

Case Study

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijamr.2017.04.07.002>

Transformation of Child into Motherhood and back to Childhood: A Case Study

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Abstract

Pranita (name changed) is a 14 year old Hindu girl from a migrant family of Odisha. The girl was admitted to the CCI. The girl's father worked in a manufacturing unit and died of diabetes mellitus when she was 11. Thereafter mother started working as a maid. Pranita attained puberty at 13 but after about 8 months her menstrual cycle stopped. The girl revealed a history of sexual abuse perpetrated by a 30 year old married neighbor that spanned two years. The mother refused approached a women's organization for help. An FIR was filed and the accused was nabbed. Further medical tests confirmed sexual assault and pregnancy. Abortion could not be possible for the medical reasons. A baby boy was born but died the next day due to some respiratory problem. Post – delivery, due to timely intervention of the authorities and the efficiency of the staff at the CCI, the girl successfully underwent rehabilitation , she adjusted well with other inmates and also underwent vocational training. She was enrolled in a school and is currently studying in class eight, being an active student in academics and extra-curricular activities. However, as far as the girl's future is concerned, there is lacuna in the child care/welfare system after he/she is deinstitutionalized. The case study also highlights the role of judiciary as the court of law found the accused guilty and awarded a sentence of rigorous imprisonment & penalty with compensation.

Keywords

Child Care Institutions,
Case Study,
Physical/sexual abuse
of Children,
Rehabilitation.

Case Background and Admission Process:

Pranita (name changed) is a 14 year old Hindu girl from a migrant family of Odisha. The girl was admitted to the CCI with the help of a social worker and the Deputy Director of the Women and Child Development department in May 2013.

Although the girl was like any other normal child with age-appropriate physical growth and development, she showed behavioral problems during the time of admission which were, perhaps, due to the trauma she was undergoing. However, the staff could successfully establish a rapport in the course of the next few days.

The girl, having been a student of the local school, was fluent in the local language which made the work of the child counselor and the researcher easier; the researcher having done 3 interviews with the child.

Family background:

The girl's father worked in a reputed manufacturing unit at Belur. He died of diabetes mellitus when she was 11 and thereafter the girl's mother started working as a maid to support Pranita and her two siblings- a brother aged 13 and a sister aged 10.

Remaining Information:

Pranita attained puberty at 13 but after about 8 months her menstrual cycle stopped. On stringent interrogation by her mother the girl revealed a history of sexual abuse perpetrated by a 30 year old married neighbor that spanned two years. The girl had been threatened by the accused against exposing him to anybody. The accused was allegedly encouraged by his mother.

However, the girl's mother refused to hide the crime and approached a women's organization. An FIR was filed and the accused was nabbed. Further medical tests confirmed sexual assault and pregnancy. The girl and her mother consented for her abortion for obvious reasons. But, by the time a team of doctors submitted their final medical report, the client was six and a half months into pregnancy and thus the team termed the abortion impossible to be carried out this late.

The girl was again moved back to the CCI and was prepared for the last trimester and the impending childbirth. So she underwent counseling and was taken proper care of along with a provision for nutritious diet. The house mother and the concerned staff members also made sure she did not face any trauma or stress. On completion of full term the shelter allowed the client's mother to stay with her. She was taken to the hospital on the due date. A healthy baby boy was born to the client but the infant died the next day due to some respiratory problem.

Post – delivery, the CCI allowed the client and her mother to move in for her recovery and proper care after which she was gradually allowed to get acquainted with the other inmates. She adjusted well and also underwent vocational training. Owing to her interest in academics she was enrolled in a school and is currently studying in class eight.

However, she had behavioral and adjustment issues because of the age gap with her classmates. Yet she has been an active student in academics and extra-curricular activities as well. She has also won accolades in Kabaddi and Kho-Kho.

Meanwhile the court of law found the accused guilty and awarded a sentence of rigorous imprisonment for ten years with a penalty of Rs. 50,000. The client was awarded a compensation of Rs. 2,55,000.

Future Plans:

When asked about her plans for the future, she looked unsure of pursuing any particular career and said that she may think about it at a later point of time.

Opinion about the institution:

The client, in the interviews given to the researcher, opined that the institution has been able to provide all the required facilities and proper care. The staff members have been kind and cooperative in assisting her to overcome the difficulties and help lead a normal life.

Comments:

The case study is a classic example for how an unexpected turn of events can be severely detrimental for a child.

Due to migration from a relatively far off place, there is lack of familial support. The father's untimely death and lack of education of the mother which deprived her of a decently paying job are other major contributory factors. Also there was lack of sexual awareness which, if present, could've perhaps prevented further assaults.

However due to timely intervention of the authorities and the efficiency of the staff at the CCI, the girl successfully underwent rehabilitation and today, lives a normal life.

As far as the girl's future is concerned, it can be seen that the child needs adequate guidance to understand and decide for herself a career path that can empower her in many ways. This shows a lacuna in the child care and welfare system when it comes to an inmate's future after he/she is deinstitutionalized.

The case also highlights the role of judiciary which convicted the culprit and awarded an imprisonment of 10 years.

Acknowledgments

It is a great pleasure to thank some important persons and institutions who have rendered their help and support for the completion of the case study of the current research paper.

First and foremost, I offer my gratitude to my research guide & also co-author of the current research paper, Prof.(Rtd) Shobhadevi R. Patil, for having given me suggestions and encouragement to complete the case study.

I sincerely thank the authorities of the KARNATAKA STATE INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SOCIETY, Women and Child Development Department, Govt of Karnataka for having given the permission to conduct the study.

I extend my special thanks to Ms. Supriya Ekbote, student of M.A in Psychology, Karnatak University, who helped me in sentence improvement of the case study.


My heartfelt thanks to my younger brother, Mr. Sunil Kumar Y D, who with his cheerful attitude gave me ideas to conduct the case study with more effectively with his tips to develop rapport with the child.

I must extend my heartfelt thanks to the University Grants Commission for offering my Senior Research Fellowship and Karnatak University for having provided me an opportunity to pursue Ph.D program.

I also thank all other closed ones of mine who gave me support and helped me directly or indirectly to conduct the case study.

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Access this Article in Online	
	Website: www.ijarm.com
	Subject: Social Work
Quick Response Code	
DOI: 10.22192/ijamr.2017.04.07.002	

How to cite this article:

Nandeesh Y D, Shobhadevi R Patil. (2017) Transformation of Child into Motherhood and back to Childhood: A Case Study. Int. J. Adv. Multidiscip. Res. 4(7): 8-10.
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijamr.2017.04.07.002>