Nainita Madurai

Six-degrees of Separation

The notion of six-degrees of separation states that any person in the world is linked by personal relationships to any other person in the world through at most six people. The theory is widely popularized and there are many who believe it. However, it is a theory that has also been extensively disclaimed by many researchers. These researchers say, among other things, that the theory of six-degrees of separation is a “small-world theory” used as a way for people to cope with living in a big world. People like to believe that there existence in the world affects more than just those immediately around them. Researchers further refute the theory by testing and proving that there are people who cannot connect through just six people.

Regardless of contradictory research, the theory of six-degrees of separation still brings up the issue of the vast connectivity of some select individuals; there are people in the world that may well in fact be connected to every person through six or fewer people. This, of course, relies on factors such as his or her occupation, personality, economic status, political status and mostly societal status (or popularity). These people are likely to be people that have many close relationships as well as many acquaintances. Through their close relationships they will secure their societal position, and in turn, both their close relationships and societal position will allow them to meet more people. This is why political figures, celebrities, and other famous people are more likely to be linked to any given person than random people in different countries.