

## ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Despite the harmful and potential effects of corporal punishment and the out breaking laws, abolishment of corporal punishment is still been a controversial issue in many states in all regions across India. Even many teachers argue that corporal punishment is necessary for disciplining school children. Though corporal punishment has been banned, many teachers hold positive attitude towards it which forms a base for involving in such behaviours. This study was undertaken to assess the attitude of high school teachers towards corporal punishment. It was found that many teachers especially male teachers and teachers working in boys schools hold a favourable attitude in using corporal punishment as means for generating behaviour change. The study also made recommendations to bring about significant change in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment.

**KEYWORDS:** Corporal Punishment, Attitude, Teachers

### INTRODUCTION

Corporal punishment has been a form of punishment in schools in India for a long time and sadly, this form of punishment still continues to thrive today in spite of the various acts and laws passed by the government to ban corporal punishment. Many western countries have banned corporal punishment and there are several laws that protect children from being hurt in such a brutal manner. However, most schools in India still advocate this type of punishment. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is a popular quote among teachers and parents alike in many parts of the country. The ultimate goal of formal education is academic achievement. Learning to concentrate, learning to perform in examinations and learning to behave in desirable ways are the key means of achieving this goal. Corporal punishment is an often used mechanism to discipline children. Corporal punishment refers to intentional application of physical pain as a method of behavior change. It includes a wide variety of methods such as hitting, slapping, spanking, punching, kicking, pinching, shaking, shoving, choking, use of various objects (i.e., wooden paddles, belts, sticks, pins, or others), painful body postures (such as placing in closed spaces), use of electric shock, use of excessive exercise drills, or prevention of urine or stool elimination. Many children who have been subjected to hitting, paddling or other harsh disciplinary practices have reported subsequent problems with depression, fear and anger. These students frequently withdraw from school activities and disengage academically. This study attempted to find out the attitude of teachers towards Corporal Punishment.

### UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Physical punishment serves as a model for aggression. Children imitate or model what they see adults due to them. Punishment may stop the child's misbehavior temporarily, but it stimulates further aggression in the child. The punishing adult may be identified as a negative and aversive person. When punishment is paired with criticism, name-calling or verbal abuse, the child may become afraid of the punisher. The effects of punishment have been shown to last only for a short time. Punishment does not teach the child what to do in the future. After being punished, the child is left in emotional confusion and resentment. He may focus on fantasy and revenge, which then can grow into hatred. The child

learns not misbehave only when the parent or teacher is around. The child may continue the negative behavior when the adult is not around. The child may stop the behavior for which he is punished and substitute another aggressive act. He may stop the negative behavior such as hitting but then increase other aggressive behavior such as verbal abuse of the person he is upset with. The frequent use of punishment may cause a child to withdraw or regress into acting younger. He may become non trusting and fearful of others. The child may develop negative beliefs of himself that are associated with the frequent use of punishment such as " I'm a bad person. I'm mean." These negative beliefs result in further lowered self-esteem. When punished, the child may strike back at the person or he may take his anger and displace it at an object, animal or another child.

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Today many countries have outlawed to use of corporal punishment. These countries have signed the United Nations Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Children. This act views corporal punishment as an act of abuse against children. Corporal punishment is used sparsely today as far as the average person can see. According to two major Acts for protection of child rights, Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, corporal punishment is a crime. Section 17 (1) of the RTE Act is designed to protect a child from physical and mental harassment. With many laws out their protecting unfair and hurtful treatment of others, it's easily to forget that most children overwhelmingly receive this questionable form of correction. In spite of the harmful and potential effects of corporal punishment and the out breaking laws, abolishment of corporal punishment is still been a controversial issue in many states in all regions across India. Even many teachers argue that corporal punishment is necessary for disciplining school children. Though corporal punishment has been banned, many teachers hold positive attitude towards it. This study was undertaken to assess the attitude of high school teachers in Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu, India, towards corporal punishment. The findings and recommendations of the study will be of profound use to personnel concerned with teacher education institutions and enable the teachers to use positive reinforcement strategies in modifying the behaviour of students.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study was to find out the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment based on the demographic variables such as Gender, Nature of School, Teaching Experience, and Age.

## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

- There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment classified on the basis of gender.
- There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment classified on the basis of nature of school.
- There is no significant association between the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment and their teaching experience.
- There is no significant association between the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment and their age.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study was the high school teachers in Thoothukudi District, TamilNadu, India. A sample of

75 high school teachers from various schools in Thoothukudi District were selected for gathering data using simple random sampling technique.

### Instrumentation

The investigator prepared a questionnaire to find out the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment consisting of eighteen statements out of which eight statements expressed favourableness and the remaining 10 expressed unfavourableness. For each statement the respondents had to choose one among the given responses such as agree and disagree.

### Research Design

According to Gay (1996), survey method is useful for investigating a variety of educational problems including assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions and procedures. The present study employed survey method. Data was collected from the sample using the questionnaire.

### Statistical Analysis

The collected responses were scored by assigning a score of 1 and 0 for the responses such as agree or disagree respectively for the statements expressing a favourable attitude and vice versa for those statements that express an unfavourable attitude towards corporal punishment. The data was analyzed employing t-test, ANOVA, Chi-Square Analysis and Percentage Analysis.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Test of Significant Difference in the Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment Classified on the Basis of Gender**

Variable	Gender	Number	Mean	SD	Calculated T Value	Table Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Gender	Male	26	8.35	4.78	3.35	1.96	Significant
	Female	49	5.24	3.19			

**Table 2: Test of Significant Difference in the Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment Classified on the Basis of Nature of School**

Variable	Number	Mean	Calculated F Value	Table Value	Remarks at 5% Level	
Nature of School	Only Boys	12	9.83	7.11	3.12	Significant
	Only Girls	22	4.77			
	Co-Ed	41	6.12			

**Table 3: Test of Significant Association between the Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment and Their Teaching Experience and Age**

Variables	Calculated Chi Square Value	Table Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Teaching Experience	Below 5 Years	9.48	Not Significant
	5 to 10 Years		
	Above 10 Years		
Age	Below 35	2.83	Not Significant
	35 to 45		
	Above 45		

**Table 4: Comparison of the Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment**

Variable		Attitude towards Corporal Punishment		
		Less Favourable	Moderately Favourable	Highly Favourable
Gender	Male	11.5	50	38.5
	Female	16.3	73.5	10.2
Nature of School	Only Boys	8.3	50	41.7
	Only Girls	27.3	63.6	9.1
	Co-Ed	9.8	70.7	19.5

## FINDINGS

- There is significant difference in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment classified on the basis of gender. Comparing the mean scores it is found that Male teachers have a highly favourable attitude towards corporal punishment.
- There is significant difference in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment classified on the basis of nature of school. Comparing the mean scores it is found that teachers working in boys schools are found to have a highly favourable attitude towards corporal punishment.
- There is no significant association between the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment and their teaching experience.
- There is no significant association between the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment and their age.

## DISCUSSIONS

- Based on the analysis it is found that Male teachers have more favourable attitude towards corporal punishment when compared to the female teachers. Male teachers may believe in the proverb 'Spare the rod, Spoil the child' and might have the opinion that showing love, care and affection will not produce any desirable change in the behaviour of students whereas Female teachers basically have the motherly nature. This might be the reason for the found significant difference.
- The analysis showed that teachers working in boys schools have more favourable attitude towards corporal punishment than the teachers working in co-ed. and girls schools. Students in boys schools show more in-disciplinary behaviours and are more aggressive than the students in co-ed. and girls schools. This should have led to the found significant difference.
- The analysis also revealed that there is no significant association between age and teaching experience of teachers and their attitude towards corporal punishment. Hence age and teaching experience do not influence the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment.
- Percentage analysis revealed that many teachers have favourable attitude towards corporal punishment. It was also found that many teachers has agreed to adopt corporal punishment to ensure safety in schools and also to improve the attendance percentage of students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of violence against students is never an acceptable means of punishment - it harms students physically, psychologically and academically. Spare the rod, or end up in jail. That's the latest warning to teachers who resort to

corporal punishment. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued a new set of guidelines that bans physical punishment of students. Heads of schools will be responsible to prevent corporal punishment. Teachers found guilty could be denied promotion, and even increments. The study had found that many teachers especially male teachers and teachers working in boys schools hold a favourable attitude in using corporal punishment as means for generating behaviour change. Hence the study recommends the following measures:

- Rather than relying on harsh and threatening disciplinary tactics, schools and teachers should be encouraged to develop positive behavior supports, which have proven effective in reducing the need for harsh discipline while supporting a safe and productive learning environment.
- All parents want their children to excel in academics and make them proud this puts pressure on schools and teachers to show an excellent academic record which forces teachers to develop a favourable attitude towards corporal punishment to ensure academic success for every student. Hence this pressure on schools and teachers should be reduced for this parents should be educated about healthy development of children.
- In-service and pre-service teacher training programmes should focus on issues of child rights, discipline and corporal punishment. Forums for teachers should be created to discuss issues related with discipline and the difficulties teachers face in dealing with diverse and unpredictable behaviour patterns
- Teachers need to engage with issues of why children are beaten and when. Workshops should be organized on handling classroom organization and management and children's learning using various kinds of techniques of drama and self-development, rather than an easy resort to punishment. Workshops need to be organized with systematic inputs from psychiatrists, child psychologists, pediatricians and counselors to sensitize teachers on the impact of corporal punishment on children and the role of the teachers in enabling a non-threatening learning environment in schools.
- A major divide between the socio-economic and cultural background of teachers and children in most state schools is a key factor in perpetuating the problem of corporal punishment. It would be strategic to develop and disseminate short films/video clips on the vulnerability of children and the responsibility of adults.
- Mechanisms can be evolved with teachers to actively discourage violence amongst children in school settings. It is time to think about framing set of rules for children in class developed by children along with the teachers.
- In-service training should train teachers to be able to identify behavioural and other signs of child abuse and appropriate utilization of confidential reporting and referral processes to school counselors, authorities etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

Corporal punishment has been a form of punishment in schools in India for a long time and sadly, this form of punishment still continues to thrive today. In India the Supreme Court introduced a law in the year 2000 to ban corporal punishment. Most states claim to follow this, however enforcement is lax and extreme brutality still goes on in most schools throughout the country. There have been several cases of suicides and attempted suicide throughout the country owing to corporal punishment in schools in India. Hence it is the need of the hour to develop right kind of attitude among the teaching community and focus on the healthy all around development of students implement the aforesaid recommendations.

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