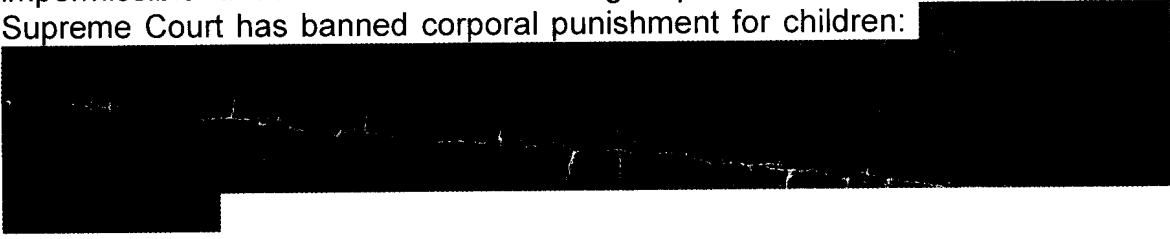


Press note on
Corporal Punishment in Schools

It is being noticed that corporal punishment in schools both government as well as private is deeply ingrained as a tool to discipline children. Children are wrapped on the knuckles, made to run on the school ground, kneel down for hours, beaten with a scale, pinched and slapped, standing up for long hours, sitting like a chair, as if it was a pedagogical tool for imparting education. In this kind of a milieu, there are also instances of child sexual abuse, torture, locking up children alone in classrooms, electric shock and acts leading to grave insult, humiliation, physical and mental injury, and even death. This is unacceptable. Memories of such violence on the child stay with them and in most cases causes a permanent damage to children's psyche and self esteem.

All forms of corporal punishment are a fundamental breach of human rights. A slap is as detrimental to the child's right as grievous injury. Indeed there are no gradations since it must be seen that condoning so called 'small acts' actually lead to gross violations. It must be recognized that any act causing injury, insult and humiliation to children is a violation of children's rights. It is also legally impermissible under section inviting imprisonment or fine or both. The Supreme Court has banned corporal punishment for children:



It is in this context, the Commission considers that the onus of responsibility in safeguarding children from punishment lies with the schools teachers as well as its management equally.

Most children in their wisdom are silent on issues regarding punishment in school. They believe that the adults are not sensitive enough. Some of them even think that if they are subject to scolding and beatings at home, it will be difficult to bring it before their parents about the punishment meted to them in school. All children must be given confidence to make complaints and not accept punishment as a 'normal' activity of the school. Every school including hostels, and other public institutions meant for children must have a forum where children can express their views and the institutions could take the help of an NGO for facilitating such an exercise. Further a box where children can drop their complaints, even if anonymous has to be provided for. This will have to be taken up by the PTAs in their meetings.

The Commission appeals to the parents to act immediately on any complaints made by children without postponement of the issue and wait for a more grave injury to be caused. In other words parents need not use their discretion in

making a complaint and shirk from bringing it to the notice of school authorities in fear that it would have adverse effect on children's participation in schools. In case of inaction by school authorities, the parents must immediately register a complaint with the nearest Police Station under section.....

The PTA's of every school must be activated and the issue of corporal punishment has to come up for discussion in every meeting. This has to be facilitated by school management in a proactive manner.

Children are as human and sensitive as adults are, if not more. They need to be secure with a caring atmosphere. It is necessary for adults to behave with them in a manner that they are not subject to violence and hurt of any kind. Practicing non-violence as a highest form of culture begins with seeing children as children. In a way the Commission feels that fostering such a culture will develop adults as responsible adults who would in turn be vigilant and question those that are breaking the norms of respecting childhood.

The Commission seeks information from the citizens in the country on any incident of corporal punishment in schools. It can be contacted at:

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