

As we all know Vinimay lays emphasis on human touch in social work without which all the work done by us will yield next to nothing. It would indeed be difficult to quantify the extent and the manner in which Vinimay's work has touched each and every child. There have been several individuals who have been touched by Vinimay at a time when they were very close to breaking point due to personal tragedies faced at a tender age. We reproduce below the real life story of a young boy who underwent unimaginable trauma over too short a period. The name has been changed to protect his identity.

### **Gaurav's story**

The story of Gaurav is perhaps one that would melt the toughest heart. Being one among three brothers and two sisters, he was orphaned at a very young age. Also, due to the impersonal nature of child welfare institutions, each of the brothers and sisters landed up in different institutions.

His elder brother was driven to suicide being unable to cope with the stress of day to day life in a government hostel. This incident sent his younger sister into a state of severe shock. All this happened while all the brothers and sisters were still living in institutions.

As both Gaurav and his sister were nearing their legal discharge dates, Vinimay arranged for a rent-free accommodation for them so that staying together could enable them to face the challenges ahead of them in a better manner. Vinimay also placed him in a decent job.

Sometime later, Gaurav confided in Vinimay members that, back home, he had some ancestral property. Sensing that this issue if handled in a proper manner could make Gaurav's life, three of Vinimay's members accompanied by Gaurav visited his home-town and talked with his relatives who were toying with the idea of easing Gaurav out of his rightful share. Vinimay's idea was to initiate a dialogue in a bid to secure for Gaurav and his brothers and sisters what was rightfully theirs. Confronted with an organization like Vinimay, the relatives developed cold feet and mentally resigned themselves to parting with what was not theirs.

The entire issue took over a couple of years to crystallize and Gaurav had to make quite a few trips back home to follow up the matter. Needless to add, Gaurav followed up the case diligently turning to Vinimay whenever he faced a difficult situation.. Eventually when the case came to its logical conclusion, Gaurav was the proud owner of the house, where Vinimay had accommodated him. Yes, he bought it with the money, which he got as his share of ancestral property.

Just when it seemed that lady luck was smiling over his shoulders, fate dealt him with yet another cruel blow. His younger brother (just over 18 years of age) who had just been discharged from an institution met with a fatal accident. He was knocked down and crushed under the

wheels of a state transport bus. What was worse was the fact that Gaurav was accompanying him and was witness to the gory sight. His sister who had barely come to terms with the earlier tragedy broke down completely and never really recovered. She was time and again extended psychiatric help through Vinimay but it turned out to be a case of just buying time.

One day when she couldn't take it any longer, she ended it all by burning herself to death. While the lip quivers and the hand trembles on reading of those ghastly tragedies that targeted one single helpless boy, one shudders to think of what must have been his plight.

Gaurav's only surviving blood relation today is an elder sister who is married and is almost paranoid with the idea that Gaurav too may meet a fate similar to that of his siblings. There must have been plenty of occasions when Gaurav must have felt like ending it all and taking the easy way out. Yet it goes to his credit that he faced all the turmoil with great resilience and fortitude.

Needless to add, Vinimay was always next to him when tragedy struck. The fact that Gaurav is able to lead a 'near' normal life today is thanks largely to the support that he received from Vinimay members who stood with him through thick and thin and did not hesitate to literally live with him in his periods of crisis. Even today Gaurav must be suffering from nightmares very often but fate has taught him to bear such things without a whimper.

It is now over two years since the last tragedy in Gaurav's life. Last year Gaurav married his long-time school friend who too had stood by him in his periods of crisis. Perhaps his wedding was the only happy occasion in his life that Vinimay members attended. Vinimay was really happy for Gaurav and for once Gaurav too was smiling. Whether his heart was smiling and whether Gaurav will ever be able to live down the tragedies that he went through, only time will tell.

Gaurav is the happy father of a girl now. Hopefully Vinimay will have many more happy occasions to share with Gaurav.

----