

Recently, some youngsters have committed suicide. What is more startling is that they were only small children who were supposed to care about nothing. These cases have aroused anxiety and discussions among the general public. The question of why youngsters commit suicide has also been raised.

A survey carried out several years ago showed that most youngsters commit suicide because of poor relationship with their parents. It is understandable that at their young age, their parents will always pay attention to their behaviour. Thus, many youngsters complain that their parents put too much restraint on them and always keep a close watch on what they like to do, what kinds of friends they make. Arguments and conflicts may result. Those who are pessimistic and sentimental may seek to end their precious life. A girl plunged to her death after a serious argument with her mother because she went back home late at night.

There are also a lot of other problems in the family leading to youngsters' committing suicide. Maltreatment and poor relationship between parents also aggravate the problem. There is one point worth noting. There are more and more single-parent families because of increasing rate of divorce and separation. This especially noticeable in the 1980's. Owing to the fact that youngsters in this kind of family may receive less attention, they may also get the feeling of being alone. When they encounter problems which they think they can hardly cope with and yet have on other people to help them, they may end their miserable life by committing suicide.

Apart from problem in families, the increasing suicide rate is attributed to great pressure in schools. All along, schools in Hong Kong emphasize academic performance rather than anything else. Teachers who are supposed to spoonfeed students demand too much from them. Needless to say, youngsters have to face great pressure for internal and public examinations. Under such circumstances, youngsters in Hong Kong do not only bear great pressure at home but also in school. When they have problems in both their studies and behaviour, they are the only person to be blamed.

It is supposed that social workers are helpful if youngsters come across problems. However, the situation is not so simple. There are few social workers in Hong Kong, there is one social worker out of several thousand students. When youngsters do have problems, they have nobody to comfort them and to give them a helping hand.

The influential mass media needs to be held partly responsible for the situation. There are programmes in which youngsters commit suicide because of unsuccessful love affairs or performance in the examination. It is so common and exaggerated that it imparts to youngsters a mistaken idea — whenever they encounter some problems which seem to have no other ways of solving it, they end their own lives in order to escape from reality.

To conclude, it is tragic to see youngsters killing themselves. We all hope that the government and society can do much more to prevent it from happening