

The Social and Economic Impact of Corporal Punishment in South African Schools

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ABSTRACT Many South African and some schools elsewhere are consumed with violence. This study explored the social and economic impact of corporal punishment was conducted in two secondary schools in Umlazi, South Africa. This study is underpinned by the power and social control theory. The data collection relied on diverse methods which were: semi-structured interviews, documentation reviews, and observation schedules. The study revealed that both schools experienced different types and levels of violence. The types of violence that affected the schools predominantly were physical violence, particularly the use of corporal punishment on learners. This study found that some teachers are verbally, physically and psychologically violent towards learners, particularly in the way that corporal punishment as a 'corrective measure' is applied despite strict laws against it. The study concluded that both learners and teachers cited the widespread use of corporal punishment on learners. Learners were faced with multiple challenges of both physical and psychologically types of violence, these includes cleaning of the yard, cleaning of toilets and lastly received corporal punishment as a main tool of eliminating learner misconducts to reinforce control on learners.

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence in South African schools is a serious concern and it has been proved to have both the economic and social impact in the lives of both parents and learners. This paper is part of a study that investigated the nature of violence schools; the social and economic impact of violence in South African schools. Corporal punishment can be described as 'any physical action that hurts a child in the name of discipline'. This could mean: hitting, slapping, pinching, pushing, shaking and kicking; depriving the child of food or rest or movement; forcing children, washing-up-liquid or other irritating substances in a child's mouth or anywhere on his or her body; and/or forcing them to sit or stand for any length of time (Childline 2010). Educationally, corporal punishment has been generally defined as the infliction of pain by a teacher or other educational official upon the body of a learner as penalty for doing something which has been disapproved of by the punisher (Miller 2009). Further, Miller views corporal punishment as involving the infliction of pain on the offender's body, and that pain and suffering are the primary and immediate goal of corporal punishment.

Internationally physical violence against children in a form of corporal punishment is still prevalent in schools (Harber 2004). The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) reported

that corporal punishment in schools in the form of beating, punching, beating or kicking remains legal in at least 65 countries, despite the statement that the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has highlighted that corporal punishment is unsuitable with the Convention. Morrell (2001) contends that corporal punishment was a fundamental part of schooling for the majority of teachers and learners in the twentieth century South African schools. It was used excessively in White, single-sex boys' schools and liberally in all other schools except in single-sex girls' schools where its use was limited. The introduction of Bantu Education in 1955 exposed Black children who had hitherto largely been outside the education system to school beatings. Unlike white girls, African girls were not exempted from beatings (Morrell 2001: 1). Harber (2004) contends that a major factor in the corporal punishment global spread was colonialism, particularly British colonialism. In Africa, for instance, it has been argued that although corporal punishment is now justified on the grounds that 'part of African culture', evidence on pre-colonial education systems suggests that this is unlikely. When neighbouring Zambia banned caning in 2000 it was described as 'a brutal relic of British rule' (Harber 2004). He argues that,

'Caning became embedded in the popular minds as critical to school discipline..... The result is a cycle of caning transmitted from one

generation to another and justified in on the basis of experience and sentiment... Instant punishment and military style parades typical of Botswana schools are all about social control (Harber 2004: 3).

Human Rights Watch (1999) also asserts that the use of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools arose in the days of the British colonial government and adopted nineteenth century British traditions of school discipline, including the widespread use of the cane. Parker-Jenkins (1999) argues that the history of childhood, at least in Western societies, registers the ordinary abuse and terrorising of children by their caretakers and at worst that an expectation that child-rearing and corporal punishment should go hand in hand has been carried over into school life. She added that, in Britain law courts consistently upheld the right of schools to beat children and corporal punishment was only finally banned in state schools in 1986 as a result of legal decisions stemming from European courts in Strasbourg. However, the ban on corporal punishment was only extended to children in all schools as late as 1999. Harber (2004) noted that in Thailand caning was finally banned at the end of 2000, where it was reported that it was used across schools, as well colleges and universities. Additionally, he asserted that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child illustrated that the prohibition of corporal punishment dated from 1947.

In Botswana strict rules on the use of corporal punishment exists but not honoured, caning was administered by all and sundry – including the student teachers, untrained teachers, learners themselves, porters and night watchmen (Harber 2004:6). To this end, Tafa (2002) argues that learners seemed to condone the widespread and regular use of corporal punishment as they freely participate in it.

Like South Korea, in Morocco most primary teachers also use a ruler, stick, or a piece of rubber garden hose which are generously used to hit children (Salmi 1999). In Palestine, corporal punishment is also widely used in schools, which is accompanied by verbal violence – scornful expressions, humiliating words and derogatory comments. And, the most frequent physical abuse witnessed by Israelites learners in Bedouin school was slapping, kicking, twisting of ears, grabbing or pushing (Harber 2004).

Despite its official abolishment in schools in a range of countries, punishment is still in use

in many countries like South Africa (Harber 2004). Research in South Africa sheds some light on the pervasive use of corporal punishment in schools. The use of corporal punishment in schools has been prohibited since 1996 in South Africa, although it is still commonly used, particularly in rural areas, and still supported by many parents and learners (Morrell 1999; Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005; Bhana 2012; Hunt 2007). Sparsely reports had been published in South African media, for example, corporal punishment is rife in Gauteng schools more than 350 cases were reported in Gauteng in April 2011 to February 2012 (John 2012). However, John contends that a worrying factor is that, a nationwide statistics of incidences of physical violence are not available from the department of Basic Education Department. Learners don't report corporal punishment because they fear victimization by teachers, experts say: "Reporting incidences is further discouraged because of parents' and teachers' relentless belief in its effectiveness to discipline learners, as well as ignorance of its danger and unlawful. The prevailing attitude is that physical violence, in particular corporal punishment is a norm and it is used and accepted in most schools".

Research revealed that South African schools continue to employ physical punishment as majors of affecting discipline in schools, more than half (55.6%) of the interviewed had been physical hurt at school for their wrongdoings (Burton et al. 2009). Burton et al. (2009) contends that the continued use of corporal punishment stems from the need to reinforce order and control in an authoritarian context but it is also important that in such a context children are not seen as fully human. Justifications for the use of corporal punishment in terms of the immaturity of young people suggest that simply being young denies the existence of the human right not to be subject to cruel and degrading punishment. The idea and practice of the physical punishment of young people may exist in the wider society but its use in schools has a multiplier effect because it both legitimates violence by the stronger against the weaker and increases the chance of the child himself or herself becoming more violent and therefore adds to the level of violence in society as a whole. By using corporal punishment, schools continue to socialise learners into violent behaviours (Burton 2007; Dunne and Leach 2007).

Some range of brutal incidences of violence and even fatality deaths related to the use of corporal punishment in school had been reported elsewhere. For example, in Thailand several children had been badly beaten by teachers, one in the head with a guitar in the year 2000. In Kenyan schools, the infliction of corporal punishment is routine, arbitrary and often brutal, consequently, bruises and cuts are regular by-products of school punishments which include severe injuries, like broken bones; knocked-out teeth; internal bleeding. In South Korea, the worst case recorded in 1993 is that of a 12 year old boy who lost his life after being beaten by teachers (Cicognani 2004). While in South Korea corporal punishment is still common practice in schools and it is not regarded as an educational problem, though it is illegal.

1.1 Social and Economic Impact of Corporal Punishment

This section addresses the social and economic impact of corporal punishment. The effects that result from the use of corporal punishment are harmful to children and can be lasting and damaging reaching well into adulthood (Cicognani 2004). International research has identified school violence as a problem that affects both developed and developing countries (Plan 2010). In many cases corporal punishment is ignored or at worst condoned. Children on whom corporal punishment is administered are often left with physical evidence or even death of the abuse. For example, children's eardrums have been burst as a result of being boxed (UNICEF's Asian Report 2001). Minor injuries such as bruising and swelling are common, more severe injuries such as sprains, broken fingers, large cuts, broken wrists and collar bones and internal injuries requiring surgery do occur (Human Rights Watch Kenya 1999). In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, teachers were arrested for allegedly beating a child so severely that needed surgery on one of his testicles.

In Egypt, 80% of boys and 67% of girls have suffered corporal punishment (Plan 2008). Still in Egypt, a defence lawyer of one teacher who beat a learner to death for not doing his homework claimed in court that his client had not broken the law because 'hitting a child is not banned in schools'. Deaths of children as a result of corporal punishment have been reported

in countries like Kenya (Cicognani 2004). Those who favour corporal punishment hold the view that corporal punishment instils discipline to learners and compliance. Cicognani (2004) content that although compliance is often obtained, but the effect of the punishment leaves children feeling more resentful as opposed to have learnt correct behaviours, while children who are spanked have a less trusting and affectionate relationship with the punisher and feel less remorse about misbehaviour attitudes. Punishment reinforces uncertainty and an identity of failure (UNICEF's Asian Report 2001). It reinforces rebellion, revenge, resistance and resentment. Furthermore studies demonstrate (Straus and Yodanis 1999) that adolescents who experience frequent corporal punishment are at a greater risk of assaulting spouses later in life. Majority of children got injured as a result of corporal punishment meted out to them; many drop out of school or run away from school/home because of physical abuse. But there is a much greater number that suffer in silence, knowing no way of protecting themselves against adult malevolence (Arshad 2008: 1).

Violence can result in serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for both teachers and learners, these include: reduced self-esteem, distress, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, increased risk teenage pregnancy, transmission of HIV/AIDS virus, fear and diminished ability to learn, community disintegration, academic underperformance, even school drop-out (University of South Africa [UNISA] 2012). UNISA further states that, crime and violence is a severe threat to the weak democracy, peace and economic stability in South Africa. It corrupts social fabric of communities and the nation as a whole and endangers the health of both children and adults. Violence further deepens gender and social inequalities and reduces the overall quality of life (UNISA 2012: 13). In addition young men who are not in education, employment or training are three times more likely to suffer from depression and five times more likely to have criminal records (Pereznieto et al. 2010).

'The psychological effects of corporal punishment may be just as harmful as the physical effects, and may include loss of self-esteem, an increase in anxiety and fear, damage to ego functioning, creation or enhancement of feelings of

loss, helplessness and humiliation, enhancement of feelings of aggression, and destructive and self-destructive behaviours, a shortened attention span, attention-deficit disorder, and impaired academic achievement. Apart from the evidence, research studies revealed that the administration of corporal punishment conveys the message that it is acceptable to express one's feelings of anger by hitting someone. Children are born imitators and they learn through modelling. When children learn that hitting is the way of solving problems, they don't learn creative ways in solving problems. If beaten they learn that it is acceptable to hurt others smaller than themselves physically. This notion has most negative bearing on the formation of an ability to establish meaningful relationships' (Oosthuizen et al. 2003: 464-465).

1.2 The Economic Costs of Corporal Punishment

The impact of violence in schools is often devastating for individual children, and can have wide-reaching social and economic consequences. It is impossible to quantify the true scope of effects of corporal punishment because children are often too ashamed or too afraid to tell anyone about it, or are not aware of how or where to report it. One study revealed that 9 Kenyan learners in one class were whipped with electric cable for not completing their English homework. One learner was injured on his back, arm and abdomen. The estimated medical costs for this learner were between US \$5 and US \$10. Given that most Kenyans live below the poverty level of \$1 a day, this was likely to represent up to two weeks' earnings and have severe consequences for the family (Pereznieto et al. 2010:6).

Pieheiro (2006) maintains that because violence is a major factor keeping children out of school, it lessens their chances of working their way out of poverty. Further, violence further takes valuable resources away from essential services, and by reducing educational achievement and subsequent earning capacity, lowers tax revenues.

Economic impact of corporal punishment had been documented globally. According to Pereznieto et al. (2010:10), in Guatemala and Argentina, early drop-out from school is nearly

59% and 11.4% of GDP respectively. In Egypt, nearly 7% is lost in potential earnings. In the UK, 16 year-olds who were punished and bullied at school are twice as likely not to be in education, employment or training, and to have a lower wage levels at age 23 and 33. In Morocco, it costs a woman US \$274 to get help from the justice system following an incidence of domestic violence including physical violence. It means getting justice and treatment would cost a fifth of woman total income.

Below are the average costs of treating injuries caused by corporal punishment in schools.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is underpinned by the Panopticon theory of "discipline and punish" (Foucault 1975). This theory proposes that organisations like factories, schools and hospitals resemble prisons (Giddens 1997), thus hypothesising that schools have become one of the new organisations of social control, along with prisons, hospital and factories, that use continual surveillance to discipline and punish in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility (Harber 2002). In this study different perspectives of discipline and punish theory by Foucault (1975) was used. Available evidence indicates that levels of violent crime, as measured by the murder rate, and overwhelmingly high rate of rape, are exceptionally high in South Africa as compared to other countries (CSVR 2007, 2010; Schonteich and Louw 2006). For these and others related reasons of crimes it is imperative for this study to theorise on why South Africa is so violent, why young girls and all categories of women are sexually assaulted and murder on day to day basis, and how children in general acquire deviant behaviours.

The Panopticon was a metaphor that allowed Foucault to explore the relationship between a) systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation and, b) the power-knowledge concept. Power and knowledge comes from observing others, it marked the transition to a disciplinary power, with every movement supervised and all events recorded. Similarly, in schools learners are constantly supervised and monitored mainly by teachers where teachers are randomly supervised the Department of

Basic Education officials. The result of this surveillance is acceptance of regulations and docility - a normalization of sorts, stemming from the threat of discipline. Suitable behaviour is achieved not through total surveillance, but by panoptic discipline and inducing a population to conform by the internalization of this reality. The actions of the observer are based upon this monitoring and the behaviours he sees exhibited; the more one observes, the more powerful one becomes. The power comes from the knowledge the observer has accumulated from his observations of actions in a circular fashion, with knowledge and power reinforcing each other. Foucault says that "by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase in power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process" (Foucault 1977).

2.1 Research Problem

Teachers are perceived as critical agents in the production of violence in schools through their self-regulation and their regulatory power over learners (Dunne et al. 2006). Those in positions of authority (for example, teachers and prefects) and those with physical and economic power (like wealthy 'sugar daddies' and senior male learners) may use range regulations: in many countries this includes the use of corporal punishment by teachers and chasing learners from class. Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education 2001) - identifies factors that place children and teachers at risk and that create barriers to learning and development. Barriers would be anything that interferes with the teaching and learning process, causing breakdown or exclusion. As such, violence in schools should be taken seriously as it has the potential to destabilize schools and negatively affect the teaching and learning process. This means that schools should be safe havens where teaching and learning can take place in harmony and where learners are free from crime and violence. Any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but it may also disrupt the educational process and affect not only the school itself, but also the surrounding community (Henry 2000). The main question that the study purported to address was:

What is social and economic impact of corporal punishment?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Analysis

In this paper a qualitative approach was opted for as we sought to understand our research participants from their own frames of reference in the context of the dynamics of school violence. Qualitative data consisted of notes and transcripts taken during the interviews observation schedules and documentation reviews. These individual interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. This wealth of data was transcribed and analysed according to phenomenological steps (De Vos et al. 2010). The data analysis procedure entailed capturing, coding and analysis into themes. An inductive approach to analysing the responses was undertaken to allow patterns, themes, and categories to emerge rather than being imposed prior to data collection and analysis (Patton 2000). Similar responses were grouped together into categories. This identification of themes provided depth to the insights about understanding the individual views of the student teachers. Similar codes were aggregated together to form a major idea from the data (Cresswell 2010: 256).

3.2 Validity and Reliability

In this study the elements of validity and reliability of research could not be overlooked. Validity is concerned with the accuracy of the questions asked, the data collected and the explanations offered (Mertens 2008; Denscombe 2010). In this study multiple data collection methods were used in order to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Reliability relates to the methods of data collection and the concern that they should be consistent and not distort the findings (Denscombe 2010:144). Generally, reliability entails an evaluation of the methods and techniques used to collect data (Denscombe 2010). Cohen et al. (2007) argue that one way of controlling reliability is to have a highly structured interview with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each participant. In this study highly structured interviews were used with the relevant participants as one way of ensuring reliability.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling means taking any portion of a population as representative of that population (de Vos et al. 2010). For the case study approach, the population sample of this study included selected learners, teachers, school governors and support staff within the total population of the two selected schools.

3.4 Case Study design

The researchers opted for a case study design in this research as it enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation of and meaning for those involved, namely teachers, learners, school governors and support staff. This approach is in line with the approach posited by Henning et al. (2010) as they contend that a case study design enables one to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning for those involved in the research. A case study is regarded as an exploration or an in-depth analysis of a 'bounded system' (that is, a system bounded by time and/or place, or a single or a multiple case, over a period of time). This study followed an in-depth approach using multiple cases as it involved two schools (De Vos et al. 2010). The schools were chosen on the basis that they were 'violent schools' – that is, schools where acts of violence occurred on a regular basis. Most of the perused media reports made mention of such schools. Based on these criteria, all identified schools were shortlisted and the two most convenient schools in terms of access and proximity were selected. It is important to note that where * (asterisk) sign has been used in this paper reflects the pseudo names of people or schools.

4. RESULTS

4.1 School Climate and Issues of Corporal Punishment

Question 1 of the interview posed the following question to the principals, the chairpersons of the SGBs, the chairpersons of the schools' Discipline, Safety and Security committees (SDSSC), the Life Orientation teachers, learners and other teacher participants: "How would you describe the ethos/values/principles of the school with regard to school discipline, in particular the use of corporal?"

Generally, the participants expressed negative feelings about the lack of safety and security measures and the persistence use of corporal punishment in these the school premises which, they felt, lead to a poor school climate. The majority of participants from Scooby secondary reported feeling insecure within and around the school premises, while only a few of the participants from Lioness Secondary felt unsafe within and around the school premises. Both learners and teachers cited the widespread use of corporal punishment on learners.

One respondent who was an SDSSC chair contend:

...for example, if a learner is not behaving well – unruly, I take an initiative to discipline that learner through corporal punishment. Although one has to be very, very careful when I punish them using corporal punishment because it's illegal to use, but we have to use it because it's the only way which is assisting us to maintain order. Before I punish the learner by using a stick, I have to ask the learner, does he prefer to take four strokes or call a parent? Then I will write down his choice and punish him if he agreed on that or wait for a parent (SDSSC Chair: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).

Whilst a learner respondent reported that he was unfairly treated after he had been accused of misconduct:

I and my friend were caned at the staff room and that was the end of it. I was not satisfied the way in which the case was resolved because I didn't do anything, but I was punished for nothing (Learner perpetrator B1: Scooby secondary verbatim transcription).

Another respondent stated:

Violence does affect them, if they know that you a strict teacher – you don't take any nonsense but caned them, they decide to bunk your period, when you are coming in they go out. When you ask where is so and so, the class said he is around at school, and you'll know that they know that you would not take their nonsense, it depends who you are, whether you disciplined (caned) them or not (Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).

Furthermore, on 3 August 2011, a grade 9 learner was accused of illegally damaging the concrete fencing to create an escape route from the school premises. The following was recorded in the tribunal book:

Lele said they broke the concrete fencing to get out of the school in order to enjoy themselves with dance. He said he went out with other three learners. Both learners were heavily corporally punished in their buttocks for their wrong doings. Two learners out of four learners agreed to repair the fencing on the 6th of August 2011 (Tribunal book: Scooby Secondary: 2011/08/03 – verbatim transcription).*

During the observation phase of this study a myriad of disciplinary proceedings were witnessed which literally took place on a daily basis at Scooby secondary. Learners were observed being punished through caning on their buttocks for smoking dagga, girls being punished for smoking “kuber”, and learners being punished for swearing, bunking classes and fighting with one another, just to mention a few. Some learners were observed coming late to school and many were loitering around the school outside the classrooms during learning and teaching times. Also learners were caned for late coming where a teacher would wait at the gate for late comers. Some would simply disappear once realised that they were punished for late coming. However, teachers were also observed coming late to school, absenting themselves from school while they should be in teaching, and also not honouring classes whilst at school as they were simply sitting in the staff rooms. International research has identified school violence as a problem that affects both developed and developing countries. Corporal punishments range from hitting with hands or sticks to making children stand in various positions for long periods and tying them to chairs. These severe punishments cause many children to abandon school – because they are afraid of their teachers, because of their injuries and because of the impact the violence has on their learning (Plan 2001).

The above discourses from the interviews were supported by the documents collected from the schools. For instance, on the 20th of February 2009, a disciplinary meeting was held where two male learners were disciplined for harassing a female teacher. The parents of both these learners were present to represent their children. The statement found in the tribunal book read as follows:

Mzamo [a learner] proposed marriage to one of the female teachers. Another learner, Luzo* also followed the teacher trying to ha-*

arrass her. According to school act, they have breached the code of conduct. They both pleaded guilty. They were initially corporally punished and then expulsion was recommended. Parents were given an opportunity to comment on the judgment. Both parents pleaded with the committee to give the learners the last chance; expulsion was waived pending filling of commitment forms by both teachers and learners. Learners should be not found guilty of any offence for the period of six months (Tribunal book: Lioness Secondary, 20 October 2009 – verbatim transcription).

One participant, who was the acting principal at the time of the study, indicated that the school is built inside the informal settlement. The majority of individuals from these squatter camps live through stealing goods from the houses and the school for re-sale purposes. She asserted:

The school is situated in a high crime area. The community does not own the school, as they vandalise and steal from school. The school is partly surrounded by informal settlement and most of our learners come from these informal settlements which mostly consist of unstable families. For example, the school is built nearby a dangerous passage, in this passage crime take place on broad daylight, pocketing even the elders are being robbed at any time of the day. The school is worse affected by these crimes and even burglary is the order of the day. As we speak right ceiling board is being repaired in my office after the recent incident of burglary in my office and other staff room. In terms of safety we are not safe at all because even if the school is fenced our own learners are involved in burglary and vandalising the school. So both inside and outside, there is an element which is not good, we as staff members we don't feel safe at all (Acting Principal: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcript).

Scooby secondary school has a high level of insecurity due to various factors. One factor is that the school is situated within a low-income, poverty stricken community where high levels of illegal drug and alcohol abuse are rife. Another teacher noted:

Ideally it is our wish that the school is safe. However, there are episodes and elements which defy our safety measures. We try to be safe, we have the security, the school is fenced but despite all these measures, there are people who

come from outside to the school, snatching cell-phones from the kids, err... though we don't have full evidence, but there is some drug-trafficking as well coming from outside to the school. We had spate of burglaries in the school, in the main office, computer lab and in the staff room. I presume the series of burglary were linked to inside informers (learners), this so because the two last burglaries were so precise, when new equipment was delivered and brought to the staff room, the staff room had a break-in the very same night. Again the ex-learners are allegedly linked to this burglary. So even if we try hard to make the environment conducive to learning by disciplining learners – through the use of corporal punishment and talking to them, but it makes no difference (Teacher A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).

One of the authors of this paper shares her personal experience of corporal punishment. She experienced corporal punishment throughout her schooling years and its implementation grew harsh as she progressed from one class to another. In 1984 while doing standard 3 now grade 5, the whole class was severely corporally punished for failing the speed test which they were not prepared for as they were taken by surprise to write it. The whole class didn't do well. In punishment for their failure, their class teacher, who was pregnant at the time, invited six male teachers to punish the class using the sticks. All six teachers were lined up waiting for each one of the learners to pass on through each the teachers. It was a norm that they were caned in both hands simultaneously as a sign of respect of not showing one hand to an adult. Undoubtedly to be caned both hands at a time a stroke equates to two strokes, which means that each learner received 12 strokes for failing a speed test. The use of corporal punishment continued till the end of their secondary school. Another sad memorable incidence was where one of the authors was beaten until the teacher missed her hand and hit her in her wrist and breaking her first wrist watch. Unfortunately there were no proper channel to report such incidence and nothing was done about it.

5. DISCUSSION

To cope with violence, it was reported that the majority of teachers in both schools relied heavily to the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO)

and the security guard as the main agents of correcting eliminating violence at school and . At Lioness secondary, in addition to the TLO assistance, the security guard was regarded as the only person who has power, authority and means to instil discipline to learners through the use of corporal punishment and other alternative ways to maintain order among learners. By so doing teachers were further reinforcing gender hierarchy by using male counterparts to administer corporal punishment on their behalfs. Still at Lioness secondary, the security guard manages to cope with learners' misconduct by using his power and authority invested to him by the school through following a self-designed hierarchically steps. These are as follows: for first offence, the learner is punished by cleaning the yard; for the second offence, the learner will be punished by cleaning the toilets, and lastly, if a learner still persists with same offence he/she will be sent to the principal for caning or to be sent home.

The above discourses of violence were also recorded elsewhere. For example, Parker-Jenkins (1999) argues that the history of childhood, at least in Western societies, registers the ordinary abuse and terrorising of children by their caretakers and at worst that an expectation that child-rearing and corporal punishment should go hand in hand has been carried over into school life. She added that, in Britain law courts consistently upheld the right of schools to beat children and corporal punishment was only finally banned in state schools in 1986 as a result of legal decisions stemming from European courts in Strasbourg. However, the ban on corporal punishment was only extended to children in all schools as late as 1999. Harber (2004) noted in Thailand caning was finally banned at the end of 2000 – where it was reported that it was used across schools, as well colleges and universities. Additionally, he asserted that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child illustrated that the prohibition of corporal punishment dating from 1947. The continued use of corporal punishment stems from the need to reinforce order and control in an authoritarian context but it is also important that in such a context children are not seen as fully human (Harber 2004). Justifications for the use of corporal punishment in terms of the immaturity of young people suggest that simply being young denies the existence of the human right not to

be subject to cruel and degrading punishment. According to UNICEF's Asian Report (2001: 6) on corporal punishment, "punishment reinforces indecision and an identity of failure. It reinforces rebellion, resistance, revenge and resentment". As a result children interpret people's actions as hostile and they learn that similar situations require hostile responses (Cognani 2004). Accordingly the use of violence as a disciplinary measure does not set the appropriate example, because children learn that acts of aggression are a means of solving problems (Cognani 2004: 4-5).

The use of corporal punishment impacted negatively on the social nexus and education of learners. Learners developed tendencies of absenting themselves from school if they realised that they will be caned for their late coming. Other learners were so fearfully of the so-called strict teachers consequently they chose to stay away from class and away from their own education. It was interesting to note that some teachers of these two schools acknowledged the use of corporal punishment by them other teachers as a way control learners. This was manifested where some teachers indicated that learners bunk the classes if they knew that a strict teacher is next. These strict teachers instil discipline to learners through the use of corporal punishment. "Hitting someone else, especially someone younger, smaller, and utterly defenceless, constitutes a violent act. This is true even in those instances where people claim that they cane 'in love' "(Morrel 2001:2). Violence in schools is a major reason for children not attending school or dropping out early. For example, in Nepal, 14% of dropouts were because children were afraid of their teachers (Pereznieto 2010).

The socio-economic impact of corporal punishment practice in schools was also recorded in this study. Learners who were continuously inflicted with pain through caning avenged to the school by being informers of the criminals and by being involving in stealing from the school. It was also reported that ex-learners were also implicated in stealing from the school by being involved in an antisocial behaviour where they involved themselves in a spate of burglary and stealing from the school. On one hand school was losing lot money in renovation of damaged offices and also in replacing the goods that were stolen or damaged. Smith (2006) contends that corporal punishment is associated

with children's aggression and other antisocial behaviour (towards peers, siblings and adults). Corporal punishment may legitimise violence for children in interpersonal relationships because they tend to internalise the social relations they experience (Vygotsky 1978). Pieheiro (2006) further argues that violence in schools reflects and contributes to social breakdown. While children who experience violence at school are more likely to engage in violence in later life, to place greater demands on health, welfare and judicial services, and are less likely to contribute to society, while in Ethiopia, 40 % of parents said that school violence would discourage them from sending their daughters to school. Sixty % of girl learners and 42 % of boy learners said that violence; in particular corporal punishment had a high impact on girls' absenteeism (Pereznieto 2010). On the other hand, learners developed aggression and anti-social behaviour against the school where they were dehumanised and mistreated by those who were supposed to take care and provide them with guidance.

The study by UNISA (2012) revealed 41% of learners indicated that they were the victim of corporal punishment and got injured. Where 59% - still a low percentage, indicated that they experienced the use of corporal punishment but were not injured. UNISA (2012) further indicated that within those learners who were injured through the use of corporal punishment there were about 24% of learners who were severely injured and had to seek medical attention.

6. CONCLUSION

This study that explored the prevalence and nature of school violence in particular the use of corporal punishment was conducted in two secondary schools in Umlazi, South Africa. The data collection relied on diverse methods which were: semi-structured interviews, documentation reviews, observation schedules and reflective journals. The findings confirm that many South African schools as elsewhere are consumed with violence. The study revealed that both schools experienced different types and levels of violence. The findings that raised the deepest concern pertained to the prevalence of direct forms of violence which emanated from the school itself. Not only learners, but also teach-

ers engaged in bullying behaviour that exacerbated the culture of violence at the schools. Some teachers were verbally, physically and psychologically violent towards learners, particularly in the way that corporal punishment as a 'corrective measure' was applied despite strict laws against it.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need to support and enhance current efforts aimed at increasing basic levels of good management, school effectiveness and teacher professionalism in South African schools as an attempt of reducing school violence. A well-ordered school is also a less violent school. In addition, efforts must be made to realise this within the post-apartheid educational framework of education for democracy and peaceful conflict resolution – an effective school must also be a more democratic school; good management is more democratic management and a professional teacher operates in a more democratic manner. The more learners, parents and staff are involved in school policy and decision-making, the more there is a genuine community, the more the school can resist violence. Parents and learners would feel a sense of ownership of the school. Finally, there is need to train many teachers on why corporal punishment is ineffective educationally and has negative consequences, as well as what are constructive alternatives to corporal punishment.

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