

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Day of General Discussion

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Violence Against Children within the Family and in Schools

Submission by **NGOs Coalition on Child Rights -Pakistan**
(no.1)

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ARTICLE-19,
UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

1. State parties shall take appropriate legislative, administrative and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in care of parent (s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow up of instances of child maltreatment described here fore and as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

LOVE IS STRONGER THAN FEAR.

- Tell your children you love them. Make sure you hug and cuddle them.
- Be interested in their lives. Ask how they feel and what they think.
- Praise their talents. If they do something well, tell them.
- Children like all of us sometimes fail. No one can do every thing well. Tell them you love them any way.
- Children deserve respect, just as adults do.

IF A CHILD MISBEHAVES REMEMBER
TO TELL THE CHILD IT IS THE
BEHAVIOUR YOU DON'T LIKE AND NOT
THE CHILD.

INTRODUCTION.

Understanding and overcoming the dynamics of social problems requires specification of and a societal commitment to certain value premises, and definitions logically linked to such premises. The concept of childhood, is a social construct that varies over time and culture. The same is true of child abuse. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important milestone in human history because it gave the idea that children have full and equal rights and that childhood has a value in itself. The essence of the Convention is that all children despite their individual differences and uniqueness are to be considered of equal intrinsic worth and hence should be entitled to equal social, economic, civil and political rights, so that they may fully realise their inherent potential and share equally in life, liberty and happiness. In accordance with these value premises then, any act of commission or omission by individuals, institutions or society and any conditions resulting from such acts or inaction, which deprive children of equal rights and liberties, and/or interfere with their optimal development, constitute by definition, abusive or neglectful acts or conditions.

The fundamental causal level of child abuse consists of a cluster of interacting elements including a society's basic social philosophy, its value premises, its concept of humans, the nature of its social, economic and political institutions and the quality of human relations prevailing in the society. A second level of causation of child abuse may be intrinsic to the social construction of childhood in a society. How does a society view its children and how does it define their rights? How much obedience, submission and conformity does it expect of children? Failure on the part of children or parents/caregivers to meet these standards is a major direct cause of many forms of child abuse at family level.

A further causal dimension of child abuse is a society's attitude towards the use of force as a legitimate means of attaining ends, especially in unbalanced interpersonal relations such as male-female, teacher-pupil and adult-child. Other causal factors of child abuse at home include parental factors like poverty, stress and frustration, drug addiction, conflicts between spouses, mental illness and other forms of psychic-pathology on the part of perpetrators. Physical abuse at home is probably the most prevalent form of child abuse in NWFP. Child physical abuse is broadly defined as a non-accidental injury to a child by a parent/caregiver. It includes injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beating or shaking, bruising, lacerations, burns, fractures or dislocations, attempted suffocation or strangulation and death. These injuries may result from hitting with or without instruments, kicking, throwing, shaking, twisting, pinching, drowning, strangulating, suffocating, poisoning, burning, tying up, dragging or pushing the child.

The greatest impact of maltreatment is on the social, emotional and cognitive development of children. In some cases, abuse has a direct physical impact e.g. a child's brain is damaged by a direct blow on the head. In most cases the maltreatment works indirectly. It can change the way children's feel about themselves and the way they see the world. The altered perception leads children to fail socially, emotionally and educationally, thus affecting their overall development and achievements in later life.

STUDY OBJECTIVES.

- a. Know the prevalence and pattern of child physical abuse at home, in North West Frontier Province, Pakistan.
- b. Find out the Children's perception of physical abuse at home.
- c. Sensitise the NCCR's partner community based organisations to the issue of child physical abuse at home.

STUDY METHODOLOGY.

The methodology of the studies undertaken under the NCCR-UNICEF collaboration framework is :-

1. Development of data gathering instruments by the NCCR's Board of Directors with the collaboration of UNICEF Peshawar office.
2. Data gathering by CBO workers associated with NCCR.
3. Data compilation, analysis and report writing at NCCR's Peshawar office. The present study was carried out in 18 districts and 3 agencies (Tribal areas) of North West Frontier Province. **(Annexure-I).**

The data was gathered by administering a structured questionnaires **(Annexure-II)** to school going children (5-16 years). The incomplete and incorrectly filled questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis. Volunteers (both male and female) from CBOs affiliated with NCCR, participated in the data gathering process.

RESULTS.

A total of 4200 children were interviewed in 21 districts and agencies of the province. 26 questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis due to incomplete entries. The district and genderwise distribution of respondents is given in **Table-1**.

TABLE-1
“DISTRICT AND GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS.
(NOS. 4174)

Name of District/Agency	Gender		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Swat	145	25	169
Buner	190	45	235
Dir	276	56	332
Shangla	121	34	155
Malakand Agency	118	12	130
Mardan	16	35	201
Swabi	110	100	210
Nowshera	116	75	191
Charsadda	151	54	205
Peshawar	100	100	200
Haripur	164	35	199
Abbottabad	81	78	159
Mansehra	81	127	208
Kohat	164	124	288
Karak	98	97	195
Bannu	138	101	239
Lakki Marwat	73	55	128

DIKhan	127	111	238
Tank	80	70	150
Khyber Agency	98	100	198
Mohmand Agency	92	52	144
Total	2689	1485	4174

Types of Punishment.

The respondents were asked about the types of physical punishment given to them or their siblings at home. All respondents admitted that they receive physical punishment at home. The types of punishment are given in **Table -2**.

TABLE-2
TYPES OF PUNISHMENT.
(TOTAL NOS. 4176)

SN	TYPES	NUMBERS	% AGE
1	Slapping on face	2253	54%
2	Slapping on back	210	29%
3	Hitting with a Stick	694	16.6%
4	Kicking	512	12.3 %
5	Pulling hair	460	11 %
6	Hitting with another object	84	2 %
7	Shaking	44	1.1
8	Any other	62	1.5

NOTE: Many children reported more than one type of punishment.

The results show that slapping on face or back, hitting with a stick and kicking are the common forms of physical punishment at home. Irrespective of the type and severity of punishment, even a little slap carries the message that violence is the appropriate response to conflict or unwanted behaviour.

Aggression breeds aggression. Research has demonstrated that children subjected to physical punishment are more likely than others to be aggressive to siblings; to bully other children at school; to take part in aggressively antisocial behaviour in adolescence; to be violent to their spouses and children and to commit violent crimes.

WHO BEAT THE CHILDREN?

Children were asked that who beat them more often at home. The responses are given in **Table-3**.

TABLE-3

PERSON WHO BEATS MORE OFTEN	BOYS (TOTAL 2689)	GIRLS (TOTAL 1485)
Father	2097 (78%)	894 (60%)
Mother	1129 (42 %)	1097(74%)
Elder Brother	1263 (47 %)	653 (44 %)
Elder Sister	54 (2 %)	312 (21%)
Grand father	46 (1.7 %)	10 (0.7 %)
Grand mother	24 (0.9%)	28 (1.8%)
Uncle	492 (18.3%)	133 (9%)
Aunt	12 (0.5%)	38 (2.6%)
Any other person	38 (1.4%)	16 (1.1%)

NOTE : Most of the respondents reported being beaten by more than one family members.

REASONS FOR PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT.

The respondents were asked for the common reason/s for which they receive corporal punishment at home. The responses are given in **Table-4.**

TABLE-4
REASONS FOR PUNISHMENT.

REASON	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	
	BOYS (TOTAL 2689)	GIRLS (TOTAL 1485)
Being Naughty	1358 (47%)	609 (41%)
Playing	484 (18%)	371 (25%)
Disobeying adults	995 (37%)	274(16%)
Making noise	322 (12%)	178 (12%)
Forgetting some important task	215 (8%)	59 (4%)
Weakness in studies	592 (22%)	371 (25%)
Without any reason	110(4.1%)	148 (10%)
Any other reason	92 (3.4%)	72 (5%)

SEVERITY OF PUNISHMENT.

Children were asked about the severity of punishment (according to their own perception), they receive more often.

The responses are given in **Table-5**.

TABLE-5
SEVERITY OF PUNISHMENT

SEVERITY OF PUNISHMENT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES (TOTAL = 4174)	%AGE
Very severe	710	17
Severe	2170	52
Mild	1294	31

THE MOST DISLIKED TYPE OF PUNISHMENT AND WHY?

The respondents were asked about the type of punishment, they disliked most and why? Responses are given in **Table-6** and **Box-1**.

TABLE-6
TYPES OF PUNISHMENT DISLIKED MOST

THE MOST DISLIKED TYPE OF PUNISHMENT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES (4174)	%AGE
Slapping on face	868	20.8
Slapping on back	38	0.9
Kicking	501	12
Hitting with a stick	668	16
Hitting with some other object	46	1.1
Pulling hair	220	5.3
Any other	84	2
All types	1749	41.9

Box-1

“WE HATE IT “

Children are speaking Are you listening

- I hate being beaten by stick; “it hurts for days”
- “When my mother pulls my hair. I feel a shooting pain in my eyes. I hate it”
- “I hate being kicked I don’t mind pain but feel humiliated”.
- “When my father slaps me on face, it turns red. I feel as if my face is burning. My friends instantly know that I have been punished at home.
- “ My father usually slaps my back with full force. I feel intense suffocation in my chest”.
- “When ever I get punishment at home, I get nausea and vomiting. I loose my appetite for days”.
- “I hate my father; he beats me for no reason”.

Repeating the “Cause” for punishment.

Children were asked whether they still do or don't do things for which they have been punished earlier. The responses are given in **Table-7**.

TABLE-7

RESPONSE	NUMBER	%AGE
Still do	1553	37.2
Don't do	1135	27.2
Try not to do	1486	35.6
Total	4176	100

Children need discipline and particularly need to learn self discipline. Physical punishment is a very in-effective form of discipline. Research has consistently shown that it rarely motivates children to act differently, because it does not bring an understanding of what they ought to be doing, nor does it offer any type of reward for being good. The fact that parents and other caregivers often have to repeat physical punishment for the same misbehaviour by the same child testifies to its ineffectiveness.

Incidents of Very Severe Physical Punishment.

The respondents were asked “Do you remember any incident when you were given severe physical punishment at home”. 626 children (15%) responded in yes. These children were asked, if they would like to narrate the incident. Some examples are given in **Box-2**.

Box-2

☞ “On that wretched day, I had gone to my neighbour’s house to watch TV. When I came back, my father tied me with a rope. He beat me very severely with kicks and sticks. I fell unconscious. I was taken to hospital. I remained in Hospital for three days”.

(Akbar 11, Distt. Peshawar)

☞ “Soon after the death of my father, my elder brother asked me to transfer my share of the inherited property in his name. On my refusal, he beat me very severely all over the body, with his gun. I got lacerated injuries on face and my nose bled heavily. Finally, I was forced to sign some papers. That horrible incident still haunts me in my dreams”.

Dilnaz 15, Swabi.

☞ “I got a broken arm, when my brother beat me last year. It still aches, when I move it in a certain position”.

Mohsin Khan 13, Kot Najibullah, Haripur.

☞ “Once I quarrelled with my younger brother. My mother held me from hair and dragged me all over the house. I cried and cried, but my mother didn’t spare me. Finally, I was rescued by our neighbours”.

Wagma-11, Khyber Agency.

☞ “Once my father slapped my face with full force. I felt some strange noises in my ears. Every things in the room was moving in a circle. Bleeding started from my nose and I fell on the ground . My grandmother came to me. She cried and started cursing my father”.

Fida Muhammad 9, Shangla.

☞ “My father hanged me upside-down for playing *Cricket*. He beat me with a stick and warned me not to go near cricket in future. I still play and watch Cricket!”

Ishtiaq 10, Tank.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Physical punishment is the commonest form of child abuse at home and a highly prevalent practice in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan.
2. Slapping on face or back, hitting with a stick, kicking and pulling hair are the common forms of physical abuse, in the order of prevalence.
3. Children are most commonly beaten by fathers, elder brother and mothers and some times by uncles, grand parents or other members of the extended family.
4. The most common reason for physical abuse of children at home are naughty behaviour, disobedience to elders and weakness in studies.
5. Children dislike all farms of physical punishment but slapping on face, hitting with a stick and kicking are the most disliked types.
6. Many a times children are beaten very severely which may not only cause serious physical injuries but also leave a permanent and bitter scar on the mind.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need to challenge the social and legal acceptance of physical punishment of children and make it a “**public issue**” in order to change societal attitudes towards children.
2. Parents and other care givers should be educated and convinced of the physical and psychological consequences of physical punishment and humiliation of children.
3. Parents should be encouraged to adopt ways of child-rearing which promote dignity, respect and positive discipline **(Box-3)**.
4. The Government and Non Governmental Organisations should develop and provide appropriate services and information for children on their right to protection from Inter-personal violence, and on non violent ways of resolving the conflicts. UNICEF and NCCR should take a lead role in this important initiative.

BOX-3

Positive discipline means disciplining children without hurting or humiliating. People learn much more through co-operation and rewards than through coercion and punishment. Punishments don't motivate people to try harder or do more; they make people upset, angry and obstinate instead. The rewards don't have to be things like toys or sweets..... what children really want is a parental attention. They want parents to notice them, talk to them, share their time with them, acknowledge and affirm the positive in them.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE MEANS TRYING NOT TO BE NEGATIVE

- ☞ **"Do" work better than "don't": rewards work better than punishment.**
- ☞ **Show and tell what they should do..... not just what they shouldn't.**
- ☞ **Try to say "yes" and "well done" more often than "no" and "stop that".**
- ☞ **Be as ready to praise behaviour you like as to scold for behaviour you don't.**
- ☞ **Rely on rewards like hugs and pat on the back rather than punishment.**
- ☞ **Ignore minor mistakes and silliness. The more you nag, the less they will listen.**
- ☞ **When they do something wrong, explain what it is and how to put things right.**
- ☞ **Even when you dislike your child's behaviour, never suggest that you dislike your child.**

ANNEXURE-II
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.

PART-I

Date of Interview _____

Name of Interviewer _____

Name of CBO _____ Child's Name _____

Father Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____

PART-II.

1. **What kind of physical punishment do you or your siblings get at home.**

Slapping on face

Slapping on back

Kicking

Hitting with a stick

Hitting with some other Object.

Shaking

Pulling hair

2. **Who beats you more often,**

Father

Mother

Elder Brother

Elder Sister

Grand Father

Grand Mother

Uncle

Aunt

Some body else, explain.

3. **What are the frequent reasons for punishment ?**

Naughty behaviour

Play

Disobedience

Making noise.

Forgetting some Important task.

Weakness in studies.

No reason

Any other, explain. _____

4. **Usually, how severe punishment you get ?**

Very Severe

Severe

Mild

5. **What type of punishment you dislike most any why ?**

6. **Do you still do or not do the act/thing for which you were punished.**

Yes

No

Try not to do

7. **Do you remember any incident, when you were most severely beaten at home?**

Yes

No

8. **If yes, would you like to give details.**