

In Conflict and Custody: Therapeutic Counselling for Women. Rani Dhavan Shankardass. SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, B1/I-1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044. 2012. xxix + 282 pp. Price: Rs 425.

Rani Dhavan Shankardass has given a wonderfully practical treatise on women counselling in all its facets. It came into being for two reasons:

(1) Troubled women sent to custody by the criminal justice system were terrified by the complexities of the system. The idea of setting up counselling units seemed a first step towards addressing the women's plights and enabling them to express themselves and make their own statements about their lives.

(2) Counselling for women has been developed and practised in professional units in other areas of the world over the last 40 years or so, but has not yet been done so in South Asia. Thus its requirement is emergent and mandatory in prisons to help distressed women.

The purpose of author for writing this book is to impart theoretical and practical guidance to trainers and counsellors to enable them to be better equipped for the purposes and processes of counselling, particularly counselling for anxious and distressed women with a range of social, legal and personal problems. The discussions in this book should also be of assistance to those who wish to understand the general purposes and principles of counselling and its fundamental skills and take them to other areas of engagement where they may be modified and used.

The author has been able to come down to brass tacks with her simple and

concise narration of women in remand homes, prisons and the like, where they are baffled at the mistreatment resulting in mental instability and illness.

In our country, the realization that prisons are something else apart from a punitive 'home' is only just beginning to be understood. The fact that custodial institutions can also be a corrective one is slowly seeping into the public consciousness, among the legal fraternity, civil society and voluntary organizations. The experiments started by the police set-up themselves, as far back as the changes brought about by Kiran Bedi, IPS in Tihar jail have now been accepted gradually as a part of routine rights of prisoners.

The author's efforts in this field are commendable indeed and the book gives a hands-on, systematic review and practice of such areas related to women. Women in conflict, prisoners, etc. have a wide range of problems like discrimination and sexual harassment even inside jails, let alone the society.

The author has sought to convey this effectively in the book, while also suggesting practical remedies. Counselling, basically deals with empowerment, that is giving power to oneself, which is the best way to bring about change in women's rights. This book shows us the path to achieve the same. It is well suited to mental health professionals and social workers dealing with women's empowerment and will go a long way in encouraging and enriching the practice of counselling in such conflict-ridden situations.

The book is a pointer to acquaint oneself with features of counselling that necessitate it to be seen, understood and undertaken as a special and specialist activity; and is a reminder for those who wish to guide counsellors in their work about the nature of the activity, the stages, skills and depth of thinking that must accompany counselling if it is to achieve its worthwhile purposes.

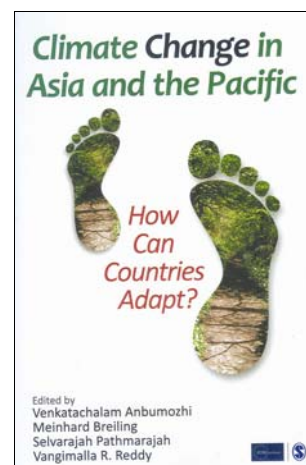
The book will prove useful towards the introduction and formulation of courses in the theory and practice of 'counselling and psychotherapy' that can be introduced as part of the curriculum in such syllabi that relate to community and social work, apart from psychology.

Overall the strength of the book lies in its simplicity and its many easy, proven methods and therapeutic interventions conducted in the most empathetic man-

ner to enable and empower distressed women to take charge of their lives. As a psychologist and behavioural scientist, I strongly support the views expressed in this book.

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Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific – How can Countries Adapt? Venkatachalam Anbumozhi, Meinhard Breiling, Selvarajah Pathmarajah and Vangimalla R. Reddy (eds). SAGE Publishers India Pvt Ltd, B1/I-1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044. 2012. xxiii + 363 pp. Price: Rs 1195.

The world has already warmed by 0.8°C since the Industrial Revolution, mainly due to the large build-up of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. It is estimated that a further warming of about 0.6°C is built-in in the system due to the GHGs already present in the atmosphere. Even this modest warming is already impacting ecosystems, food production and freshwater sources across the world. Climate risks and impacts are likely to increase manifold in the future as the global mitigation efforts are not successful in reducing GHG emissions. More so, today GHG build-up in the atmosphere is increasing even at a faster rate. For instance, the year 2010 witnessed record emissions surpassing the threshold of 9 Gt of carbon for the first time in human history. Global mitigation efforts are