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Before and after the advent of "Maar Nahi Pyar" (Love rather than Punish): Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives on the Situations They Experienced

Rizwan Saeed
PhD Scholar (Education), Department of Educational Research & Assessment, University of Okara, Pakistan. E-mail:asiajamil20@gmail.com

Dr. Syed Abdul Waheed
Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Studies, University of Okara, Pakistan.
E-mail: s.a.waheed@uo.edu.pk

Dr. Nadia Gilani
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Okara, Pakistan.
E-mail: nadia.gilani@uo.edu.pk

Abstract

The Slogan "Maar Nahi Pyar" (love, rather than punish) has been introduced in Punjab Schools to provide a safe and learner-friendly school environment. The study explores teachers' and parents' perspectives regarding the effects of this slogan on the students' behavior toward their education and students' discipline. A qualitative, narrative phenomenological approach was used for this purpose. For data collection, semi-structured and focus group interviews were conducted with the teachers and only semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents to collect the data. Purposive sampling was used, whereas teachers with at least five years of teaching experience before this slogan were selected. The findings revealed mixed reactions regarding the effects of the slogan on the school environment. Some teachers and parents mentioned improvements in the students' participation and behaviour. However, the majority of the teachers and parents highlighted its negative consequences. Teachers mentioned the instances where the students took advantage of this emphatic approach, resulting in increased disruptions and reduced academic focus. The study also implies that the implementation of the slogan has its benefits, but there is a dire need to overcome the challenges the teachers face for its successful implementation. The findings contribute to the growing literature on alternate discipline strategies, emphasizing the need for more balanced and well-enforced policies. Future research should focus on strategies that mitigate adverse effects and ensure that positive reinforcement does not affect classroom management.

Keywords: *Student discipline, student behaviour, educational slogans, education policy, love rather than punish, narrative phenomenology*

Introduction

Over the years, education has changed drastically with its focus on creating safe and inclusive school cultures. In this context, the slogan "Maar Nahi Pyar" (Love, rather than Punish) has become well-known as a substitute approach to school discipline. This slogan encourages substituting punitive actions with nurturing and compassionate discipline to address behavioral

issues among school children. Although the objectives of this slogan are admirable, it is also essential to consider its implications and any other potential harm it could do to schools.

This paper examines the history of this slogan, as well as its difficulties and effects on the educational system. In September 2005, the government of Punjab banned the practice of physical punishment in government schools (Hameed & Chaudhary, 2022). The Punjab Government's Chief Minister Monitoring Force published a notification on January 23, 2018, titled NO.DD (M)/Child Protection/2018, regarding the complete prohibition of corporal punishment (Punjab, 2018). To understand the slogan "Maar Nahi Pyar," it is essential to look at the historical founding of discipline in education. School discipline has long been characterized by an unforgiving set of rules and penalties and an unwavering sense of the importance of "law and order." However, in the past decade, researchers, psychologists, and even lawmakers have been skeptical of how much this harsh disciplinary approach has worked.

As a result of this paradigm change, alternative strategies have emerged that prioritize empathy, understanding, and restorative justice. A student's behaviour can be managed by using physical punishment, often known as corporal Punishment, if the student exhibits behaviour that deviates from the standards of the school where they are studying (Danish & Iqbal, 2016). it is customary to discipline children with corporal Punishment nowadays. Even if they aren't considered acceptable, it is also thought that slapping and spanking children has a strong impact. Straus (1991) said 84% of adults felt that adult spanking might sometimes be necessary (Danish, 2016).

As students spend a significant amount of time in school, teachers are responsible for identifying behavioural changes in their students. Physical abuse or corporal punishment is a global issue that has disrupted the social well-being of children worldwide (Rafique et al., 2019). The Government of Punjab, Pakistan, has implemented several measures to deter the use of corporal punishment in classrooms. "Maar Nahi Pyar" is another initiative to improve literacy within the province. According to the sources, these instructions were sent to principals and school heads to address the root cause of school dropouts.

The phrase "Maar Nahi Pyar" expresses the essence of a paradigm change in education. This indicates that there are more effective ways to deal with students' behavioural problems than a punitive approach to Discipline. On the contrary, it promotes a more humanistic and relationship-focused approach where educators and administrators concentrate on building a solid rapport with students. According to Special Education Secretary Zahid Saeed, the Punjab government prohibited corporal punishment because it weakens children's sense of self-worth, according to special education secretary Zahid Saeed. The decision was made after consulting psychologists who believed that corporal Punishment stunts children's mental development and suppresses their personalities. Mir (2006) states that this slogan's rationale is based on the idea that improving student results can be achieved by creating a caring and encouraging educational environment. Proponents believe that positive behaviour, school involvement, and solid relationships with peers and teachers are all increased when pupils feel appreciated and cared for. This approach is also seen to be a reaction to complaints against the too-harsh disciplinary measures. According to the administration, teachers who breached the restriction would either lose their employment or suffer disciplinary Punishment. According to official government sources, the decision was made following multiple instances of physical Punishment over the previous few weeks. The government of Punjab, Pakistan, has taken serious notice of the incidences of corporal Punishment in different schools, according to Punjab Zahid Saeed, Special Education Secretary. Heads of schools have been directed to guarantee that the slogan "Maar

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Nahi Pyar" is implemented in actual letter and spirit (Mir, 2006). The introduction of the slogan has created an enormous amount of discussion and reflection among teachers and parents about the implication of this slogan for handling behavioural issues of school-going children. The parents and teachers have varying perspectives on how this slogan translates in real-world educational and family contexts.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to explore teachers' and parents' perspectives following the introduction of the slogan "Maar Nahi Pyar." By following their journey of experiences, beliefs, and concerns since adopting it, this study intends to provide critical perspectives on the success and potential implications of the slogan for the overall development of the students. More specifically, it focuses on reoccurring themes, challenges and successes mentioned by parents and teachers in their attempts to balance responsibility and empathy within the discipline process. The research breaks down into three key concepts. This recognizes punishment within educational systems as increasingly administered and contends that discipline has always been part of education. It then deals with some contemporary classroom discipline issues, such as how classes are changing their work and behaviour management practices and moving towards softer approaches, especially after this slogan. Finally, the researchers examine how 'Maar Nahi Pyar' impacts students' behaviour and academic outcomes from teachers' and parents' perspectives.

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of teachers and parents who have experienced the situation of *"Maar Nahi Pyar"* before and after the advent of this slogan?
2. What are teachers' and parents' perspectives who have experienced the situation of *"Maar Nahi Pyar"* before and after the advent of this slogan regarding discipline
3. What difference did teachers and parents observe in students' behaviour toward learning before and after the advent of the "*'Maar Nahi Pyar'*" slogan?

Research Methodology

The study uses a qualitative research design to explore the perspectives of the teachers and parents who experienced the situation before and after the advent of the slogan "*maar nahi pyar*" regarding discipline, behaviour towards learning, and changes in the students' general behaviour. The main goals were to ascertain how this policy affected students and to obtain the opinions of parents and teachers on it.

A narrative phenomenological approach was used to ascertain and interpret the lived experiences of the teachers and parents. This approach combines two approaches and concentrates on narratives, i.e., stories and the first-hand experiences of the participants. Combining these two qualitative methods into a single study served three significant goals. First and foremost, it is imperative to comprehend the advantages of merging approaches to understand the perspectives of parents and teachers concerning the influence of the slogan "maar nahipyar" on the educational setting.

Second, this study's outline builds on the potential for meaning-making that result from phenomenological analysis of lived experience and narrative interpretations. Third, the consequences of combining phenomenological inquiry with story analysis are explored to

propose that two qualitative methodological decisions support the construction of meaning-making.

Participants and Sampling

According to Creswell (2013), a researcher's qualitative research goal is to examine the participants' lived experiences deeply. Purposive sampling is used for this. On the other hand, phenomenological research includes participants with shared experiences. Purposive sampling is therefore carried out by criteria (Rahi, 2017). The nature of this study was qualitative. To investigate the lived experiences of teachers who had implemented the "*maar nahi pyar*" slogan and had at least five years of classroom experience before it was put into effect, this criterion was chosen so that teachers had a significant period to observe and compare the students before and after the advent of the slogan.

Similarly, parents with both types of children/grandchildren had experience in pre-slogan environments at schools and home and experienced after-slogan environments. Four focused groups of four teachers from different schools were chosen. For semi-structured interviews, five parents and five teachers were selected who fit the prescribed criterion.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with teachers. For the focus group, four teachers consisting of each of the 3 focus groups who met the required criteria were selected. Focus group discussions offered an in-depth exploration of social issues—these methods aimed to gather data from designated groups (Nyumba et al., 2018). Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from parents to gain insights into their experiences and observations regarding their children's behaviour toward their learning before and after the advent of the slogan. These methods sought to collect information from particular groups (Mannan & Afni, 2020). Parents' data was gathered through semi-structured interviews because parent focus groups were not feasible. The average time duration for the individual semi-structured interview was 43 minutes, while the average time duration of the focused group was 1 hour and 35 minutes.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the focus group and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Researchers deliberated over various plans for analyzing qualitative data. While some are unique to the study design, others might be used with several qualitative research designs. A flexible strategy for data analysis may be chosen by the researcher since, for instance, a qualitative study of a general character typically needs to adhere to a set plan for data analysis. It is preferable to employ thematic analysis as a flexible analysis plan that is wider than a single study (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

However, some qualitative research studies require a particular data analysis plan. For instance, because grounded theory utilizes theoretical saturation, it necessitates using an analysis method known as constant comparison. This method involves collecting and analyzing data at the same time. In this study, the researchers used the following steps: First of all, the data were gathered and reviewed and obtained from semi-structured and focus groups. This step is called familiarization. After this, critical information was gathered to form codes to identify salient characteristics related to the research questions. Themes were developed based on essential elements of participants' experiences and perspectives through the analysis of codes. These

themes were examined and improved to ensure they appropriately depicted the data. In the end, these themes were defined and named to provide a concise and clear summary of the participants' perspectives.

Results of the Study

The results of the study finally appeared in the form of themes that emerged out of the interview and focus group transcripts. The themes are given in the following section.

Punishmwnris inevitable

The effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in schools depends on punishment. It helps to maintain discipline and order among the students. In addition to being places of learning, growth, and development, schools act as miniature versions of society, complete with laws and norms that must be observed. Although the goal of Punishment is highly debated, many contend that it is required to establish a supportive learning environment, uphold norms, instill responsibility, and discourage misconduct.

Even though it is controversial, Discipline in schools is usually seen as necessary to maintain behavioural standards, create a supportive learning environment, and give students the tools they need to deal with the difficulties and consequences they will face outside the classroom. Each student is unique, with personality differences. As a result, students can use different strategies or tactics. For instance, in focused group 2, participant 2, a female participant who taught science at the secondary level, described two categories of students: those who are discipline-free and those who occasionally need it. Similarly, Participant 2, a male teacher with 32 years of experience in urban teaching and an MSc and M.Ed., identified three primary categories of students:

> *There exist three types of students: the first type who are self-motivated and study without punishment, the second who remain unmoved despite the Punishment, and the third who only respond to the punishment threat to meet their academic responsibilities.*

Participant 3, a father, stated that although his parents were uneducated, they employed stringent controls over him, which helped him pass his matriculation. On the other side, he was lax and careless with his children's education, which is why they were unable to complete their studies and pass even matriculation. Parent participant 1, who lived in a rural location, reflected that he kept an eye on his kids and encouraged their teachers to discipline them severely if they didn't study well. In the same way, Participant 3 of the focused group 01, a female teacher who was working at a public school in a rural area, reflected, *"But we don't punish students for fun. Because teachers are not cruel to the students, they are just like their parents"*.

Participant 1 of focused group 3, a head teacher who also taught Arabic and Urdu, discussed the benefits and drawbacks of the "*Maar Nahi Pyar*" slogan. He also explained the history of the policy's introduction and its current state. According to him, this phrase has not achieved its true purpose and is causing more harm than good to children. This guideline was put in place, in part, so that students could attend class fearlessly. On the other hand, the pupils' educational deficit is the second aspect of this approach. He continued;"*The decline in the students' engagement with the studies is alarming, as they have ceased to read, write, or pay attention to their education.*

Neither at school nor at home do they dedicate themselves to learning." Similarly, parent participant 1, who belongs to a rural area, also strongly opposed this slogan.

On the other hand, a female science teacher who was the third participant in focused group 2 said both approaches are essential and should be applied in classrooms, just as in homes. She compared the need to discipline the students and the necessity to discipline our kids at home when they misbehave or disregard our essential instructions. In the same way, in focus group 1, participant 1, a female computer science teacher also serving as the school's head of department, stated that teachers should not be prohibited from disciplining students or employing alternative methods. She thought banning the Punishment was terrible since some kids react negatively to not getting punished. Conversely, she added, some pupils learn well and don't require Punishment since they study that way; she explained that; "*A teacher's responsibility extends past the instructions only; it lies in their discretion to teach them with love and affection or administer Discipline whenever required, as they possess detailed knowledge of their students.* Similarly, parent participant 4, living in an urban area, stated that his children never got punished by the teachers as they always did their work.

On the contrary, participant 4 of the focused group 1, a female elementary school teacher, supported this regulation and expressed gratitude to our government for introducing such a fantastic policy. In the same way, focused group 2 participant 1, a female teacher who also served as a head teacher, reported that this policy had also improved the school environment. She stated, *"This is a good slogan; it benefits the students, and they should be taught with love and affection rather than strictness. Some male teachers of the past relied on excessive physical Punishment on their students". Similarly*, parent participant 05, who was M. Phil in Education, pointed out that:*"Corporal punishment often comes out from the depths of our inner emotions, a manifestation of uncontrolled aggression, rather than a measured one."*

However, a desire for learning and self-motivation can be an adequate substitute for Punishment in encouraging kids to learn. Their teacher or the community is the most significant sources of enthusiasm and motivation. But only some teachers can motivate their charges. For this reason, they frequently penalize the pupils. Participant 1, an elementary school teacher with a bachelor's degree who specialized in teaching English, explained this;
"Incorporating corporal punishment into the education can serve as a motivator for learning, as without it, the students may untether from the pursuit of knowledge." He also added that this is the reason for the decline in the results of the matriculation board exam. He also recalled an instance: *Despite teaching them with care and love and giving the students proper time to learn a particular lesson, the students needed to have understood better. Only 3-5 students knew their work; however, when I threatened them that I would call their parents or punish them, more than half of the students did their work.*

Discipline Problems

The English teacher described the pupils' deplorable state. When instructed without the use of Punishment, they became lethargic and refused to do their assignments even when given enough time. This circumstance also highlights that pupils only complete their work out of fear of Punishment rather than out of a desire to learn or better themselves.
But, given the current circumstances, teachers were powerless to discipline students or motivate them to act outside their authority. Here are the perspectives of teacher participant no. 4 on this matter. "*Children learn by two factors. One thing is that students with a passion learn the lessons. On the other hand, children (students) with no passion can only learn if they are fearful*

or afraid of the consequences of their teachers". Similarly, a parent participant, participant 6, described that these two factors are also helpful for maintaining discipline and education. He stated: "*Discipline is always implemented due to two factors. First is the sense of responsibility, the second is the fear of the punishment."*

Most teachers also mentioned that if there was no punishment, the teachers needed to use other forms of discipline. Among these choices, the fail-pass-based evaluation model was originally an option. However, this policy has since been discontinued, and all pupils must advance to the eighth grade. Each of these reduced the standard of education. Participant 2, the teacher, characterized this as; "*The quality of education became too low after this policy. Although students may get good marks, it is only due to the policy of assessment, paper pattern, marking system, cramming, and 100% of students' promotion students to higher classes".*

Students become disinterested as a result of this as well. Whether or not the students get promoted to the next class based on their exam results under the current promotion formula ultimately leads to their failure in the long run. Participant 6, a female teacher who continued to work as a district teacher educator, described this as:

> *Before this policy, the students had responded well, and there was accountability. They knew that if they learned their lessons, they would be able to get a promotion for the next class. But this is different nowadays as all students get a promotion. We repeatedly ask the students to read, remember, and learn their lessons, but to no effect.*

Students Behavior and Academic Performance

Teacher Participant 4, who has 30 years of experience in teaching Urdu, explained that although he thinks that punishing the students when they don't do their work is not a good idea, it is suitable for our students. In his words, "*Punishment of the students in their studies is not a good idea. There is no doubt about that, but, in my experience, before the advent of this policy, our teaching methodologies and approaches were better to some extent at those times". S*imilarly, another senior teacher, participant 5, who teaches Urdu, pointed out that this slogan is just like poison h*e* pointed out this as;

> *This slogan is like poison since it is rooted in the minds of students. Students don't pay heed to their studies. They neither read nor write. Now, if we ask a 10th-grader to write his/her complete bio-data in Urdu, he/she would not be able to.*

Two extreme perspectives on the punishment are presented in the paragraph above. Teaching Urdu at the secondary level is something both of these teachers do, and one acknowledges that it is not a good idea to punish students. Before implementing this policy, punishing students was accepted as usual and aligned with the teaching strategies and methodologies of the day because there were fewer qualified teachers in terms of professional and academic credentials. The other participant supported Punishment since, before this policy, he had to manage students without Punishment after being accustomed to maintaining them with it. Some teachers have not followed this policy since its implementation, as some teachers don't use alternate methods to engage the students in their studies.

A female school teacher, Participant 2 of Focused Group 1, who was teaching secondary-level arts subjects, including English, Urdu, and Polish Studies, described that there must be psychological treatment for the students as everyone is not equal. *"Understanding individual differences is the key to effective education and guidance. To nurture the potential of every student, a balance between Discipline and affection is vital, just as a delicate balance exists in*

nature". Similarly, parent participant 5 also described that "*strictness is essential by some sort of psychological measures to avoid the strict corporal punishment."*
Participant 2 of the focused group 3, an Arabic teacher teaching Arabic and Islamic studies to elementary and high classes, described that this policy has brought chaos and disorder in the schools. He was of the view that this policy needed to be more suitable up to enrollment and should have been introduced after matriculation. He also gave the example of our own houses and stated that when in our own homes, we cannot maintain Discipline without intervening and proper checks and balances. How can we maintain Discipline at schools without reward and Punishment? He described his experiences as;

> *It is easier to control the students with rewards and Punishment. They need to be more stubborn and ready to listen to our instructions. In the absence of consequences, some students choose to wander freely, even during school hours, for they believe no one can restrain them.*

He further added that this sort of student behaviour disturbs the school environment and society. He explained his point of view as; *"Not only the teaching-learning process but the overall school environment and the society as a whole is disturbing. Now even some students are taking drugs at schools and outside the schools".* A primary school teacher who participated in focused group 3 explained that fear and reward are the two things that might drive us on. He stated that incentives and sanctions should be appropriate for primary school pupils, typically between 10 and 13. Additionally, he questioned this government's stance, saying that Punishment should be outlawed universally if it is so terrible. Every institution, including the courts and the police, should refrain from using Punishment on convicts and instead educate and inspire them.

The concept of Punishment in schools remains an inevitable part of the educational process, even though it could spark debates and create opposing points of view. Schools intend to provide a conducive studying environment, promote subject knowledge, and offer students the essential abilities to deal with the obligations that await them in their future endeavours by way of enforcing guidelines and implementing punishments. However, it's far more important that educators and administrators deal with Punishment with compassion, equity, and willpower for restorative justice whenever possible. By striking a cautious stability among empathy and Discipline, in addition to supplying learning opportunities, they can correctly perform the motive of Punishment in schools, that is, to foster students' educational and personal development even while maintaining a well-mannered and secure studying environment.

Discussion

The slogan "*Maar Nahi Pyar*" is more detrimental than beneficial, as most students only work when driven either by a sincere desire to learn or out of fear of Punishment. The study Punishing is Inevitable contradicts the findings of Toft and Zhukov (2012) and is consistent with Zolotor et al. (2010). Teachers are more suited to determine the most successful methods for their children since they frequently act as surrogate parents. This research aligns with the findings of Adebayo, O. (2020). However, the fail-pass system's lack of accountability has led to a lack of responsibility. Most Students only work correctly with Punishment. This study is consistent with Bortolotti et al. (2015) and Abbas et al. (2018).

Public awareness efforts addressing the change in laws governing physical Punishment have ranged from almost nonexistent in countries where it is prohibited to massive campaigns that persist years after the bans (Durrant & Smith, 2010). Consequently, it makes sense that we observed differences in national rates of corporal Punishment and convictions about the need to

use it—not only due to legal prohibitions but also in ways specific to certain nations. Historically, nations have focused more on fostering children's psychological development after making significant strides toward ensuring survival (Jensen et al., 2015). This paradigm has been evolving, possibly due to global initiatives to support children's well-being, with initiatives to support children's survival and development becoming more integrated, especially in low-income nations (Huebner et al., 2013).

The importance of including interventions aimed at changing beliefs and providing education about alternatives to corporal Punishment is illustrated in a study of Kenyan teachers eight years after the Kenyan government banned corporal Punishment in schools. Although the teachers were aware of the law, they continued to use corporal punishment because they believed it was the most effective way to discipline children (Mweru, 2010). In reviewing the history and context of the legal ban on corporal Punishment in Sweden, Durrant (2011) noted that the ban was meant to be educational rather than punitive. Before the legal prohibition of corporal Punishment, children already had the same protections against assault as adults. In effect, the legal ban on corporal Punishment did not create a new crime but instead was meant to communicate clearly to parents that chastisement was not an acceptable way of bringing up children (Durrant, 2012).

Countries may differ in legal consequences associated with using corporal Punishment after it is outlawed, and these differences in legal consequences might account for differences in the effects of the bans. The three theoretical models of behaviour change that guided our study (Ajzen, 2011) suggest that laws induce behaviour change because they function as a public instantiation of societal beliefs about the appropriateness of a particular behaviour and because they involve a set of rewards and punishments for behaving by the law (or not). The pattern of decreasing reported use of corporal Punishment and belief in its necessity from Time 1 to Time 2 in Ukraine supports this theoretical expectation regarding behaviour change following the outlawing of corporal Punishment, as did the pattern of findings in Togo showing a decrease in the reported use of severe corporal Punishment from Time 1 to Time 2.

The pattern of findings in Togo concerning milder forms of corporal Punishment and belief in its necessity was inconsistent with expectations derived from the theoretical models. Recognizing that changing the law is not always sufficient to change behaviour, several public awareness campaigns have been developed to promote awareness of laws involving corporal Punishment, to impart knowledge regarding the adverse effects of corporal Punishment, and to build capacity in using non-violent forms of Discipline (Durrant & Smith, 2011). In addition, many parenting interventions have incorporated components designed to change beliefs and behaviours related to corporal Punishment and alternate forms of Discipline (Holden et al., 2014).

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to examine and learn more about the complex viewpoints of teachers and parents who have seen the shift in the school atmosphere from a punitive technique to the "*Maar Nah Pyar*" slogan. A thorough examination of their opinions revealed three key themes. The first outstanding theme reflects the belief that punishment remains a necessary issue of classroom control. Several teachers and parents expressed reservations about relinquishing punitive measures, maintaining that favourable conditions necessitate disciplinary moves to keep

order and foster duty. This viewpoint shows the complexity of adopting the new slogan because it contends with deeply ingrained disciplinary norms and perceptions.

The findings of this study highlight the complex effect of the "*Maar Nahi Pyar*" slogan on the students' motivation and conduct. It becomes glaring that, for most students, the concern of punishment or an actual ardour for learning is the primary riding pressure for their academic engagement. While instructors play a pivotal role in students' lives, their potential to determine powerful strategies is often needed by the need for more accountability in the fail-pass system. This loss of duty amongst students reflects a concerning trend where many need to perform accurately with the presence of punitive measures.

The studies indicate that the "*Maar Nahi Pyar*" slogan, meant to promote a more compassionate technique to education, has inadvertently brought about a decline in pupil motivation and reluctance to take responsibility for their getting to know. These findings light up the demanding situations each instructor and policymaker faces in fostering a balanced and effective instructional environment that combines love and field to encourage students' intrinsic motivation and academic growth.

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