do an Indian sign language from older deaf mentors. If you have a deaf child who have deaf parent, that deaf child usually learns Indian sign language from their parents, you know, but increasingly there is a sense that Indian sign language needs to be something that is taught to younger children you know and that is standardized and that is valued. So, I think this past year somebody filed a



PIO or actually multiple people filed a PIO to make Indian sign language a national language.

And so, that is going to be interesting to see whether or not that is not a denied or not as a national language. I think deaf people in India are very keen for Indian sign language to have more recognition, and for more people to be exposed to it.

**HK:** So, our deaf school goes thought now, bilingually meaning signing in English or their mother tongue as much as Indian sign language or is it exclusively Indian sign language?

**MF:** So, increasingly there is a sense that deaf children in India need to be taught bilingually using Indian sign language especially deaf schools. However that is not the case, because deaf teachers of the deaf are not been taught Indian sign language as part of their teaching courses. So, very few teachers of the deaf actually know Indian sign language and this huge problem that there are some experiments.

So, in Haryana in the north, there are there is a deaf bilingualism project, where there are deaf teachers working in schools without teaching deaf children and teaching teachers of the deaf Indian sign language and so that is really exciting to see. And there are other experiments with bilingual education around India, however, that is not the norm increasingly it is recognized that it should be enormous.

Especially, because India signed and ratified the United Nations, convention on the rights of persons with disabilities which specifically mentions that children have the right to education in sign languages. So, it will be interesting to see what happened over the next few years and you know, you know the current government for example, The current government in its manifesto said that it was going to progress more on early intervention for children with disabilities. It will also be interesting to see, whether early intervention includes sign language based early intervention or not.

**HK:** That needs to be seen and how I mean, policy wise and practice wise both are different and we need to see how things will unfold.

**MF:** Yes, we have too we have too.

**HK:** Going back to America well is sign language treated as a foreign language or the second language in education, what is the condition there?

**MF:** So, many play schools and colleges recognize sign languages as foreign languages, specifically in American Sign Language. So, students can take American Sign Language as a foreign language, as a requirement for upon language and many schools and colleges offer American Sign Language as a course. Here at the University of Chicago we have two levels of American Sign Language and we also have a scholar American Sign Language and just sign language in which text in general, who teaches classes on sign language linguistics you know, and sign language has also been featured in TV shows.

So, we have some really popular TV shows here in America which featured American Sign Language, which is such as the show Switched at Birth which many people have watched. And there is a American deaf model and actor named Nyle Dimarco, who has appeared on a series of competition TV shows like America's Next Top Model and Dancing with the Stars, which I do not watch probably do not watch, but he I think did very well on both of those. So, there is increasing exposure to American Sign Language.

**HK:** I see. What about deaf socialization Michele, because I think along with sign language usage one tends to combine peculiarities certain idiosyncrasies of deaf socialization and they both together our clubbed to name something like deaf culture, which you explained early in the in our conversation. So, my straight question is this, is deaf socialization say for example, youth any different in India? When I grew up for example, I have seen deaf, my deaf counterparts, I studied in a blind school which also had deaf children Saint Louis School for the deaf and blind.

**MF:** Yeah.

**HK:** Yeah. So, they used to be very strong in sport and they had very close affinity with the school, intense networking unlike blind pupils who you know, spill out. So, yeah that is what I wanted to know.

**MF:** I think it might be one thing about deaf culture and that is that deaf Indians, I have noticed have been using the concept of deaf culture and there is a really important concept to them, because again I think there is this attempt to you know foreground deaf experience of being different and to.

**HK:** Validate also.

**MF:** Yet again and developing.

**HK:** Validate, yeah.

**MF:** Yeah. And in terms of deaf socialization, to me I think deaf social networks and deaf socialites tend to be pretty intense as you are pointing out you know, where people really stick together and they share information, there is very much a value placed on sharing information, sharing news. If one deaf person learned something, there then you know incumbent or required to share it with another deaf person, because that is part of deaf values, you know, sharing information, sharing news, wanting the deaf community as a community to develop and to get ahead.

So, I think it really is a collectivist mentality you know within deaf worlds and I think that had to do again, but shared language use and a sense that not everybody uses that shared language, and there is a sense that you know it is not only language, but it is this value around the need to share things and to help each other become uplifted.

You know recently there has been work so the scholars I mentioned Annelies Kusters who was at Heriot-Watt University in Scotland, but there was a book that came out in 2016 which was called Innovations in Deaf Studies. And, in that book the editors which were analyze and a woman named Maartje De Meulder, and a man named Dai O'Brien. They said that they wanted to focus on what they call deaf ontologies you know or unique deaf ways of being in the world.

You know and so it is interesting to think about, well is ontology is just another word so culture here, as it doing the same work, but I think there is this attempt to carve out. You know a space for trying to understand, why it is that deaf people stick together, now what is it about deaf embodiment, what is it about deaf sensibilities, what is it about deaf values that produced this way of being in the world together and wanting to be together.

So, in my sense my sense in India is that there are these very tight deaf communities and that within these communities people really negotiate the fact that people have different access. The sign languages that people who come from different class backgrounds, the

people come from different caste backgrounds and the people come from different geographic areas.

One thing that I think is really interesting is that you know if you are talking to somebody and they tell you verbally they tell you their name, their full name, you can tell you know what religion they are and you can usually tell their caste background you know. However, in sign languages people usually have a name sign which is often you know the first letter of their name signed, and then sign usually on the face.

So, for example my name sign will be the letter M and this is against my face moving outward, because I used to have cat eye glasses. So, I am signing my name sign. And so when you sign name signs, you do not know what somebody's background is.

**HK:** Yes.

**MF:** You know and so there is a way that that is obscured and not revealed in the same way that is good to spoken languages. You know, however, I have noticed that you know deaf people often say so for example, if you are eating lunch together. And offer somebody food, you know they will say oh, but I am vegetarian, I am a Brahmin and there was sign Brahmin.

You know and people are very sort of not embarrassed or ashamed or they are very upfront about just signing, I am a Brahmin. Yeah and this has been backlash against deaf with people saying no, we should not sign that we should not you know use that sign, because it is not a good sign. So, I think there are some debates around that, but in general these other kinds of differences are back rounded.

**HK:** I see. I also hear the concept called deaf gain, perhaps it is in sync with what you said a minute ago, minute ago about deaf ontology. Are they same? Because, the deaf gain perhaps may be visual aesthetics of sign language may be one or there may be sign languages more conducive perhaps for socializing or visual information transfer, I do not know what does that mean deaf gain?

**MF:** So, deaf gain is a new concept that I think was coined in either 2013 or 2014 the book came out in 2014 and that was Dirkesen Bauman and Joseph Murray.

**HK:** Yes.

**MF:** And maybe, they said you know, we used to talk about hearing loss and they always used to talk about you know hearing impairment, hearing loss they used to be framed as a deficit, a deficit, now we want to frame it as a positive thing. So, what we want to do is we want to think about what it is that deaf people contribute to the world and what is it that they contribute to the world through visual language, through deaf ways of being in the world, through the poetics, through their unique embodiment.

And they talk about things like the emergence of the deaf space movement, which is an architectural movement designed to create spaces that are visually appealing to deaf people and that enable deaf people to move through the world.

Well, you know or they talk about just poetic forms you know, well they talk about inventions they talk that Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone after working with deaf children and using structure graphs and putting sound waves onto paper, you know. So, they try to use these examples as demonstrating ways that deaf people contribute to the world.

Now, on one hand I find this theory to be very provocative and I will use it when talking with many people in the world, because I think this is important concept you know. I think it is an especially important concept for you know deaf Indians, who are trying to say look you know being deaf is a good thing you being deaf is not a bad thing. So, I think it can be a valuable concept. However, analytically I should say that I have problems with it and the reason for that is, because it sort of concepts that deaf people have to contribute to the world in order to be valuable right.

**HK:** Yeah.

**MF:** So, in a way it is a very sort of neoliberal sort of argument, you know.

**HK:** I get that.

**MF:** We are valuable, because we contribute you know.

We are valuable, because we give you these things you know and the question of why do deaf people have to always you know, why is it that contribution is the marker of value, why cannot being just be a marker of value.

**HK:** Something like differently abled, you are delivering something because of that special ability.

**MF:** Yes.

It is very simple actually through the differently abled concept, do not you think?

**HK:** Well, it aids some people in having some sense of resilience, but at the same time it can also camouflage violence done on them structural violence, so both can happen.

**MF:** Yes, I agree.

**HK:** Well. Michele when I was young, that is in my school I only saw I mean, I only heard deaf people working in very very noisy environments say factories, printing houses, where humans cannot work inhuman noise. So, the assumption was deaf people are you know totally dead to stone deaf to noise, but the reality is sound and noise disturbs any moving life including all including deaf.

So, sound and noise have they a nasty power equation and they are also repugnant to health. What is the scene now, employment real employment scenario, maybe the noise thing you can talk about, but I want to know about the real life condition, now.

**MF:** In India.

**HK:** Yeah.

**MF:** Or in U.S.

**HK:** Yeah in India, in India, maybe you can.

**MF:** So.

**HK:** Address the noise thing first and then get into that.

**MF:** So, in the past as you bring it out I think Indian people often they did welding, you know they did work in large government factories, where they were all day or in private factories, there is also a lot of deaf people who have historically worked in places like Tiruppur, am I pronouncing it right?

**HK:** Which one?

**MF:** Tiruppur, Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu.

**HK:** Ok Tiruppur, yeah.

**MF:** Tiruppur.

**HK:** Yeah.

**MF:** And you know and deaf people have actually done very well, you know working on power looms and doing garment work, making money per piece.

**HK:** Right.

**MF:** However, what has been really interesting to me is that lately you know under India's liberalization and the focus of disability as a category of intervention, you have all of these NGOs and for profit organizations that have developed that now provide job training for deaf people. And that job training is often soft skills training to have deaf people work in places like Cafe Coffee Day, Costa Coffee, McDonald, KFC which has special KFCs which are largely staffed by deaf people or in the information technology enable services sector, where deaf do data entry and other back office work.

So, I find this kind of concerning, because I think that these jobs are often dead ends you know. In the sense that there is not really potential for getting promotions and so in my research I have met many deaf people who work at Cafe Coffee Day, who have been there longer than their hearing counterparts and yet they are not promoted on they are not made into managers you know.

I also think it is interesting that when deaf people go to these vocational training centers and ask for help finding jobs, they are off what are they to do, what are they good at you know, what kinds of things do they see themselves doing, they are just told you are deaf, you should get this training in the soft skills area or is she get this training and the computers area. So, there are not a lot of flexibility and there is not a lot of room for deaf people to try different kinds of job. I think it is also interesting; again I am talking mostly about metro area.

So, who what work mostly in metro areas, I will say that I have visited Coimbatore I think it is 10 years ago where I have last has been in Coimbatore.

So, when I was in Coimbatore I was interesting, because they were not NGOs there are and deaf people were finding jobs through their neighbors or they were going to take up a to work in the garment industry. And I actually found this to be preferable, because it seems like people were getting different kinds of jobs and they were drawing on that familial and their neighborhood networks as opposed to national areas like Delhi, Bangalore perhaps in Chennai, where people are told you are deaf go to this NGO, they will help you get a job you know and again the kinds of jobs that they are getting are quite narrow you know.

I think that deaf people are still very interested in getting government jobs you know however, negotiating the reservation system can be quite fun and quite difficult you know. And, it is something that people have been expressing a lot of dissatisfaction towards I mean as we know a lot of those jobs are not built right, there is a backlog of people waiting for the quotas to actually become filled.

And I also think it would be interesting to focus more on the kinds of jobs that deaf people are getting in the informal sector. So, one of the people I did work with in Bangalore decided that he was going to sell tea, green tea at a local park and he so it is very nice green tea; he would set up a wood burning fire you know in this park.

And, he would sell it to early morning workers at 10 rupees a cup you know I think he made something like 22000, 20 to 30000 rupees a month which was a lot more than he would make if he was working at Cafe Coffee Day where, I think the most he would make would be 8000.

**HK:** That is right.

**MF:** Rupees.

**HK:** That is right.

**MF:** Yeah.



**HK:** That is right. And what is the situation in America when it comes to employment for the deaf, but before that I will I would also ask what is the state employment for visually impaired people in India, state is the primary employer, is that different for deaf people?

**MF:** So, I do not know in numbers I wish that I did. I think very solid employer and I think deaf people would like to work for the state, there is a sense about either in banks or in government offices, the railways and so on.

**HK:** Alright.

**MF:** But I think again this question of all these would have been filled a deaf people giving jobs, are they getting jobs that are meaningful jobs or they given jobs with a beyond and not given promotion, so this is the question that I think for me. In the U.S, I do think deaf people are underemployed compared to non-deaf people for that the hearing people would you have in came for disabilities act which is supposed to prevent discrimination in employment.

And, I think increasingly you do find jobs in hard of hearing people employed and all kinds of sectors I mean, all kinds of job you know; they are also entrepreneurs, they are computer programmers, they are teachers, they are professors, they are salespeople, they are clerks, there is all kinds of jobs in which you can find deaf people.

**HK:** I see, well. Coming to the fact end of the program, but let us talk about deaf studies and its connection with disability studies, well. Lots of similarity, but that the problem about vocabulary and how does one identify oneself; say as a disabled person or as a minority community and other vexed questions. So, what is happening on that front Michele?

**MF:** So, there are still very much in opposition. So, which I find unfortunate I think deaf studies scholars are the locked in to identify where disability. Are these scholars I think, so right now I think we could say that we are in the third wave of deaf studies, I think somebody analyze boosters and her co-editors of the innovations and deaf studies, volume have mapped out the waves. And I think again there is still a focus on deaf and deaf ontologies, deaf people with visual sensibilities and deaf people as you know a linguistic minority.

You know, I think it is interesting that deaf studies scholars do overlap with disabilities studies, scholars to some degree you know at least and the focus on critiquing the medical model and thinking through the social model. However, there is still very much of split of as in much engagement I think between deaf studies and disability studies. Know if you go through society for disability studies conferences, but you just went to whether there are lot of deaf study scholars, there are no?

**HK:** Yeah there were, there were particularly on oralism, there are a lot of presentational oralism and there was some some presentations on deaf accommodation in higher education and so on.

**MF:** That is interesting you know, so I think it will also be interesting to see how the field develops, how that studies develops. And if it becomes closer to becomes closer to disability studies, but my sense so for work are they are still two very different field and that scholars are policing those boundaries.

**HK:** Well. Policing is not good for any field, but what are how I see it is Michele, I think critiques of majoritarianism can immensely draw on deaf studies to make a very important and wants to critique about how minorities, how accommodation; a fuller accommodation can be achieved for people belonging to minorities that is how I read it, what do you think.

**MF:** How so?

**HK:** Well how so, well let us put it this way concepts like oralism, critique of oralism. Basically says if you existentially if you plug out the means of learning, plug out the means of communicating or self expression, then you are actually existentially threatening a community and that can happen to happen when majoritarianism is in full swing, whether it is fitted against people with religious minority or caste, groups or race you know. There are ways of removing or annihilating them one. And one of them is modes of self expression and learning and that is how I see the connection.

**MF:** That makes sense again yeah.

**HK:** Great Michele, you know it is 1 hour. And thank you so much for the time very very useful insights.

Especially, I particularly appreciate the cross cultural critique that came so smoothly in this 1 hour. Thank you so much Michele.

**MF:** And thank you for including me. And I would love feedback from students and if anybody wants to contact me, they are more than welcome to do that. I am you should have a website on the department of comparative human development. So, please feel free to contact me and thank you so much Hemachandran for including me at this. Thank you.

**HK:** Thank you.