

# **Workshop on Parents Child Relationship Development**

**Jointly Organised by Marriage Counsellors, Family Court, Mumbai  
and**

**Muskaan, Centre for Child and Adolescent Guidance Centre, TISS.**

**Date: 01.03.2014**

**Time: 20.00 PM to 5.30PM**

Venue: Hall, 3rd Floor, Family court, Bandra Kurla complex, Bandra East, Mumbai

**Present:** Hon Judge I M Bohari (Court No. 2), Hon. Judge B.S.R Kafre (court No. Room 3),  
Hon Judge Prasad N. Palsingankar (Court No.4)), Hon. Judge L.B. Magbum (court No. 5)

## **Organising team:**

### **Family Court:**

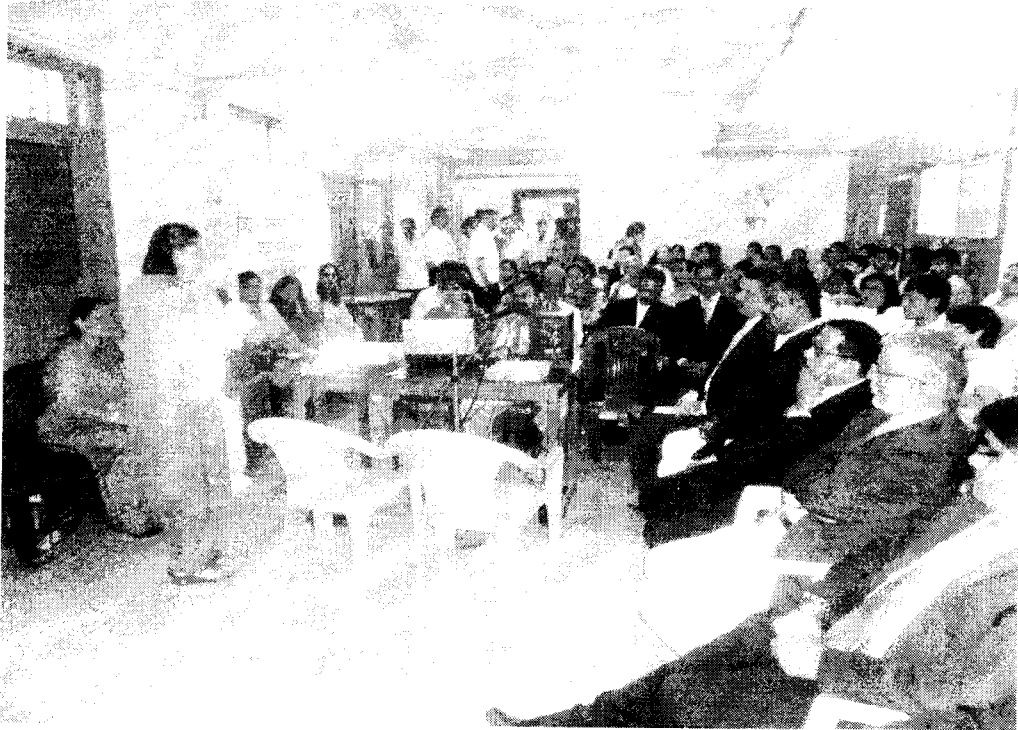
Mr Sonawane (Marriage Counsellor), Mrs Kapile (Marriage Counsellor),

### **Muskaan:**

Ms Freny Italia (Counsellor, Muskaan), Mr Jayaprakash JK (Psychiatric Social Worker, Muskaan), Ms Gayathri KR (Psychiatric Social Worker, Muskaan)

**Guest Speaker:** Smt. Tanuja Atul Donde (Consultant Counselor)

Ms. Italia was welcomed by Mrs. Kapile to introduce the Guest Speaker to the audience.



**Mrs. Tanuja Atul Donde** comes with rich experience of 31 years in the field of child mental health and has done her postgraduate studies (MA Social work) at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has extensively practised in diverse settings of mental health and is currently affiliated as a Consultant Counsellor and Trainer with corporate houses ( Godrej Industries, Mmodal Global Systems (India) Private Limited, Diageo Pan India Limited, Portescap -Seepz), Indian Air Force, Thane Camp, St Lawrence High School & Jr. College, Thane, Shreerang Vidyalaya, Thane, Gurukripa Hospital, Thane, as Psychiatric Counselor & Consultant. She is a member of Bombay Psychiatric Society for 27 Years. She is also a Columnist of NIE Times of India

Although strong feelings can be tough on kids, the following reactions can be considered normal for children.

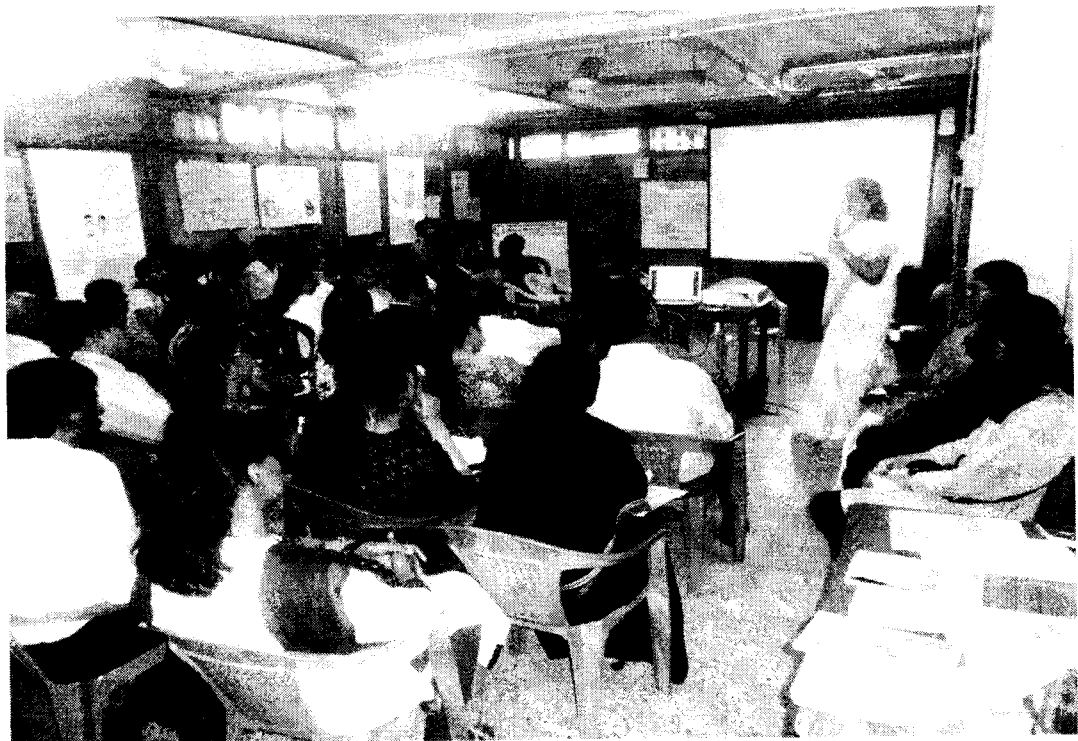
- **Anger.** Your kids may express their anger, rage, and resentment with you and your spouse for destroying their sense of normalcy.
- **Anxiety.** It's natural for children to feel anxious when faced with big changes in their lives.
- **Mild depression.** Sadness about the family's new situation is normal, and sadness coupled with a sense of hopelessness and helplessness is likely to become a mild form of depression.

- **Relationship with both parents.** What's best for your kids in the long run? Having a good relationship with *both* of their parents throughout their lives.
- **The long view.** If you can keep long-term goals—your children's physical and mental health, your independence—in mind, you may be able to avoid disagreements about daily details. Think ahead in order to stay calm.
- **Everyone's well-being.** The happiness of your children, yourself, and, yes, even your ex, should be the broad brushstrokes in the big picture of your new lives after divorce.

Mrs. Tanuja session started with basic needs of children, types of parents, effective communication and discussion the common problems seen in maladjusted kids.

Discussion was moderated by Ms. Italia. All parental queries were addressed effectively by Mrs. Donde. Parents had raised issues of conduct and behavioural difficulties of children in the context of ongoing conflicts of parents. As a clarification Mrs. Donde highlighted on the inadvertent need for reinstating healthy communication between

parent and child, consistent parenting practices as one of important way forward to help children. The summary of the talk is being enclosed as Appendix I.



### **Movie Screening and focussed Discussion anchored by Muskaan:**

A 45 minute edited Hindi movie "Rahul" (story of child who parents are separated) was taken up for screening. Ms. Italia, Mr. Jayaprakash and Ms. Gayathri moderated the discussion based on some of the relevant issues depicted in the movie. The movie was deeply moving for many parents and discussion was crucial for therapeutic reflection and in providing insights into the trauma of children when parents are in conflict and separate.

Following the screening the group was subdivided into four groups who discussed relevant themes depicted in the movie. The summary of discussion is provided below.

### **What are some of the Rights of Children?**

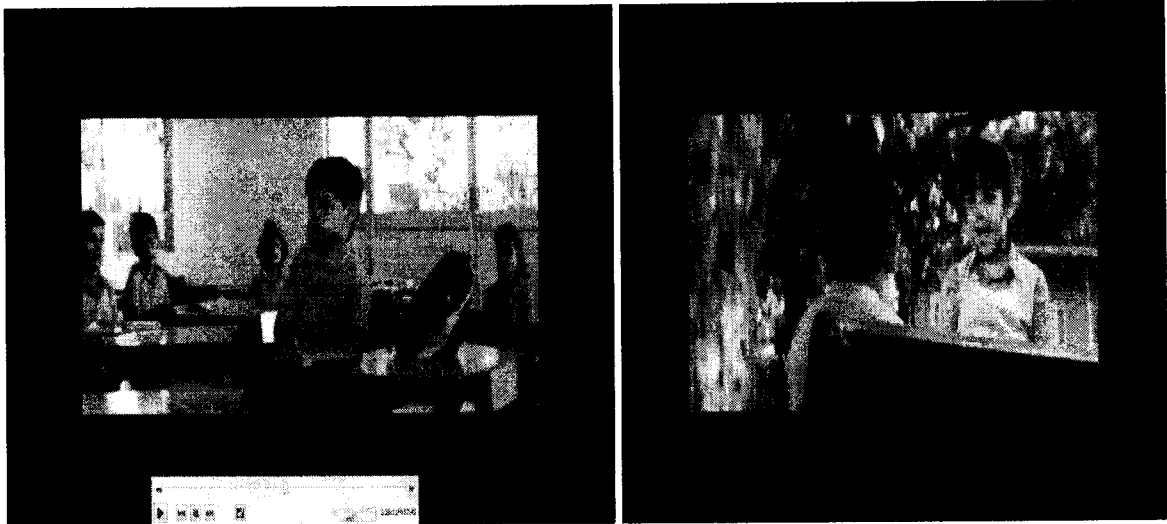


#### Key Points discussed

- Child has some right to be with both parents. It is the parents who have to ensure that the rights of child are taken care.
- Whenever they like they should be able to meet both parents. Access and visitation are child's right. A child should not be divorced to any of his parents. Quality time has to be given by both parents.
- Child has a right to healthy childhood. All basic needs of the child need to be met.
- A child should not be discriminated against any other child whether it comes to having normal parents or conflictual parents
- A child has a right to shared and joint custody.
- Children have a right to be protected and not be a part or be influenced by the dispute.
- Child has a right to a stress free life.

**How to communicate parental separation/divorce with children?**

**How to help children discuss their feelings about the separation?**



Key Points discussed

- Being open and use of simple style in communication
- Not avoiding the questions raised by children on separation. Whenever appropriate trying to communicate positively about the reasons keeping in mind the mental disposition of the child. Talking negatively will have negative impact in the long run.
- Listen to one's child and assess his feelings. Try to make him comfortable through positive reassurances. That it is not abnormal, it's a part of living.
- It is essential that child get love and affection from both parents. Assure the child that their parent will always be the same despite being separate.
- Clearly tell your child that he or she is not the reason for separation.
- When parents who do not put children in such situation where they have to think about the parents.

**When children are put in a position where they feel they have to protect their parents from hurt?**



**Children can be sensitive to parental emotions. Are they really ready for this? What needs to be done here?**

Key Points discussed

- Parents should not put children in such a situation where children think that they need to protect parents. Children should not be put in a reverse situation where the child needs to counsel his parents; in fact parents should counsel children in a positive manner. Yes, they should be emotional in a positive manner.
- We should make or encourage the child to feel good and confident about both the parents.
- Parents should focus on children's development.
- Parents should refrain from any acts that will put their children in hurtful situation.

**Child ends up being a “go-between” in middle of the conflict.**

**Yet may feel sad about having to leave one parent and go to the other even if they love both.**



**Is it necessary for any child go through such a trauma?**

Key Points discussed

- The situation in the movie clearly depicts that children should not be overburdened about the parents
- Children should not be put in a vulnerable situation where they have to choose between either of the parents.

**Emotional and behavioural damages intense stress**

- Leads to lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem and leave a huge emotional dent in their minds.
- Child becomes introverted and socially secluded
- Would find it hard when it comes expression of their emotions.

## Concluding session:



Hon. Judge Palsingankar emphasized that the programme was being particularly being organised to bring in the human side that are often forgotten in the legal battles. Hon judge added that family court is clearly different from other forms of civil court and understood issues in non-criminal point of view and that parents need to cooperate when it comes to the goal of the child's future and wellbeing. Hon Judge reiterated that such programmes are done so that parents adopt active measures to redress the trauma of their children and bring qualitative improvement in the child's life.