

Why the increase in youth violence in our society? Is it a breakdown in laws or societal failure?

After a deep thought on the indiscipline among our youth and in some of our schools and the larger society, it has become abundantly clear to me that it's not our children in schools across our dear nation who are in most urgent need of discipline and re-education on disciplinary matters, but many of their teachers, educational policy makers and the larger society.

It would not be far from the truth to argue that our children in schools are not to be blamed for their lack of discipline. They are children seeking knowledge and discipline, unfortunately they learn from their environment and from people they see every day and at times consider as their role models.

Today, nobody can cite ignorance of the effect of corporal punishment on the developing brains or minds and bodies of children as an excuse, as they once could. They can't argue that they themselves were 'disciplined' in this brutal, immoral and barbaric fashion and it hasn't done them any harm. There is enough scientific evidence, published research works all around us and particularly on the internet for whosoever wishes to learn more on this subject.

Why does this unkindness and cruelty still persist in our educational system despite persistent cry against the use of violence against fellow human beings all over the world?

Why are we shocked by the increase in senseless brutality and criminal activities in our society today? The behavior of the youth reflects the behavior of the larger society. While the nation is always appalled by news of senseless and often brutal attacks by 'teachers', much is not done to end this, hence the overflow of what our young ones are experiencing into our society.

While the general assumption is that female teachers – especially those who are mothers – would be more maternal, more understanding, more kind, more tolerant of a child's minor misbehavior in class, evidence suggests that is not the case. Give them access to a ruler or cane and the chances are they can swing it on par with the men if not with greater force and brutality. Where their maternal instincts end and brutality kicks, in is a mystery.

Walk to any primary school and ask children who insults them the most, the answer is surely the female teachers. Ask them who calls them witches and wizards - the female teachers. Ask who tells them that they are brainless, empty barrels and good for nothing – the female teachers.

Where are their maternal instincts? The perception that they are other people's children and not theirs, leads to these behavior. Not until we all see these young ones as our own and see our contribution in their life as a divine work, we will keep on sending into the world, cruel and uncaring human beings who will in turn send back to the work their own kinds; for a child becomes who he or she lived.

I met a child who was beaten by her teacher for coming late to school. In the process the girl got bruises on her buttocks and her beads got broken and scattered in the classroom. When I approached the teacher, he made me aware that he had her treated at a local clinic and he had apologized to her for the injuring even though it was not his intention to hurt her.

This was interesting because I did not know since when a mere apology, no matter how sincere,

healed physical bruising or negate the pain and humiliation suffered by a victim, not to mention the long life psychological and physical scar abuse leaves on the victim and not even talking about breaking the law on physical assault, which in any way does not apply to teachers.

A student at Keta Business College was part of a group of students beaten at assembly as is the case every morning. After receiving the cane and getting to the classroom the boy could not sit down. Any time he tried sitting down, he realized that something was prickling him. He tried in vain to see if there was anything in his shorts and realized that there was nothing. After several attempts and several minutes of not concentrating on the morning lessons, he excused himself and went to the wash room. After passing the hand over his buttocks, he realized that there was something under his skin which was the problem. He then went to the staff room to inform the teachers and he was taken to the hospital for the piece of stick left in his skin to be removed.

What a shame that these barbaric things are happening all over our nation in this modern era and the sad thing is that, most of them go unreported because as a society, most of us do not see anything wrong with it and would do anything to defend it unless the harm happens to someone so close to us or our own children. Education is changing all over the world and most schools are trying hard to reform their system.

So close to Keta Business School is Keta Secondary School where there is a policy on no corporal punishment of students. These are two schools in the same environment with the same culture, one being human toward her students and the other being cruel.

Not are all these evils happening only in state schools, some private schools are worse than the state ones. There is a story of all the students of Calvary Senior High School in Madina being whipped for not performing well in their exams. In this private school, even matured students who are there to better their grades are being beaten on their buttocks. It is a shame for us as a nation to keep quiet over this barbaric behavior when matured women are being humiliated on daily bases by male teachers. It is sad that most of these ladies for one reason or the other could not pass their exams and therefore, have decided to better their grades and are being subjected to this barbaric behavior.

It is unfortunate that today, most teachers in this nation do not know that corporal punishment is no longer part of the disciplinary code of the GES. The question is “who is to inform them”?

The fact is that Corporal punishment is a cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and a clear violation of a child's fundamental right to life, liberty and freedom. This is what it is when applied to all other human beings.

Parents who send their children to schools where corporal punishment is used need to ask themselves if they would send their children, those they claim they love, cherish and would die to protect to the next door to be beaten by their neighbor? Would they send their children whom they claim make their life worth living to an environment where they would be mentally tortured and physically abused even after the physical wounds are healed?

Why then would they send them to a school where they know these abominable acts of corporal punishment are a regular occurrence? Why then would they not speak out in support of other parents whose children have been abused and tortured in the name of corporal punishment in the

pretense or false belief that it actually does their children good?

Corporal punishment offers no solutions to any disciplinary problems: never has it and never will it. It has NEVER generated any good, only the opposite. It is impossible to beat love and respect into anyone. Corporal punishment creates in the individual: fear, hatred, violence, disrespect, resentment and vengeance. It compresses, represses, and like a time bomb explodes when least expected. It can and always leaves deep emotional scars and almost always begets further violence.

Corporal punishment has no place in an enlightened society. It perpetuates a cycle of child abuse and teaches children to hit someone smaller and weaker. It teaches them that human interaction is based on force and not on reasoning.

Corporal punishment is a violation of the fundamental human right of our children and worst of married women and men who are in uniform in schools. It must end now both at home, schools, and detention centers for minors and in all training centers. There is no justification for its continuity. If it is wrong to be used against one's spouse, it should be wrong to be use against any other human being, not to talk of our children who are more vulnerable and fragile and deserve to be protected.

I do not understand why when I hit an adult I could be charged for assault, when I hit an animal I would be termed to be cruel but when I hit a child, society believes that it is in the interest of that child.

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