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Prepared by: Dr. Jaishree Devi, Assistant Professor

Department of Education, RTV

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND GENDER

It is very often said that there is no such thing as a social reality. Further the question is asked! What are social constructions? Rejecting intrinsically- good, or bad categories, these are described as social constructions. In other words, morality is the acquired vision of a society. How is the vision of a society or its social construction shaped? Is it shaped automatically? Is it culture - specific? Let us examine this process of social construction. Everyday we observe various objects, experience several events and related with various social interactions. These entire phenomena that are experienced individually help to develop an image of society or the world. Indeed we filter everything that happens to us everyday through the lens or screen of our understanding of our world and society. This everyday sense of the world or things forms the basis of social reality or construction of social reality (IGNOU material p: 6). In this sense, social construction is a social process in which both individuals and other social institutions and practices are intrinsically related. Social construction is also influenced, shaped and dominated by the interests of a particular group or class of people. In this sense, the culture, norms, ideologies, and values of the dominant group are used to justify and sustain a particular form of social construction. Hence social constructions through which we understand everyday life try to classify people on the basis of caste, class, religion, community, kinship, gender and so on. The classification of people is the consequence of social construction. Let us read about the relationship between social construction and gender. As we explore social construction of gender, we will focus on aspects such as the distinction between sex and gender as well as cultural construction of gender.