

This study is an effort to examine the phenomenon of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools in order to give a conceptual explanation to this practice as a method of instilling and maintaining discipline. The debate on the practice of corporal punishment is symptomatic of a predicament that deserves some attention. This predicament is both historical and social in nature. It is historical because the practice of caning has existed in various places and ages though in different ways.

In the Kenyan education system corporal punishment was introduced as an adjunct of the British Colonial Education package. Kenya, then a British colony, copied the colonial education system just as it did with other systems. After the attainment of independence, the practice was instituted in the 1968 Education Act and promulgated in 1972.

This predicament is social because caning is not only practised in schools but also in homes. Many parents adhere to the Biblical Solomonic dictum that "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (Proverbs 20:30; 22:15).

The study is presented in six chapters that endeavour to elucidate some basic concepts that are controversial to the theory and practice of education, and more specifically in regard to the practice of corporal punishment.

Chapter one lays the background to the subject under study. It traces the historical evolution of this practice in various parts of the world thereby shedding light to the debate on the plausibility of corporal punishment as a means of enforcing discipline.

Chapter two offers a review of literature related to the study. It brings to light some themes that are pertinent to the problem of school discipline in general and to the debate on the practice of corporal punishment in particular. This chapter also contains the theoretical framework upon which the study is based.

Chapter three begins with a discussion on the nature and objectives of education and proceeds to give an appraisal of the concepts of 'authority' and 'democracy' insofar as they relate to the educational practices of discipline and punishment.

Chapter four presents a critique of the practice of corporal punishment is presented from a pedagogical perspective. The various teaching and administrative methods, skills and techniques that help in effecting and maintaining discipline are discussed. These procedures, though relatively effective, manifest some loopholes inherent in them. This phenomenon invites a re-examination of the value of corporal punishment.

Chapter five looks at the actual situation in various types of schools in Kenya and notes that the use of the cane is still prevalent despite its ban by the government in the year 2001. Various factors that enhance this practice are examined and some alternatives proposed as possible replacements of the cane.

Having presented the background and the justification for the need to reevaluate the role and place of corporal punishment, the study concludes with some practical principles and guidelines for more effective and humane modes of enforcing discipline. The study ends with recommendations that organically grow from the discussions developed in the study.

This study being a qualitative research principally employed the descriptive approach in its endeavour to clarify and analyse the concept of corporal punishment in so far as it affects the educational theory and practice in Kenya. However, some field study was carried out in order to garner some raw data upon which the analysis of the phenomenon of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools was based.

The respondents, totaling to four hundred and twenty eight, comprised various stakeholders in the educational enterprise such as head teachers, teachers, officers from the Ministry of

Education, parents, students, sponsors, educationists and human rights activists. These were purposively selected to ensure adequate representation in respect to various categories of schools and variety of geographical locations.

The findings were analysed and explained by use of various philosophical approaches. These are: the analytic (or rational), critical (or prescriptive), speculative (or metaphysical), phenomenological (or existential), and, lastly, the dialectical method. However, though the study adopts a combination of various philosophical approaches it is clearly located within the analytic, dialectical and phenomenological methods owing to its nature