

Corporal Punishment and Discipline: What Teachers of Secondary Schools of Kolkata and Durgapur of West Bengal Speak

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Abstract

Corporal punishment is often justified as a necessary mean to create classroom discipline. This paper provides the views of government and private school teachers regarding use and role of corporal punishment maintaining discipline. Results revealed that the classroom condition play vital role in causing indiscipline among students and teachers take the path of corporal punishment to maintain discipline. Corporal punishment is favoured and supported by majority of teachers for disciplinary status. Use of corporal punishment does not depend upon gender of the child. Home and society in which a child grows has immense effect on his indisciplined behaviour.

Introduction

Every day, in India as elsewhere in the world, children are beaten in their schools as a mean of discipline. Corporal punishment means to inflict punishment on the body. It is to beat, hit, spank, swat, pinch or cane a child with belts, hands, sticks or any other tool. Such violence may be a deliberate act of punishment or simply the impulsive

reaction of an irritated teacher, parent, adult or even an older child. No matter what form the violence, however, it is always a violation of children's fundamental human rights (Amnesty International, 1998). Behavioural problems in schools generally are and have been an area of concern for teachers, educational authorities, policy makers and the general public

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for as long as one can remember. In the classroom or in a learning situation or during a 'valued activity', the intended outcomes of teachers and learners may not be achieved if there is a lack of discipline from participants. Actions that are or can be linked to any anti-social behaviour, laziness or acts of violence, are always associated with lack of discipline. Even learners themselves in coming to the classroom with learning goals to achieve, expect their classmates to be well-disciplined or display behaviour that will not interrupt their own learning or that of their classmates. They should adhere to Wilson's view (1974) that discipline is a kind of 'moral compulsion' that one should submit to. Learners therefore need to subject themselves to discipline without which it would be difficult to engage themselves in any 'valued activity'. Instilling discipline in schools, teachers argue, is problematic. The topic of discipline without the use of corporal punishment in school is important, and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency because of fast deteriorating situations with respect to behaviour. Today we have a culture of disrespect, defiance of authority, truancy and arrogance. Ill-discipline abounds and respect and morality have declined' (Sunday Times, 18 July 2004). Although the disciplinary matter can originate from various points of view. According to Robertson (1999), some children at schools can be disruptive because 'they have been subject to distorted or inadequate care throughout childhood due to a variety of family and economic difficulties'. It is because of that neglect that

they are now demanding attention in the classroom. In addition, he says that school failures to identify the behavioural problems that may have their origin on home background are strongly associated. When children with similar problems are not doing well in their learning areas or subjects, they have a tendency to disrupt the attentive and concentrating learners. Again big numbers of learners that teachers have to deal with in one classroom are a 'daunting and intimidating prospect' (Fontana 1985). People who take

Interest in the education of children are aware of this problem. 'Teachers agree that once the class size rises above 35, it is impossible to maintain discipline, or even an acceptable low noise in the classroom' (Daily Dispatch, 16 June 2004). Keeping in mind the above problem the present work was formulated to know the views of secondary school teachers of few selected areas of Kolkata and Durgapur of West Bengal, regarding interdependence between corporal punishments and maintaining discipline among school children.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the views of different categories of teachers like male and female teachers of government and Private school regarding role of classroom condition to cause indiscipline which lead to use of corporal punishment.
- To find out the views of different categories of teachers regarding maintenance of discipline through use of corporal punishment

- To find out the views of different category of teachers regarding use of corporal punishment to girls and boys students for their indiscipline behavior in school.
- To find out the views of different categories of teachers regarding the role of home and society in causing indiscipline among children that leads to corporal punishment.
- To find out the views of different categories of teachers regarding the impact of corporal punishment on children to maintain discipline in the school.

Hypotheses

H₁^o There is no difference in the views of government and private and male and female school teachers regarding the classroom conditions to play vital role in discipline maintenance through corporal punishment.

H₂^o There is no difference in the views of male and female teachers of government and private schools regarding the use of corporal punishment to maintain discipline.

H₃^o There is no difference in the views of male and female teachers of government and private school regarding views of corporal punishment to boys and girls students to maintain discipline.

H₄^o There is no difference in the views of male and female school teachers of government and private school regarding the role of home and society in children's indiscipline act which leads corporal punishment to them.

H₅^o There is no difference in the views of male and female school teachers of government and private school regarding the impact of corporal punishment to maintain discipline.

Research Methodology

Methodology refers to the choice and use of particular strategies and tools for data gathering and analysis. Some methodologies embrace both data gathering and analysis, such as content analysis, ethnography and semiotic analysis. Here methodology is presented under following sub-points:

Population of the Study

It comprises of few subject teachers both male and female working in some government or private school situated in urban areas of Kolkata and Durgapur where they usually come across situations that they indulge themselves in giving corporal punishment to the child to maintain discipline.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

There are 49 school teachers (government and private) from the above mentioned population selected randomly to collect their views regarding the topic mentioned. There are ten schools, five from government and another five from Privates situated in Kolkata and Durgapur area of Kolkata and Burdwan districts. Here purposive sampling technique is used. Sample description is given on the next page.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Government Teachers</i>	<i>Private Teachers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Category I	22	27	49
	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Category II	14	35	49

Tools Used

Self-made structured questionnaire was prepared considering five dimensions: 1. Classroom condition, 2. Corporal Punishment as a means of discipline maintenance 3. Use of corporal punishment to male and female child. 4. Role of home and society. 5. Impact of corporal punishment on children. Every dimension comprise of five relevant questions having 5 categories of options to respond. Whole questionnaire was validated by expert teachers of this filed. As a whole, tool consist of 26 questions which were put before each respondent who were different subject teachers belonging to different schools, age and sex. So, these were total 26 questions belonging to five dimensions where each dimension consisted five relevant questions except dimension five which carried six questions. Respondent has to answer in five point scale which has options like:

SA Strongly Agree, A Agree, N Neutral, DA Disagree, SDA Strongly Disagree

Scoring Procedure

Scoring is done on the basis of responses made by different teachers on five point scale as per the values assigned to each category: Strongly

Agree: 1, Agree: 2, Neutral: 3, Disagree: 4, Strongly Disagree: 5 and other category is Strongly Agree: 5, Agree: 4, Neutral: 3, Disagree: 2, Strongly Disagree: 1. There are some items which do not follow the normal trends of marking.

To measure views of different categories of teachers' Likert's method was used. In this method, a number of statements are developed related to the topic of study to measure the views of the respondent regarding above mentioned purpose. The respondent is asked to indicate the degree of agreement towards each item on a five point scale which are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

Statistical Technique Used

All the collected data were statistically calculated on the basis of basic statistics (mean, standard deviation). Paired t-test was done for comparison between two groups (Male and female, government and private school teachers). Reliability of the tool (self-made questionnaire) was verified by Split-half method.

Administration of the Tool and Data Collection

Randomly chosen teachers of different subjects, gender, ages and types of school are served the structured

questionnaire and given the time of one week to fill up their responses. After this, questionnaires were collected for data analysis and interpretation.

Results And Discussions

By considering dimension I, classroom conditions that deals with finding out how far classroom condition is responsible for indiscipline which leads to corporal punishment by teachers to maintain discipline in different schools, it has been found that there is no difference in views of teachers belonging to male and female, and government and private categories, all of them considered that improper school environment, unscientific building constructions, over crowdedness, poor student teacher relationship, improper method of teaching are responsible for causing indiscipline inside the classroom that make them to handle the children by using corporal punishment as results shows difference in views is non-significant at 5% level of significant (Table 1 and 1A).

Although few teachers doesn't favour the above conditions fully. In the same time few teachers favour counseling and value education to develop sense of self-discipline.

In most of the private schools and in some government schools it has been found that building construction is not proper and thus not fit for smooth running of the classes and automatically give rise to indiscipline amongst children.

Again by considering dimension II, Discipline maintenance through punishment which intends to find out how far teacher lobby prefer to punish the child hard to keep the discipline of their school in line. It has been found that there is significant difference in views of male and female teachers belonging to different schools regarding this issue, as t-value is 2.066 that is significant ($p < 0.05$) but there is no difference in views of government and private teachers regarding this issue as t-value is 0.943 which is non-significant at 5 per cent level of significant and therefore this hypothesis is retained (Table 2 and 2A).

Table 1 : Paired t-test Between the Views of Government and Private School Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Government	27	5.889	1.528	1.197	Non-significant at 0.05 level
Private	22	5.318	1.810		

Table 1 A : Paired t-test between the Views of Male and Female Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Male	14	12.50	2.594	1.398	Non-significant at 0.05 level
Female	35	11.429	1.914		

Table 2 : Paired t-test Between the Views of Government and Private School Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Government	27	4.074	1.859	0.942	Non-significant at 0.05 level
Private	22	4.636	2.237		

Table 2 A : Paired t-test Between the Views of Male and Female Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Male	14	14.43	1.834	2.066	significant at 0.05 level
Female	35	15.486	2.525		

Moreover, it has been assessed from the data that most of the teachers prefer punishment for maintaining discipline though they do not consider corporal punishment as only means to be used for this purpose. They prefer that in Indian context at times corporal punishment becomes necessary but very few number of students fall under the purview of corporal punishment. Some of the teachers responded for banning of Corporal Punishment to uplift the disciplinary status of schools. Baumarind et al. (2002) argued that the negative effects of corporal

punishment are only associated with the harsh, punitive discipline, which is acknowledged by all experts to be detrimental to children’s well-being and ethically unacceptable.

By considering dimension 3, Gender based Discipline maintenance which deals with finding out whether female child is punished more than a male child and how hard punishment is given to male child in comparison to the female child, whether girls are more disciplined than boys etc. there is no difference in the views of male and female teachers but significant

Table 3 : Paired t-test Between the Views of Government and Private School Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Government	27	3.556	2.423	4.207	Significant at 0.01 level
Private	22	5.682	2.571		

Table 3 A : Paired t-test Between the Views of Male and Female Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Male	14	14.643	3.522	0.276	Non significant at 0.05 level
Female	35	14.943	3.199		

different ($p < 0.01$) was noted between government and private school teachers (Tables 3 and 3A).

So it is evident that neither extent of indiscipline is gender based nor the type of punishment is gender based, though it has been found that beating or emotional attack is preferred by most of the teacher for the female child and beating hard or suspension is preferred in case of male child. Accordingly it can be said that teachers have the opinion that indiscipline among the children does not depend upon the gender of the child though punishment may vary from gender-to-gender and extent of indiscipline.

By considering 4 dimension, role of Home and Society which deals with finding out how far home and society of a child is responsible for the developing indiscipline among children that eventually result into corporal punishment at home as well as in school to them by their parents and teachers. It has been found that there is no difference in views of male and female teachers and government and private school teachers regarding this issue as t-value in both pairs are 0.483

and 0.296 respectively which is non-significant at 5 per cent level (Table 4 and 4A) of significance.

Teachers hold the view that the family background, economic status and technological developments, surrounding environment of the child have immense effect on child's behaviour and discipline. Although few teachers think that it should not be sole reason for indiscipline. It has been also found that some parents support use of corporal punishment by teachers to bring them in track and few teachers strongly disagree with the condition that they should solely render the responsibility of making a child disciplined. A qualitative study according to Russell (1996) of the views of New Zealand parents and parent-educators provides a graphic example of how family discipline can affect parent-child relationships. The study quotes a mother who made a conscious decision never to smack her own children: My parents were very strict. I assumed everyone was being brought up the same. You will do as you're told and you won't question. My mother would use the wooden spoon;

Table 4 : Paired t-test Between the Views of Government and Private School Teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Government	27	5.889	2.207	0.296	Non-significant at 0.05 level
Private	22	6.045	1.463		

Table 4 A : Paired t-test Between the Views of Male and Female teachers

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Male	14	12.143	2.033	0.482	Non-significant at 0.05 level
Female	35	12.457	2.119		

my father was more into bare hands. There were other things: go to your room, miss out on something. If you were naughty, they almost took it as a personal affront; they just seemed so offended by it, like you were insulting them. I was basically very good and I was hit frequently. I'm sure through being smacked it made me do so silly things without thinking. It made me go out and do the same thing again, what I'd been smacked for. The message I got from them when they hit me was not "what you're doing is bad, don't do it again". The message I got was "we don't love you". (Russell 1996:69)

punishment work as an effective means in discipline maintenance, it has been found that there is no difference in views of male and female teachers and government and private school teachers regarding this issue as t-value of each pairs are 1.228 and 0.7384 respectively which are non significant at 5 per cent level (Table 5 and5A) 1.

Teachers can consider the corporal punishment if it is necessary to uplift the disciplinary status of a school and it should be made the means for discipline maintenance but norms, rules and limits should be set by law

Table 5 : Paired t-test Between the Views of Government and Private School Teachers.

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Government	27	4.815	2.237	0.738	Non significant at 0.05 level
Private	22	5.318	2.476		

Table 5 A : Paired t-test Between the Views of Male and Female Teachers.

<i>Types of Samples</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Male	14	18.643	2.305	1.228	Non significant at 0.05 level
Female	35	17.657	3.038		

So home and society of a child play an important role for child's disciplined behaviour as child spends six to seven hours in school and rest of the hours at home or society. Therefore, teacher should not be blamed for not performing the duties of inculcating the discipline amongst the children.

By considering dimension 5 which deals with the impact of corporal punishment on discipline which deals with finding out that how far corporal

and jurisdiction so that teachers as well as student remain safe, though few teachers believe that it has a negative impact and behavioural change cannot be brought by use of corporal punishment. They are not in favour of making corporal punishment as means of discipline. In different school in Indian context. " Save the children" survey of children in South Africa found that regular beating resulted in a loss of interest in studies and a

dropout in academics performance. A statistical study of public education in Alabama found a correlation linking corporal punishment in schools to dropout rates.

Major Findings

Teachers consider that the classroom condition plays a vital role in causing indiscipline among students and teachers take the path of corporal punishment to maintain discipline.

Forms of discipline such as corporal punishment and verbal and non-verbal abuse of children, continue to feature in many schools, and are used to humiliate children in front of their peers. Yet many teachers and ever parents still believe that such punishment is important, unaware of the immediate and long-term detrimental effects of these practices. It is important for teachers to reflect on the rationale that underlies the rules and conventions that govern schools, and whether these are consistent with our aims of education. For instance, rules such as the length of socks and the whiteness of sports shoes are of no educationally defensible importance. Rules regarding maintaining silence in classrooms, answering 'one at a time' and answering only if you know the right answer, can undermine the values of equality and equal opportunity. Such rules may also discourage processes that are integral to children's learning, the development of a sense of community among peers, though they may make the class 'easy to manage' for the teacher and facilitate 'covering the syllabus.' (NCF-2005: 87).

Corporal punishment is favoured and supported by majority of teachers for disciplinary status. Use of corporal punishment does not depend upon gender of the child as intensity of indiscipline among both genders is almost same.

Home and society in which a child grows has an immense effect on his indiscipline behaviour. Corporal punishment is necessary to uplift and to keep up the disciplinary status of the school in indian context and at the same time some norms should be fixed.

Educational Implication

In indian context, corporal punishment is one of the most frequently used means to maintain discipline in schools. Although most of the teachers are not in favour of using it, they usually come across such situation where they are compelled to use it. In this study so many reasons are found significant and favorable for encouraging corporal punishment. Most of these factors or reasons can be controlled if proper attention could be given and government as well as society should take the responsibility to rationalise this issue. Significance of corporal punishment for uplifting disciplinary status of a school is also highlighted. This study will help in doing further research at broader level to make it more useful.

Suggestion for Further Study

Present status regarding corporal punishment in the secondary schools of West Bengal is that it is totally banned by law and no teacher is supposed

to use any physical or psychological punishment to the child. But from the present study it has come up that teachers prefer to retain this. So from this study it can be recommended that there should be not corporal punishment in true sense instead we need to have pedagogy suited to the learning needs of children which keep them engaged and inculcate among them self-discipline. Although it was also felt that some kind of punishment is required to improve social-personal behaviour of students but this view points out lack of exposure of teachers to emerging curricular vision which keeps child at the centre of learning activities with challenging engagements which help the child in developing self-discipline. Moreover the study results also revealed that reliability is too low, therefore for further study restructuring of questionnaire should be necessary.

Delimitation of the Study

It is not possible to undertake the research on all areas of the problem in view of time and resources. To come up at a valuable decision, detailed and comprehensive study is necessary. To delimit the area of the problem for convenience work has been confined to following areas:

- Study is confined to secondary school only;
- It is confined to the role of corporal punishment in the area of discipline;
- It is confined in government and private schools situated in urban areas;
- It is confined to the study of teachers view only regarding the issue of using corporal punishment in school.

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