Teachers’ Role in Reducing Violence in Schools

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As children are considered the future of every country, it is the duty of every teachers of every level to teach the students certain manners as they grow up. This presentation deals with relevant issues surrounding violence. It also discusses teachers’ contribution in reducing violence in the school set up. Further, types/forms of violence in schools, its consequences and sexual and gender-based violence have been looked into in details within the laid down objectives. Data are ‘secondary’ in nature.

1. Introduction:

“Teaching” is defined as “the most important and noblest profession in the world”. Teachers are the one who develops children, community, and society family and ultimately in the nation building. Teachers can play a vital important role on both increasing and decreasing the school violence. As the problems in regarding violence on school grounds is affecting not only students but also concerned parents, authorities and the nation. As children are considered the future of every country, it is the duty of every teachers of every level to teach the students certain manners as they grow up. As teachers have the most influence on children after parents, it is vital for them to understand every child and act accordingly. So it is important for every teacher to have good skills and understanding capability to help him/her know every student and act accordingly.

Teacher is responsible in helping to shape a child’s future. So Teacher should be very careful in choosing the type of punishment for every child, as severe punishments helps to grow an arrogant attitude in students. Also severe punishments may cause mental damage to a student which might take a long time to heal from or even be permanent.

Teachers should punish students fairly and equally and also be in the limits. A teacher should also show compassion towards students evenly, like a student who is not doing his homework should be excused once or twice, but if Teacher shows persistence in not providing the homework, then the teacher should have every right to punish the student accordingly. Similarly rude and violent behaviour should be dealt immediately by the teachers. Such problems should be dealt at an early age, so that they are discouraged on acting similarly in the future. Students should be given the chance adapt and change their behaviour with age but with reminders and restrictions.

It is important for every teacher to praise accordingly to each student. A teacher should never be biased in the class. Showing affectionate towards a certain student might create jealousy within the classroom which might create unwanted problems. Though it’s human nature to be biased towards a certain people, a teacher should hide his/her feelings from the students as they look up to him/her equally. A teacher should always be reminded to be fair and equal in dealing the
students. Hatred and jealousy should be avoided and dealt by teachers at an early age by discussions.

2. Objectives and Methodology:

This presentation deals with relevant issues surrounding violence. It also discusses teachers’ contribution in reducing violence in the school set up. Further, types/forms of violence in schools, its consequences and sexual and gender-based violence have been looked into in details within the laid down objectives. Data are ‘secondary’ in nature collected from books, journal articles and internet sources (appropriately quoted in the text). Method of data analysis is “descriptive research”. Mainly qualitative date has been used by the author in this work.

3. Concern for Violence: Rationale:

The educator has a vital role in identifying, reporting, and preventing child abuse and neglect. Over the last few decades, various organizations have developed programs directed at informing educators that they are a valuable resource. Professionals submitted more than one-half (56.5 percent) of the cases referred to and assessed or investigated by child protective services (CPS), with education personnel the most frequent source of reports (16.2 percent). This highlights the important role of educators and indicates that many educators are already involved in responding to this issue, yet more can be done to address maltreatment. Several studies indicate that many educators are not entirely clear what the indicators of child abuse and neglect are or how to report suspected maltreatment.

One study surveyed 2,793 schools to assess staff readiness to report maltreatment. Because only 51 percent of those completing the questionnaire had received training on reporting child maltreatment, there is still much work to be done to alert educators to their important role in identifying and reporting abuse and neglect. There are many reasons why educators are so vital in identifying, treating, and preventing child maltreatment. These are discussed below:

a) They have close and consistent contact with children.

b) Educators have a professional and legally mandated responsibility for reporting suspected maltreatment. While educators facilitate children’s learning, children cannot learn effectively if their attention or energy is sapped by the conflicts inherent in being ‘maltreated’.

c) School personnel have a unique opportunity to advocate for children, as well as provide programs and services that can help children and strengthen families.

It is important to realize that a positive relationship with a supporting adult may enhance the resiliency of children who have been abused, are at-risk for being abused, or live in a home where no maltreatment occurs but the family experiences other problems, such as substance abuse. Why educators must become involved in preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect. These reasons are related to:

- Community efforts,
- Educational opportunities,
- Legal concerns,
- Professional responsibilities, and
- Personal commitments.
4. Nature and Scope of School Violence:

The nature and scope of the violence in the school are defined as “behaviour by persons against persons that intentionally threatens, attempts, or actually inflicts physical harm” (Reiss & Roth, 1993). Violence is considered “school-associated” if such behaviour occurs on school grounds, while travelling to or from school, or during school sponsored events. Furlong & Morrison (2000) defined systemic school violence as “any institutional practice or procedure that adversely impacts on individuals or groups by burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically, or physically”. Because virtually no effective, community-level violence prevention strategies have been evaluated as effective in reducing school violence, the scope of this article is restricted to school-based strategies that focus on reducing aggression and violence by students.

5. Forms of Violence in Schools and Their Consequences:

5.1 Physical and Psychological Punishment:

Scholars have defined physical punishment as “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. In educational settings, it involves hitting (‘smacking’, ‘slapping’, ‘spanking’) students with the hand or with an implement”. It can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing students, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair, boxing ears, forcing students to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion as in washing students’ mouths out with soap. Corporal punishment, in the view of the Committee, is invariably degrading. There are also many non-physical forms of punishment that are cruel and demeaning. This includes punishment which belittles, humilates, scares, threatens or ridicules a student. Moreover, the very use of physical force by a person who is larger and stronger than the student conveys a clear message of power, control and intimidation, reinforcing the fact that acts of physical aggression are intertwined with psychological aggression.

- **Consequences:**

  Physical or corporal punishment carries serious repercussions for a student’s mental and physical health. It has been linked to slow development of social skills, depression, anxiety; aggressive behaviour and a lack of empathy or caring for others. Corporal punishment is therefore not only detrimental to the student or the child at whom it is directed, but also to teachers, caregivers and other students and children as it creates far greater difficulties to overcome. Corporal punishment also breeds resentment and hostility, making good teacher-student and student-student relationships difficult to maintain in the classroom. It makes teachers’ work harder, less rewarding and immensely frustrating. Furthermore, it neglects to teach students how to think critically, make sound moral decisions, cultivate inner control, and respond to life’s circumstances and frustrations in a non-violent way. Such punishment shows students that the use of force - be it verbal, physical or emotional - is acceptable, especially when it is directed at younger, weaker individuals. This lesson leads to increased incidents of bullying and an overall culture of violence in schools.

5.2 Bullying:

A student is being bullied when s/he is exposed repeatedly over time to aggressive behaviour that intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort through physical contact, verbal attacks, fighting or psychological manipulation. Bullying involves an imbalance of power and can include teasing, taunting, and use of hurtful nicknames, physical violence or social exclusion. A bully can operate alone or within a group of peers. Bullying may be direct, such as one child demanding...
money or possessions from another, or indirect, such as a group of students spreading rumours about another. Cyber bullying is harassment through e-mail, cell phones, text messages and defamatory websites. Children may be more vulnerable to bullying if they live with a disability, express a sexual preference different from the mainstream, or come from a minority ethnic or cultural group or a certain socio-economic background. Bullying sometimes leads to fatal physical attacks.

**Consequences:**

For both the bully and the student who is bullied, the cycle of violence and intimidation results in greater interpersonal difficulties and poor performance in school. Students who are bullied are more likely than their peers to be depressed, lonely, or anxious and have low self-esteem. Bullies often act aggressively out of frustration, humiliation, anger and in response to social ridicule.

### 5.3 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence:

Gender-based violence may take a psychological, physical and/or sexual form and relates to the enforcing or upholding of power imbalances between the sexes. Gender-based violence works to actively reinforce gender inequalities, stereotypes and socially imposed roles. Although girls are more often vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, boys, too, are at risk. Gender-related violence in schools can be physical, such as corporal punishment of girls who do not act in a ‘ladylike’ way. It can be sexual, as in rape. It can be harassment or exploitation by other students, teachers or school staff, or it may be psychological as in blaming the victims of rape. Sometimes this violence takes the form of punishing or shaming students because of their sex or sexuality.

**Consequences:**

Data on students’ exposure to sexual violence in schools is limited, due to the fact that they are hesitant to report acts of sexual violence for fear of being shamed, stigmatized, not believed or retaliated against. Sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence in schools are significant factors in low enrolment and drop-out rates for girls. Gender-based violence not only acts to discourage girls from going to school but may also cause parents to prohibit their daughters from attending school for fear that they too will be victimized. Sexual violence against boys in school can cause particular shame as it is often considered a taboo subject. Sexual and gender-based violence puts students at risk of sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancy, low self-esteem and diminished performance at school. It also has repercussions on the family and the community.

### 5.4 External violence: effects of gangs, conflict situations, weapons and fighting:

Violence that occurs outside of the school environment, such as gang violence, political conflict, police brutality and domestic violence is often reproduced in the school environment. Gang violence in schools includes beatings, stabbings and shootings, and tends to be more severe, even deadly, compared to other forms of violence in schools, especially when associated with the trafficking of illicit drugs. Political instability and conflict including police brutality are also examples of external violence that profoundly impact the nature of violence in schools. External violence in a surrounding school community can likewise infiltrate the school, resulting in weapon-carrying and increased incidents of violence. Students may carry weapons because they feel threatened, or because guns and weapons are accepted as a part of a community’s daily life. Fighting generally involves conflict where it is not easy to make the distinction between perpetrator and victim. Bullying can lead to fighting, with or without weapons.
**Consequences:**

When students are involved with gangs or live in communities where gangs and drugs are part of the culture, this can directly lead to fighting, weapons and drug-related violence within the school. Conflict situations can impair students’ ability to learn and to attend school. Conflicts may also impact school infrastructure, availability of qualified teachers, and distribution of and access to learning materials.

6. **Role of Schools and Teachers:**

Teachers and school environment play an important role in this topic. The school and management can give training to teachers about how to create a friendly and helpful environment in the classroom and school so student are not getting involved in this type of activities. Some of the area on which we can train our teachers are classes on anger management and conflict management, how to give guidance to students who get easily affected by this type of activity, how to create cool and comfortable environment for the students to perform well in studies.

7. **Expectations from Teachers:**

A teacher should become a role model for the class, as students tend to look up to their teachers for advices of many sorts. Students are always proud to be under good teachers. So teachers should try to win the hearts of all his/her students. Teachers should influence students to do the right things and also advise on the many small aspects of life, like advising on what types of shows to watch on the television which will help them teach many different things. Teachers should also have constant connection with the parents and provide updates to them of their children and also check on their behaviours outside the classrooms. That is why a teacher involvement is vital in reducing school violence. Transmitting knowledge is only one part of what teachers do. They also make an essential contribution to the emotional and cognitive development of children, and play a central role in social development and change. Although some students may unfortunately experience violence in their homes, teachers can provide them with alternative ways of being by modelling constructive, non-violent behaviour and by fostering empathy and peaceful conflict resolution skills. While teachers have a key role to play in stopping violence in schools, they cannot tackle violence alone. Because the causes of violence in schools are multi-faceted, stopping violence in schools requires multi-dimensional actions engaging all members of a school’s community in a holistic manner. Parents, social workers, community leaders and institutions must work side-by-side with students, teachers and administrators.

8. **Role of Other Stakeholders:**

8.1 **Parent and Family Role:**

Parents are the first people that kids get to know on this planet and what these parents teach or expose them too is what the kids think are the best for them. And if the environment provided by these parents is wonderful, then there is no chance of these kids indulging in violence. If parents want to see their kids not become violent or aggressive, then they can concentrate on doing the following things:

a) Meetings with children at the regular basis.

b) Whenever you found that there are some problems that your kid is going through, be with them and give support to your child.

c) Do not compare your children with other same age children please.
d) Keep track of who are in touch with your children, and which type of friend they have.

8.2 Students and Classmate’s Role:
Classmates and other students can play an important role in reducing this type of activity because they are the persons who are spending more time with each other. Here is a list of some awareness that can helpful to other students to reduce student violence activity:
   a) Refuse to bring a weapon to school, refuse to carry a weapon for someone else, and refuse to keep silent about those who carry weapons.
   b) Welcome new students in school and help them in a new environment.
   c) Report any abnormal and suspicious activity to school management.
   d) Avoid alcohol and drugs.

9. Rules and Regulations for Behaviour in Your Classroom-Few Words of Caution:
The following norms should be prepared by school authority; therefore it should be help for reducing violence in the school:
- Invite parents to talk with you about their children’s progress and any concerns they have. Send home notes celebrating children’s achievements
- Learn how to recognize the warning signs that a child might be headed for violence and know how to tap school resources to get appropriate help.
- Encourage and sponsor student-led anti-violence activities and programs ranging from peer education, teen courts, and mediation to mentoring and training.
- Offer to serve on a team or committee to develop and implement a Safe School Plan, including how teachers and other school staff should respond in emergencies.
- Enforce school policies that seek to reduce the risk of violence. Take responsibility for areas outside as well as inside your classroom.
- Insist that students not resort to name-calling or teasing. Encourage them to demonstrate the respect they expect. Involve them in developing standards of acceptable behaviour.
- Teach with enthusiasm. Students engaged in work that is challenging, informative, and rewarding are less likely to get into trouble.
- Learn and teach conflict resolution and anger management skills. Help your students practice applying them in everyday life. Discuss them in the context of what you teach.
- Incorporate discussions on violence and its prevention into the subject matter you teach whenever possible.
- Encourage students to report crimes or activities that make them suspicious.

10. Ten ways for Reducing Violence’s in School:
The violence’s can be reduce by using ten ways as suggested by monster school of USA, they says it is too early to wage a collective war against school violence? Must we wait until a generation is wiped off by grip of school violence? Following considerations need special attention:
   ▪ Praise and Encouragements: The teachers and parents should endeavour to praise, encourage and possibly reward their kids for their good performance. These kinds of gestures motivate and ginger them to do better with the hope of getting more reward.
• **Be Watchful:** The teachers and parents should watch closely over the children. If kids are giving more time, it will help develop intimacy and more insights into some areas of concern that was yet unknown.

• **Love and Care:** No medicine is as potent as love and affections. Children should be given more of these. A child that is well aware that he/she is genuinely loved hardly has time to think or plan evil.

• **Friendship:** A lot could be done among the peer group towards reducing the level of violent behaviours. A good friend should ensure that he/she is his brother’s keeper. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

• **Counsellors and Psychologists:** Schools should engage and maximize the office of the counsellors and psychologists to the advantage of the kids. Since they have received special trainings relating to children psychologists, they can study and rightly offer solutions to the kids problem before it escalates.

• **Teachers’ Supports:** Any seasoned teacher can always offer a hand of support to the children in time of need. Teacher are known to be temporal parents and so expected to as well give them parental support and affections.

• **Encouragement of Extra Curricular Activities:** If kids are made to read and study all day, it can give room to dullness of the brain. Efforts should be made by both parents and teachers to organize some other educating activities to give the children balance education. If they are engrossed with their hobbies, who knows they can even pick a career from there and vacuums for violence will not be opened.

• **Fame:** Parents and teachers should enlighten the kids the different types of fame and the dangers inherent in getting famous by negative means. In addition, the benefits of diligence fames should also be enlightened.

• **Weapons:** Kids should be outlawed from carrying weapons. Government should make it a criminal offence for the parents and the sellers that equip children with any kind of weapons. It should be noted that allow kids to carry weapon is like sending them on suicide mission.

• **Parental Companions:** Frankly speaking, parents are the first, best and everlasting teachers for every child. It is the full responsibility of parents to provide their children with adequate support and guidance. The likelihood of any child going astray is very minimal if timely support, guide, care and love is given by the parents.

11. **Conclusion:**

As we know that school is very important place where Children’s all over development can be done through various activity such as the arts, sports, spirituality, friendships and family supports, participation in positive groups or clubs, hobbies, involvement in community betterment projects, and personal characteristics such as leadership qualities, conscientiousness, agreeableness, feeling respected and valued, self-efficacy, and emotional literacy. An orientation to positive individual assets and the conditions that promote them also shifts attention from a focus on circumscribed violence prevention programme and punitive approaches to a focus on safety promotion, the maintenance of basic human and civil rights, and the active support and positive sanctioning of prosaically behaviour through the school.
References: