

Review Paper

Revisiting the place of punishment in Zimbabwe's primary and secondary school formal education system

Munamoto Chemhuru

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Great Zimbabwe University, P. O. Box 1235, Masvingo, Zimbabwe. E-mail: munamotochemhuru@gmail.com. Tel: 263 39 253507, 0913 900 812.

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The paper examines the issue of punishment in the process of education within the Zimbabwean context, especially as it applies to primary and secondary school formal education. It addresses the problem as to whether punishment as a tool of educating should be part of the process of education, which is by and large a worthwhile activity. In essence, it addresses the issue of whether punishment and the process of education are compatible. Despite the growing consensus that punishment breaches children's fundamental human rights, the paper attempts to provide a philosophical justification of the institution of punishment, contrary to these contemporary calls from humanitarian quarters for the abolition of punishment from the Zimbabwean education. Given the fact that education is a process through which desirable states of the mind are developed in a morally acceptable manner, focus will be at examining the justification of punishment as a tool for conformity and practice in the process of educating primary and secondary school children within the Zimbabwean context. Hence, it establishes that whatever its purported negative and legal implications, punishment serve the retributive, deterrent and reformative functions.

Key words: Punishment, deterrence, retribution, reform, education, Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

A philosophical discussion of the place of punishment within the Zimbabwean context is very critical to the understanding of the question of its moral justification, justice and the challenge of modernism and liberalism in education today. Taking an analytic approach to the relevance of punishment in education within the Zimbabwean primary and secondary school formal education, the paper addresses the concept of punishment as a process leading to desirable states of the mind, hence, the position that punishment is compatible with the process of educating children, and sometimes adults will be argued for throughout the paper. Thus, the paper argues that punishment is part of the teleological practice of instilling discipline that is compatible with the process of inculcating values that are desirable to the student, contrary to the contemporary philosophical arguments that punishment is unjustifiable, both in principle and practice. Thus, the thesis of the paper is that despite its purported moral, legal, political and other implications that are associated with punishment, still, it remains a result-oriented process of the practice of educating children and sometimes adults in Zimbabwe.

First, the paper examines discipline as an inseparable tool of education. Secondly, it addresses the aspect of punishment and the two-fold division of punishment in terms of the physical aspect and verbal forms of punishment, with an attempt to define and understand how punishment is construed as a normative tool within the Zimbabwean context especially among primary and secondary school children. Lastly, it addresses the retributive, deterrent and the reformative approaches to punishment as a tool that is used in the Zimbabwean primary and secondary school formal education. These approaches are discussed as desirable ways that foster is the inculcation of desirable states of the learner's mind.

DISCIPLINE AND EDUCATION

This section establishes the argument that discipline should be part of the process of education. In the same spirit, it proffers the thesis that in order for the standards of discipline to be upheld most especially amongst children of varying ages and diverse social backgrounds,

some form of punishment is prerequisite to moral and social conformation. Discipline and education cannot be separated from each other. They complement and are intertwined. In order for education to take place, discipline must be preserved and upheld sometimes. There is need by the teacher or the educator to foster some commitment to the values that the teacher would be trying to exchange with learners. This commitment has more to do with discipline than anything else. In the process of education, some form of discipline is required, especially on the part of the learner. According to Artikinson, discipline is part of the process of educating and in order for discipline to be upheld, there is need for some punishment in education. For Artikinson (1988:28): Discipline in etymological terms is concerned with learning. It implies submission to rules or some kind of order. The rules may be those of what is learnt like the rules of grammar, football or morality. They may be those of the method of learning like the rules of practice or training. They may be more general rules necessary for something to be learnt like rules relating to residence, sleep or diet.

The point that Artikinson is making is that, in order for education to take place, there should be some order or discipline or set standards, like standards of morality, truth standards and aesthetic stands among other virtues of morality that human beings always aspire to achieve. The same criterion applies to the process of education. If in any way the teacher ought to create a favourable environment for learning, then certain standards ought to be created and upheld. In order to achieve this order or these standards of morality, parents and teachers normally resort to some utilitarian means of restoring discipline in the process of educating students. According to Ali (2001: 123), "utilitarianism is an ethical view that considers the morality of an action in terms of its utility, that is, its consequences, the welfare and satisfaction it produces on the greater number of people and on the basis of the magnitude of the interest it serves the overall society." At the same time however, the legality of the practice of punishing children, especially using the whip need not to be overlooked. Within the process of education in Zimbabwe, thus, punishment can be meted out to the student in an attempt by the teacher to make the student to conform to certain standards set out by not only the teacher, but also, sometimes the society at large.

Thus, as a form of instilling discipline, some form of punishment may be applied to students that may have disrupted the process of learning through indiscipline. Hence, in line with this thinking, punishment within the process of education can be construed as a way of instilling discipline. Lack of discipline in the learning environment arouses the concepts of punishment. Educators thus administer punishment as a tool that is aimed at restoring discipline so that learning can go on well. For example, in Zimbabwe, it is morally permissible to punish students through the use of the whip or some labour in a

in a certain way that is compatible with societal norms and values if for example the student/s has disrupted the learning environment or discipline that is compatible with it. Supporting the same argument, Peters (1966:266) is of the contention:

"even the most inspiring, stimulating and competent teachers sometimes come across pupils who will not submit to the discipline of the learning situation. Or a class is inherited from another teacher in which no tradition of discipline has been established. On occasions such as these, 'authority' on its own may be ineffective. It may have to be backed by 'power' in the form of punishment in order to maintain or bring about those minimum conditions of order without which progress in learning is not possible. This naturally introduces the question of punishment".

Indiscipline in education within the Zimbabwean context may involve various forms of morally unacceptable behaviour that educators may construe as incompatible with the process of learning in education. Within the classroom context for example, indiscipline among students may manifests itself through noise making in class, stealing other students' valuables, beating and fighting other students among other practices that generally can be characterised as socially unacceptable not only within the school set up, but in society at large. The reason why these and other practices like coming late to class are unacceptable is that they are not compatible with the process of education. Rather, as Peters (1973: 85) sees it, education should be understood as "something that is thought to be conducive to valuable states of mind."

UNDERSTANDING PUNISHMENT IN EDUCATION

Perhaps a definition of what punishment entails would be necessary before any attempt at trying to examine whether it should be part of the process of education in Zimbabwe. As Peters sees it, "punishment involves the intentional infliction of pain or something unpleasant on someone who has committed such a breach of rules. The pain also must be inflicted by someone who is in authority, who has a right to act in this way" (1966: 268). Thus understood in this way, punishment in education becomes a tool through which the educator can use to coerce and make the student to reasonably accept that what they would have done is not compatible with education and that they ought to reform to ensure an enabling environment for learning. At some level, punishment denotes ways in which an individual may subject others to join his views by means of physical coercion, for example through the infliction of pain or restriction of movement or by psychological coercion, for example withdrawing food, shelter and the like. Authority on the

other hand “involves the appeal to an impersonal normative order or value system which regulates behaviour” (Peters, 1966: 239). Following these views of punishment and authority, it appears punishment presupposes some authority within the process of education. In other words, in order for punishment to be administered within the process of education, it must be administered by someone who is in authority.

According to Weber (1947: 301), “the claim to legitimacy is a belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and right of those elevated to authority under such rule to issue commands.” Weber here distinguishes legitimate authority from traditional authority which according to Peters (1966: 242) “rests on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them.” Traditional authority which is intertwined with absolute power seems to be also a result of charismatic authority which according to Peters (1966: 244) “rests on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him.” Peters looks at examples of religious leaders like Jesus and political leaders like Napoleon as Charismatic authorities. A teacher, therefore, should not appeal to power in executing punishment as way of instilling discipline. Against such charismatic power in education, Peters (1966: 245) argued, “the knowledge claim of course has to be in some practical sphere such as religion or politics, for such a charismatic leader to emerge. Then, a person who is an authority becomes also in authority.” Thus, the teacher (as an authority) can enforce rules and use his authority to instill discipline that is prerequisite to a learning environment. Punishment is thus, related to authority in that it is part of it. Punishment is actually justified by authority in the sense that those who are authorities are morally justified to administer punishment. There is a sense in which there is power in authority, but the reverse may not be true. Hence, when there is an appeal to a special person as a source, originator, interpreter or enforcer of rules, through punishment, then the term authority is properly used. In this regard, the justification of punishment is based on the understanding that it is backed by the authority that is vested in the one who administers it. For example, in the Zimbabwean education system, the headmaster is normally the one that is mandated to administer corporal punishment as given in Paragraph 2a of the Zimbabwean Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act of 2004.

Generally understood, punishment involves the infliction of pain or other penalty upon a person for the violation of a regulation. In Zimbabwean education, punishment can be understood and justified as two-fold. At one level, it can be applied and accepted as physical punishment. At another level, it can be administered as verbal punishment. The former, which is the common form of punishment in Zimbabwe, involves the actual

infliction of pain on the offender’s body through the use of the stick, or through various other practices like staving, giving the student some extra work to do, and various other practices that eventually affect the offender’s body in a negative way. Corporal punishment is normally contained in this physical understanding of punishment involving the use of painful retribution on the offender. Corporal punishment is normally justified as lawful in the home or school where parents and teachers have a common law right to chastise their child or learner. Following a Supreme Court ruling that caning of minors amounted to cruel and inhuman punishment, the Zimbabwean Lancaster House Constitution of 1979 was amended in 1990 to allow “moderate” corporal punishment “in appropriate circumstances upon a person under the age of eighteen years by his parent or guardian or by someone in “*loco parentis*” or in whom are vested any of the powers of his parent or guardian” (article 15). The later involves the controlling of the learner’s behaviour by various verbal reprimands like cautioning and giving the learner some advice. All these are ways that should, according to the position of this paper be justified as morally acceptable within the process of learning in Zimbabwe. However, of concern in these two positions on punishment is that corporal punishment on learners breaches their fundamental human rights to respect for human dignity and physical integrity. Its legality thus challenges the universal right to equal protection under the law, especially the right of the child. The imperative for removing adults’ assumed rights to hit children is that of fundamental human rights against the background that corporal punishment has legal implications if it is not properly administered.

Punishment, thus understood, although it has far-reaching socio-political and legal implications, it remains a machinery of facilitating collective conscience of the student through frowning at impropriety of manners, which are capable of being inimical to the developments of legal norms and disrupting the social equilibrium (Balogun, 2009: 45). While this remark is easily applicable to the system of education of Zimbabwe, since such a conception presupposes some kind of order or organized communities within the process of education, it is not easy however to apply the machinery of punishment within the process of education because of the complex nature of the Zimbabwean society. Generally, there is a myth that punishment fails to fulfill its essences in contemporary Zimbabwean society because its administration has been palpably exposed to several abuses. However, this myth ought to be dismissed in the light of the argument of this paper. Against this background, however, punishment in the Zimbabwean primary and secondary formal education becomes an aid through which the teacher can use to preserve and uphold discipline in the classroom situation. A teacher can therefore justifiably use his power, as well as his authority and punish a student who fails to stick to set rules of

discipline as a way of making him to submit to certain rules or some kind of order. For example, a teacher can punish a student for making noise in class, while he is teaching because the teacher is an authority who knows that such an act like noise making in the class is incompatible with the process of education.

In the Zimbabwean primary and secondary school formal education, discipline should be the basis for an environment for the process of learning to take place. Also, certain standards that are necessary for learning to take place should be created given the fact that most of the students at primary and secondary school levels are mostly below the age of ten years and teenagers who mostly misbehave in one way or the other. Thus, according to Peters, "punishment is a much more specific notion which is usually only appropriate when there has been breach of rules (1966: 268)". Thus, the teacher should rely on additional methods like punishment through the whip, or giving the student in order to ensure the conditions necessary for learning. In view of the fact that discipline should be part of education, punishment therefore becomes inevitable and necessary sometimes. Even King Solomon, in the book of the 'Proverbs' believed in the idea of spoiling the child and sparing the rod. He advocated for the idea that punishment is a valuable aspect in the education of the child. Pursuing the same argument, Henrich Pestalozzi noted:

"The pedagogical principle which says that we must win the hearts and minds of our child by words alone without recourse to corporal punishment is certainly good and applicable under favourable conditions and circumstances, but with children of widely different ages as mine, children for the most part beggars, and all full of deep rooted faults, a certain amount of punishment was inevitable (Mayer, 1973: 274)".

In this regard, according to Pestalozzi, punishment should be administered as part of the process of education depending on the background of the student, certain special circumstances and most obviously human nature. However, all this would contradict with a naturalist approach to education where the ability of the learner is supposed to simply unfold naturally without any external influence from educators. Power, through punishment helps sometimes the teacher to instill discipline. The relationship between authority, power, punishment and discipline in education is so intricate that sometimes we seem to move from the authority of the teacher, to get the power such that once a teacher has that power from his authority, he can easily instill discipline in the learning set up through punishment sometimes so that education can take place. This is why according to Atkinson:

"There are several alternative ways in which we might attempt to persuade the pupils to join us in

such a common enterprise of learning. One rather obvious alternative is that of coercion- forcing pupils to obey their will. There is of course a necessary place for coercion in nearly every classroom (1988: 23)".

For Atkinson, thus, it is apparent that teachers and parents face an inescapable responsibility to coerce pupils back into acceptance of authority. However, as a critique to such use of coercive methods in the process of education, Atkinson feels that "coercive approaches may ensure the passive obedience of the pupils. But, they are unlikely to encourage any large degree of active cooperation between pupils and the teacher" (1988: 24). However, as it is the argument of this paper, cooperation between the teacher and the student may not be as valuable as the states of mind that would have been inculcated into the student. Hence, it is the humble submission of this paper that a cue must be taken from the institution of punishment. There seem to be an intricate relationship between authority, punishment, power and education, such that in a way, people in authority, that is, teachers, can easily use their power and inflict pain through punishment on pupils at whim. Thus, by so doing, the difference between authority and power comes out. It is apparent that authority has got power in it, but there is no authority in power, hence Peters gives the example of two boxers who are fighting, and in the example, his idea is that in as much as they might be inflicting pain upon each other, it is not considered punishment because there is seem to be no breach of laws in their act, hence all boxers might have power, but not authority. Peters thus argued for the tripartite conditions for punishment that must be fulfilled in education. These are:

- (i) Intentional infliction of pain,
- (ii) The infliction of pain must be done by someone in authority, and
- (iii) The pain must be inflicted on a person/pupil as a consequence of a breach of rules on his part.

Hence for Peters, the two boxers who are fighting are far from fulfilling any of these three conditions. On the other hand, according to Atkinson (1988:29), "the pupil who is fined or deprived of privileges or perhaps caned is undoubtedly being punished in that pain is being inflicted as a consequence of misdemeanors."

In the school set-up however, some acts that we call punishment are not in actual fact punishments. For example, if a child is given homework to do and does not do it and eventually is asked to go back and redo it, then it is not strictly speaking a form of punishment. Rather, it is a form of reminding the student of the thing that he should have done already. According to Peters, that kind of external discipline is not punishment in the actual sense. Punishment must actually involve retribution and

pain. Retribution considers the circumstances in which punishment is deserved and the purposes for that kind of punishment, hence according to Nozick, in his retributive theory of punishment, "a wrong doer deserves punishment for a wrongful act, and he must compensate the surviving victims of his act" (1981: 263).

APPROACHING PUNISHMENT IN EDUCATION

Basically, three approaches that attempt to reform the learner or the child have been developed in education. These are; the retributive approach, the deterrent approach and the reformative approach. Using this tripartite division of the forms of punishment in education, it can be justifiably argued that punishment is administered as a consequence of some wrong doing or as a teleological practice of preventing wrong doing and also as a means of reforming someone, as shall be established in the three approaches to punishment to be discussed below.

The retributive approach

With this approach, punishment is simply justified as having a place in education. Peters (1966); Nozick (1981) justified punishment on the basis of its retributive premise, that is, punishment is a consequence of an offense. For example, a teacher is justified in instilling discipline to a learner or child who makes noise in his absence. In that instance, for Peters, it is justified to look at punishment in that instance as retribution because, for him, a normative relationship is built into the concept of 'punishment.' The implication is that punishment is not necessarily used as an end in itself, but rather it is used as means to achieve some good end, that is good behaviour, which is compatible with a process of education. Following this argument, it is apparent that even in most traditional and contemporary Zimbabwean societies among the Shona and Ndebele communities also believe in the aspect of retributive justice in punishment. For example, the use of the shamhu/uswazi (Shona and Ndebele names for the whip, respectively), to a child who misbehaves was an attempt to instill retributive justice. The idea behind retributive punishment is the distribution of pain for wrongdoing, which is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. According to the Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulations (Statutory Instrument 65 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1992):

"A school-teacher shall have authority to administer moderate corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes upon any minor male pupil or student" (paragraph 2b) and, as for parents, "where moderate corporal punishment is administered upon a minor person by a parent, guardian or school-

teacher within the scope of that authority, the authority shall be a complete defence to a criminal charge alleging the commission of a crime of which the administration of the punishment is an essential element" (paragraph 2b). Paragraph 6 of section 241 also applies".

In this regard, the constitution of Zimbabwe takes into consideration that some form of punishment is necessary to the discipline that should be upheld within the classroom context. However, with regard to this retributive approach to punishment in education, the only problem as far as such form of disciplining is concerned is that there seem to be a problem of meeting the normative demands that are built within the concept of such punishment. Hence for Peters, "it is one thing to understand what is meant by 'punishment' and it is quite another to give good reasons why punishment exists" (1966: 269). This is especially in view of the fact that sometimes, those that are in authority to administer punishment, actually abuse their authority to do so and in the end, they also abuse learners. Thus, the administration of retributive justice sometimes brings in human rights issues at the fore. For example, the data that is available from the: An analysis of epidemiological data of reported physical abuse of primary school pupils by teachers between January 1990 and December 1997 shows:

"73.9% cases reported to the Ministry of Education, 26.1% cases reported to the police were examined cases of corporal punishment which violated the regulations established for its administration (Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulations, Statutory Instrument 65 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1992). The study found that of 38 cases, in 80.4% the victims were beaten, whipped or hit, 10.9% were clapped or slapped, 4.3% were punched with fists, 2.2% were kicked, and 2.2% punched. Boys were more commonly physically punished than girls 58.7% compared with 41.3% respectively".

Thus, in view of this problem, of meeting the normative demands of retributive punishment and its abuse in education, it appears that sometimes, there is a problem in education as to 'when' and 'how' such punishment should be administered, and to what extent can it be administered without violating certain fundamental human rights of the learner or the child. It appears that, in the administration of retributive punishment in education, insufficient attention is being paid to the principle of the best interests of the child both in legislation and practice, as well as to the respect for the views of the child in school, social and family life. But, however, in view of these observations, the reprisal aspect of punishment in education cannot be easily avoided. It still remains to be seen whether there could be any fertile grounds for the breeding of desirable character traits within the learner, in

an environment that is immune to the administration of punishment.

The deterrent approach

Deterrence, according to Owoade (1998: 47) refers to the restraint which fear of punishment imposes on those likely to commit crime. This theory of punishment rests on the understanding that the purpose of punishing wrongdoers or criminals is to deter, prevent or frighten other people from doing the same wrong or criminal act (Dzurgba 2000: 62). As Balogun (2009: 49) sees it "punishment as a deterrence may either deter or the would be or potential criminals or offenders from carrying out the same wrong later in future." For example, it is a common practice among Zimbabwean teachers that if a student comes late to school, class or for a lesson, he can be given some work to do after learning hours, like tasking them to water the garden, fencing the school yard, or cleaning the classroom or school yard among other forms of punishments that can be given to students. This way, because of the embarrassment that goes with the performance of such menial work that the student will have performed other students will try to avoid committing the same punishable offence because of fear of embarrassment, hence sometimes punishment serves as a deterrent tool. Some of the punishable offences anonymously recorded from students who had committed punishable offences in Masvingo Province, in the first term of 2010 are as follows:

- (i) "The teacher was beating me because I was playing although break was over." Girl, Mucheke, Masvingo Province,
- (ii) "I was punished for coming late to school. I cleaned the toilets and cultivated in the garden." Boy, Rujeko, Masvingo Province,
- (iii) "I never wrote my homework. I got whipped on my bum with a hosepipe." Boy, East View, Masvingo Province, and
- (iv) "We fought in class and I was told to dig a hole the size of my height." Boy, Chivi District, Masvingo Province.

Thus, in view of these and other cases, the teacher or parents can at times justifiably use these and other forms of punishment to deter or prevent children or students from doing again what is morally unacceptable or undesirable. According to this utilitarian approach to education, it appears punishment is part of education since it promotes the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people, and the least amount of pain to the least number of people. According to Peters (1966: 27):

"The most promising justification for punishment is that provided by the utilitarians who argued that

though the infliction of pain is prima facie a mischief because pain is evil, a small amount inflicted on offenders is less an evil than the larger amount of pain which would be caused by the refusal to attach sanctions to socially important rules. Deterrence and prevention are therefore the basic reasons for punishment".

In view if the consequentialist approaches to punishment, therefore, punishment is a concept that has got an intricate relationship with education because the ultimate aim after all is to promote happiness for the greatest number of people in a morally acceptable manner. In this case, punishment is justified on the ground of the effect it produces. Thus, following this criterion, it is morally acceptable to inflict pain through punishment on a student if his actions do not lead to happiness, or a morally acceptable behaviour that is in sink with the process of education in Zimbabwe. For example, in the Zimbabwean educational context, behavioural practices like those cited by the four students above and other practices like beer drinking, smoking cigarettes, stealing other students' valuables, making noise in class among other undesirable practices are not compatible with the process of education hence the inevitability of punishment as a deterrent.

Thus, against this background therefore, threat for punishment will almost always deter, frighten or prevent individuals from doing something that might invite punishment. Also, from a utilitarian perspective, it is believed that punishment promotes the development of desirable character traits for the greatest number of people, hence the position that it should be part of the process of education for Zimbabwe.

The reformative aspect

Although, punishment can be sometimes justified because of its deterrent and retributive aspects, still, given the fact that it involves the infliction of pain on the offender sometimes it raises the problem of justice. Justice, as defined by Rawls is simply fairness. Thus, the infliction of pain in the process of punishing students should also be examined in terms of whether it has been done in a manner that is fair Rawls (1971). There are problems at times when for example, teachers and parents face the dilemma as to whether they should give preference to punishment or to the aspect of justice, which can simply be understood as fairness (Rawls: Ibid). For example, in the case in which the teacher decides to punish the whole class of students say about thirty students, in a situation in which the teacher finds them making noise, and they did not specify the culprit, it is very difficult to administer collective punishment, as that would be tantamount to violation of other students' freedoms. Peters even observed:

“Teachers often have recourse to this (collective penalty), when they keep a whole form (class) in or deprive everyone of some privilege when they are unable to discover the culprit. What the boys say generally is that this is not fair. And of course they are dead right (1966: 271)”.

The point here is that, in a classroom situation, sometimes punishment can either be just or unjust depending on the situation, hence the problem with the utilitarian notion is that of attempting to ignore the issue of fairness or justice (Rawls: *Ibid*). There has also been a tendency in education to construe education as a process of reform. In the same way, punishment can also save the reformatory purpose in the process of educating students. Punishment for some, is a means of reforming, thus, forming certain desirable mental states. Hence, as Peters (1966: 272) sees it, “it is desirable to arrange the conditions of punishment in such a way that there is some possibility of a person being reformed while being punished...”

It is generally held that when one is dealing with children, he can actually use the tool of punishment as a means of reforming them. This is based on the understanding that education is closely related with the aspect of reforming. According to Peters, education as a life long and value-laden process implies some change for the better in that “it may be the case that prisoners can be treated constructively while they are being punished so that they emerge from prison as better people” (1966: 272). The same applies to the students in this case. They can be punished in order to make them better, or to instill morally acceptable character traits; hence the biblical doctrine according to King Solomon that parents must spare the rod and spoil the child. However, it should be noted that reformation is not necessarily an outcome of punishment sometimes. It is not always the case that punishment will lead to reform, or that reform is a result of punishment. But, at the same time, punishment should be lawful in education, where educators have a common law right to chastise their learners. Provided it is administered in a way that is not abusive to the learner’s basic rights to human dignity, punishment should be morally acceptable in the process of educating children at primary and secondary levels in Zimbabwe.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Punishment as a tool of education becomes problematic only in cases where the teacher uses his power in order to administer punishment as a way of improving performance of the child in class. It becomes a real issue when teachers punish students or worse when they cane them for example, failing a mathematics test. Such form of punishment, which teachers often administer in order to improve the performance of the child, may include,

canning or beating and giving rewards for tasks reasonably done and blame for tasks badly done. All these forms of punishment have been criticized on the grounds that they are not only morally unacceptable, but that they do not actually achieve their intended goals.

According to Peters, (1966:273) “rewards and praises for tasks reasonably done are much more likely to improve performance than punishment and blame for tasks badly done ... hence in the sphere of school work, then, the case of punishment as an aid to education seems pretty weak.” In this regard, the argument is not that punishment should not be completely chucked out of the classroom. But that in as much as the teacher may use it; he ought not to use the tool as a catalyst for improving children’s performance. Hence, it is reasonable to take Artkinson’s argument that a teacher should not use punishment as a means of improving performance in class. Otherwise that would be tantamount to abuse of the teacher’s authority and at the same time an abuse of child’s right to freedom. Sometimes, it is apparent that punishment promotes a positive moral development. Given the fact that the process of education and morality are intertwined, it is sometimes understandable and reasonable to administer punishment as a way of promoting moral development and not exclusively for improving performance. For example, sometimes teachers use the whip to beat students for failing a given test which is morally unjustifiable. As Peters sees it:

It might be argued on the other hand, that such punishments do not serve purely as deterrents or preventive measures; they sometimes assist in moral education. They help to mark out what is right and wrong and if the teacher is careful, to explain the reasons for the rules which are being enforced, they can help to stamp in desirable habits which will later make a solid foundation for a rational moral code (1966: 274).

This however is against the views from child psychologists who dismiss the view that punishment leads to moral development. There is a sense in which there is evidence that punitive aggression by the teachers and parents leads to aggression by the learner. Actually, there seem to be no evidence that it leads to moral development. This view however does not throw away the weight of one of the arguments of this paper that punishment serves the moral role in the process of education.

In view of the foregoing discussion therefore, it might appear as if punishment is undesirable in the process of educating, but however, given the fact that education involves inculcating values that are desirable and also that punishment serves the retributive, the reformatory and the deterrent functions, all of which are aimed at promoting a conducive environment for education to take place, one cannot avoid the inevitability of punishment in

the process of education. Contrary to the modernist-humanitarian approach to the unjustifiability of punishment, thus this paper has established that punishment in the Zimbabwean primary and secondary school formal education system becomes a necessary tool for instilling discipline that is necessary in education. The paper thus, recommends that the State revisits, upholds and defends the current appropriate legislative measures to allow the administration and use of any form of the discussed forms of punishment within the school set up and in the family as well. But at the same time, certain checks and balance are crucial to the execution of such punishments especially in view of the abuse of the instrument of punishment from educators and parents that we witness, read and hear about in the media everyday.

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