Corporal punishment in Secondary schools in Kenya: Issues and challenges

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Abstract: Banning of corporal punishment in Kenvan schools since 2001 has sparked intense debate to both parents and teachers on management of discipline in schools. In the recent months after resumption of learning due to Covid-19 Pandemic, many schools have experienced unrest leading to burning of dormitories, classes and even learners assaulting teachers. The study was tasked with the analysis if divergent views on corporal punishment and justice in schools towards character formation. In addition, the study examined the issues and challenges in addressing discipline in secondary schools and finally established whether Kantian ethics can facilitate attaining of character formation and training in Kenyan secondary schools towards disciplined citizenry. The study found out that corporal punishment is still being used in secondary schools in Kenya despite the ban because of the cultural and ethos orientation despite the government advocating for contemporary forms of discipline and effective guidance and counselling in schools. The study found out that despite the retributive theoretical orientation, Kantian ethics can equally facilitate the character education and training of the young towards moral values and disciplined citizens. The study recommended for the revitalised teacher training and capacity building in a humanization education and training towards adoption of multidimensional approaches in handling discipline issues in the school set up for instance pastoral programme, Chaplaincy services, Volunteer /charity works to expose learners to realities that meet their attention to deviate their naive way of looking at reality. In addition, involving students in formulating school rules and regulations alongside each penalty to re orient learners towards sound moral judgment of their acts.

Key words: Corporal punishment, Issues, challenges, Character formation and training, Kantian Ethics

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the rewards and punishment approaches in addressing discipline issues in schools has been shaped by the introduction of laws to guide and protect the vulnerable and thus guard the young in the education process (UNICEF, 2020). The role of education is to model the young in sound moral virtue and truth (Aboluwodi, 2015). Each State therefore in line with international laws on protection of children, has set up constitutional frameworks to align to the global agenda. The Kenyan government through a legal notice of 2001 and the Kenya constitution 2010 declared that physical handling of any child by causing pain amount to physical assault and this is punishable by law. Despite the formulation of the above laws it has been observed by researchers that Corporal punishment is still being administered (Beth Kirigo Mwai., 2014, Kindiki, 2015) this indicates that the alternative liberal approaches have failed or are not eassily addressing the justice issues within the education set up (Aboluwodi, 2015).Another issue that is voice in such practice, is the failure of use of school rules and regulations. Such by laws set up in schools exist to guide the justice system in an environment. Students that violate such rules and even by extention commit crimes are liable for punishment before the law. However, theories sorrounding this concept of punishment if not well explicated then education in Kenya shall be breeding irresponsible citizens who defy law and order and thus an irresponsible and morally eroded society.

Statement of the problem

Punishment and reward system has been adopted greatly in the education environment to reinforce behaviour and sometimes minimise extremes in character development of students. Since the abolition of corporal punishment in Kenya by the legal notice in 2001 it's becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to maintain discipline in schools. The situation has been worsened further by the Covid-19 pandemic which led to closure of most schools when students stayed for more 9 months away from school. Arson attacks, Teacher student conflicts, riots and even destruction of property has been experienced in the recent past in many Kenyan secondary school. The students that perpetrate such acts have always caused heavy financial implications to parents and guardians who are surcharged by affected schools for the mess caused by their children. Does this decay in moral development only indicate the failure by parents who need to be punished like this leaving other stakeholders such as students, government, security teams and teachers? In addition, how should teachers act when students defy authority, break school rules and regulations leading to destruction of school property?. The study therefore attempts to critically examine the concept of punishment and justice in the Kenyan secondary school with a view of striking a balance for the just school community towards effective character training of the students.

Objectives of the study

- 1. Analysis of different theoretical underpinnings of corporal punishment use in schools
- 2. Assess issues and challenges facing secondary schools towards character formation of students

3. Critically examine whether Kantian deontological approach can facilitate effective character formation in secondary schools in Kenya

Research Questions

- 1. What are the divergent theoretical underpinnings for the use of corporal punishment in schools?
- 2. What are the issues and challenges facing secondary schools towards character formation of students
- 3. Can the Kantian deontological approach facilitate effective character formation in Kenyan schools?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a purely qualitative research design where literature on punishment and Kantian ethics were sampled using purposeful sampling technique and content analyzed based on the themes presented. Being a philosophical study, it adopted analytic method in breaking down the concept of punishment and searching for basic assumptions in justification against and for use of corporal punishment in schools. In addition, synthetic technique was adopted in providing critical judgment on the use of corporal punishment towards character development of the students in Kenya and thus establishes the relevance of Kantian ethics towards character formation of the students in Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Virtues theory and deontological theory in assessing the concept of punishment in Kenyan secondary schools.

Virtue theory

This theory is eudemonistic in character for the reason that there is an end in human conduct that one aims at and that should be happiness (Curren,2010). Different virtue theorists treat the end differently, According to Plato four cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage, fortitude and temperance are acquired through learning and Aristotle observes that the basic moral principle are immanent in our day to day activities and are usually discovered when they are studied in a formal set up and that the end must be the "good" (Collins, 1990).

Conservative theory

This theory hold to the view that culturally, the use of corporal punishment, suspension, expulsion on erring students have worked and thus its use can continually bring result to the current generation. In addition, the virtue system has taken it that the use of a cane can only bear results when the elder members of the society who represent authority correct the young towards moral training.

Conception of Punishment

According to Newman (2008), in redefining the concept of punishment from a criminal law point of view, observes that punishment has to do with inducing pain or unpleasant consequences to the offender, giving sanctions for an offense committed against a specific rule or law, to a specific offender who committed the crime, administered by somebody in authority rather than the offender and finally the authority that administers it must be legally constituted. Thus he outlines specific elements of punishment which are: offender, crime (act), a law or rule, authority that administers and finally society/community.

Why use of punishment?

Punishment has always been used by those in authority to administer justice, reduce crimes, for social protection and finally to reinforce behavoiur. The following are some of the justifications of punishment in the society.

Retribution view: This type of justification heavily relies on the nature of crime or act committed. Punishment here is administered based on the ethos and cultural dictates of the rules and laws in the society. According to the proponents of this theoretical orientation, Hegel and Kant, the State has legal protection to administer punishment using retributive measures in order to strike a balance between the crime destroyed towards the state, people and the criminal. The debt repaid is usually for the people not the state.

Secondly, retributive measures adopt the rules such that whoever goes against them must face the tune of the very laws or rules. This therefore govern human conduct which is agreeable by society and reflect the moral order of the society. Thus, punishment of offenders confirms the collective sentiments and moral standards of a people.

Thirdly, the punishment given to the offender must be proportional to the crime committed. According to these theorists, this is not vengeance since legitimate institutions have been set up to handle each crime committed by the offender without allowing innocent persons suffer too.

Biblical texts have also been used to support the theoretical orientation towards giving due justice to the criminals. For instance: Exodus 21:23-25 "But injury ensues, you shall give life for life, eye foe eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Leviticus 24:17 "Whoever takes life of any human being shall be to death." Deuteronomy 19:21 "Do not look on such a man with pity. Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, for hand, and foot for foot."

Deterrence view: According to Beth (2014), punishment imposed on the criminal by the state was meant to preventing future crimes from occurring. Thus punishment is viewed as a social deterrent. Whereas retributionists focus on the past events of the criminal, the deterrence theorists focus on the future occurrences of such acts against the rule of law.

Rehabilitation view: Whereas the retributive theorists and the deterrence theorists focus on the crime, the rehabilitation theorists focus on the criminal. The person who broke the law and did such crime was pushed by the society in order to limit future occurrences as well as address the criminals social past. Rehabilitation centers run specific programs to offer education

course that facilitate overcoming a past experience for instance drugs, alcohol etc.

Incapacitation view: Sometime the criminal can act in a way they injure other people in the society or destroy the social fabric within a community. Thus, the best alternative is to protect the society from such messes by putting the criminal under custody by shifting punishment from bodily pain to mind pains. This is informed by the utilitarian notion of getting communal good, peace and coexistence.

Restorative Justice/ social protection view: Paying special attention to victims and their rights is a condition *sine qua non* for the resolution of conflict between the offender and the victims for a peaceful coexistence. In this case the state though mandated by law to administer justice, abandons the right of the state (*Ius Puniend*) to state obligation (*Officium Puniendi*) and thus in this capacity involves other agents to facilitate dialogue and compensatory mechanisms to restore justice, peace and societal bond.

According to the Christian teachings, the proponents of such orientation always quote the following passages towards affirming their justification of punishment. Ephesians 4:32 "and be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ."Hebrews 12:14 "Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the lord."Luke 6:27-42 "Love your enemies "Matthew 18:33 "should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?" Such texts drive every human being to be accountable to his or her actions.

Behaviorists view: The conception of the word punishment is opposite to word rewards as used by behavioral social scientists. According to Ivan Pavlov and B.F Skinner, the theory holds that the retributive form of punishment has consequences that follow behavior that reduces likelihood of repeating such behavior again.

Despite the above theoretical orientations, punishment in the society has not been static and thus the approaches, measures of administering it have varied from society to society. The retribution, deterrence, incapacitation and restorative justice conceptions have not mentioned anywhere the character formation or behavior change of the criminal. It's only the behaviorists who opine character formation by use of punishment.

III. RETRIBUTIVE PUNISHMENT USED IN KENYAN SCHOOLS

There are many forms of retributive punishment used in Kenya schools. According to Gerald, N. K. (2012) the forms may include canning, slapping, kneeling down, pinching, pulling of ears, forced manual labour and thus punishment is part of school ethos and culture. Corporal punishment is the commonest form of punishment used in schools and home in Kenya despite the ban (Placeholder2). In the light of the Kenya constitution 2010 Article 53(1,d) children have a right to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment and hazardous or exploitative labour.in addition Article 29: Every person has the right to freedom and security of the person which includes the right not to be subjected to corporal punishment.

A justification for the use corporal punishment schools

From a historical perspective corporal punishment has worked in the past on our parents and even us. The cultural orientation has made the practice a culturally accepted ethos. Thus annulling it leads to bringing down an ethical practice well administered to the erring in the society. This is well supported from the ideology at the onset of missionary activities and the colonialist in Africa. On the search of Negritude identity, some African Philosophers ascribe to the notion that Africans were subject to the bamboo reed for their mind to work (Oruka,O 1997).Thus the practice was practiced by the whites and early missionaries to pump knowledge to a race that was black. In fact this ideology was still promoted in the USA against the black children in school (Curren, R.2020).

Secondly, corporal punishment has always served as the easiest, direct and immediate form of punishment offered to the erring young children to affirm authority. The authority instituted by society to model the young can't be ruled out thus as a tool of forcing obedience, controlling the unruly, minimizing errors, crimes and indiscipline cases. According to Kimani et al., (2012), in Kenyan schools corporal punishment is practiced by both teachers, Parents and prefects to control school discipline. This is informed by the cultural ethos based perspective and retributive theoretical orientation towards controlling the students. In addition, supporters of retributive punishment also hold to the view that it is not vengeance since it's done within guided principles and it's different to physical abuse (Gudyanga. E *et al.*, 2014).

Thirdly, retributive form of punishment has always been adopted since the teachers are intrinsically motivated to be in control of the learners discipline. Therefore removal of corporal punishment means dethronement. According to Naong.M (2001), abolition of corporal punishment kills teachers' morale and thus disorients them in taking charge of the student moral growth.

Issues and Challenges in addressing school discipline

The legal challenge: Despite the ban, the corporal punishments methods are still practiced in schools amidst the controversies on the best method of maintain discipline in schools. In affirming the Kenya 2010 constitution, Teacher Service Commission (TSC) in its directive to control punishment in Kenya basic Education treats corporal punishment as illegal and the perpetrators are punishable by law either interdiction, a fine or jail term or sometimes both based on the nature of effects. This orientation has provoked mixed reactions among stakeholders including teachers. Teachers in striving to protect their jobs have abandoned their role as disciplinary agents and core formators of the young in virtue. In addition, the student body has taken this an

advantage of being protected by law against corporal punishment towards keeping off parents and teachers from controlling their character while at school. This over protectionism has prevented stakeholders from adopting a multidimensional approach to the issues and challenges on school discipline. As a result school administrators have set up rules and regulation without involving students which are broken by rowdy students.

The question to ask is, how do you subject the minor to a rule or law that s/he has not been inducted?. Education's major role is to inculcate moral virtues in the young and thus form responsible and law abiding citizens. This is compromised by the 8.4.4 curriculum which is examinations oriented and therefore value system is lost leading to strikes, arsons and drug abuse among other vices.

Culture and ethos: It has always been voiced by the Swahili saying "Samaki mkunje angali mbichi" (Fish can be fold only when wet) in addition, from the Bukusu Cultural saying "Enula yama eng'ana" "The good starts when still young" from a cultural point of view corporal punishment has been adopted at an early age to shape character and reinforce behavior. Thus it has been adopted since ancient civilizations in family, school and even places of worship. Responsibility was bestowed on the elder members to administer this for the sake of reforming the erring. The young have always abandoned old practices for instance, the Bukusu traditional saying "Nandakambilwa kakona khumwanda kwe njoli" (whoever doesn't hid to instruction, sleeps on the elephant's pathway) Suffering is imposed on the erring for not adhering to instructions and keeping the warnings as adviced. This has been termed ancient in search for their "rights, freedom and place in the society by the young generations. Thus the social norm has to be broken through strikes, arson and attacks. These forces have caused friction among the students and authority and thus unending conflicts.

Arsons, Attacks, strikes and teacher student conflicts: Teacher learner relationship is a crucial element in the teaching and learning process. Teleological theorists agree that the teacher must be a role model for the student towards character formation; On the other hand the deontological theorists affirm the teacher's duty in character formation of the students. From this observations the teachers role in nurturing good morals cannot be substituted nor under estimated. The teacher is key to what the learner becomes.

Parental responsibility: Informed by the cultural orientation it is the parents' role to nurture the young and sometimes handle and pay for damage. However, the surcharging of parents for the messes done by students has greatly raised concerns on who takes responsibility or the damages. The government provides directives to prevent the very authority in addressing indiscipline through retributive means and again allows schools to surcharge parents for the wrongs done by the protected students. The government and schools must own up to their misguided directives towards character formation and search for a collective involvement too ease the tensions and burden on parents and guardians.

Cells and approved schools for the indiscipline: The isolation of the erring students to such environment has ignited certain perception among students. First and foremost, student takes this as an alternative to change of environment or school. Thus an avenue to exit school, secondly, increased dropout and failure in national exams due to absenteeism and poor lesson attendance. An introduction to cells and prison life to these minors has always provided them with training for future crimes.

Suspensions and expulsion: This has led to increased dropout rates and failure in exams.

The above issues and challenges have gravely sought for the theoretical framework that orients the stakeholders in this case government, students and parents to own up their roles towards attaining specific duties in the realization of character training of the students. Thus the only duty based theory is Kantian ethical; deontological theory.

Kantian Ethic and Character Education in Kenya

Immanuel Kant is a deontological theorist that held that man by virtue of being rational has the ability to legitimize actions and make the universal rules through training of his consciousness. His approach is called a deontological perspective etymologically "*deonto*" connotes a debt or duty owed to a group of people or to person (Donaldson, 2017).Through rational process, man formulate rule and lay foundations for judging specific act as wrong or right. Thus Kantian Ethics is based on examination of acts.

According to Kant, there are four categorical imperatives that test the legitimacy of an act to be universalized. First and foremost the act must not be frustrated if the maxim of the act were to become a universal. Secondly, the act should always treat humanity as ends in themselves and not means to an end.Thirdly, the maxim of the act, as the will of every rational being laying down universal law should not frustrate the will of every natural being. And fourthly, the act should not contradict the autonomy of the will when the maxim of the act is universalized (Donaldson, 2017, Ramaswamy, 2018).

The categorical imperative is a set of rules set to legitimize the wrongness and rightness of an act. The procedural experience of judging acts can only be acquired through training. According to Kant, education for training child's character through attention to forming maxims of moral worth and applying them to day to day life.

Aspects of character formation in Kantian Ethics

Self perfection: In maxim three, act as the will of every rational being laying down universal law demands that the individual dispensing such a maxim to be of high levels of self legislation and moral jugment. The duty to increase moral perfection is both perfect and imperfect, Perfect in terms of its

object where a person acts not in conformity with the duty in question but considering his or her duty in the capacity of a teacher and imperfect in terms of its subject, moral end can only be achieved objectively, otherwise it is achieved in pure actuality but not here on earth.

The continual development, spreading and strengthening of moral principles through education makes teachers to guide students in the development of her concepts in a Socratic fashion and not acting as models and conformists.

Principalism: Autonomy: Intentionality:

Implications of Kantian ethics towards attaining discipline in secondary schools in Kenya

Kantian ethics has always been contrasted to virtue theory and consequentialist theory. The primary element that advocates of Kantian ethics is the concept of duty. The binding element between the student and the teacher in a school set up must be duty but not conformity to rules and regulations.

Despite the rules that prevent teachers from canning students they have a duty to provide education that facilitates sound moral development. It is also the duty of students to learn the right thing for future use and act morally. Thus this section shall interrogate the implications of Kantian ethics based on aim, teacher student relationship, curriculum and content in secondary schools towards attaining moral growth among students.

Aim

In the lecture on education, Kant highlights on the development of child's character development as a crucial element in the training. In the light of this spirit, Njoroge and Bennars (1986) bring out this aspect in terms of a normative dimension of education. On the other hand Sifuna (2007) opines that African Indigenous education was based on such foundation of values for use within a society and thus holiticism and perennialism became foundations of training and character formation.

In the post colonial Kenya, the commissions and reports highlighted the reliance of values in the education system however, the education system reforms orientated training towards examinations (Amutabi, 2013). However, among the national goals of education moral education is clearly stipulated in goal no.4.

Students are therefore expected to act in accordance with school maxims and later maxims of mankind. Following of these rules comes only when there is a true formation of the mind through training and adoption of Socratic Method through casuistry.

IV. TEACHING METHODS

Canning cannot be a method of teaching morality. Despite its adoption as a method, as an act towards character formation; it

doesn't meet the threshold of the 4 maxims given by Kant to be a right act. The best method for character training as given by Kant is Casuistry (Donaldson, 2017). This method entails, involving of students in preparing school rules and grounding the rule in sufficient reason as to why such should be adopted and why the other rule cannot be adopted. This enables forming of dutiful maxims in varying circumstances. Any such changes must be participatory and their voice must be heard.

Through maxim construction and subsequent application in day to day life at school, students establish a transformation of ways of thinking and the basis of character. And since these are activities of mental faculty, intellectual development can't be left out. Relevant examples must be adopted by the teacher in testing maxims towards orienting the young to formulate theirs (Griffiths, 2014).

Content and curriculum: Ancient literature and modern and post modern experiences have rich rules, actions and recorded evidences on the use of corporal punishment in schools, methods used in addressing discipline in schools and even extents to which students have resisted character formation. From an African Indigenous Education, it was the role of the elder members of the society to provide the maxims for the young to follow. This resulted to conformism. The presence of written documents on the events in the educational environment presented in the various disciplines i.e.Law,Civic Education, Religious Education, Ethics etc are to be availed to students to compare maxim construction in different times and synthesize for current formulation of maxims (Fatih, 2018).

The content of subjects like History and Government, CRE, IRE, HRE and Sciences clearly give students ability to follow certain rules in order to attain specific results. School rules and regulations provided during admission of students in form one also provided a basis of students being exposed to maxims and being able to learn by formulating new ones for principalism and autonomy among students.

Teacher- student relationship

Authority in this case is a facilitator towards character formation. Duty demands that the two patties attaining the set goals together. No party is left in attaining of duty. Education and training involves guiding students in formulation of maxims and facilitating application in clear and unclear circumstances with the school set up and giving critical judgment for growth (Gülcan N. , 2015). The role of the student is to test the maxims possibility in orienting the self towards perfection and autonomy. When one party fails in its duty, character formation is hinders and thus resorting to physical attack, blame and abuses.

Chaplaincy in schools: According to the Ministry of Education (2016) proposed policy framework on chaplaincy in Kenyan schools and Constitution on Kenya (2010), the Ministry of Education is mandated to ensure incalculation of sound morals and values to learners in line with national goals of education: Goal no.4

The Policy framework papers outlines among others vices; Burning of schools, violence and destruction of school property, youth radicalization, sex orgies and drug abuse as indicators of moral decadence in the society. Since 2016, little effort has been made to ensure student unrest is addressed. Waweru (2018) observes that there is lack of adequate facilities and well structured programmes that can support chaplaincy in schools. By actualizing chaplaincy services across all schools, the spiritual welfare of the students of diverse religious backgrounds will be addressed drastically reducing student unrest in schools. Chaplaincy departments can permeate through student network via peer counselors or spiritual leaders selected, trained and commissioned in school to help other students. Such peer counselors act as role models to their peers. Guidance and Counseling must be functional in the schools and such HODs elevated to the level of Deputy incharge of Guidance and counseling.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Corporal punishment has been used in secondary schools since independence and despite the ban it is still in use in Kenya because of a cultural and ethos orientation. This orientation however is informed on a wrong assumption. Character formation and training can only be obtained when stakeholders carry out their duties objectively. It is the role of education to facilitate character formation and training. Kantian ethics can facilitate addressing of indiscipline in school through objective training, formulation of the national golas of education towards character formation, including curriculum content that is rich in values, facilitating maxim formulation among students to enhance casuistry in schools. And finally adopt a multidimensional approach in handling discipline issues in schools for objective growth of the students.

Recommendations

- Schools to involve students in formulating school rules and regulations in order to make students to test their relevance and provide sufficient reasons for proper sound judgment.
- Casuistry as a method of training the young in virtue to be exposed to the teachers in their training in order to facilitate moral training in the schools well.
- The Kenyan government before bringing out legal notices to widely consults stakeholders on approaches of handling indiscipline cases towards effective moral training.
- Clearly reorienting education toward character formation by revisiting the national goals and reformulating them.
- Increase curriculum content with ancient examples on the use of corporal punishment and its effects on the student toward moral formation
- Adopt multi dimensional approaches in addressing indiscipline in schools for instance, pastoral

programmes, chaplaincy services, Guidance and counseling etc.

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