



A Study On The Parents' And Students' Attitudes Towards The Implementation Of Punishment Free Zone At Primary Level Schools Of Balangir District

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Abstract: The present study aims to investigate the parents and students' attitude towards the implementation of punishment-free zone at the Primary level schools. A descriptive survey method was used for the present study. For the present study 51 Parents (male, female & rural, urban) and 50 students of Balangir district were selected purposively as sample of the present study. The data collected from the parents was analyzed and interpreted by SPSS while the students' data were analyzed by the simple percentage according to their response. The findings showed that there is no significant difference between male and female parents & rural and urban parents because pain is pain for all and fear is fear for all. All these students were treated equally and there are other methods that can build confidence and discipline without using physical punishment among students.

Keywords- Punishment-free zone, Attitude of parents and students, Elementary Level, Punishment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans, often is considered creatively powerful among all living beings, are equipped with education to foster development. Historically, systems like India's Gurukul employed strict, rigid rules where punishment for mischiefs was common, typically involving physical tasks rather than fostering mental or physical growth.

In today's scientific era, education is universally essential. However, the modern formal system can cause unhappiness when students feel compelled to conform, partly due to the persistence of corporal punishment. Defined as deliberately inflicting pain in response to undesired behaviour, its use has declined since the 1950s but persists globally, often administered more severely and frequently to boys more than girls. While India's stated educational goal is child-centric learning based on love and affection, reality often differs.. Its purpose extends beyond intelligence to include moral ethics, values, discipline, character building, and personality shaping. Successful classroom learning depends significantly on teachers, encompassing both instruction and classroom management. Effective

management creates a positive learning environment through strong student-teacher relationships. Traditionally, discipline involved punishment for mistakes.

This leads to the concept of a Punishment-Free Zone. This approach deliberately avoids conventional punitive measures like reprimands, detentions, or physical penalties. Instead, it emphasizes understanding, guidance, and support using positive reinforcement, open dialogue, and restorative practices. The core belief is that behaviour improves more effectively through empathy, mutual respect, and proactive strategies than through fear or control. Mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities and signs of progress.

It is applied in settings like schools, homes, workplaces, and therapy, the aim is to cultivate safe, emotionally healthy environment, where individuals, especially children, can express themselves, learn from experiences, introspect and develop self-discipline, accountability, and social awareness.

In Schools: Instead of detention or suspension, educators address challenges through calm discussions, conflict resolution, and restorative justice (e.g., reflection, peer mediation, repairing harm). This educates and promotes lasting behavioral change without shaming.

In Homes: Punishment-free parenting uses explanations, emotional support, and consistent boundaries instead of yelling or physical punishment. Strategies like "time-ins" (calm reflection space) replace punitive "time-outs". The fundamental shift moves away from coercion towards fostering intrinsic motivation and responsibility through positive relationships and constructive problem-solving.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Corporal punishment refers to the use of physical methods intended to impose pain as a consequence for behavior. Commonly seen among minors in home and school environments, examples of such methods include spanking and paddling. When it comes to adults, particularly in correctional settings, it can take forms like whipping with a belt or horsewhip. Historically, physical penalties for crimes or misconduct, such as floggings, brandings, and even mutilations, were prevalent across various civilizations. However, as humanitarian ideals developed following the Enlightenment, many societies began to perceive these practices as increasingly inhumane. By the late 20th century, many developed countries started to eliminate corporal punishment from their legal frameworks. The legality and acceptance of corporal punishment vary widely across different jurisdictions. In recent decades, the principles of human rights have increasingly influenced the discussion surrounding corporal punishment in various contexts, leading to important conversations about its implication and alternatives.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The education of traditional period is very difficult as compared to modern. Not going too far into history, but just comparing 18th century with 21st century education, we see there is a huge difference in the attitude, aptitude, perception, mental ability, and talent of both the teachers and students. Generally, we hear that traditional teachers used to punish their students if they made any sorts of non-acceptance mistake. The same practice is now considered as a crime in the current academic atmosphere, where corporal punishment is banned. We can't face the rules of the past in present day. There is something exciting about the perception specifically related to corporal punishment. There were numerous research studies conducted upon it. Most researchers agree that parents, teachers and students towards corporal punishment and the researcher found that "physical punishment creates pain, fear and feelings of humiliation and does not properly cure the cause of misconduct" (Kilmici, 2009; Singh & Shukla, 2013; Muchhal & Kumar, 2016). But one of the researchers claim that corporal punishment tends to bring negativity and makes the child to resort to violence (Kalaivani, 2016). Apart from that the review provided another direction. Few researchers agreed that the most of the teachers and parents had a positive attitude towards punishment free zone at elementary school (Singh & Pradhan, 2024). Because the use of corporal punishments bring discipline among students and remove the bad habits that Cause indiscipline in their life (Singh & Shukla, 2013). Iskandar et al. (2024) agreed that skinner theory of reward and punishment is one of the techniques in building student discipline in

elementary school which was different from other mentioned findings. But Policastro et al. (2024) and Singh and Shukla (2013) believed that corporal punishment was not effective as there were better ways to punish a child rather than using corporal punishment. Afifi (2012) stated that “the use of physical punishment and provide evidence that harsh physical punishment independent of child maltreatment is related to mental disorder”. But Some others researchers claim that childhood corporal punishment shown to have effect on children’s psychological development and both parents are equally affecting the child psychological development (Chong & Yeo, 2018). Another one researcher claims that corporal punishment harms physical, mental and educational outcomes and calls for global bans with teacher training (Gershoff, 2017). Pajarillo-Aquino (2019) believe that punishment had weaker effects on students whereas rewards significantly improved the student’s performance. But few researchers agreed that majority of teachers (97.1%) agreed discipline is essential, but (61.7%) believed corporal punishment was not effective and students largely viewed corporal punishment as an effective disciplinary method (Bailey, et al., 2014). Some others researchers claim that the (55.7%) of pupils reportedly experiencing physical abuse at least once during their school’s life including Male- 73.2%, and Female- 26.6% (Ba-Saddik, et al., 2013). Breen, et al. (2015) stated that corporal punishment remains normalized & pervasive in children’s lives, contributing to negative emotional effects and reinforcing cycle of violence and emphasized the need for culturally sensitive prevention strategies and alternatives. Deb (2025) agreed that Indian school students suffer from high levels of academic stress, abuse, family violence, social discrimination & mental health issues. Dobbs (2007) claim that 92% of children’s reported that physical punishment was used in their homes and children’s express feelings of fear, anger, sadness & rejection and it emotionally damaging the children’s. But others researchers state that corporal punishment is a normative but harmful practice among Tanzanian primary school children’s (Hecker, et al., 2014). But Rimal and Pokharel (2014) believed that physical punishment tends to cause immediate compliance but does not teach self-control/ desired behavior long-term. Feinstein and Mwachombela (2010) claimed that majority of teachers and students were unaware of national restrictions and students also dislike the practices. Some researchers claim that corporal punishment has been abolished & unlawful in South African school yet many educators still view it is the primary means to maintain discipline (Mashau, et al., 2015). But Samuel et al. (2024) stated that 69.7% of stakeholder’s had a negative attitude of towards of corporal punishment while 30.3% had a positive attitude. Some others researchers claim that advocating for alternative disciplinary methods to promote healthier child development and societal well-being (Straus & Donnelly, 2001).

IV. RESEARCH GAP:

So, no studies have been conducted to ascertain how these variables interact to affect student’s perceptions and performance in the classroom. In previous studies it has been noted that the parents’ attitudes partly favorable & partly unfavorable towards the punishment free zone (Baral et al., 2019), and also noted that parents show more negative attitude towards physical punishment as it creates pain, fear and feelings of humiliation. Researchers also noticed that punishment does not remove the cause of misbehavior. The present study attempted to fill the gap as to both parents and student’s attitude towards the punishment-free zone were taken into account for examined.

Today’s education system, we find numerous challenges that students face. These obstacles should not be ignored. Children have the right to protection from all form of violence, abuse, and maltreatment. Corporal punishment, in any context, violates the right. Respecting children’s rights to protection, health, development, and education necessitates that corporal punishment should be prohibited by law and eliminated in practice, creating a punishment-free learning environment supported by the government. So, the importance of the present study is that, will help the students, teachers and also the parents to deliver the lesson in front of the entire classroom free, the students also feel comfortable while sitting in the classroom, the parents also feel comfortable and safe when sending their children into the classroom, the teachers also feel comfortable by listen different types of complaint from parents. The present study attempts to study the attitude of parents and students towards the

implementation of punishment free zone at elementary schools in relation to their demographic variables.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this present study, which aims to gather the perspectives of parents and students on the concept of a punishment-free zone in elementary level school. As the current study is about the collection of attitudes of both parents and students here the present investigator used descriptive survey method for the entire study.

All the parents of elementary level students and all the students those who have studying in elementary level schools of Balangir district were the population of the study.

Out of all the parents and students of elementary level of Balangir district, 51 parents and 50 students were selected purposively as sample for the present study.

For collecting data from the students, the investigator used self-develop questionnaire which is only mean for students and also used standardized tools which was developed by Baral et al., 2019. Each statement has five alternative response, Namely- Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. The values given to the alternatives are 5,4,3,2,1 respectively. The google form was used to collect data from parents. In the Google forms there were 10 statements for measuring the parent's attitude in that tool where 1 to 5 ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

As per the study's objectives, the present investigator used arithmetic mean and t-test for analyze and interpret the gathered data with the help of SPSS.

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Objective 01- To study the attitude of parents towards the implementation of punishment free zone at elementary schools in relation to their gender

There is no significance difference between the attitude of male and female towards PFZ

TABLE NO- 1: (Gender wise significance difference in attitude of parents towards PFZ)

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	T-Value	Significance Level
Score	MALE	50	34.1800	6.61072	102	1.685	0.05
	FEMALE	54	31.6852	8.31644			

Not Significant at 0.05 Level

From table 01 it can be seen that the calculated T-value is 1.68 with 102 df at 0.05 level of significance. The mean of the gender is 34.18 and 31.68 respectively for male and female. Here the null hypothesis is accepted as the calculated T-value is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, there is no significance difference between the attitude of male and female towards punishment-free zone at elementary level.

It can be assumed that the male and female parents show a positive attitude towards the implementation of punishment free-zone and they understand that punishment creates more pain, fear among their children. But the present study is creating contradictory with the findings of Baral et al. (2019). Because Baral et al. (2019) mentioned that the attitude of parents towards the PFZ is partly favorable and partly unfavorable but in the present study there is no significant difference exists between the male and female attitude of parents. Because male and female they have one child and physical punishment it may be match with the result of Rizwaan et al. (2012).

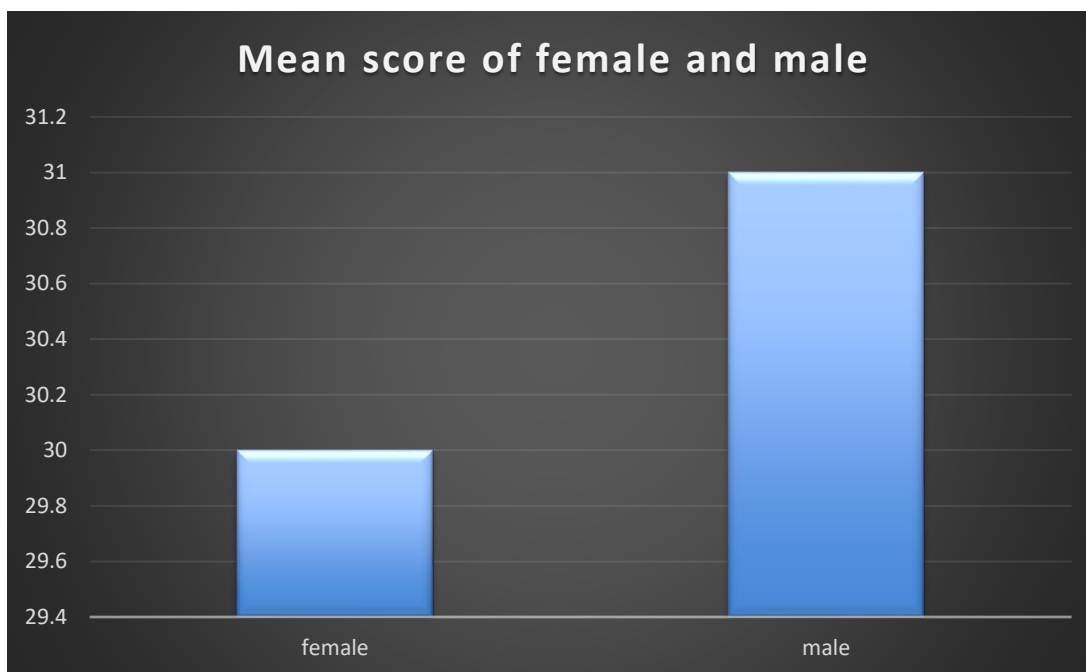


Figure no-1 (Mean score of female and male parents)

VI.I. Objective 02- To study the attitude of parents towards the implementation of punishment free zone at elementary schools in relation to their locality

There is no significance difference between attitude of rural and urban parents towards PFZ.

TABLE NO- 2: (Locality wise significance difference in attitude of parents towards PFZ)

	Locality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	T-Value	Significance Level
Score	RURAL	51	34.0000	6.74092	102	1.07	0.05
	URBAN	53	32.4528	7.90221			

Not Significant at 0.05 Level

From table 02 it can be seen that the calculated T-value is 1.07 with 102 df at 0.05 level of significance. The mean of the locality is 34.00 and 32.45 respectively for rural and urban. Here the null hypothesis is accepted as the calculated T-value is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, there is no significance difference between the attitude of male and female towards punishment-free zone at elementary level.

It can be assumed that the rural and urban areas parents show a positive attitude towards the implementation of punishment free-zone and they understand that punishment creates more pain, fear among their children. The present result is tentatively it may be match with the result of Rizwaan et al. (2012). Because Rizwaan et al. (2012) mentioned that physical punishment creates pain, fear, and feelings of humiliation and does not remove the cause of misbehavior. So here it may be happened that the both parents of rural and urban areas are does not want to feel the pain and feeling of humiliation that their student's feel. At the time of data collection the present researcher can organize some interview with the parents at that time with the parents gives some suggestion regarding the punishment that there are other disciplinary method exist in the education system but the corporal punishment is not effective and exists some efficient method for removing the misbehavior of the students and it is similar with Singh and Shukla (2013). So, the there is no significant difference between rural and urban parents.

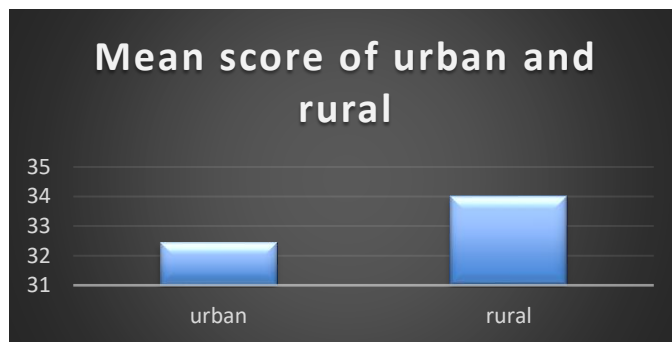


Figure no- 2 (Mean score of urban and rural parents)

VII. Table NO- 3: Attitude of the students towards the PFZ at elementary school

Below Attitude of students towards PFZ were analyzed by using percentage.

No	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
Q1	How do you think a punishment free zone could affect the student's behavior?	29.6%	16.7%	20.4%	11.1%	22.2%
Q2	Do you think a PFZ could help reduce stress or anxiety among student's?	18.5%	29.6%	13%	18.5%	20.4%
Q3	In your opinion teachers can promote good behavior without using punishment?	14.8%	24.1%	25.9%	18.5%	16.7%
Q4	Do you feel safe if the school implemented a PFZ?	9.3%	14.8%	13%	35.2%	27.8%
Q5	Do you think a PFZ would help to improve the relationship between students and teachers?	14.8%	18.5%	16.7%	22.2%	27.8%
Q6	Do you think that a PFZ is fair and effective for all students?	24.1%	9.3%	25.9%	18.5%	22.2%
Q7	Do you think that a PFZ could bring some benefits to your school community?	11.1%	22.2%	14.8%	25.9%	25.9%
Q8	Do you think teachers and staff could do to support students in a PFZ without using punishment?	9.3%	22.2%	33.3%	14.8%	20.4%
Q9	Do you believe a PFZ would make the school feel safe for all students ?	9.3%	22.2%	16.7%	24.1%	27.8%
Q10	Do you think conflicts between student could be resolved in a PFZ ?	13%	18.5%	13%	18.5%	37%

The above table represents the attitude of the elementary level school students towards the punishment-free zone. As per the obtained data, it revealed that near about 29.6% student's positively stated that punishment free zone could affect their behavior, where 33.3% students disagree about that statement, and remaining 20.4% students are neutral towards the statement, and minimum 16.7% students only agree. But in Q2 near about 18.5% students showed a positive attitude regarding PFZ could help reduce stress and anxiety among them, and the attitude of students towards the Q2 29.6% were satisfactory, near 13% are neutral towards the statement, and 18.5% students were disagreeing towards PFZ could help reduce stress or anxiety among students, near 20.4% students show their attitude negative towards in Q2. But in the Q3 14.8% students were strongly agree towards the teachers can promote good behavior

without using punishment, while 24.1% students were satisfactory, and near 25.9% showed their attitude neutral from, and 18.5% were disagree towards the good behavior cannot promote without using punishment, 16.7% students showed negative attitude towards the respective statement. and in Q4 near only 9.3% students strongly supports towards feel safe if the school implemented a PFZ, and 14.8% were just agree, but 13% students showed neutral attitude, and maximum students were towards the statements. In next Q5 show that near 14.8% students strongly showed positive attitude, where only 18.5% students showed agree, but 16.7% were neutral response, and 22.2% students showed negative attitude, where 27.8% strongly negative attitude towards the statement. Then on Q6 students show near 24.1% strong positive attitude towards the PFZ is fair and effective for all students, but only 9.3% were satisfactory, and 25.9% students showed neutral attitudes, and maximum 18.5% disagree, where 22.2% were strongly negative attitudes. In next Q7 students shows that 11.1% strongly agree, where 22.2% agree, but only 14.8% were neutral because they didn't understand properly the statement, and 25.9% showed their negative attitude towards the PFZ could bring some benefits to your school community, and 25.9% students were strongly show their negative attitudes. In Q8 students shows their attitude near 9.3% positive, where 22.2% were only satisfaction, but 33.3% were show neutral attitude, but 35.2% students show their negative response towards the statement. Then in Q9 where students show that only 9.3% showed positive attitude, where 22.2% showed agree, and 16.7% were neutral, and maximum 51.9% students showed their negative attitude towards the PFZ would make the school feel safe for all students. and Last one Q10 showed near 13% students were strongly agree, where 18.5% were agree, but only 13% were neutral, and minimum 18.5% students were disagreed, where 37% students were strongly disagreed towards the conflicts between student could be resolved in a punishment-free zone.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT:

It can be assumed that the male and female parents show a positive attitude towards the implementation of punishment free-zone and they understand that punishment creates more pain, fear among their children. But the present study is creating contradictory with the findings of Baral et al. (2019). Because Baral et al. (2019) mentioned that the attitude of parents towards the PFZ is partly favorable and partly unfavorable but in the present study there is no significant difference exists between the male and female attitude of parents. Because male and female they have one child and physical punishment it may be match with the result of Rizwaan et al. (2012). It can be assumed that the rural and urban areas parents show a positive attitude towards the implementation of punishment free-zone and they understand that punishment creates more pain, fear among their children. The present result is tentatively it may be match with the result of Rizwaan et al. (2012). Because Rizwaan et al. (2012) mentioned that physical punishment creates pain, fear, and feelings of humiliation and does not remove the cause of misbehavior. So here it may be happened that the both parents of rural and urban areas are does not want to feel the pain and feeling of humiliation that their student's feel. At the time of data collection also parents the present researcher can organized some interview with the parents at that time with the parents gives some suggestion regarding the punishment that there are other disciplinary method exist in the education system but the corporal punishment is not effective and exists some efficient method for removing the misbehavior of the students and it is similar with Singh and Shukla (2013). So, the there is no significant difference between rural and urban parents. But according to the report of Express News Service (2024) 57 cases were lies between 2010 and 2024 where six cases were respectively from the district of Sundargarh, Balangir, Jajpur where five cases were reported from the Mayurbhanj district. So still some schools are there where practice of corporal punishment is continued to bring discipline, building social manners, standards among students of rural areas to become an activate role maker, creator, and good social citizenship to meet the diverse recruitment of the society. Also Senapati (2024) reported that a 7-year-old student stayed for at least 2 hours In front of the school gate by principal because of disturbing inside the classroom during the instructional process.

IX. Opinion of parents towards corporal punishment:

Opinions on corporal punishment vary widely among parents and students, reflecting diverse cultural, social, and personal perspectives. Some parents believe corporal punishment is an effective disciplinary measure, citing its ability to immediately correct behavior. They may have experienced it themselves as children and see it as a traditional or cultural norm. Many parents oppose corporal punishment, arguing it can lead to physical harm, emotional trauma, and increased aggression in children. They advocate for alternative discipline methods, such as positive reinforcement and redirection. Some parents support corporal punishment in specific contexts, like at home, but not in schools or other settings. Others may believe it's acceptable for younger children but not for older ones.

X. Opinion of students towards corporal punishment:

Many students who have experienced corporal punishment report feelings of fear, resentment, and humiliation. They may view it as unfair, ineffective, or even abusive. And also, some students may comply with rules out of fear of physical punishment, but this doesn't necessarily promote long-term positive behavior. many students advocate for alternative discipline methods, such as restorative practices, counseling, or problem-solving, that focus on understanding and growth rather than punishment.

XI. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION:

1. Removing punitive measures encourages respect, empathy, and mutual understanding, leading to more welcoming and improved a positive learning environment.
2. Students are guided to take ownership of their actions and understand consequences through reflection, not fear, promoting long-term behavioral growth.
3. Without fear of punishment, students are more likely to communicate openly with the teachers, creating stronger bonds and mutual trusts.
4. Eliminating exclusionary discipline helps keep students engaged in schools and reduces the likelihood of academic failure or disengagement.

XII. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1. The study can be conduct at secondary and higher secondary levels.
2. The present study was only delimited to the Balangir district, Odisha, so it recommended that for covering other area.
3. The study can be conduct on attitudes of other stake holders towards the implementation of the punishment-free zone.
4. The study can take the Govt schools and private schools (as samples) and find the attitudinal difference among students.
5. A comprehensive study on the effects of the use of a punishment-free zone may be undertaken for further study.

XIII. CONCLUSION:

After the above analysis and interpretation, the present study revealed that the need and demand of the present educational system era is something needs more than that of the traditional education system. In this artificial intelligence and social media era, it is very difficult for teachers and parents to handle the children but in this punishment-free zone environment there exist some different

kinds of methods to handle the students and remove the cause of mischief. Nowadays teachers also need to apply more innovative ideas and methods by taking into consideration of the psychological aspects of the learners. It can be concluded by saying that the present study reveals that punishment-free zone is a good step taken by the Government of India which is a safe zone for students where there is a ban of any physical punishment inside this, which ultimately makes children free to go to school and learn creatively. From the above discussion it was found that there is no significant difference between male and female parents & rural and urban parents because of physical and mental torture. All these students were treated equally and there are other methods can build the confidence, discipline without using physical punishment among students.

XIV. Challenges after the implementation of punishment free zone

There are many kinds of challenges faced after implementation of a punishment-free zone specifically in Odisha, Bihar and some disadvantage state. One of the primary challenges after implementing a punishment-free zone is resistance to change. Some stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and parents, may struggle to adapt to the new approach, citing concerns about discipline and order. Express News Service (2024) reported that 57 cases were lies between 2010 and 2024 where six cases were respectively from the district of Sundargarh, Balangir, Jajpur where five cases were reported from the Mayurbhanj district where corporal punishment is still practice. So still some schools are there where these unethical practice of corporal punishment is continued to bring discipline, building social manners, standards among students of rural areas to become an activate role maker, creator, and good social citizenship to meet the diverse recruitment of the society. Also Senapati (2024) reported that a 7-year-old student stayed for at least 2 hours Infront of the school gate by principal because of disturbing inside the classroom during the instructional process

They may also worry that punishment free in school campus/classroom will lead to increase the deployment of respect towards teachers, acts and a decline in academic achievement. Addressing these concerns and providing support to stakeholders can help alleviate resistance and ensure a smooth transition and managing severe misconduct, such as violence or bullying, can be a significant challenge in a punishment-free zone. Educators must develop strategies to address these behaviors in a way that prioritizes safety, support, and rehabilitation. This may involve working with students to understand the underlying causes of their behavior, providing individualized support and counselling, and developing restorative solutions that promote healing and accountability and maintaining consistency and fairness in a punishment-free zone can be challenging. Without traditional punitive measures, educators must find alternative ways to ensure that students are held accountable for their actions. This may involve developing clear protocols for addressing misbehavior, providing individualized support and consequences, and ensuring that all students are treated with dignity and respect. and supporting teacher well-being is crucial in a punishment-free zone. Educators may need regular effective training and support to adapt to the new approach, and they may require additional resources to manage challenging behaviors.

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