

Sub: Corporal Punishment

Dear

As you are aware the issue of corporal punishment is a blight on our education system that periodically comes to light in the event of a tragic incident. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has been concerned that while individual incidents get dealt with, systems still do not exist that can engage with this issue in a humane and sustained fashion at all levels.

2. On the basis of a complaint received from the father of late Mr Rouvanjit Rawla, student of La Martiniere School for Boys, Kolkata, NCPCR set up an Enquiry Committee to look into the facts of the case. The Committee submitted its report on 22nd June, 2010. Subsequently the Commission deliberated on the findings of the Committee and has made its recommendations which are attached as Annexure 1.

3. The basic view of the Commission is that corporal punishment should not be tolerated in any form and that it is the responsibility of all sections of society to ensure that it is rooted out not just from our education system but our mindsets are changed as well. For this we have recommended actions of different forms to be taken by the school in question, including its Board of Governors, and also for State and Central Government.

4. In particular we request you to ensure that the Directives issued by the Commission are adhered to. We would also like an Action Taken Report on this matter sent to NCPCR within a fortnight.

5. We would like the State Government to set an example by taking a strong stand on the issue of corporal punishment and sending the appropriate messages to the schools in their jurisdiction. Systems and structures should be put into place by all schools so that matters related to discipline and punishment are dealt with in a continuous and comprehensive fashion by all concerned – the students, teachers, school management and parents so that they do not result in tragic outcomes.

6. The recently passed Right to Education Act has given every child a fundamental right to receive education in an atmosphere free from fear and trauma. Section 17 of the Act categorically states:

“No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment”
[Section 17(1)]

7. It is the obligation of the State to guarantee this right. We hope that the Government of West Bengal will take a lead in pursuing this matter not just with La Martiniere School for Boys, Kolkata, but with all schools in the State.

Yours sincerely,

(Lov Verma)

Encl: As stated above

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(Lov Verma)
Member Secretary