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2.4.7 Case Study

A case study is defined as a collection of all available information – social, physiological, biographical, environmental, vocational – that promises to help explain a single individual. A case study is a comprehensive collection of information gathered using different tools and techniques of data collection. It is the most important technique and the best method of studying the whole individual. Its purpose is to say positively and with confidence that, as far as possible, all sources of information have been tapped and all kinds of data have been gathered about the client. In case study, information about the individual is so organized and combined into a whole that the individual studied is viewed as a dynamic one trying to adjust to the environment in which he is. The main object behind a case study is to observe the individual as a whole.

Behind a case study there is always a large developmental view. The counsellor is interested not only in diagnosing the problem and suggesting suitable remedies, but s/he is also interested in bringing about a better adjustment. A detailed case study is conducted for bringing about a better adjustment of the person who is the subject of investigation. The counsellor looks for the strengths and weaknesses, abilities and disabilities to plan possible ways of development and proper growth of the individual.

Facts to be collected in a case study

A case study about a person presents basic information on the following topics:

- a) the physical, socio-economic and cultural environment
- b) the history and present status of the family
- c) personal history of the individual.

a) The physical, socio-economic and cultural environment: The physical environment includes the neighborhood in which the individual has grown up and now lives, rural/urban, working/middle class surroundings, living in own/rented/makeshift home, small/large house etc. The socio-economic environment refers to the society in which the individual is brought up and its condition regarding material prosperity. Are the people among whom the individual lives farmers, businessmen, or professional people? Does the community provide playground facilities and youth activities?

Cultural environment – What are the ways of life, ideals and points of view

of those among whom one lives? Are they well educated and prosperous?

b) Family: Many diverse information about the family has to be collected to understand the characteristics of the individual being studied.

What is the status of health and physique of the family members – father, mother, brothers and sisters? Are most of these members active, lethargic, strong or frail?

What is the educational or occupational status of the family members? What are their special abilities or disabilities?

Is there harmony in the family or is it a broken family? Does the individual get proper care and security? What has been the attitude of the parents towards the individual – affectionate, indifferent, dominating or interfering?

What about the emotional adjustment of the family members? Are they moody, cheerful, short tempered, aggressive, timid, reserved, or uninhibited? Is there any conflict in the family?

What about the social status of the family? Is it a progressive family? Is the family well accepted or isolated in the community? Has it fallen into disrepute or is held in high esteem?