

ARTICLE

## Risk Factors Associated with Corporal Punishment of Children in India: A Qualitative Study

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### ABSTRACT

Corporal punishment (CP) is an age old practice in India with certain variations across geographical locations. The prevailing cultural notion about CP is that it is useful in disciplining children. However, the rate of incidence of CP varies with geographical locations and types of schools, as reported by several previous studies. Nevertheless, very few studies focus on risk factors of CP in India. Therefore, the present study attempts to understand the risk factors associated with CP, as perceived by the parents and, whether they applied CP to their child and also experienced CP as a child. Qualitative data collection method, which is in-depth interviews, was conducted with 43 parents outside school premises when parents were returning from the school after attending the parent-teacher meeting. Participation in the study was voluntary. The findings disclosed that a number of risk factors were responsible for the CP of children. Risk factors include poverty and illiteracy, child characteristics, family size, family violence, parent's dependence on alcohol or drugs, parent's personality, parent's lack of knowledge about negative impact of CP and legislative measures, and stress in daily life. On the other hand, contributory factors were poor social network, lack of support facilities, cultural beliefs and practices and situational factors. About one-third of the parents (15/43) frankly admitted to applying CP in the last year. The findings of the present study highlight the need for the sensitization of parents about negative consequences of CP through school-based family counselling approach.

### KEYWORDS

Corporal Punishment; Children; Parents; Risk Factor; Perception; India

### Introduction

Every child is innocent, creative and possesses potential. We need to understand their psychology and guide them in the right direction. During their growth and development phase, children need basic care and support facilities like proper nutrition, medical care, education, safety, love as well as affection (Deb, 2009). Simultaneously, they need to be disciplined by

the parents and guardians in a way that will not be physically and psychologically harmful (Deb, Bhadra, Sunny & Sahay, 2020). At the same time, disciplining should familiarise them with the do's and don'ts, value of routine life, and good manners thereby developing a better understanding about social expectations in them. They should understand the importance of different values in life and adhere to culturally accepted social norms and behaviours (Deb, Bhadra, Sunny & Sahay, 2020). In other words, this process of disciplining children is called socialisation. It teaches children how to talk and behave with others in different social situations. Social adjustment and interaction with other children in a socially desirable manner is very essential to become well accepted in a group. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach basic manners to their children and listen to their voices from time to time to give them a feel that their views are very important and that the parents value the views and opinions of their child for their overall welfare and well-being. Unfortunately a large number of the parents do not recognise the rights of the child and that is why they hardly consult children before taking any decision about their life and welfare. Spending quality time with children makes them comfortable in sharing their personal views with their parents (Deb, Bhadra, Sunny & Sahay, 2020). Disciplining children during the initial development phase is very important so that they follow certain routines in daily life and perform their academic and other activities in culturally appropriate manners. In some societies like India, while disciplining their children, parents resort to applying physical force, causing physical injury as well as mental pain. Some parents also psychologically abuse their children using offensive words to have control over them (Deb et al., 2017; Deb & Modak, 2010).

### **Incidence of CP**

WHO (2002) defined physical abuse/CP towards children and adolescents as “an act by a caregiver that causes physical harm or has the potential of harm.” In some cases, it is intentional and/or deliberate while in certain cases, it is found to be unintentional. However, in case of intentional physical abuse, it is mostly done to assert control over children. As stated earlier, the incidence of CP in children varies from community to community across the world. An international population-based study among parents covering Chile, Egypt, India, and Philippines, reported that mothers in India were more abusive and struck children with objects (36%), kicked (10%), and choked (2%) them (Sadowski et al., 2004).

The national level study carried out by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (MWCD Report, 2005) reported that two out of every three children faced CP. One study carried out in Tripura (India), found that about 20.9, 21.9, and 18.1% of children underwent psychological, physical, and sexual violence, respectively (Deb & Modak, 2010). Another Indian study disclosed that about one-fourth (25.1%) of the school students were seriously hurt/injured physically in the last year (Deb et al., 2016). The same study further reported the number of siblings and fathers' level of education were risk factors for CP. The common types of CP included “punishing in a painful way (36.6%, 34/93), hitting with a cane or lashing with a belt (19.4%, 18/93), and pushing, grabbing, and kicking (14.0%, 13/93). Less than 5% of the victims reported being locked or tied to something (4.3%, 4/93), being choked

or strangled (3.2%, 3/93), and being burnt or bruised with a hot or sharp object (3.2%, 3/93). Eighteen victims (19.4%) reported other forms of physical violence, such as, throwing tea cups or hard objects towards them” (Deb et al., 2016).

### **Available Evidence Concerning Causes behind CP of Children**

Available evidence highlights that family is the place where children mostly experience CP at the hands of the biological parents as well as step-parents (Deb & Madrid, 2014; Deb, 2006). Ideally families should be a safe place and should have a peaceful environment for the healthy mental growth and development of a child. In this regard, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (CRC) rightly remarked that family is the most conducive setting for the development and well-being of children and adolescents (UN Secretary General Study, 2005). Cultural beliefs and practices are one of the most predominant factors for child abuse in India. A Kolkata-based study observed that about one-third (30%) of the male and near to one-fifth (16.7%) of female teachers still believe that CP is necessary for disciplining children in schools (Deb, 2004). Other risk factors for CP include poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism, family violence, mental health problems of the adults at home and so on (Alyahri & Goodman, 2008; Deb & Madrid, 2014; Deb & Modak, 2010; Holt et al., 2008; Hyder & Malik, 2007; Saha et al., 2014).

### **Effect of CP on Mental Health**

There are numerous studies reporting the negative impact of CP on the mental health of children. More precisely, previous studies demonstrated that the children who experience CP, manifested severe adjustment difficulties, greater aggressiveness, lower social competence and cognitive abilities, and poor academic performance in schools than their non-abused peers (Deb & Mukherjee, 2011; Deb & Mathews, 2012; Deb & Walsh, 2012; Kolko, 2002; Macdonald, 2001).

### **Legislative Measures for the Prevention of CP of Children**

There are several legislative measures across countries, which ban CP of children as it has adverse effects on mental health of the children as well as it affects the children emotionally, hampers their social interactions, career and some of them suffer from lifelong trauma that is feelings of shame and guilt. The UN Convention on Right of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) is the international yardstick to protect the rights of the children. There are 54 articles protecting the interest of children. Most of the nations across the world, including India signed in the same convention ensuring its implementation in their respective countries. According to Article 19 of the UNCRC, *“States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care*

*of the child.” More specifically, article 28(2) of UNCRC states that all the nations to “take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.”*

In India, there are a number of legislative measures for child safety. The Constitution of India, 1949, Indian Penal Code (IPC, 1860), Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000 are a few of them.

For example, article 39 of the Indian Constitution asks the *“State to direct its policy towards securing (among other things), that children are not abused; not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength; and that they are given and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.”*

Similarly, there are a number of provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC, 1860) for the protection of citizens from physical harm and these include (i) Section 323: Voluntarily causing hurt; (ii) Section 325: Voluntarily causing grievous hurt; (iii) Section 326: Voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means to name a few. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 also prohibits 'physical punishment' and 'mental harassment' of children under Section 17(1) and makes it a punishable offence under Section 17(2).

Despite all the legislative measures, a large number of children experience abuse and neglect in the family and in the educational institutions. Neglect, psychological and physical abuse of children are very common in developing countries like India. Given the same background, the present study attempted to understand the risk factors for CP as perceived by the parents through in-depth interviews.

## **Research Questions**

- What are the most common risk factors of CP on children?
- Whether parents applied CP and reasons behind it?
- What is the knowledge of the parents about the impact of CP on children and legislative measures for prevention of it?

## **Methods**

This is a qualitative research in which an effort was made to understand the perception of parents about potential risk factors for applying CP on children. The sample was 43 parents who were contacted in front of Kendriya Vidyalaya (JIPMER Campus), Puducherry, India, following convenience sampling technique. Out of 43 parents, 16 were fathers while the rest were mothers. Most of them had two children (29/43) and they belonged to a middle- income

group of families. The average age of the parents was 42 and most of them were graduates, especially fathers.

In-depth interviews were conducted when they came to school to attend the parent-teachers meeting. Each interview lasted for about 15 to 30 minutes and it was conducted as per the convenience of the parents.

The issues which were explored during in-depth interviews include risk factors behind CP, whether they applied the same to their child, reasons behind the same and their knowledge about legislative measures for prevention of CP. Further their suggestions were sought to prevent practice of the same. Participation in the study was voluntary and confidentiality of the information was assured (For In-depth Interview Guidelines see Appendix I). Qualitative data collected from the study subjects were subjected to Thematic Analysis (TA).

TA is a method of analysing qualitative data which is descriptive in nature for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes that come up repeatedly (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After going through the qualitative data, common themes were identified and code number was assigned to ascertain the patterns of qualitative data and themes across the different interviews.

## Results

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from 43 parents provided several highlights which were broadly categorized into fourteen themes.

In the following section, theme-wise issues are presented one by one:

**Poverty and Illiteracy:** Parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds were found to be vulnerable to applying CP. For example, people living below the poverty line always suffer from financial crises. As a result, some of the parents working as daily wage earners and/or having poor income become dependent on alcohol or other substances causing crisis in the family and even resulting in family violence. Some male members of those families come back home after taking alcohol and abuse their wives as well as children, both verbally as well as physically, when there is a protest in the family about the alcoholic behaviour. Poor economic condition is correlated to illiteracy as a person with a low level of education remains unskilled and is paid a low salary for their work and that too, there is uncertainty about regular income. So, poor income invites a lot of hurdles in the family and family members become vulnerable to violence and physical abuse. According to some of the respondents,

*“Daily wage earner or people involved in casual work are dependent on alcohol” – a male parent*

*“Alcoholic behaviour of the male member of a family cause family violence and abuse of wives and children physically” – a female parent*

*“People with low level of education struggle throughout their life from poverty” – a male parent*

*“People living in slum areas consume alcohol regularly and beat their children” – a female parent*

**Family Size:** It is also found to be an important factor for children to experience CP. Small children living in a single family where both the parents work become vulnerable to physical abuse in the hands of caregivers as parents leave the child with the caregiver when they go to work. On the other hand, children who are living in a large family often become a victim of CP for fighting with siblings or other peer group members as they do not get personal attention from the parents. According to some of the parents,

*“Single urban family is a risk factor for child physical abuse” – a male parent*

*“Small child left with caregivers are vulnerable to abuse and neglect” – a female parent*

*“Children of large family also experience abuse” – a male parent*

**Cultural Factor:** In some communities, applying CP is a common practice and it is considered to be the best method to have control over a child. So, children born and brought up in those families are vulnerable to CP. Parents also believe that CP is the best option to discipline children for their betterment as well as to get better academic performance.

*“Most of the parents in our locality apply CP for disciplining children” – a female parent*

*“Applying CP is not uncommon in our family” – a male parent*

**Child Characteristics:** So far as child characteristics are concerned, children who are not very prompt in fulfilling social expectations in different aspects of social life become vulnerable to humiliation, abuse and neglect. Every parent expects their child to be very prompt in responding to social demands as well as in taking responsibility for the family. If parents' expectations are not fulfilled, those children become vulnerable to abuse and neglect. For example, in a country like India, there is an expectation of a male child by every parent for taking their family heritage forward. If parents get a female child, the child invariably experiences neglect and abuse. Secondly, cognitive functioning of a child is a risk factor for CP. A large number of children with a low level of intellectual capacity experience CP

*“One of our neighbours got three female children and the last one frequently experienced physical abuse as she is not smart like the other two children” – a male parent*

*“A child with poor academic performance becomes victim of CP in our society” – a female parent*

**Academic Pressure and CP:** Academic expectation of parents from their children is very high because of the hard reality of our society. For parents of a middle class family the only means of leading a better life is their children's good educational performance, which will in turn help them to get employed. If academic performance is not exceptionally good, a child will struggle to get admission in another good institution for higher studies. Because of the social system of

education in India the tuition fee varies from school to school. There are a few good public academic institutions where tuition fee is minimal and affordable for parents of middle class and lower middle class families. Therefore, parents want their child to get through competition and get an opportunity to study in the same institute. On the other hand, fee of private educational institutions are very high, which parents of the middle class families cannot afford, causing too much pressure on parents and in turn, parents give pressure to their children for better academic performance. If children do not perform well in every stage of education, they experience threat, psychological and physical abuse. So, the lack of adequate number of good educational institutions, and over competition for jobs were the prime factors responsible for CP on children.

*“Parents’ expectation in terms of academic performance is more from their child” – a male parent*

*“Mothers mostly apply CP since they spend more time with the child at home” – a female parent*

*“There is a strong belief that mental pressure on children will improve their academic performance” – a male parent*

**Parents Personality:** It is also found to be a causal factor in a number of cases behind CP of children. The parents, who are short-tempered, moody, and less concerned about child welfare, resort to physical assault of the children especially when they come to know after attending the parent teacher meeting in the school that the academic performance of the child was not good or teachers complained about the child.

*“Some parents are totally indifferent about child welfare” – a male parent*

*“Some parents are short-tempered and abuse their child frequently for a minor issue or mistake committed by a child” – a female parent*

*“When parents get any complaint from the class teacher, they beat their child” – a male parent*

*“Parents from middle and low income group of families indulge more in CP than other parents” – a female parent*

**Situational Factors/Stress in Daily Life:** There are several situational factors like loss of income, sudden death of the main earner of a family as well as stress in daily life, causing CP to children. The parents who work in stressful situations and who travel a long distance for attending the office and who do not have much social support, they sometimes lose their patience and abuse their children for committing minor mistakes. According to some of the parents,

*“Some parents work very hard for their survival” - a male parent*

*“Parents who lose their job suffer from mental depression and some of them become dependent on alcohol. Alcoholic behaviour leads to CP of children” – a male parent*

*“Some parents travel for two hours for attending the office and two hours for returning home. Those parents lose their patience when they see that their child do not study sincerely” – a female parent*

**Lack of Knowledge among Parents about the Negative Impact of CP:** It is another factor that emerged from the interviews with the parents. Due to lack of knowledge, parents resort to corporal punishment. This issue requires the sensitization of parents.

*“Hardly any parent is aware of the psychological impact of CP” – a male parent*

*“For some parents, mental health of a child is not an important issue” – a female parent*

*“I did not know that CP has a negative impact on the mental health of children” – a female parent*

**Parents Knowledge about Common Childhood Disorders:** A large number of children across the world suffer from common childhood disorders like learning disability, autism, mental retardation, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Therefore, some children are not able to respond to social stimulus in a socially desirable manner, which is often misunderstood by the parents. Children with common childhood disorders experience humiliation as well as corporal punishment and they become double victims of the situation. Certain deficiencies are inborn and at the same time, certain deficiencies invite physical punishment for them. Common childhood disorder affects a large number of children worldwide and this problem requires proper scientific diagnosis and medication, not corporal punishment and/or psychological maltreatment of children.

*“I did not know anything about common childhood disorders” – a male parent*

*“I heard about autism, but not about other childhood disorders” – a female parent*

*“I heard from the news that some children suffer from mental retardation” – a male parent*

**Poor Social Network:** In some communities, lack of social support is the reality and this is a challenge. Lack of social support as well as poor social network are the risk factors responsible for children becoming vulnerable to corporal punishment as nobody is there to protect them from abuse and neglect.

*“Parents from families with poor social network abuse their child” – a female parent*

*“Since there is nobody to intervene, children remain vulnerable to physical abuse” – a male parent*

**Intergenerational Transmission of Physical Abuse and Parents Mental Health Problems:** Interestingly, in-depth interviews with the parents also disclosed that the parents who were physically abused during childhood become more abusive unconsciously to discipline their children. In other words, the parents who abuse children were abused during their childhood and this is called intergenerational transmission of abuse and neglect.



Parents who got married with mental health problems and after marriage got one or two children often neglect and abuse their children. For example,

*“I was abused physically several times during my childhood” – a male parent*

*“I have also applied CP when my child was not listening to me” – a female parent*

*“I abused my child physically. But afterwards I realised I should not do the same” – a male parent*

*“I know one family where a mother is having some mental health problem. Sometimes, mother abuse the child physically” – a female parent*

**Parents’ Behaviour:** Out of the 43 participating parents in the present study, one-third of them openly admitted applying CP in the last one year due to a multiple reasons. The reasons include not listening to parent’s instructions, not studying sincerely, sleeping for a longer time, restless behaviour and so on. For example,

*“I applied CP as my child did not listen to me” – a male parent*

*“My son sleeps for a longer time” – a female parent*

*“My son is always restless and spends more time with friends” – a male parent*

**Parents’ Knowledge about Legislative Measures:** Knowledge determines the behaviour of an individual. That is why this study attempted to understand whether parents are aware of the legislative measures that prevent CP. A few of them (7/43) stated that they were aware of UNCRC (1989) while less than 25 per cent (10/43) mentioned that they have heard of the provisions in the Indian Constitution about safety measures of children although none of them could exactly specify the name of the provision. At the same time, only 6 out 43 parents stated that they supported the Right to Education Act (2012) and the provision for banning CP. According to some of them,

*“I am not aware of UNCRC (1989)” – a female parent*

*“I have no idea that there is a law which prohibit CP” – a male parent*

*“I heard that some of the articles of Indian Constitution were about child safety” – a male parent*

*“I have heard of Right to Education Act (2012) and I think the provision to ban CP is a good initiative” – a male parent*

**Prevention of CP:** The study also explored the opinion of the parents about prevention of CP. Most of them stated that awareness is required among all parents. Further, some of them remarked that schools should organise special sessions for parents as well as for teachers for

creating awareness about the issue. In addition, some of them suggested a number of other measures as mentioned below:

*“School authorities need to organise sensitization program for parents” – a male parent*

*“Every parent should be invited in this sort of awareness program” – a female parent*

*“We never thought about the negative impact of CP on the mental health of children” – a male parent*

*“TV channels should also take the initiative to telecast programs on CP as part of their social responsibility” – a female parent*

*“Academics and scholars from Colleges and Universities should guide the school authorities in conducting awareness programs on CP” – a male parent*

*“Children should also be sensitized about their safety and rights” A female parent*

## **Discussion**

Number volumes of research have been carried out on the incidence of CP in the hands of parents and teachers. Evidence clearly demonstrates that there is a positive link (association between CP and mental health of children (Deb, Kumar, Holden, & Simpson, 2017). That is, the children who experience CP suffer from depression, anxiety as well as other psychological problems (Deb & Modak, 2010; Deb et al., 2016). Evidence also highlights that CP affects academic performance and personality of the children (Naz, Khan, Daraz, Hussain, & Khan, 2011). However, limited study focused on the risk factors of CP perpetrated by the parents in India. The present study explored the issue to fill up the knowledge gaps. The study revealed that a number of risk factors are found to be responsible for applying CP on children as disclosed by the parents.

The risk factors behind CP by the parents vary from country to country. In developing countries like India, poverty and illiteracy were found to be closely associated with CP as revealed by the present study and also corroborated by a number of previous studies (Alyahri & Goodman, 2008; Hyder & Malik, 2007; Saha, Giressan, Deb, 2014; World Bank report 2003). Parents with poor levels of educational background, who work very hard for survival, wish that their children should not be involved in any socially undesirable activities. After returning from the workplace, when they see that the children are involved in socially undesirable activities under peer group influence and do not study sincerely, it irritates them and creates an enabling environment for applying CP. Parents expect that their children should remain at home when they go out for work and they should not receive any complaints from neighbours and other community members. This issue requires further probing with parents of both rural and urban communities to ascertain whether a rural and urban community has any special impact on applying CP.

Family size, family environment, violence in the family and poor family income and/or unemployment are associated with CP of the children, as disclosed by the present study and corroborated by the evidence of a number of previous studies (Button, 2008; Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008). Further, cultural factor is found to be one of the predominant risk factors of CP. Every culture has its own cultural beliefs and practices for disciplining children (Taylor, Hamvas, Rice, Newman, & DeJong, 2011). There is a cultural belief in the Indian society, i.e., CP is helpful to discipline children and get better academic performance from them and it is culturally approved. Almost all the participants clearly hinted that cultural practice is responsible for the continuation of the traditional practice of disciplining children in India.

Study also disclosed that there is an association between parent's personality and child upbringing. Some parents are short tempered and lead a disruptive life and even some are dependent on substances (Deb, McGirr, Bhattacharya, & Sun, 2015; Kunitz, Levy, McCloskey, & Gabriel, 1998). One previous study disclosed that "parents unhappiness, emotional distress, anxiety, loneliness and isolation, depression, somatic complaints, interpersonal problems, feelings of incompetence as a parent, a tendency toward becoming upset and angry, and stress in daily life events are associated with CP" (Black, Heyman, & Slep, 2001). Parents with such challenges hardly pay proper attention to studies of the children but develop an unrealistic expectation from the child in terms of academic performance. When their unrealistic expectations are not fulfilled, they lose patience and scold their child in a manner which affects the child psychologically. Some parents even apply physical force for minor mistakes and/or for poor academic performance. Parallel to the findings of Clement and Chamberland (2009), contribution of parental stress, mother's personal characteristics in favour of CP was also found in the present study. Likewise, CP produces several intended and unintended effect depending upon the child's behavioural characteristics (Gershoff, 2010); therefore, child characteristics is a significant determining factor of the impact of CP.

Over expectation of parents from the children in regard to academic performance caused by high academic competition creates stressful situations in the family which sometimes results in physical punishment of the children. Every parent wants the child to be studious and perform well without realising the individual differences i.e. every child is not equally potent and/or equally good in every subject. Nevertheless, when they see that the performance of their child is not good, when compared to their neighbour's child, parents put mental pressure and some of them give certain conditions for better performance, bringing stress to some children. In some cases, parents beat their child either by using hands or sticks. There are a number of examples which clearly highlight the positive association between parental expectations from the children resulting in CP and its impact on children's mental health (Deb, Strodl, & Sun, 2015; Deb & Strodl, 2014). If children get proper guidance from parents and if parents follow up their studies from time to time, throughout the year, and if their queries are clarified either by the parents or by a teacher, invariably a child will perform better. Therefore, it is the job of every parent to provide quality care to their children for better academic performance, encourage and appreciate their small achievements and good activities and in turn, it is expected that a child will show better academic performance and will behave in a socially desirable manner.

There are situational factors, as emerged from the present study which cause stressful situations resulting in applying CP by the parents. For example, parents, especially the mothers, who work both inside and outside the house, are more likely to remain psychologically stressed. Therefore, those parents, when they see the children fighting among themselves after returning from work and/or witness a strong argument going on among them in connection with certain issues, sometime they lose patience and resort to CP out of anger.

Parent's lifestyle is also found to be highly associated with children's outlook, behaviour as well as motivation in studies. Parents should be the role model for a child so that their children follow them and become responsible citizens. In daily life, there are many instances where parents do wrong things in life and expect their child to not follow their lifestyles. For example, parents who take alcohol expect that their child should not take alcohol. Alcohol intake is a culture specific behaviour. In some cultures this behaviour is not encouraged. In India, if a child is found to be taking alcohol, it calls for physical punishment. Therefore, parents should be careful about their lifestyles and behaviour for the welfare of their child.

There are families who are not having good social networks and live in underdeveloped areas. Children of those families remain more vulnerable to CP since nobody is there to intervene if there is an incidence of CP either within the family or outside the family. Rather, it has been observed that some of the parents of those communities ask the school teachers to apply CP so that their children study sincerely and it becomes easier for them to discipline their child.

Interestingly, most of the respondents frankly admitted that parents who are manhandled during childhood and/or experienced physical force are more likely to apply the same to their children. Some of the respondents also admitted that they were abused during childhood and also applied corporal punishment on their children with the same notion that it will be beneficial for quality upbringing and a better future of their child. In other words, it is called intergenerational transmission of child physical abuse and neglect. Like the intergenerational transaction of domestic violence in India (Koenig, Stephenson, Ahmed, Jejeebhoy & Campbell, 2011), this study opens the possibility of a similar tendency in the case of CP as well, which has to be investigated systematically to understand its nature and function.

When any parent comes across a child with common childhood disorders, they fail to understand the causes behind the same problem and become upset. As a result, some of the parents of children with common childhood disorders remain upset and whenever they notice that their child is unable to perform like other children, they lose their patience and apply CP out of frustration. A number of studies corroborate with the findings of the present study in this regard (Alizadeh, Applequist, & Coolidge, 2007).

Similarly, lack of knowledge among parents about negative consequences of CP as well as parents' poor knowledge about legislative measures preventing CP are found to be contributory factors behind CP of children (Deb & Madrid, 2014; Deb & Mathews, 2012). The present study provided clear evidence of the lack of knowledge among parents about various National and International legislative measures which prohibit CP. This issue requires sensitization among

parents through school-based family counselling programs. The hard reality is that there is no concept of school-based family counselling in India. However, it has been observed that school-based family counselling is working extremely well in the developed countries and benefits a large number of parents in understanding children's issues from the right perspective and in turn, parents alter their behaviour in this regard. In India, we have the New Education Policy 2020 which has emphasized on mental health intervention in schools. This issue requires proper planning to design and implement an effective school-based mental health intervention program to address children issues for creating a better child friendly society.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings highlighted several risk factors behind CP in addition to potential contributory factors. This issue requires the attention of the school administrators for creating awareness among parents as well as among school teachers through a school-based intervention program. The school is a platform where parents are invited to handover the progress report of the students and this platform could be utilised in inviting good resource persons for discussion with the parents and teachers about the same issues.

In some countries, if children report CP by parents to school authorities, parents are invited in the school and asked to apologize in front of all other students and school teachers for their misconduct. The same concept may not be applied in every community but there is a need to sensitize parents about adverse impacts of CP through school-based individual and group counselling. In order to promote the concept of School-based Family Counseling in India, there is a need to sensitize the school authorities explaining the necessity for this service for the benefit of the children. Second, professional institutes should organise short-term courses on the subject. Third, school authorities should designate two to three teachers with psychology background for attending short-terms orientation courses on the subject so that they are able to identify the children who require support services and can comfortably extend counselling services to the parents since in India getting professionally trained people to act as a counselor is a big challenge.. There is a need to conduct another study covering large samples to confirm the findings of the present study.

Media should take the lead role to sensitize the larger society through various programs in an interesting manner by using the latest data about the incidence of CP and its adverse impact on mental health and personality of the children. Media should refer to the national and international legislative measures and policies concerning the banning of CP. There is a need to sensitize the children about their rights and the necessity to report the incidence of CP to the appropriate authority.

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### Appendix I: In-depth Interview Guide

The broad objective of the study is to understand the causal and contributory factors behind corporal punishment (CP). Participation in the study is voluntary. We are interested to know your personal views only. We will ask you a few questions and you need to share your views freely and frankly. You can skip any question or withdraw from the study if you are not comfortable to answer any of the questions.



#### PROBE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES

1. Background of the parents/respondents (name, age, education, gender, occupation, caste and community, monthly income)
2. Family gender preference, family social network, and adversities experienced by family
3. Parent's dependence on alcohol and parent's personality as perceived.
4. Knowledge and perception about child rights
5. Academic support, parents expectation and performance of children
6. Perception about child upbringing and/or disciplining children
7. Whether parent's applied CP, and if so, under what circumstances
8. Parents experience of CP during childhood
9. Knowledge of parent's about negative impact of CP
10. Knowledge of parent's about common childhood disorders
11. Knowledge of parent's about legislative measures for prevention of CP
12. Other potential risk factors behind CP
13. Suggestions for prevention of CP.

Thanks for kind cooperation