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A PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE FOR THE CHILD IN CONFLICT WITH LAW- A QUALITATIVE CASE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

The Term Child in conflict with law refers to anyone under 18 years of age who has come into contact with the justice system as a result of being suspected or accused of committing an offense. Adolescence is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights. It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and

abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles.

Adolescence is the most important period in one's life. At this time the child has tendencies for curiosities and experiments. They want to feel and experience whatever they see on this earth. Hence, environment plays a vital role in formulating their behavior. Adolescence is the period of stress and storms. Children at this stage develop either positive character or negative character. Hence, they are looking for their identity. The elders are not ready to accept as they are grown up children. So the children, mostly rely on the friends circle. Hence, peer pressure becomes a most important factor which makes the children to commit illegal activities. They enjoy their life being fully involved in the friends circle.

This paper aims to discuss about an in-depth case study of a 17 year old boy who had the criminal tendencies due to peer pressure from the environment. Due to which the child developed stealing behavior, using alcohol, unhealthy sexual experiments, and scholastic backwardness and became a born criminal. The Researcher used an art therapy to express the inner feeling of the child. Many sessions of counseling were rendered. The client improved a lot. He repented for his past life. He wanted to lead a peaceful life. His revenge and hatreds towards the society and community could be minimized to a large extent. He made the strong decision that he would never involve in any criminal activities. He rejoined the school showing interest in studies. This paper concludes that peer pressure is the most effective element which may endanger a person's character either positively or negatively.

KEYWORDS: Child in conflict with law, Peer pressure, and Behavioral problems.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and youth. A transitional period always happens to be a difficult one as new developments occur

rapidly during this time and the difficulty is in adapting adequately to the changes. During 2 to 5 years of age, there is the period of very fast developments. That is mainly physical. During this time mental development also increases simultaneously. Then there is a period of slow developments

and slow changes. Generally it ranges from 5 to 11 years and it is called a period of moratorium. Then again ranging from 12 to 18 years there is a period with a spurt in physical, mental and emotional developments. It is the period of adolescence. So many biological changes occur during this time. It is mainly called a

period of the onset of puberty. Rapidly the individual moves towards maturity in biological growth (Shrimali, S. 2008).

Adolescence has been described as a period of storm and stress and it is a period of life when one experiences the greatest turmoil and crisis. It is a transitional period when one is not so young that he can live wholly depending on parents nor he is so mature as to be able to live independently.

The peer group is one of the characteristics of adolescents. The impact of peer-group is the strongest during this period. During early childhood, parents, especially the mother enjoy the greatest influence upon the child. The child values its acceptance by the parents to be higher. The child's greatest reward is the praise for his behavior by the parents and the severest punishment is the withdrawal of parental affection. With the child's entry into the nursery, his social circle expands. Then he cares for his acceptance by the peer group. He cannot tolerate isolation of who happens to be very close to him.

For an adolescent, the peer-group grows more in importance than parents do. He is influenced by his peers in matters of dress, hair-style, links-dislinkings, hobbies, recreations and so on. If the home environment is drab, his attachment to the group of his friends will be greater. And if that group or his friend or friends do not happen to be good, he too will be spoiled. If the companions of the child are potential delinquents, he may also feel tempted to join them in furthering the process (Kumar, R. 1988).

Review of literature

Peer relationship in adolescence will continue the trend towards increased time spent with peers. As an adolescent's relationships with family are restructured, peer relationships will multiply and become more intense as new demands and social expectations are made apparent to the adolescent by the peer group. While the overall number of friends decreases during adolescence, peer relationships often surpass the parental relationship as the adolescent's primary source of social support. Friendships will take on a new significance in adolescence and will be centered on intimacy and self-disclosure. In addition, sexuality will add a new dimension to an adolescent's social life as dating begins and new possibilities for intimacy develop (Keeran Thomas and Evans Subhadra, 2010).

For most adolescents, social relationships extend beyond family and individual friends to include peer groups or age mates who know each other, sometimes quite well. Adolescent peer groups share many of the characteristics of those in middle childhood. They involve social equals who are of roughly the same age, maturity and background and who enjoy spending time together pursuing shared activities and goals. Peer groups, however, play even greater roles in the everyday life of adolescents than the peer groups of younger children do, and they tend to be more structured and organized, frequently included individuals from a relatively wide age range and are much less likely to be all male and all female.

For a teenager, peers are a central source of information about himself and others. They provide him with critical information about who he is, how he should act, and what he is like and so forth. They serve as a basis for making comparisons between his own actions, attitudes and feelings and those of others. One major study used participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, and journals to learn about the social interactions of 303 boys and girls ages 13 to 21. The participants were studied at beaches, social clubs, parties, on street corners and inside their homes and were asked about their friendships and other peer relationships. The researchers discovered two types of peer groups. The first, the clique, was closely knit group of two or more people who were intimately involved in a number of shared purposes and activities and who excluded those who were not. The second, the crowd was a larger, less cohesive group of between 15 to 30 people. Adolescent crowds were generally informal association of two or four cliques.

Membership in a clique allows the teenager to have a few select friends whom he knows well and who share important interests and activities, whereas membership in a crowds provide contact with much broader groups of peers on a more casual and informal basis. The small size and the intimacy of a clique make it like a family in which the adolescent can feel comfortable and secure. The

major clique activity seems to be talking and cliques generally meet during the school week. The Crowds usually gather at parties and other organized social functions, which typically take place on weekends **(Seifert, L. & Hoffnung, J. (1991).**

Peer groups are an important component of the adolescent's social convoy, the network of social relationships that follow a person over his or her lifetime changing in structure, but providing continuity in the exchange of support who is included in this social convoy is determined by the adolescent's emotional attachment of the person and by the person's role in the adolescent's life. They provide critical information about so many things. These are important ingredients in an adolescent's development of self-concept and identity. Most important peer groups provide a support base outside of the family from which the teenager can try on the different identity roles that ultimately contribute to his adult personality. Peer groups can also exert powerful pressures to conform especially when the family fails to serve a constructive corrective force **(Seifert, L. & Hoffnung, J. 2000).**

Conformity to peer pressure can be particularly disruptive during early adolescence. Frank Vitaro and his colleagues examined how the characteristics of their friends affected delinquency among 11 and 12 years old boys who were judged by their teachers to be either highly disruptive, moderately disruptive, moderately conforming, or highly conforming. They found that only moderately disruptive boys appeared to be negatively influenced by hostile-aggressive friends and exhibited more delinquent behaviors at age 13. Highly disruptive boys were most delinquent at age 13, regardless of their friends' characteristics and boys who were judged to be moderately or highly conforming appeared to be unaffected by their friends' characteristics **(Seifert, L. & Hoffnung, J. 2000).**

A child is more vulnerable to crime due to natural curiosity, innocence, ignorance about the implications and consequences. The children, who enter the gateway of crime due to one reason or the other, are known as juvenile delinquents. Juvenile delinquency can be defined as a condition of guilt, a culpable failure in duty, a fault, a misdeed or an offense committed by a youthful person. **(Kumar, R. 1988).** In other words juvenile delinquency refers to a pattern of destructive or antisocial activities and law breaking offenses committed by adolescents**(Seifert, L. & Hoffnung, J. 2000).**

A child has got his own world of thinking, feeling and believing. He thinks that every person is related to him and everything in the world belongs to him. Any happenings which thwart his aforesaid belief, leads to a feeling of frustration. Any hindrance from anybody is unnatural for him. Gradually he comes in contact with the realities of life and finds them stony hard. Since civilization rests on multiple inhibitions, we train our children to build certain inhibitions in their natural reactions and conform to certain modes of behavior, which are acceptable to the society. At times the child finds certain practices contrary to the preachings, the child gets confused over the double standards**(Kumar, R. 1988).**

Numerous behavioral problems arise in daily life. To live and to grow are fundamental urges in life. No child grows up without exhibiting some problem behavior or other at some time or another. The term behavior problem is used to designate a deviation in behavior from the one expected or approved by the society. Problem behavior is that behavior which makes life difficult and unsatisfactory for the child and his parents. Breckenridge and Vincent consider behavior problems as those forms of behavior which indicate that something is wrong with the child himself or with the environment in which he lives. In Verma's view behavior problem is nothing but a deviation from the accepted pattern of behavior on the part of an individual in society**(Devadas, P. & Jaya, N. 1996).**

Behavior problems lead to more serious crimes if it is not checked thoroughly. They may go against the moral law of the society. An individual, usually under the age of eighteen years of age who manifests either antisocial or criminal behavior is referred to a juvenile delinquent. Therefore, juvenile delinquency is a pattern of behavior of children who come in conflict with the law. There are various forms of delinquency such as truancy, vagrancy, stealing, smoking. Gambling, drinking, and committing crimes, including sexual misbehavior. There are many factors responsible for these behavior problems. The chief causes of these problems are biological factors, sex and family**(Devadas, P. & Jaya, N. 1996).**

In biological factors, although the theory of innate predisposition of delinquency is considered untenable, an individual's body builds and features do influence his acceptability. His vulnerability may be accentuated because of certain biological factors, including constitutional peculiarities and organic

defects. Sex is a factor in delinquency. The male's greater aggressiveness and higher reactivity constitute a more adequate biological base for delinquency. Likewise, conditions in the family are probably the most important factors in producing delinquency. There are some other factors within the family, such as broken home or broken family, neglect of parental function and quasi broken home, all these contribute to the behavior problems of the child(Devadas, P. & Jaya, N. 1996).

METHODOLOGY

The Methodology used in this research was a qualitative research method. That is to say the Researchers did a case study of a seventeen year old child who is admitted in one of the children's homes in Kerala.

Objectives

1. To do ego strengthening of the child.
2. To do behavior modification of the child.
3. To impart art therapy for the child.
4. To readmit the child to the school.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Research design used in this research was Case study Research Design in nature. The Researchers used this design in order to do an in-depth analysis of the client.

Tools of Data collection

The Researchers did an in-depth interview using an interview schedule comprising all the details of the client. The idea was to explore the child fully so that he may open his inner mind completely. Many sessions of counseling were intended. Moreover, art therapy was incorporated in this study.

CASE STUDY

Introduction

Mr. A is hailing from Kottayam. He is studying in 12th standard. His father's name is Raj (Name changed) and Mother is a housewife. The occupation of his father is quarry mines and rubber tapping. He has one brother and studying in 10th standard. He is from middle socioeconomic family. Till 10th standard he studied in one school. After that, he studied Plus Two in another school.

Case Presentation

Up to 10th standard, the child was not much exposed to the outer world of exposure. He was within the reach of his parents and house environment. During the time of 10th standard, he started to sell rubber sheets produced by him. It encouraged him to earn more money by himself and that slowly changed his behavior pattern. Hence he happened to make friendship with his classmate Mr. B (Name changed). He was new to his neighborhood. Slowly their friendship grew immensely. Mr. B was a thief or an inborn criminal. Mr. A and Mr. B began to move together in everywhere and in everything else.

Mr. B started to steal the houses and Mr. A accompanied him. Mr. B got more money and jewellery from the theft. Mr. A got only little less compared to Mr. B. However, they shared the stolen materials among themselves. They did not go to the school. They got out from home wearing school uniform and did not go to school. They were roaming around different places and observe rich homes and made plans for the theft. This was their daily routine. They continued to steal the houses around their locality. With the stolen wealth they enjoyed the life in bars and hotels and other amusement places. They used to drink alcohol and smoke frequently. Mr. A drinks the alcohol a lot. The getting money they used to spend within their friend's circle. Likewise, they were 12 in numbers always. They had a lust for women.

Mr. A is very much in touch with sexual experiments. At the age of 14, he indulged in sexual activities. He had sexual intercourse with his neighbor girls. Moreover, during the school days, he had the sex act with his biology teacher. Later he had a strong sex link with a Hindi teacher. He had a romantic love with a girlfriend early and then he left her. But later he had fallen in love with a Christian girl. It lasted for two years. They were in deep love. But Mr. A told her to leave him. However, she was not ready to leave him. So, somehow his parents came to know about this matter and so they sent him to Trivandrum. But after a while he came back to his house. Then again, he met his lover again. Mr A had told everything about his theft to lover. Then she asked him how much money you need to withdraw from your criminal activities. He did not receive any money from his lover and continued to do criminal activities.

Mr. A used to get blue films from one mobile shop. He had a strong acquaintance with that shop. It was his secret place. But one day he told to his friend about this and they approached jointly in mobile shop. Then they said that you have to bring fifty thousand and you can get film star for one day for sexual pleasure. In order to accumulate this money, they planned to enter into one rich house. So, one day after watching a film in a theatre, they came to one house where they had planned the theft. They started to make a hole in the wall. Meanwhile, one of the members of the house arrived and saw them. The house member started shouting and people from the adjacent places came to the spot. Suddenly Mr. A and his friend started running, but they were caught by people and they handed over to police. At the police station he said everything that he had committed. In order to make them say the truth, the police used some methods like throwing the chilly powder into the eyes and under the arms then into the penis and so on. He was tortured and made him tell the truth.

Outcome

The counselor drew every piece of information from him. He opened his inner mind. The counselor motivated him to go forward as a good person in the future. The counselor feels that he had taken a strong determination that he will steal no more. The counselor gave him good advices. He is telling that in future he will go from his native place and move to Ernakulam. There he wanted to engage in the construction fields. The client exclaimed that because of his sinful activities, his parents also were caught and put into jail. That was a heartbreaking event for him. He felt completely helpless situation and he called God for his help for the first time and in him alone he surrendered himself. Through art therapy, he exhibited the inner self and its sorrows completely. He said that "I want to change myself. I really regret for what I have done. I will never repeat all these bad activities. I want to rely on God and want to walk in the right path." These were real words from his inner self and that was a real repentance he showed throughout the counseling sessions.

DISCUSSION

Mr. A seems to be extrovert. He has positive values in his mind. The circumstances led him to commit crime. He is bold in nature. He has the mental power to commit crime. It seems that he has repented a lot for having indulged in all illegal activities. In his attitude the counselor feels that he has changed a lot in this children's home being for a long period. He did all his illegal activities because of peer pressure from the friends circle. A lot of freedom he enjoyed in this adolescence period was a major cause for going astray from the right track of life. Early sexual experiences made him to value human existence negatively and hence it made him a moral degradation in his attitude towards others. So the counselor made ego strengthening for the betterment of the client.

He had an aversion towards the society and community. That also was reduced and began to accept the community. The counselor used the art therapy in such a way that the client wrote everything in different color papers and made him to relax his mind always focusing towards love and compassion to everyone else. He did not complete the Plus Two studies. So the counselor could make to rejoin the client into Plus Two School, so that he can finish his schooling fruitfully. He started to show interest in studies and simultaneously there were attitudinal changes in his behavior and other

activities. He left the bad friendship completely and he took a strong decision to keep himself away from sin and sinful situations.

CONCLUSION

This research was an intervention study of a seventeen year old boy who had the behavioral problems in his life. The impact of this study is very high because it opened a new idea of environment of adolescent children who are highly affected by peer pressure. Children are highly influenced by their friends circle. That in a way created and ended up in high criminal activities. The causes of his behavior are throwing some lights on how he came into these bad activities. That really opened eyes of the researchers that environmental modification is must for the children. The Environment does influence the children a lot. This study really brought about the importance of adolescent children once more that how much we should care for them for their better future of life. The Researchers felt happy that the particular child got readmitted in the school and thereby he became socially fit to live in the society to be fully human and fully alive. The Researchers have ensured a high level of confidentiality in this research. There will be many a children like this. The Researchers suggest that by doing such intervention studies, there can be a real level of difference in life can be brought.

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