

## Sexual child abuse and domestic violence

Social problem appears to be an elusive concept. It is defined variously by writers. Mary Walsh and Paul Furfey define it as "a deviation from the social ideal remedial by group effort". In their perspective, only a condition that does not fit in the ideal condition projected by the social ethics constitutes a social problem.

1. Here in this context, I want to mention some memorable experiences I had gone through when I was working some years back as a Social Worker in south east part of Nebraska where there are some aboriginals; basically they belong to the tribal group. Actually they were innocent and good people. But what made me so frustrated was, there had a custom of child marriage. Actually it was the part of their religious custom but the girl child who undergoes for this system was not at all mentally prepared to serve the right duties of a wife and of course of a mother. They were illiterate and do not know how to lead a civilized life. The girl child undergoes for the child marriage at the age of eight or nine wouldn't be physically and mentally fit for this brutal custom. So it cannot be termed as a marriage, and obviously it is a perfect example of sexual child abuse, but only thing is that it is part of their custom but not intentional. The more pathetic fact was that the child would not get any formal education or of that kind either from a school or from a teacher. The men in the community were addicted to alcoholism and most often that lead to domestic violence too. So as a social worker it was my duty to make them aware about the demerits of child marriage and how it affects the children. So with the help of the community development agencies, we started our work. We had used audio visuals, classes and seminars to make them aware about this bad custom. After a series of prolonged group activities and exercises we were able to change them very well. Today they know the importance of education and its relevance in the life of a girl child. If the girl child gets adequate education, it not only changes her life, but the coming generations also.

This may be on account of poor home-environment, lack of clear goals, or difficulties in their life. Our guidance and counseling helped them to set clear goals and to cultivate good habits, so that the community itself had undergone for drastic changes by the proper intervention of a social worker at the right time and right place. As a social worker, my guidance and counseling extended its hands to the solution of their personal and social problems by training their emotions, developing their interests and promoting their social efficiency.

2. My second task was to give the mentally challenged tribal group in northern California who were in a pitiable condition almost five years back. The children in that area needed more care in their studies, but also in their personal and social adjustments. The common educational problems we found among them are:

1. Difficulty in choosing subjects for future study
2. Disillusionment with the chosen subjects
3. Academic difficulties (Failure to cope with a course of study, failure in the examination, low marks, sub-standard performances etc.)
4. Fear and anxiety about school-work, fear of examinations, feeling of academic inadequacy, displaying physical symptoms—headache, nausea etc. — in response to academic pressure.

5. Poor study-habits, lack of concentration, lack of interest, lack of motivation, slow-speed in reading or writing.

Our educational guidance enabled the children to enhance their abilities and skills, and encouraged them to perform their work with better self-confidence.

## **Personal Guidance**

Pupils faced many problems of interpersonal relationships — with parents, teachers, friends and others. Problems generally aggravated when they enter the adolescent stage. They include problems of sex, finance, independence, friendship and the like. That 'storm and stress' sometimes pushed them to seek solution in the use of drugs. When they become disappointed or frustrated, they neglect studies and involve themselves in anti-social activities. They become maladjusted.

As a social worker, my guidance and counseling extended its hands to the solution of their personal and social problems by training their emotions, developing their interests and promoting their social efficiency. The world of work is becoming very complex, and in occupational terms, there is a wide range of possibilities for a student. He needs guidance in realistic vocational aspirations, and in making wise vocational choices. There were exceptional children among them as the gifted, the handicapped, the backward and the mal adjusted. Our guidance took particular care of such children. Decision-making is an important aspect in the life of every individual. Broadly speaking, the entire life-span of an individual is a series of decision-making acts. Our guidance and counseling helped them to make prompt and wise decisions.

Placement and follow-up service—as a social worker our guidance and counseling provided help to secure a grade, a place in their studies and to secure a job later on. It helped the pupils, then, to adjust to the situations.

As a social worker our guidance and counseling assisted them in developing desirable work and study habits in order that they might attain the maximum results according to their interests and abilities. It involved, on the part of the counselor, knowledge of the interests, aptitudes, abilities, difficulties of the group.