



## Selected Research

### What does it show on the state of corporal punishment in India?

#### Child Abuse: India 2007

(Kacker, L., Varadan, S. & Kumar, P. (2007), Study on Child Abuse: India 2007, New Delhi: Ministry of Women and Child Development)

The Ministry of Women and Child Development published the first nationwide study on child abuse in India.<sup>1</sup> The study revealed a high prevalence of corporal punishment of children in all the settings – their family homes, schools, institutions and on the streets.

69 percent of children reported physical abuse, including corporal punishment, in one or more situations. Of children abused within the family, in the majority of cases the perpetrators were parents (88.6 percent), followed by teachers (44.8 percent), employers (12.4 percent), caregivers (9.5 percent), NGO workers (4.8 percent) and others. The difference between boys and girls was marginal. The vulnerability of younger children is the greatest with the incidence of abuse declining marginally as the children age progresses.

Even children in institutions in need of protection and care and those in conflict with the law reported rampant physical abuse. Often caregivers are also abusers which destroys the faith and trust of the child and often

	Institution	Gender	Yes	No
Children in Need of Care and Protection	Shelter Home	Boys	64.15	35.85
		Girls	40.83	59.17
	Children Home	Boys	63.79	36.21
		Girls	35.47	64.53
	Any other	Boys	71.17	28.83
		Girls	41.64	58.36
Children in Conflict with law	Observation Home	Boys	70.37	29.63
		Girls	62.26	37.74
	Special Home	Boys	64.23	35.77
		Girls	80.36	19.64

Source: MoWCD (2007)

alienates him/her from society itself. Children in institutional care are among those who report the highest levels of sexual assault.

The most commonly reported punishment was being slapped and kicked (63.7 percent), followed by being beaten with a stave or stick (31.3 percent), and being

<sup>1</sup> It was based on the experiences of 12,447 children aged 5-18 years from across 13 states and also involving 2,324 young adults (aged 18-24) and 2,449 stakeholders (adults holding positions in government departments, private service and urban and rural local bodies, and individuals from the community)

pushed, shaken, etc (5.0 percent). For many the hurt resulted in serious physical injury, swelling or bleeding.

Unfortunately, over 44.5 percent of respondents felt that it was necessary in disciplining children and 25.5 percent disagreed with its necessity with 30.0 percent expressing no opinion. When asked about the most suitable form of punishment for discipline, 35.2 percent said scolding or shouting, 11.3 percent slapping or beating with a stick, almost 11 percent felt locking a child in a room or denying food was suitable punishment.

### **Impact of Corporal Punishment**

*(Saath Charitable Trust/Plan International, India, 2006, Impact of Corporal Punishment on School Children: A Research Study – Final Report)*

In May 2006 by Saath Charitable Trust supported by Plan International (India) looked at children's experiences of corporal punishment in schools and in the home in one district in each of four states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. The research involved 1,591 children mostly from 41 schools as well as members of various children's organisations. Parents, teachers, community members, government officials and other adults were also consulted. The main methods used were interviews, focus group discussions, role play and classroom observation.

The study found corporal punishment to be an accepted way of life in all schools and communities visited. The most common forms of punishment were hitting with hands and stick, pulling hair and ears, and telling children to stand for long periods in various positions. Threats of physical violence were common. Severe forms of corporal punishment were also encountered, including being severely kicked, starvation, tying with rope to chairs/poles followed by beatings, and being assigned physically strenuous labour (e.g. in the fields).

In all schools, there would be at least five beatings every day, in addition to other more moderate forms of punishment, though the punishments were less severe than those experienced in the home. Punishment in the home was inflicted by mothers and fathers on both girls and boys with equal severity, more frequently for boys.

### **Inside Classrooms**

*(Reported in cities.expressindia.com, 7 April 2007)*

A 2004 study by the NGO Aapanach found that, of 350 children surveyed from public, private, and municipal schools, over 75 percent said that they received punishment at school, and nearly 60 percent said the most frequent form of punishment was caning or hitting with a ruler. It was common for the whole class to be punished (66 percent). A third (33 percent) reported cases of severe injury due to punishment.

## Inside Homes

*(Reported in Krug, E. G. et al. (eds) (2002), World report on violence and health, Geneva: World Health Organization)*

*WHO report available at:*

*[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/)*

As part of the World Studies of Abuse in the Family Environment (WorldSAFE) cross-national project, researchers looked at incidence rates for corporal punishment using the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale, as self-reported by mothers covering the period of the previous 6 months.

In rural areas of India, "severe physical punishment" was reported as follows:

- hitting the child with an object not on the buttocks 36 percent,
- kicking 10 percent,
- choking 2 percent,
- burning 1 percent,
- threatening with a knife or gun 1 percent.

"Moderate physical punishment" was reported as follows:

- spanked buttocks with hand 58 percent,
- slapped face or head 58 percent, pulled hair 29percent,
- hit with knuckles 28percent,
- hit with object on buttocks 23 percent,
- pinched child 17 percent,
- twisted ear 16 percent,
- shook child 12 percent,
- put hot pepper in mouth 3 percent,
- forced to kneel/stand in uncomfortable position 2 percent.