

Eradicating Corporal Punishment from Deeni Madaris of Bahawalpur

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Abstract

Corporal punishment in educational institutions is a universal problem. Deeni Madaris (Religious Educational Institutions) are no exception. Justification for punishment is generally given from discipline maintenance and learning enhancement point of view. But extrinsic discipline does not last so long. When fear of punishment is taken off, acts of indiscipline start occurring once again and learning of students has been proved to have negative correlation with punishment. A Survey was done to know the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment. It was found that 80% of Madaris teachers have positive attitude towards corporal punishment. In the end it is suggested that teachers in religious institutions may be provided training for alternative ways of maintaining discipline and teaching methodologies.

Introduction

To make a child obedient; teachers in schools, religious schools (Madaris), parents at home and rivals at streets hit children with anything they find available. The purpose is to teach them a lesson. There may be many justifications in people's mind for their behavior but the world has defined this behavior as corporal punishment.

Definition

“Corporal punishment is an adult’s act of violence against a child. Its purpose is to cause pain or discomfort to the child by hitting with hand or object, smacking, hitting with object such as cane, belt, whip, shoe, electric wire, iron rod etc., kicking, throwing the child, pinching, pulling hair, twisting arms or ears; forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position or to take excessive physical exercise etc.” Save the Children & UNICEF (2005). This act of violence might have emerged in the form of punishment or it may be an impulsive reaction of an irritated person he may be a teacher, parent, adult or even an older child (UNICEF, 2001). Concept of corporal punishment is not new to the world. Corporal punishment is given to students and children at school and home for making them disciplined(Jenkins & Marie, 2003).

A small number of research studies is available in Pakistan but violence can be seen everywhere. Children face physical and psychological punishment both at school and home. And no differentiation is found in religious educational institutions also. Many students leave studies due to corporal punishment(UNICEF, 2001).Children in Pakistan don’t have power and status in the society. It is thought over here that children know nothing so they are not given any importance and right in decision making (UNICEF, 2001).Bahawalpur, as a part of Pakistan has similar situation.

United Nations’ General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC) on November 20, 1989 which came into action on September 2, 1990 (Societyfor the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), 2002). On 12th November 1990, Pakistan has also endorsed

the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), with a reservation to make its provisions according to the principles of Islamic Laws and values. In 1997 Pakistan withdrew its reservation (Berti, 2003). Article 37(a) of the Convention states that no child shall be caused to undergo torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2003). The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has advised on October 2003 that Pakistan should completely forbid all forms of corporal punishment; begin an awareness campaign among the people on the negative impacts of corporal punishment on children, and provide teachers and parents with training on non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment (Save the Children & UNICEF, 2005). A number of teachers feel that corporal punishment should not be given to students but they don't know the alternatives to maintain discipline. Moreover culture of the area and society not only allows but sometimes recommends corporal punishment in classroom (Department of Education of Pretoria, 2000). The culture of corporal punishment and physical abuse can be changed through change in attitude of teachers and staff (Hyman, Flanagan & Smith, 1982). Prospective teachers should be trained for maintenance of discipline a positive manner and acceptable alternatives to the corporal punishment, if it is not done it will produce anger and frustration among teachers and they will create further problems for students, school and parents (Hyman & Ronald 1993; Richardson, Rita, Evans & Elizabeth, 1994). But the problem with Pakistani Madaris is one step ahead. There are no defined prospective teachers. Any student can be or may not be a teacher after completion of his own studies.

The government of Pakistan has forbidden corporal punishment in Pakistani educational institutions since December, 2003. The teachers are

ordered to abolish corporal punishment. But we have to admit the fact that physical punishment is widely prevailing practice in the schools (Save the Children & UNICEF, 2005; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2005). Save the Children & UNICEF (2005) found that parents and teachers think corporal punishment as corrosive tool to learning and discipline. Society in Pakistan takes it as normal procedure of teaching learning process. Shah (2006) claimed corporal punishment is interwoven in people's social attitudes. He further added that the attitudes of parents and teachers must be modified that the child can be taught and disciplined without the rod.

Kazdin & Benjet (2003) presented three different points of view about corporal punishment. These are named as pro-corporal punishment, anti-corporal punishment and conditional corporal punishment. Many teachers think that corporal punishment is absolutely necessary for inculcating an appropriate desirable behavior in students. They say "spare the rod and spoil the child". In an experimental study, Newsom, Flavell, & Rincover (1983) claimed that corporal punishment has been found effective for short-term compliance to the set rules.

Second point of view says that corporal punishment has negative effect on children's learning and behaviour. Straus & Stewart (1999) concluded that "violence begets violence" it means violence is passed on from generation to generation. Hogan (2003) said that corporal punishment has adverse effect on learners' attitude. Hindberg (2001) thinks corporal punishment violates children's physical integrity, self-esteem and undermines their confidence. Save the Children (2003) report says that corporal punishment of children causes in them depression, low self-esteem, negative psychological adjustment, poor relationships and children feel rejected.

Third point of view states that the effects of corporal punishment are not necessarily positive or negative, it depends on other conditions such as the rate of occurrence i.e. if it is inflicted many times it may be psychologically harmful for students personality, being intense, i.e. if it is severe in nature it will be harmful emotionally and it should be administered looking to situation (Kazdin & Benjet, 2003). Amnesty International (2002) found that corporal punishment is given regularly in Malaysia. Gershoff (2008) points out that in United States there is a tradition of corporal punishment. He refers to the General Social Surveys (GSS) of 1986 in which 84 percent of American adults agreed that children sometimes should be physically punished. As the civil rights movement gained momentum through the 1960's and 1970's people became more thoughtful of every one's rights, including children (Chenoweth & Just, 2000).

How it Started

Literature reveals that it has been in practice for thousands of years. McCole (1999) found that Spartan, in (650 B.C.), used corporal punishment as part of training; to develop willpower and physical strength among children. Corporal punishment was allowed in Bible. In this regard he refers to the most well-known Biblical verse, "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (13:14, Bible). (Jenkin & Marie, 1997 and Hale, 2006) said that at that time educational institutions were closely attached to the church. Traditionally the norms and values of Victorian society had also allowed corporal punishment. It was rooted in the concepts of "original sin", and corporal punishment was allowed by parents to be administered on their children. As Christian society thought that a child is born with a sinful origin. And the sin has to be rooted out of a child with

punishment. But no example of physical punishment for teaching his companions could be found from the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Muslims especially religious school teachers are considered to be strict followers of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). So it is unacceptable from them to give corporal punishment to their students. Hence this study was conducted to find the ways to eradicate corporal punishment from religious educational institutions of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Methodology

Present study was conducted to observe the attitude of religious school (Madarsa) teachers towards corporal punishment and then suggest some possible ways to eradicate it. Instrument of the study was adapted scale with due permission of its developer Asghar Ali, (2012) for measuring teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment. The original instrument was in English language and its translated version was administered. The Cronbach alpha for this research tool was found 0.96. This scale was used as a test for screening teachers with negative and positive attitude towards corporal punishment.

Population

All Madarsa teachers and senior students who teach in Madaris of Bahawalpur were the population of this study.

Sampling

Only those 102 teachers were selected as sample who willingly consented for participation in the study.

Data Analysis

Frequencies of responses were tallied and percentage was calculated with the help of MS Excel program. The table for analysis of data is given below:

S. No	Statement	Yes	No
1.	The government should allow corporal punishment in schools.	80	22
2.	Corporal punishment should be used because it is beneficial for students' lives.	76	26
3.	Corporal punishment should be used because if teachers do not use it then they will verbally abuse the students.	84	18
4.	Corporal punishment should be used as a last option.	70	32
5.	Corporal punishment should be used to control students in large classes.	71	31
6.	Corporal punishment should be used because there is lack of resources/teaching aids in school.	82	20
7.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it is a major reason of students' drop out from schools.	40	62
8.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it will give birth to a backward society.	38	54
9.	Corporal punishment should not be used because actually it is the teachers' own frustration /anxiety that leads to corporal punishment.	20	82
10.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it is usually the teachers' personal insecurity that leads to corporal punishment.	20	82

11.	Corporal punishment should not be used because the effects of corporal punishment decrease with its use.	26	76
12.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it produces psychological problems in students.	55	47
13.	Corporal punishment should be used because students think it is beneficial for them.	57	45
14.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it creates shyness /lack of confidence in students.	77	25
15.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it stops the students from self-expression.	76	26
16.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it creates depression/anxiety in students.	54	48
17.	Corporal punishment should not be used because by its infliction the teachers feel aggression, which is not good for their mental health.	32	70
18.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it weakens students' willpower.	32	70
19.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it damages students' initiative power.	33	69
20.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it weakens students' decision power.	43	59
21.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it damages the	45	57

	mental growth of students.		
22.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it damages students' personality development.	46	56
23.	Corporal punishment should be used because it has no negative effect on children.	80	22
24.	Corporal punishment should be used because it solves the problem in a very short time.	77	25
25.	Corporal punishment should be used because students only understand the language of corporal punishment.	78	24
26.	Corporal punishment should be used because it works better than psychological techniques for maintaining discipline.	77	25
27.	Corporal punishment should be used because it deters students from excessive talking/noise.	62	40
28.	Corporal punishment should be used because without its use students will defy the authority of teachers.	76	26
29.	Corporal punishment should be used to stop students from cheating/copying in tests or examinations.	77	25
30.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter students from out of seat seating in the class.	70	32
31.	Corporal punishment should be used to train students for cleanliness.	72	30
32.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter students from doing	70	32

	mischief/naughtiness.		
33.	Corporal punishment should be used because it is the only way to discipline students in a classroom.	62	40
34.	Corporal punishment should not be used because students who are corporally punished will use this practice in their future.	52	50
35.	Corporal punishment should be used because it controls aggression in students.	82	20
36.	Corporal punishment should be used for the development of students' character.	80	22
37.	Corporal punishment should be used for teaching students to respect their teachers.	76	26
38.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter students from problems such as drug abuse.	76	26
39.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter students from telling a lie.	77	25
40.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter student from physical or verbal abuse.	70	32
41.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter student from stealing.	72	30
42.	Corporal punishment should be used to help in deterring vandalism in students.	70	32
43.	Corporal punishment should be used to make students civilized/learn	62	40

	manners.		
44.	Corporal punishment should be used to deter students from bothering other students.	52	50
45.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it leads to criminal tendencies in children.	82	20
46.	Corporal punishment should be used to motivate students for learning.	80	22
47.	Corporal punishment should be used to develop positive attitude towards schoolwork in students.	76	26
48.	Corporal punishment should be used to motivate students to do homework.	77	25
49.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it leads to lack of student's interest for education and learning.	32	70
50.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it frightens students and then they try to avoid educational environment.	32	70
51.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it damages students' teachers' relationship.	33	69
52.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it soon loses its effects whatever it originally had.	32	70
53.	Corporal punishment should not be used because it damages classroom morale.	32	70

54.	Corporal punishment should be used on those students who are weak in studies.	76	26
55.	Corporal punishment should be used on lazy/bad students.	77	25
56.	Corporal punishment should be used for making students concentrate on their studies.	70	32
57.	Corporal punishment should not be used because a teacher should teach with love.	72	30

Responses of teachers show that they are in favour of corporal punishment. They favour it regardless of the reason. Although in positive statements they also favoured the love, care and respect for the students yet they feel corporal punishment as necessary as food. Maximum number of teachers favoured the corporal punishment for the sake of motivation for learning. They also rejected the use of corporal punishment as it promotes criminal mentality among students.

Conclusions

Majority of Madaris teachers are in favor of corporal punishment. Teachers feel corporal punishment as a necessity. Most of the teachers think that Islam allows corporal punishment to students. No teacher could give any example from the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in favor of corporal punishment for students. Most of the teachers of Islamic religious school (Madarsa) confused the original sin theory of Christianity with Islamic thoughts. So it felt necessary to train them in Islamic ways. It is also found that no formal training for teaching is provided in Deeni Madaris.

Recommendations

It is obvious from conclusions that teachers in Deeni Madaris did not have any other point of view but favoring the corporal punishment. But as we know from literature as an established fact that corporal punishment harms the students' learning and attitude. So it is recommended that Madaris teachers must be provided in-service training as there is no pre-service training system available for students of Deeni Madaris (the upcoming teachers). This training may be provided through department of Arabic or from department of Islamic studies as teachers of Madaris are familiar to these departments and there is a trust level between the two streams of education systems. This training must include the topics related to awareness about harms of corporal punishment and alternative motivational techniques. Positive re-enforcement may be introduced in-place of negative re-enforcement system in Deeni Madaris so that graduating students may be confident and useful citizens of Pakistan.

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