



## Perspectives of Parents towards the Use of Corporal Punishment for Children

**Dhruba Prasad Niure**

dhrubapn@gmail.com

Reader

Central Department of Education, TU, Kirtipur

**Madhabi Sapkota**

PhD Scholar

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### Abstract

*This article intends to identify the perspectives of parents towards the use of corporal punishment for shaping their children's behaviors. To achieve the objective, this research was guided by interpretive paradigm followed by basic qualitative research design. Only 10 parents were chosen by using purposive sampling method to conduct open-ended interview. Document analysis was also used to gather supplementary information required for the study. The study results reveal that though the corporal punishment is legally banned and has negative consequences on children, parents are continuously using it as a disciplinary method to shape their children's behaviors. Nevertheless, there is an increasing recognition of the limitations of punishment and the long-lasting implications of alternative approaches to making sustainable changes in children's behaviors. Almost all parents believe that punishment should be used to a minimal extent by giving more priority to alternative approaches to modify children's behaviors.*

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### Introduction

Corporal punishment refers to the use of physical force to cause pain to a child without injury (UNICEF, 2014; United Nations, 2007; World Health Organization, 2021). Various definitions of corporal punishment indicate the use of physical force to induce pain to control specific behavior. It encompasses behaviors such as spanking, slapping, choking, pinching, etc. with an intention

of improving, modifying, or controlling behaviors of children (Straus & Michael, 2005). Punitive actions cause physical harm and emotional distress by violating the child's rights to dignity and safety (Han, 2017; United Nations, 2007). Despite of increasing recognition of its potential harm to children, it has been widely adopted as a natural way of parenting (Lenihan, 2019) including in Nepal. It therefore exists as a prevalent issue globally including both in homes and schools.

Considering the detrimental consequences of corporal punishment, different laws and policies have been introduced at national and international levels. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children [UN-CRC] (1989) is accepted as a milestone in international law for protecting fundamental rights to ensure the dignity and physical and psychological integrity of all children (Rubin & Chung, 2006) including girls, marginalized children, and children with disabilities. Since Nepal is a signatory country of the Convention, she emerged as the first country in South Asia and the 54th country in the world to outlaw corporal punishment on children (Nepal Law Commission, 2018). UN-CRC forbids any form of punishment or disrespectful behavior towards children either in school or at home. Considering the provisions made under the Convention, Nepal legally fines up to NRs. 50,000 (approximately \$370) and imprisonment for up to one year who commits such a crime. The Act relating to Children-2018 also protects the rights of children against corporal punishment to be safeguarded from all forms of violence, neglect, and abuse either in school or at home (Save the Children, 2023; UNICEF, 2022). Likewise, the Constitution of Nepal-2015 also prohibits any form of torture, physical or psychological harm at homes, schools, or any other settings (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). Nevertheless, corporal punishment is usually employed as a means of discipline, especially within familial and educational contexts in Nepal.

In Nepal, the use of physical punishment in schools and at home is directly associated with long rooted traditions and cultural beliefs. Teachers feeling pressured by parents and administrations to maintain discipline through physical means also compel them to use corporal punishment (Khanal & Park, 2016). Corporal punishment is highly

prevalent and accepted in Nepal despite being a form of child abuse by law (Nepal Law Commission, 2018). Physical punishment at the primary level while psychological punishment at the secondary level and is most common in Nepal (Khanal & Park, 2016) due to limited awareness about alternative disciplinary methods and the negative impacts of punishment (World Health Organization, 2021). In this regard, recognizing the diverse forms of corporal punishment employed either by teachers or parents is crucial for effective intervention and prevention efforts (Gershoff et al., 2015). While legal prohibitions are crucial steps, transforming societal attitudes towards corporal punishment through proactive approaches is equally essential for meaningful change (Lenihan, 2019). Initiatives for engaging parents and communities in understanding the detrimental effects of corporal punishment and promoting positive disciplinary practices are crucial for sustainable change (Han, 2017). Such an initiative can be handy to minimize the use of punishment in our community. Fostering a supportive and conducive environment free from violence in school and at home (United Nations, 2007) therefore is very important to mitigate the problems associated with corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment used in schools often exceeds the severity of punishments administered by parents. Boys, children with disabilities, and marginalized children are more likely to be subjected to corporal punishment compared to girls, those without disabilities, and from higher socio-economic background (Gershoff et al., 2015; Lehinan, 2019; World Health Organization, 2021). The prevalence of corporal punishment within educational institutions is alarming and victimization rate is getting worse day by day (Han, 2017; Straus & Michael, 2005). Though physical punishment has severe risks

and negative consequences on children's lives, a significant number of teachers in school and parents at home use it as a means of improving their children's behaviors (Han, 2017). Research (World Health Organization, 2021 for example) depicts that around 60% of children aged 2-14 years regularly suffer from the punishment by their parents or caregivers. Another thing to remember is that the prevalence of corporal punishment is notable in rural schools than in schools located in urban areas (Center for Effective Discipline 2007; as cited in Han, 2017). Consequently, these days, societal acceptance of violence against children has been institutionalized through the use of punishment (UNICEF, 2014; Lenihan, 2019) in schools and at homes in many countries including Nepal.

Corporal punishment has been increasingly recognized as having more harmful effects than advantages on children. It induces fear among students, contributing to emotional distress and acceptance of violence as routine in school life (Human Rights Watch, 2009). As a result, various governments have introduced and enacted different laws, acts, and policies to prohibit its use (Han, 2017, World Health Organization, 2021). Although a significant portion of people argues that physical punishment can be conducive to maintaining discipline and improving problematic behaviors of children, many contend that it fosters repeated misbehaviors, anxiety, low confidence, poor self-esteem, emotional issues, and poor academic performance (Han, 2017; Lenihan, 2019) within them. Furthermore, research indicates that corporal punishment is associated with lower levels of mutual respect between students and teachers, decreased academic engagement, a more hostile school environment (Han, 2017), poor mental health, and increased approval and use of violence and criminal behavior in adulthood (Global

Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2016; Lenihan, 2019; Save the Children, 2023). Overall, the negative impact of corporal punishment on victims underscores the urgency for its abolition in schools and at home by substituting it through the implementation of alternative disciplinary measures by responsible people, parents for example.

However, several parents have been using corporal punishment as a technique to correct their children's anti-social behaviors. Some of them also recommend teachers to use punishment as a way of shaping desirable behaviors in their children. Parental attitudes and beliefs regarding corporal punishment are influenced by a myriad of factors such as cultural norms, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, and personal upbringing (Han, 2017; UNICEF, 2022). Understanding these perspectives is crucial to taking the initiative at the policy and practice level for promoting positive parenting practices and safeguarding children's well-being as enshrined by different laws in Nepal. In this regard, this article intends to explore the perspectives of parents towards the use of corporal punishment for shaping children's behaviors.

### **Methodology**

This study was guided by an interpretive paradigm followed by a basic qualitative research design since it has not been guided by specific qualitative research design. Interpretive paradigm places more value on understanding subjective meanings and interpretations of social behaviors on the topic being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All parents of students studying in Aakash Ganga Secondary School (pseudonym), a public school where researchers could approach easily to respondents to collect authentic

and credible information required for the study. were taken as the population of this study. Among them, 10 parents were chosen as actual informants of the study by using purposive sampling method. By gender, six were females and four were males. Open-ended interviews were conducted to gather qualitative information from the informants. Furthermore, document analysis was also used as a supplementary technique to collect additional information. Different policies, laws, empirical research, and peer reviewed articles related to corporal punishment were consulted to get deeper understanding the phenomenon being researched. All information collected from multiple sources were edited, categorized, and thematized by considering research objective.

Considering the epistemological assumption of the study, approximately 40 minutes time was spent on each informant during interview process to obtain the in-depth information required for the study. This study attached value to subjective and multiple realities as seen by participants in the research process. The ontology of this study refers to those things which are rooted in the beliefs, culture, experience, and understanding of parents towards the punishment. By considering the axiological orientation of this study, those things were valued, which were valued by the informants involved in this research. We tried our best to maintain the ethics and values of research. It means; that information was collected by considering ethical guidelines of qualitative research such as informed consent, volunteer participation of informants, protecting them from any type of harm (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and so on. Pseudonyms (Parent-A, Parent-B, Parent-C ... Parent-J) of the participants were also used to make this study confidential.

## Results

Home is where children spend most of their time with their parents, guardians, or caregivers. By law, they have right to have a safe learning environment at home for their smooth growth and development. Parents should be positive toward children and constructive-behavior-shaping strategies should be applied to build children's behaviors desirably. In this regard, the following findings disclose the perspectives of parents towards the use of corporal punishment for children in the Nepali context.

### Behavior shaping method

Study results indicate that corporal punishment was accepted as a behavior-shaping method either in school or at home. Parents and teachers use both corporal and non-corporal punishments to foster positive behavior within children. Though punishment has negative consequences on children, it has been used by parents and teachers for a long time to develop intended habits within school-aged children in many countries including Nepal. In this regard, a parent involved in the study opined, that *we can shape desirable behaviors within our children through punishment. However, it is not always necessary to use the punishment... taking away from screen time can also improve our kid's behaviors...I have repeatedly found its positive consequences* [Parent-J]. Moreover, some informants indicated that only one way of shaping children's behaviors is punishment. They argue that '*nathoshi aago baldaina*' [Fire doesn't burn without hitting]. In this regard, a participant replied, *...boarding schools secure good results because they use punishment as main method of behavior shaping* (Parent-C). Thus, Nepali parents acknowledge the use of corporal punishment but underscore the importance of being mindful and selective when employing it. Punishment teaches several lessons to the

children especially what should not be done and guides them towards socially acceptable behaviors. Some verbatim shared by parents below also supports this fact.

We have given our children in the hand of teachers to shape their future. Sometimes our children do not complete given assignments within the stipulated timeframe...Teachers frequently invite us to visit the school for having a discussion about children's problems...We suggest teachers punish our children to correct their behaviors..., Parent-G shared.

We frequently use corporal punishment such as scolding, slapping, hitting by stick, etc. to improve our children's anti-social behaviors. But we should be conscious while using the punishment...It should be used when works. Punishment helps our children understand the impact of their actions and promotes socially accepted behaviors, Parent-D answered.

The differing viewpoints mentioned here reflect the complex landscape of parenting philosophies in Nepali society. The study results indicate that corporal punishment is a common method employed by teachers and parents in shaping their children's behaviors in school and at home. Despite having negative consequences, punishment has been traditionally used to develop desired habits in children. Although some parents believe in using corporal punishment to instill social behaviors, others state that non-corporal punishment can also be used effectively to shape children's behaviors in a desirable way. Parents believe that punishment teaches children what behaviors to avoid and guides them toward socially acceptable conduct. They have also emphasized the importance of being judicious while applying it.

### **Temporal changes in behaviors**

Study results also depict that corporal punishment only makes temporal changes within children with several dysfunctional consequences. It means; that many parents have experienced that punishment does not effectively address behavioral issues in their children. It does not address the main cause of the problem; it only represses undesirable behaviors temporally. Supporting the fact, Parent-H opined, *my experience with punishing our daughter is that it only stops the behavior for a short while...She does what she needs to avoid punishment, but it doesn't lead to any lasting change within her...* Therefore, *it is our responsibility to encourage children to the right path if they follow the wrong way...*Parent-E shared. It indicates that children may temporarily avoid punitive behaviors due to the immediate pain, but once the pain subsides, they resume their previous actions without learning better ways to handle situations. The verbatim shared by some informants below also indicates that punishment does not have a long-lasting effect on children.

I have noticed that when I punish my small children, they stop their wrong behaviors for a while, but they eventually revert and repeat them...It indicates that they just learn to avoid getting caught to escape punishment rather than truly changing their attitude, Parent-B clarified.

I have realized that when I use punishment to correct my son's behavior, it doesn't address the root of the problem. Punishment might help children avoid certain behaviors while they are experiencing pain, but once the pain is vanished, they often repeat the same mistakes. The punishment doesn't teach them better ways to handle situations, Parent-C explained.

...Excessive punishment used to improve children's behaviors makes them resentful. They might behave well for a bit, but eventually, they repeat the same mistakes. This indicates that punishment does not have positive consequences in teaching the right lessons to the children, Parent-I declared.

Thus, study findings indicate that punishment is an ineffective method for correcting children's behavior permanently. While punishment may lead to temporary behavioral modification, it fails to address the underlying issues in the long run. Excessive punishment can result in anger, poor self-esteem, negative consequences in learning, and a poor relationship with teachers and parents. Therefore, a number of parents suggests that punishment does not have positive and long-lasting consequences in teaching children the right lessons and encouraging meaningful behavioral change.

### **Disciplinary approach**

Punishment is used by many families in Nepal to make children disciplined and honest. Though some critics highlight the potential negative impacts of punishment on relationships, motivation, and emotional well-being, supporters argue that punishment have many positive consequences when it has been applied fairly and consistently. Punishment makes children disciplined by offering tangible consequences for undesirable behaviors. *Punishment is very useful tools for us to make our children disciplined. It helps our children remind the boundaries we have set*, Parent-C answered. It indicates that punishment makes children disciplined by determining boundaries of acceptable conduct. When children experience negative outcomes such as time-outs, additional work, etc. for example as a result of corporal punishment, then they always try their best to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviors.

A significant number of parents think that consistent and fair punishment helps children understand the rules and expectations within their environment for promoting self-control and responsibility. In this regard, Parent-D notified,

Punishment can be used to maintain discipline in children. When children do not complete tasks such as cleaning their room, doing homework, washing dishes...etc., we scold them in an angry tone. As a result, they complete the tasks...Later on, they start completing assigned work without any punishment. Punishment therefore makes them obedient and disciplined.

Furthermore, Parent-B added, *...discipline of our children at our home is sometimes maintained through punishment, such as reduced playtime, slapping, and reducing time for watching television, which help them understand the importance of bearing responsibility*. It indicates that parents have been using both corporal and non-corporal punishments to shape their children's behaviors desirably. *I believe in using punishment as a discipline-maintaining approach...Therefore, when rules are broken by our children, they know there will be consequences..., extra household chores for example*, Parent-E declared. Thus, the use of punishment is a common strategy among parents to maintain discipline in children. Over time, children begin to follow rules and complete assigned work without any external pressure indicates that they internalized the expectations and proceed accordingly.

### **Punishment as a cultural practice**

Study results reveal that punishment is a necessary method for instilling obedience and responsibility in school-aged children. This method has been used from generation

to generation to build socially acceptable behaviors within youngsters. People who have been bearing parental roles today were children before a few decades, their parents used to punish them to control their undesirable behaviors. Based on their upbringing, they have also been practicing punishment as a reliable method to improve their offspring. This method relies on the belief that consistent consequences for undesirable behaviors effectively shape children's habits and ensure compliance with household rules at first and social rules later. *Punishment in our family is embedded as a child-rearing cultural practice to teach children about acceptable behavior...*, Parent-G informed. Parents who support this approach argue that it helps children understand the importance of accountability and the repercussions of their actions, which ultimately guide them toward disciplined and responsible adulthood.

...we adhere to the traditional ways of parenting that our parents used for us...Punishment was repeatedly used by our seniors to correct our misconduct..., Nowadays, we are practicing the same things to ensure our children grow up with the same values we were taught, Parent-A confirmed.

Since punishment is considered as an integral part of child-rearing culture, many parents believe that appropriate punishment helps children understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. *Punishment is a culturally accepted method to help our children follow good social habits...*, Parent-C stated. This approach is related to the idea that if a child experiences negative consequences for her/his misbehavior then s/he will not demonstrate such behavior again in the future, which ultimately institutionalizes social norms and values through each individual's behavior.

In addition, punishment is often viewed as a necessary tool to strengthen the accountability of children, respect for authority, and ability to function within societal expectations.

### **Longer use lessens the impact**

The findings of the study depict that almost all parents thought that the best way to discipline children is punishment because it creates fear within them, prevents misbehavior, promotes obedience, and encourages desirable behaviors. However, the study results also indicate that if punishment is used excessively to modify children's behaviors, its effectiveness tends to decrease over time. In this regard, an informant informed, *continuous use of punishments seems to become less effective as children start to ignore them and demonstrate unintended behaviors* [Parent-F]. Initially, punishment controls undesirable behaviors and instills discipline within youngsters, but when children become accustomed to repeated punitive measures, they no longer take them seriously. *It is crucial to balance punishment with positive reinforcement and open communication to foster long-term positive behaviors. Using punishment inappropriately can have harmful impacts on children*, warned Parent-D. Moreover, the repetitive use of punishment can weaken the parent-child relationship. *It is not good to use punishment as an ultimate method to correct wrong behaviors. But we can use it without hurting the children to minimize their problematic behaviors...*, Parent-A warned. Children may also learn to avoid punishment through deceiving behaviors instead of internalizing the values and principles that parents aim to inculcate through punishment.

Thus, the results of the study disclose that if parents punish their children more, then the children take punishment less seriously. This overreliance on punitive measures makes it

increasingly difficult to correct undesirable behaviors as the children grow accustomed to the consequences and begin to disregard them. *I have frequently noticed that the more we punish our children, the less they take punishment seriously...It is difficult to correct their undesirable behaviors later...*, Parent-H informed. Furthermore, study results highlight the need to rethink ways of shaping children's behaviors. Positive reinforcement, open communication, and a supportive and conducive learning environment should be provided for forming good habits within the children. *The more we rely on punishment, the less our children seem to learn from it, therefore, we should rethink our approach to shape their behaviors...*, Parent-I suggested. Such approaches not only help children learn positive values but also strengthen their relationship with parents by building a trust and mutual respect. Parents can guide their children effectively to shape desirable behaviors for their holistic development by applying constructive methods and reducing the use of corporal punishment.

### **Partial impact**

Study results show that punishments either corporal or non-corporal have partial impact on children. *...punishment has a limited effect on youngsters...It might stop the bad behaviors in a moment, but it doesn't always prevent such behaviors from happening again...*, Parent-C answered. Furthermore, another informant added, *children should be kept far from physical and mental torture... Punishment can be useful to correct some behaviors, therefore, punishment, to some extent, can be beneficial...*Parent-A clarified. Children usually show problematic behaviors when they do not get a chance to be involved in different activities on which they are interested. It means, children show anti-social behaviors due to the lack of opportunities for being entertained. Information provided by

informants indicates that sufficient facilities are required to engage children in constructive activities. But such facilities are neither available at home nor in Nepali schools. Consequently, parents have been using punishment as a temporary solution to control unintended behaviors of their children. In this regard, an informant clarified,

Corporal punishment can have only a partial impact on the children...It addresses the issue caused by them temporarily, therefore, there is a possibility to go back to their old ways of doing in a couple of days. Punishment doesn't always address the root of the problems... [Parent-J].

Almost all parents agree that punishment can momentarily terminate undesirable behaviors but does not prevent their recurrence. *Punishment does not always offer desirable behaviors children...It should be used carefully to observe its positive impact on children...*, Parent-H recommended. Since punishment addresses immediate issues and fails to resolve the root causes, more constructive engagement opportunities for children are necessary for sustainable behavioral change. *...in developed countries, many facilities are available in the schools to fulfill the needs of every child. Therefore, they can shape children's behaviors in an intended manner without punishment,* Parent-D claimed. Furthermore, Parent-B added, *in the countries like Nepal, it doesn't work without using punishment. We can use it to improve children's behaviors but not to harm them.* This indicates that parents should use punishment as lesser as possible. Therefore, the saying 'two shots to the bench and one shot to the child' should be considered while using punishment.



**Alternative measures are more impactful**

Study findings depict that the emphasis on love and affection is crucial to build desirable behaviors within the learners. Positive reinforcement and emotional support are powerful tools for shaping behavior in a healthy and constructive manner. Parents can create a conducive and supportive environment at home to encourage their children to engage in their learning. *It would be better to establish alternative disciplinary measures to avoid their unintended behaviors*, Parent-F shared. Punishment may cause unintended negative consequences for growing children. Therefore, *corporal punishment should be banned strictly in educational institutions and emphasis should be given to the moral education of the students*, Parent-I suggested. They should identify some other viable alternative approaches instead of using punishment. By offering alternative disciplinary measures, parents can effectively encourage their offspring to take their responsibilities. *Regular interaction between parents and teachers is necessary to be clear about the problems that have been facing by children for timely solution*, Parent-B declared. Such measures promotes a culture of empathy, understanding, and mutual respect, which ultimately strengthen behaviors of children in positive way.

The regular interaction between parents and children is crucial for understanding and addressing the issues faced by children in school and at home. *...open conversations between parents and their offspring and identification of the difficulties facing by children to settle down them on time can be fruitful to develop good morals within children...*, Parent-H said. It fosters a collaborative approach to support the child's overall development. *Rewarding and praising children for their good behavior can make a bigger difference in their behaviors...*,

Parent-D notified. Therefore, as enshrined by law and constitution, corporal punishment should be strictly banned in schools and at home. Instead, emphasis should be placed on imparting moral education to students, as it plays a vital role in nurturing their character and values. Parents can create a conducive space for the growth and well-being of their children by promoting a positive and caring environment at home.

**Discussion**

Globally parents have been using punishment to shape their children's behaviors (Han, 2017). Study findings indicate that corporal punishment can effectively be used to suppress unintended behaviors of children. Despite the negative consequences of corporal punishment on children, many parents have been employing it to address the undesirable behaviors of their children. It has been practiced in both homes and schools (Rimal & Pokhrel, 2013) despite having legal bans on it (Nepal Law Commission, 2015; 2018). Study results also reveal that most of the parents prefer to use punishment to improve their children's habits and conducts. Corporal punishment encompasses a wide range of harmful practices such as additional household chores, extra homework, choking, pinching, hair-pulling, and more (Gershoff et al., 2015). Although punishment is less effective than reinforcement for shaping and maintaining behaviors (Cooper et al., 2014), parents have been using it as a disciplinary approach. Study results also reveal that corporal punishment often fails to make sustainable behavioral changes in growing youngsters. Those who experience frequent physical punishment have greater chances of demonstrating violent behaviors in school and at home.

Supporters of corporal punishment argue that it is easy to administer, controls problematic behaviors in a moment, and prevents anti-social activities due to the fear of physical pain (Han, 2017; Lenihan, 2019). The tradition and social acceptance of corporal punishment perpetuate its use, as many parents experienced its different forms in their childhood and view it as a familiar approach to correct misconduct (Gershoff et al., 2015; Grujicic et al., 2022). Cultural backgrounds significantly influence the views on the use of corporal punishment. It means; that parents affiliated with conservative cultures tend to accept it, whereas progressive cultures focus on non-violent strategies (Grogan-Kaylor, 2004; Jackson & Garcia, 2016). In this regard, study results depict that those parents who were punished highly during their childhood are more likely to use similar methods for their children's habit formation. To change this mindset, promoting non-violent disciplinary approaches and gaining faith-based support is crucial (Lenihan, 2019). Study results also reveal that the children who receive frequent punishment tend to tolerate the similar type of punishment and do not take it seriously. Such children may exhibit increased aggression (Grogan-Kaylor, 2004), long-term emotional and mental health issues (Han, 2017), more severe offensive behaviors (World Health Organization, 2021), and poor self-esteem. Parents therefore should be aware of its dysfunctional consequences.

Research (Gershoff et al., 2015 for example) indicates that boys, children with disabilities, and those from marginalized and disadvantaged communities are more subjected to corporal punishment either in school or at home. Punishment usually focuses on what not to do rather than what to do (Cooper et al., 2014). As a result, children may learn to suppress undesirable behaviors especially in either the presence of a punisher

or a specific context where the possibility of being punished is high. Study results portray that punishment only suppresses undesirable behaviors of children temporarily rather than eliminating them in the long run. Furthermore, punishment lowers mutual respect between children and parents, plays a detrimental role in socio-emotional development, reduces school engagement, increases aggression, and creates a hostile school environment (Han, 2017; World Health Organization, 2021). Those children who are subjected to frequent punishment may rely on external control instead of managing their behaviors independently.

Study results show that if a child becomes accustomed to specific punishment then the same type of punishment no longer elicits desired behaviors. It means; the effectiveness of the punishment diminishes with prolonged use. The child may require increasingly severe punishments to offer a similar type of behavior. Moreover, corporal punishment has adverse effects on relationships (Fairbanks & McGuire, 2005), academic performance, and school climate (Simons et al., 2013). Many children also have adverse perspectives on using corporal punishment as a behavior-shaping strategy (Han, 2017; Smith, 2015). Therefore, alternative behavior modification techniques should be used to shape children's habits desirably.

Study results indicate that alternative disciplinary methods to corporal punishment are necessary to promote socially acceptable habits. Research highlights dual perspectives regarding the use of corporal punishment. Some believe that mild corporal punishment can be applied as a last option, while others advocate for its complete ban (Rubin & Chung, 2006). Positive reinforcement can be used as an effective technique to encourage

sustainable behavioral change (Cooper, 2014; Crittenden, 2005). Both parents and teachers should prioritize positive behavior supports and interventions, love and affection, quality time with children, and counseling services on a required basis to develop social behaviors (Lee & Martinez, 2018; Rubin & Chung, 2006). Study findings also indicate that positive reinforcement, communication, and quality time with children is used as crucial methods to encourage children for recurrence of their behaviors that are expected.

Understanding the root causes of problematic behaviors is essential for finding appropriate approaches to behavior modification (Robinson et al., 2005). Efforts to eliminate corporal punishment require policy reforms, teacher training in alternative disciplinary methods, an increment in the awareness level of parents, and community engagement. By promoting non-violent disciplinary strategies and fostering supportive learning environments, stakeholders can work towards eliminating violence against children as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (World Health Organization, 2021). Thus, valid alternative approaches should be institutionalized effectively for the sustainable development of positive behaviors within all children.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

Punishment is taken as a highly used behavior-shaping method especially in underdeveloped and developing countries including Nepal though it has been legally banned. Over-reliance on punishment can lead to many dysfunctional consequences such as anger, poor self-esteem, and controversial relationships between parents and children. Children ignore the punitive measures and learn to avoid getting caught by their parents if they receive punishment repeatedly.

Understanding the limitations and potential harm of punishment is crucial for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to develop positive behaviors in children. Parents realize that punishment should not be applied as an ultimate method of behavior shaping with the growing awareness of its negative consequences. While punishment may lead to immediate obedience in the presence of punishers, it fails to ensure sustained positive behavior once they are absent. The use of punishment begins from a lack of awareness and limited access to more comprehensive child-rearing techniques.

Study indicates that positive reinforcement (reward, praise for example) of good behavior alongside mild form of punishment for bad behavior can create a balanced approach to shaping desirable habits within children. Promoting non-punitive discipline techniques, emphasizing love and affection, fostering communication, spending quality time with children, and collaborative attempts to address the underlying reasons for problematic behaviors could be handy to substitute punitive measures. Developing and implementing moral education as a part of regular educational programs can also be beneficial for helping children develop strong character and values. Policy reforms, increased parental awareness, teacher training, and community engagement are crucial for fostering constructive disciplinary practices and ensuring the holistic development of children as reflected in the goals of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. More importantly, the cultural beliefs and practices of larger society should be taken into account while formulating and enacting policies and programs against corporal punishment.

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