Students' Perspective on Corporal Punishment: A Case Study of High Schools Students in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Corporal punishment has been a part of the education culture not only in Pakistan but the entire Indo-Pak subcontinent for centuries. There have been two conflicting arguments of teachers and educationists and the liberals who oppose the practice. This empirical study was conducted to know the students perspective as a stakeholders. Majority of the Students of highs schools did not support the practice as it badly affects the students' performance. The results revealed that corporal punishment fails to motivate students for studies. However, when administered after a mistake, corporal punishment also makes some students realize their mistakes. It creates hate amongst students against the teachers who use such violent methods of disciplining.

Keywords

Corporal Punishment, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Motivation, Feelings, Teacher, Attitude.

Introduction

Punishment for disciplining is a centuries old practice that has and is prevalent in almost all cultures and societies. Corporal punishment has been a part of the education culture not only in Pakistan but the entire Indo-Pak subcontinent for centuries. There have been two conflicting arguments of teachers and educationists and the liberals who oppose the practice. Those who plead the practice are of the opinion that light punishment like psychological shaming) physical (beating with sticks and slapping/punching the students and the economic punishment (fines) are given to correct the students for their minor wrongs associated with the norms of the class and educational institutes like low performance in studies, bullying and harassing other students and misbehaving with teachers and elders.

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given to correct the students for their minor wrongs associated with the norms of the class and educational institutes like low performance in studies, bullying and harassing other students and misbehaving with teachers and elders.

Those who argue against are of the opinion that the practice has added negative consequences and led to a major dropout from schools particularly during the early years of education. The third stakeholders i.e. the students are never considered as the sufferers/beneficiaries phenomenon but never consulted on the issue.

Methods and Material

This empirical research was conducted in four public sector High schools of Peshawar City KPK Pakistan to know the students' perspectives on the subject and the impacts of punishment on their academic performance.

The research is based on two assumptions namely; (1) Students form a negative attitude towards the teaching and teacher who award punishment and (2) Corporal punishment motivates students and creates a sense of competition among them in their academic performance. The assumptions are operationalized as;-

Assumption - I

Operationalization:

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable			
Modes of Corporal Punishment	Attitude of Student			
Indicators:	Indicators:			
 Physical punishment (Beating with stick/slapping/ punching). Psychological punishment (shaming, jeering, forcing to stand up in certain way. Economic (fines). 	 Not attending class of that teacher. poor performance in that subject. Ignore/indifferent to that teacher in private life. 			

Assumption - II

Operationalization:

Results in
gularity in attendance of that teacher class. proved performance in that subject. peates respect for that teacher in private life even er schooling

Objectives

The present study was undertaken for the following objectives

- Extent of corporal punishment prevalent in Schools.
- What types of corporal punishment are awarded in the said schools in Peshawar?
- What is the students' perspective on reasons and results of receiving corporal punishment?
- How do the students' feel after receiving corporal punishment?
- What is the attitude of student towards those teachers who award corporal punishment?
- Does corporal punishment motivate student?

Universe of the Study

The universe of the study was four Government High/ Higher Secondary Schools in the city center area of Peshawar city namely GHS-No.1, II, III and IV.

Sampling Strategy

There are four high /higher secondary schools in the city center area namely GHS-I and II on the main GT Road, GHS-III at Khyber bazaar and GHS-IV at Kakshal area of the city. These are the biggest and the oldest prestigious schools of the province even. The first two schools were established before independence (Please ask someone or see the foundation stones of these schools for authenticity) of the country.

The overall sampling strategy was stratified-purposive.

Three classes i.e. 8th, 9th and 10th from each school were selected as human universe for sampling. 20 students from each class were sampled on the basis of their seating arrangements. It is generally believed that the brilliant students sit in front rows of the class while those who are slow, shy or dull or least interested, sit on the back benches to avoid direct discussion/active participation in class activities, were selected purposively. This gave us a sample of 60 students from each school and the total sample size from the four schools as 240.

Tools of Data Collection

Survey research design was used. Tool of data collection was structured interviews. We could use other method/ techniques like questionnaires (the same structured interview schedule) but that would have given different result as students in this age are mostly careless, un-attentive to things which they do not know or understand.

Secondly, the quality of education is so low that most students would have not expressed themselves in either languages of Urdu or English. Urdu, no doubt, is spoken and understood by most if not all people of the country, but internalization of a language is different than understanding the words.

Results

The students were asked about the occurrence of corporal punishment, the types of punishment they met, their feelings after having been punished for their minor wrongs and impacts of the punishment on their academic performance. The statistical data is presented below;

Table I: Occurrence and Frequency of Corporal Punishment

Have ever been	Frequency		Total		
punished		1	2	3	
Yes	192 (80%)	-	136	56	192
No	48 (20%)	-	-	-	48
Total	240 (100%)	-	136	56	192

Denotations for Frequency; 1=Frequently, 2= Occasionally,3=Rarely.

Table I: The students were asked about the frequency of corporal punishment. It was found that 80% (192/240) students have had experienced corporal punishment with the hands of their teachers during the last one year and 20% (48/240) never received corporal punishment. This means the practice of corporal punishment is very common (objective No.-I).

Have ever		Instrument of Punishment						
been Punished	Frequency	By Stick	Slapping	Pulling/ Twisting Ears	Ridiculous Postures*	Fine	Standing in Class	Total
Yes	192 (80%)	117 (61%)	17 (9%)	25 (13%)	8 (4%)	08 (4%)	17 (9%)	192
No	48 (20%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
Total	240 (100%)	117 (61%)	17 (9%)	25 (13%)	08 (4%)	08 (4%)	17 (9%)	240

Table II: Methods of Corporal Punishment?

Table II; As far as methods/instruments of punishment were concerned, they include beating with a stick, slapping/smacking, pulling/twisting of ears. The most ridiculous and the severe form of punishment were to ask make postures known as *Murgha Banana* (to get hold of the ears from beneath the knees). Fines are also levied and asking students to stand in the class or stand on the bench for the whole or part of class period of 40 minutes etc.

61 % (117/240) majority of the students reported being punished with stick, 9 % (17/240) received slaps or being smacked, 13 % (25.249) received their ears being pulled/ twisted meant to shame the student, (the mildest punishment), 4 % (8/240) were ordered to make ridiculous postures (*murgha*), 4 % (8/240) were fined while 9 % were punished by standing for a while in the class as symbol of penalty .(objective no.2).

Reason Behind Punishment	When you Miss About	You are Weak in Study	Incomplete Home Assignments	Truancy	Total
Frequency	46 (19 %)	125 (52%)	43 (18%)	26 (11%)	240 (100%)
Total	46	125	43	26	240

Table III: Reason Behind Corporal Punishment

^{*}This include to make someone sit and get hold of his ears from beneath the legs known as "Murgha banana".

Table III. When the students were asked about the reason for such punishments, 19% (46/240) said that when they miss about in the class or make a mischief, they get punished or warned. 52% (125/240) respondents reported that they receive such punishment on the pretext of being weak in their studies. 18% (43/240) reported that when they do not complete or ignore the home work/assignments, they get punished.11% (26/240) respondents stated that such punishment is awarded due to partial or total truancy means either they do not attend a particular teacher's class or remain absent form school .(objective no.3).

Table IV: Feelings of Students after Being Punished

Feelings	Realize	Feel Hatred	Still	Feel	Total
after	my	for	Respect that	Ashamed	
Punishment	Mistake	that Teacher	Teacher	and Insulted	
Frequency	120 (50%)	19 (08%)	31 (13%)	70 (29%)	240 (100%)

Table IV: What did the students' feel after receiving corporal punishment? This was one of the key questions which resulted in some interesting findings (Hypothesis 1). Almost 50% of the students who received corporal punishment said they realized their mistake after the punishment. This means those who plead corporal punishment for correction of the minor wrongs of a child, are correct in their stance.

8% (19/240) students reported that as the punishment is mostly unjustified and they did not commit any wrong but penalized, they feel hatred towards that teacher who abuses his power and privilege. In contrast to this no. of 8% ho develops hatred towards a teacher, 13% (31/240) respondents said that they still respect their teachers as they have no personal grudges but do so for reforming us.

29% (70/240) respondents said that they feel ashamed and insulted if penalized or beaten in front of the class. Again this impact may have positive results as shaming may lead to competition and hard work but can also dishearten the students who can leave the school and or continue but do not show good performance.

The present study reveals that 50% students realize their mistake and support those who plead punishment as a means of correction and realizing civic senses (objective no.4).

240

Do you Favor Corporal Punishment	Frequency	Attitude Towards and Impa Discourages the the Students Students		Hurts the Personality	Total	
Yes	17 (7%)	-	17 (7%)	-	-	1 7
No	223 (93%)	129 (58%)	-	47 (21%)	47 (21%)	223

Table V: Impacts of Corporal Punishment

240 (100%)

Total

129 (57%)

Table V: The table shows that a minority of thestudents 7% supported the practice of punishment and viewed that corporal punishment encourages and motivate students to work hard and make them compete with other class mates.

17 (7%)

47 (21%)

47 (21%)

Out of the 93% (223/240) students who did not favour the practice, a vast majority 58% (129/223) said that punishment discourages the students in a number of ways like being embarrassed, shamed in front of friends, cousins and relatives who make joke of such students outside the schools or at home and in the street. Many a times such taunting becomes unbearable for some students and they lose their hearts in studies and have low performance. 21% (47/223) students believed that when a student is punished in school, degrade his personality and such students feel psychologically inferior to others. A similar number of students were of the opinion that such punishment cause drop outs and students do not come to school or change schools one after the other (objective no.3).

Does Corporal Punishment Motivate You	Frequency	% age
Yes, significantly	48	20 %
A little bit	120	50 %
Not at all	72	30 %
Total	240	100 %

The specific question that is corporal punishment motivating or de-motivating, was asked from the students. Majority were of the opinion that corporal punishment does motivate students towards their studies. 20% (48/240) reported that this act significantly motivated them and after having been punished, they improved a lot and removed their weaknesses.

Again, 50% (120/240) respondents said that corporal punishment does help improve a little bit and motivated them for their studies (Hypothesis 2)..

30% (72/240) students totally opposed the idea and said that it does not help them motivate in their studies.

Do you Favor Corporal Punishment	Frequency	Suggests About Substitute Arrangement for Corporal Punishment					Total
. umommoni		а	b	С	d	е	
Yes	17 (7%)	-	-	-	-	-	17
No	223 (93%)	29 (13%)	62 (28%)	20 (9%)	45 (20%)	67 (30%)	223
Total	240 (100%)	29 (13%)	62 (28%)	20 (9%)	45 (20%)	67 (30%)	240

Table VII: What Can be the Substitute for Corporal Punishment? (done)

Denotation:

a = charge fine, b = inform parents, c = if repeat send to home, d. = advised, e = be stopped

Table VII: The students were asked that what should be the alternate to corporal punishment to improve the behaviour and weaknesses of students who get penalized.

Majority of the students i.e. 93% (223/240) were against corporal punishment. Only a minority of the students' i.e. 7% (17/240) favoured the practice.

On asking the students that what could be the substitute or alternate to the corporal punishment to discipline the students? Many good suggestions were put forth. Those 7% (17/240) who supported or favoured the practice were not asked the question.

The vast majority of 93% (223/240) who opposed the prevalent practice of corporal punishment suggested low;-

29 (13%) suggested that the students be fined but when they were asked that why the parents be burdened for their wrongs, they had no answers.

62 (28%)students suggested that the parents of such students be informed instead of levying a fine on the students and the parents were the best to correct their children.

20 (9%) of those who disapproved of the practice suggested that those students who persistently creates problems in the class or do not reform themselves, should be straight away sent homes.

45 (20%) students were of the opinion that constant persuasion and advice of the teachers could solve the problems.

67 (30%) students were of the view that the practice be stopped immediately and the students are no more harassed and embarrassed.

Discussion

According to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (herein after CRC) Article 19(1)

"States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child."

Corporal punishment is considered a very vivid form of violence by many. Despite CRC's commitments, corporal punishment prevails throughout the world. According to the UN sources, out of 198 countries, corporal punishment is not fully prohibited in 164 (83%). Similarly, in 157 countries, it is also not fully prohibited in alternative care institutions or day care centers. The situation is not much better in schools. In 122 countries of the world, corporal punishment of children in schools is not fully prohibited (US and Pakistan included). At the large, it seems that there is a global consensus on corporal punishment of children. The consensus however is changing in the 21st century.¹

Pakistan is one of the few countries where corporal punishment is legal, both by schools and by parents². Pakistan is not alone in this respect. Angola, Bahamas, Barbados, Bhutan, Batswana, Brazil, Brunai, Cuba, East Timor, Egypt, France, India, Indonesia, Australia, China, the US, the UK, Mongolia and many other countries hold policies similar to Pakistan towards corporal punishment of children.

The basic philosophy of punishment is to discipline an untamed member of the society. Similarly, educational institutions have always used corporal punishment as a mean to discipline undisciplined students. Corporal punishment is universal. Even

in many of the states in the US, corporal punishment is not illegal. In the UK, parents can give corporal punishment. It is lawful. However, it was banned in public and private schools in early $2000s^3$.

The nature of corporal punishment ranges between minor/ psychological to severe beating and even amputation. Based upon the severity of punishment for children Doggart (May 26, 2011) categorize the countries into four tiers⁴.

Tier -4 countries are most violent towards children. It is those countries where three groups of punishers can smack children: parents, teachers, and government officials. Iran and Saudi Arabia are perfect examples of tier-4 countries. In Saudi Arabia and Iran, state can amputate children. Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh are also included into tier-4 division⁵.

Tier-3 countries are those countries where children can be smacked by parents and teachers. Czech Republic, France, Iraq and the US (and most of the European countries) are examples of this tier. In the US, most of the parents (72%) believe "it is OK to spank a child". Likewise, it also revealed that one in two American children are getting spanked or slapped.

In tier-2 countries, only parents may beat their children. It is legal. These countries included Canada, Russia, Japan, China, South Africa and most of Europe – including the United Kingdom in this category. In Britain, the corporal punishment in public schools has been outlawed by the Parliament in 1986 and in private schools in 1998. Nonetheless, it remains legal in British homes.

Tier-1 countries are those nations that are practicing "universal prohibition" of corporal punishment of children. There are total 29 countries in this group including New Zealand, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Kenya, Spain, Israel and Venezuela. In these countries, all forms of corporal punishment are legally prohibited.

Arguments for and Against Corporal Punishment

As mentioned in the above categorization, except a few countries, Corporal punishment in a variety of forms and severity, is centuries' old practice in most of the countries including Pakistan and the researchers assume that every person who have been to school in Pakistan, must have experienced corporal punishment in the form of canning on buttocks, slapping on face, rounding of ears, and being order to do 100 sit-stand, or to stand for fifteen to thirty minutes with both the hands up in the air and one leg above the ground.

Impacts of Corporal Punishment

Studies suggest that corporal punishment methods impact students' academic achievement and long-term well-being⁶. Recent studies suggest that improvement in school behaviour or academic performance is negatively associated with corporal

punishment. In the US, one similar study found that in "states where corporal punishment is frequently used, schools have performed worse academically than in states that prohibited corporal punishment⁷.

Supporters of corporal punishment are usually the traditionalists who cite references not only from religious sources, such as the Old Testament book of Proverbs, chapter 13: "Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them."

Sanderson (2003) also favors corporal punishment in rising and teaching of children. He states

"Discipline in rising and teaching of children is necessary if they are to become social, productive and responsible adults. Punishment is only a method of disciplining and corporal punishment is only one aspect of punishment."

In the present day UK corporal punishment has been legally prohibited in schools and other institutional settings except for parents. Those in favour of corporal punishment call for the return of the rod. One teacher said

"Children's behaviour is now absolutely outrageous in the majority of schools. There are too many anger management people who give children the idea that it is their right to flounce out of lessons for time out because they have problems with their temper. They should be caned instead."

A June 27, 2013 story of *The Express Tribune* revealed that in Pakistan, most of the parents and teachers believe that "most kids need to be beaten. It further reveals that teachers who experienced similar punishment as children, are more likely to justify the use of corporal punishment¹⁰.

Despite being favored by teachers and parents, a May 18, 2008 report of the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) which is the humanitarian news and analysis service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, suggested that corporal punishment is the key reason for 'dropouts' in Pakistan¹¹. The report is full of case histories of how corporal punishment scared brilliant students who were not going to school anymore.

Psychological studies also support the idea of negative impacts of corporal punishment and would say that punishment decreases a child's 'self-esteem' and can lead to symptoms like depression and anxiety. Studies suggest that it can also backfire; making the victim into a hero whom subsequently gets more peer attention for unacceptable behavior.¹²

Likewise, Bauman and Friedman (1998) found that majority of family physicians and pediatricians argue against corporal punishment. According to them, corporal punishment does not work to correct negative behavior permanently.¹³

It can be concluded that there are numerous forms of corporal punishment. Students in school receive corporal punishment for this or that reason. It negatively affects students' psyche. After receiving punishment, students are scared and form a very dark attitude towards the teacher awarding the punishment but the positive aspect can also not be ignored. It also motivates students.

Conclusions

Corporal punishment is a controversial phenomenon in most of the countries. It is considered as a part of the in formal means of socialization in a particular cultural set up. Like many other social phenomena this act is also contentious but it is for sure that both the proponents and opponents have no personal agendas but work towards the welfare of the young generation in their right socialization.

Recently, in Pakistan too, some NGOs have taken up this issue and made it a serious problem but the reality is that majority of the main stakeholders (the student) are not against the practice and considered it as a means of their motivation and reformation.

Corporal punishment to a mild extent is reformative but the teachers should not become a sadist to bruise and physically harm a child in the name of correction. In Pakistani context in general and the Muslims' context in particular, a teacher is considered as a spiritual father/ mother and if a child persistently makes wrongs and mischiefs, the parents do slap and smack them. Similar is the case with corpora; punishment in schools. The corporal punishment, as told by majority of the students, does make him/her realize his/her mistakes or wrong doings.

On the other hand, it also has the potential to create hate in some students against the teacher awarding corporal punishment. If punishment is awarded for being weak in studies, doesn't make student work harder or overcome their weakness. It does not have the necessary motivating force behind it. Students rarely get agitated after receiving punishment from teachers. This needs a case-work approach and individualization.

Moreover, evidences have been found through research that corporal punishment plays a major role to hinder the learning capacity of students and slow down the zeal of creativity. Severe punishment cause students stressed belligerent and outrageous. Such an aggressive approach from teachers and re-aggression from student's causes uneasiness and hooliganism rather than to correct their behavior and conduct in classes. It was highlighted that the trend of punishment tends to create abomination and the sense of hatred among the students. Further, those who are frequently subject to corporal punishment develops an anti-social character having rival thoughts towards society. Continuing with the anti-social attitude, it

hampers the adjustment of students in society where they imitate the submissive methods for self- satisfaction and pervades long term adverse impacts on personality of the individual.

In-short, the overall research findings come to a common conclusion that corporal punishment is both positive and negative at the same time. But the positive aspects are more than the negative at the same time.

End Notes

- ¹For example, CRC and other such international instruments against any form of child abuse and violence against children
- ²CNN. (November 9, 2011). Corporal punishment policies around the world. In *The CNN Freedom Project*. Retrieved, December 13, 2013 from http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/11/08/country.comparisons.corporal.punishment/
- ³For details see also Global Report 2013. (2014). Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. Retrieved Feb 28, 2014 from http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/frame.html
- ⁴Doggart, S. (May 26, 2011). Schools in Sweden can't be beaten: corporal punishment around the world. in *The Telegraph*. Also available online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/expateducation/8530207/Schools-in-Sweden-cant-be-beaten-corporal-punishment-around-the-world.html
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶Joint HRW/ACLU Statement. (April 15, 2010). "Corporal Punishment in Schools and Its Effect on Academic Success." In *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved March 2, 2014 from
 - $http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/04/14/corporal-punishment-schools-and-its-effect-academic-success-joint-hrwaclu-statement \#_ftnref6$
- ⁷Hickmon, Michael. (2008). Study: Paddling vs. ACT Scores and Civil Immunity Legislation. Retrieved March 2, 2014 from http://www.stophitting.com/index.php?page=paddlingvsact
- ⁸Sanderson (2003).Alternative to Corporal Punishment. Retrieved March 2, 2014 from www.sen.beck.org/Punishment-Alternatives.html
- ⁹Doggart, *Op.Cit*.
- ¹⁰Shaukat, Aroosa. (June 27, 2013). Corporal punishment: Most kids need to be beaten, teachers and parents believe. In *The Express Tribune*. Retrieved March 2, 2014 from http://tribune.com.pk/story/568929/corporal-punishment-most-kids-need-to-be-beaten-teachers-and-parents-believe/

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 - http://www.irinnews.org/report/78275/pakistan-corporal-punishment-key-reason-for-school-dropouts
- ¹²Committee on the Rights of the Child. (Friday, 28 September 2001) OHCHR Violence Against Children within the Family and in Schools. Retrieved March 2, 2014 from http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.28/NCCR-2.pdf
- ¹³Bauman, L.J., Friedman, B. (1998). Corporal Punishment: Pediatric ClinNoAm 1998;45:403-14.

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