

## Media Voices

*children are smacked far less than when we were young;  
they as well as we know their rights*

Voices of teachers in Nicaragua (2008) evaluating  
the role of the media in turning around this classroom behaviour<sup>1</sup>

Journalists are often the champions of human rights. Not only do they often give voice to public opinion but also shape it. They arm governments and civil society with information to effect change.

This section compiles a cross-section of effective media stories angles<sup>2</sup> which highlight the issue of corporal punishment with sensitivity and from a child-rights perspective.

### Report Abuse

# Teacher's slap hits teen's hearing

Anahita Mukherji | JNN 23/2

**Mumbai:** Here's a strong case against corporal punishment. Mujahid Dadan (14), a Std IX student at Antonia D'Souza High School, Byculla, was slapped on the left ear by a teacher for talking in class. The blow punctured his eardrum, resulting in moderate hearing loss.

The incident occurred 11 days ago during a free period when the students were making a noise. After repeated attempts to silence the class, Ashish Zunzunrao, the PT teacher who was on substitution duty, caught hold of Mujahid, who was chatting with a few friends.



**BAD BLOW**

The school authorities are apologetic about the incident. "I have told all our teachers never to hit children. Zunzunrao is very sorry about what he did," said school principal Fr Anil Rego. He added that Zunzunrao had intended to slap the boy on his face, but he turned his head and received a blow on the ear instead.

The boy's parents, however, feel that an apology does little to alleviate the pain and trauma that their son has suffered. A non-cognizable (NC) complaint had been registered with the Byculla police on the day of the incident. The complaint was registered before the medical diagnosis revealed a ruptured ear-

This news item of a child having lost his hearing by a teacher's slap in September 2007 in Mumbai, India was sensitively portrayed by the media by capturing the opinions of the teachers, parents, doctors and even experts of the socio-legal cell. The child's name and photo, however, were also been displayed in this news item and it is assumed that appropriate documented consent was procured for their release.

<sup>1</sup> Rona Jualla-Ali Nico van Oudenhoven (2008), On Tolerance towards Violence against Children: Lessons from Nicaragua and Trinidad & Tobago, Seminar 'The school says NO to violence! Ways to prevent violence in the schools' Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF) Ministry of Education, Research and Youth International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) Bucharest, May 2008.

<sup>2</sup>MediaWise and UNICEF (2005), Media and Children's Rights, [www.mediawise.org.uk](http://www.mediawise.org.uk) (Last accessed by the author January 2009)

## Follow the Story

### Teacher gets over 2-yr RI for corporal punishment

Even after nine years, the media continued to report on the story till the conviction and sentence of two years rigorous imprisonment was delivered to the teacher, P. C. Gupta for meting out corporal punishment to a class VI student in New Delhi in 1997. The accused had made a student parade naked in front of the whole school for three hours. Rakesh, the student whose "fault" had been that he had taken a dip in the school tank on a warm afternoon on a day was forced to discontinue his studies after the incident due to constant taunts by other teachers and fellow students.

Despite his dream of "completing his education and starting a small business" shattered, after nine long years, at the age of 21 years working as a factory mechanic, he was finally atleast able to ensure that his tormentor was brought to book.

## Spotlight on Heroes

### Babus catch 'Taare', Aamir's celluloid lessons to hit schools soon

The film, Taare Zameen Par, directed by successful Bollywood actor Aamir Khan while purportedly dealing with the issue of dyslexia, cut across age barriers and sensitized parents, teachers, youth, the elders.

## Research in Focus

### Ouch! 2 out of 3 kids beaten in school

### When schools 'teach' untouchability

CRY study exposes discrimination against Dalit teachers and students in Gujarat govt schools

DNA Correspondent,  
Ahmedabad

Gujarat may be doing better than several other states in terms of literacy but when it comes to quality of education, the state seems to be lagging behind. A recent study carried out by Bunyadi Adhikar Andolan and CRY (Child Relief and You) has revealed that untouchability is liberally practised by teachers and consequently by stu-

#### Caste bias

Activists, who personally visited these schools, witnessed visible forms of untouchability on at least 30 occasions over a period of 20 days

school level, he will grow and spread this ideology. It is about time we stop these ideologies of division from spreading to the next generation," Singh added.

This is again in addition to the fact that the overall status of education in schools is quite dismal. "Gujarat has better infrastructure than other states, but the number of teachers and even their quality is very poor. The study reveals that



When the study the Women and Child Development ministry was released in 2007 not only did it focus attention of the fact the 2 of every 3 children face physical abuse in school, but its media coverage paved the way for a series of talk shows on televisions, opinion polls and initiative of state governments to issue guidelines to ban corporal punishment in schools.

**Experiments with Success**

# Idukki shuns corporal punishment

## Teacher canes herself, kids confess

JOHN MARY

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan. 31: A teacher in the country's first child-friendly district caned herself, repeatedly in

STICK THERE, SWORD HERE



school improve its infrastructure. She gave him a list of demands on the phone, to which Baby agreed. The first item, an LCD projector, could reach the school next week.

Kutty today showed how that could be done.

Idukki, a hilly district home to settlers and farmers who had moved up from the plains, has produced some of

Idukki in Kerala in January 2008 has become India's first district to officially pledge to stamp out corporal punishment in schools. Similar success stories show that "change is possible". The media, in fact, even brought to light a very unusual case of a female teacher who a fortnight after the Idukki declaration to stamp out corporal punishment, was so committed to the cause of 'do no harm' to children that she caned herself repeatedly in front of 500-students assembled in the school, provoking the children who had stolen money from a fellow pupil to confess their crime and vow never to commit a similar mistake.

**Days of Awareness**

# Children's Day to celebrate rights

National Panel Issues Guidelines To Schools For Meaningful Programmes

## PUNISHMENT IS NO NEGATIVE WORD

Sonia Sanjay | 9/6/08

A student of Class V Priyanka, in Malakal in class and disturbs other students. Her teachers do not know how to discipline this hyperactive child, as she refuses to heed their verbal warnings.

Nine-year-old Shanvik is considered fairly intelligent by his teachers and parents, but he just refuses to practise anything. While hearing this case? he an episode, involving him, from certain social activities has been started to make him fall in line, say his parents.

Finally, there's some hope for hurried teachers and parents like them, who are looking for "alternative" ways to discipline kids, now that there's a ban on corporal punishment in the classroom. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is all set to come up with a set of guidelines on "positive" disciplining strategies. Its working group will submit a final proposal in two months.

Says NCPCR chairperson Shanta Sinha: "We will come up with positive disciplining techniques and alternative ways of improving the child's behaviour without inflicting any physical punishment. The working group will come up with a final document by February, which'll suggest all necessary measures to ensure that there is no corporal punishment."

The working group, constituted by NCPCR, has on board officials of the human resource development ministry, NGO activists and members of parents-teachers as-



Positive disciplining techniques

While a ban on corporal punishment has proved insufficient to stop the menace in government schools, an NCPCR working group is all set to come out with guidelines on how to discipline kids without the cane and the pain

Feature articles are especially useful on commemorative days to analyse the phenomenon of corporal punishment and Box 1 presents a calendar of hooks.

### **Box 1: A Calendar of 'Hooks'**

*This selection of international events offers some suggestions on hooks or pegs on which to hang story ideas. There will be many more national, cultural and religious anniversaries and events around which to construct a 'children's angle'. Those most relevant to highlight corporal punishment in schools are:*

#### **January**

24 Girl Child Day

#### **March**

8 International Women's Day

International Children's Day of Broadcasting

#### **June**

4 International Day of Child Victims of Aggression

12 World Day Against Child Labour

26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

#### **August**

12 International Youth Day

#### **September**

8 International Literacy Day

15 National Teacher's Day

21 International Day of Peace

#### **November**

14 National Children's Day

19

20 Universal Children's Day

25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

#### **December**

10 Human Rights' Day

Source: MediaWise and UNICEF (2005), Media and Children's Rights, [www.mediawise.org.uk](http://www.mediawise.org.uk) (Last checked January 2009)

## Human Interest

Parents block  
school bus to  
protest corporal  
punishment

Deepender Deswal | TNN

Rohtak: Enraged over repeated incidents of corporal punishment in a private

Corporal Punishment

Schoolkids  
told to beat  
schoolkids

Pallavi Polanki  
New Delhi, November 16

THERE'S NO stopping corporal punishment

## Photo Essay

Pictures often speak more than a thousand words.



Getting along: A student at Wat Khemampirattaram school dances in a class designed to build teamwork. ANDY NELSON/THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Thai schools use dance class, prayer to curb violence

A pilot program aims to teach students teamwork and tolerance – and let them blow off steam.

## Social Ambassadors

My son underwent abusive violence: Anil Kapoor

29 Nov, 2008 06:00 am IST | Anu Chanchal /INDIATIMES MOVIES

Middle East: Queen Rania of Jordan to fight corporal punishment in schools

Queen Rania of Jordan recently stressed that violence of schoolchildren is a 'red line' cannot be tolerated and accepted.

## And the Blank Slate.....