



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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## PREVALENCE OF MISCONDUCT AND ADOPTION OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESS IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS IN TRICHY DISTRICT

A. Saravanan<sup>1</sup> and Dr. R. Portia<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Alagappa University College of Education, Karaikkudi, Tamil Nadu.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor in Education, Alagappa University College of Education, Karaikkudi, Tamil Nadu.

### ABSTRACT:

The present research is twofold in its aim; the first one being to record the intensity of four categories of misconducts in schools; followed by an indirect approach to dig out any cue about the awareness of institutions in respect of Restorative justice an innovative strategy to serve as a 'social healing' process to maintain a participative and peaceful school environment. The findings reveal the problem of misconduct in high school classes and the ignorance of school administration in adopting Restorative justice or related innovative strategies. The study has established the association between prevalence of misconduct and the disciplinary process adopted in terms of locality and type of school management.



**KEYWORDS:** Misconduct, Disciplinary Process, Restorative Justice, Overt Aggressive Behaviour, Covert Disruptive Behaviour, Attention Problem, Emotional Opposition.

### INTRODUCTION

No other field of activity undergoes such ocean of changes as in the field of formal education. Most of the productive fields face man versus man, as well as man versus machine conflicts. In several scientific fields and business areas man versus man conflict is predominant followed by man versus society. However, in the field of education there exists umpteen modes of conflicts as man versus man, man versus children, children versus family and man versus society. Due to

such variations, the problem arising in one conflict is likely to get multiplied because of the spontaneous ignition of similar or allied problems in other categories of conflicts. Whatever be the number of or mode of conflicts exists in an educational institution, the fact is that the spark of a small difference arising in one category looms large as the cause of conflicts in the institution. That is, the violation of an 'agreed' rule or norm of the institution by one of the two in a category is regarded as a 'misconduct' leading to problem creation reported as

'conflict'. The mechanism generally adopted in schools to manage or correct misconducts is regarded as a disciplinary process. It is a theoretical understanding that an institution infested with misconducts is sure to fail as a 'behaviour modifying unit' and to put the institution on the track of development. Still many of the school administrators and teachers are not aware of creative disciplinary process Restorative justice practices.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Reimer Kristin (2011) undertook

a case study to explore the implementation of Restorative justice within one Ontario public school. According to the researcher, Restorative justice is a philosophy, and a process of dealing with harmful behaviour. The researcher reported that while there is a personal commitment to the practice of Restorative justice on the part of teachers and administrators, it is difficult to sustain the Restorative justice programme, if the structures and the cultural systems are not in tune with the demand of Restorative justice.

Gallagher Dahl et al. (2014) developed a Restorative justice programme for a large university to induct students noted for misconduct. Students accused of misconduct, after going through the Restorative justice programme, participated in the conference and filled in a survey questionnaire regarding their motivation and perceived outcomes. The study revealed that the students who were motivated to make reparations to others had the best outcomes. Students who were forced to participate in the Restorative justice programme had fewer benefits.

Cremin Hilary et al. (2012) published an article focusing on 'interdisciplinary' preparations on restorative justice where in stated that 'grounded in criminology restorative justice also has roots in psychology, education, sociology, peace studies, philosophy and law. The authors convinced of interdisciplinary perspectives in the working of Restorative justice have strongly supported its applicability in education.

Pavelka Sandra (2013) in the article entitled 'practices and policies for implementing restorative justice within schools' enlightened the advantage of Restorative justice models in schools providing opportunity to improve school culture by addressing the disciplinary standards and creating a forum for peaceful resolution of conflicts and misbehaviours. Moreover, it was stressed that these Restorative justice models were useful to establish mutual, prescriptive agreement for resolving and repairing the harm caused by wrong doing.

The reviews support the assumption of the Researchers, that for tackling the problem of misconduct in schools, the formal disciplinary process and the informal disciplinary process adopted in schools generally may not be as helpful as they ought to be. Instead it is explicitly shown in the review; the Restorative justice is the only ideal strategy to offer a wholesome resolution to the conflict and 'fuller' reparation to the parties affected by some means.

### **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

It is not a misnomer that teacher is a change agent. He needs to be creative and innovative in his field of activity. But contrastingly, what happens is that even the innovations introduced in teaching by the Government are not successful in classrooms as the teachers infuse in them their own usual practices, and show the learning outcomes better, but with a loss of expected growth and development in learners. When the intended goal is not achieved at the grass root level, it will lead only to confusion causing 'misconduct' in learners. The presence of higher level misconduct in several institutions is an indication of failures on the part of teachers, and the Government. That is, the failure on the part of schools to make use of creative strategies such as 'Restorative justice' may be a cause for the prevalence of large scale misconducts. The study is meant for verifying the assumption.

The lethargy on the part of school administration in improving the discipline of the students is a fact beyond refusal. A casual talk with the students, teachers and the school administrators will reveal the lacunae on the part of the school administration. The major reason for this is their misconception about 'discipline'. By discipline they go by regularity to school, punctuality, coming in uniform, and other external features. There are lot more misbehaviours thriving unseen among students, and burst out now and then, and make the institutions crest fallen. Therefore, there is a need to study the prevalence of different categories of misconduct among the students who are in the early adolescent stage in the high schools.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Yesteryears, 'pin drop silence' were the order of the classroom, preceding and during the teaching-learning process. About two decades back, much of teaching-learning process witnessed a 'two

way process' with students interacting with teachers to clarify their doubts and supplementing the answers of others or rejecting the points, on the basis of their own interpretations. The present scenario is diagonally different from the previous ones, with students occupying the whole teaching-learning process, by initiating the topic or questions meant for discussions, to be picked up by the highly active ones for giving valid inputs, as answers for the questions stated, and to lead a relevant dialogue about the core, central idea or theme of the topic. The teacher as facilitator guides the student to think differently, and look for different interpretations by consulting other sources including websites. In such modern student centred teaching and learning, the classroom will be a place of reverberation of voices claiming, arguing, protesting, appreciating, condemning and encouraging the works and efforts of others on the basis of the correctness or usefulness of the information supplied for enlightening all in the class.

It implies, therefore, the nature of teaching learning process adopted in the class as fully teacher-dominated teaching-learning process; partially teacher, and partially learner-dominated teaching-learning process; and fully student-dominated and intermittently teacher facilitated teaching-learning process may have a hand indirectly in controlling the occurrence of misconducts in the classroom. But in reality, most of schools in Tamil Nadu seem to be still handicapped in effecting modern means of teaching. Moreover, the most crucial task of administration in schools is maintenance of discipline. Infact, the symbol of the standard of an institution is invariably the discipline of the students. The better the discipline of the students, the higher will be their overall performance in all aspects. It is almost the backbone of the institution. So, if discipline fails, the whole institution will crumble down silently in a short span of time. Nevertheless it is the least bothered area in educational institutions, as large percentage stakeholders feel satisfied with the 'moderate' achievements of the learners. Therefore, the Researchers assumed that the prevalence of misconduct in the high schools in Tamil Nadu may be attributed to the traditional mode of approaches followed by teachers in teaching; the disciplinary process adopted; and the culture based characteristics common to people of different localities. Thus the topic of research is stated as follows.

### OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- **Prevalence of Misconduct:** It means the presence of four categories of misconducts, i) Overt aggressive behaviour, ii) Covert disruptive behaviour, iii) Affection problem and iv) Emotional oppression behaviour among students of different classes.

Operationally, it is the frequency of occurrence of different categories of misconducts recorded over a period of one month in the 'Misconduct Checklist' prepared by the Researchers.

- **Disciplinary Process:** It means the strategies adopted in schools to correct the misconducts of the students. The categories, i) Formal disciplinary process ii) Informal disciplinary process and iii) Creative/innovative disciplinary process.

Operationally, it is the score obtained on the three categories of 'Disciplinary process Questionnaire' prepared by the Researchers that decides the degree of prevalence of each one of them as high, moderate and low.

### OBJECTIVES

- To find the intensity of occurrence of different categories of misconducts in the high schools in Trichy district in total and in terms of locality and type of management.
- To find the degree of adoption of different disciplinary process in the high schools in Trichy in total and in terms of locality and type of management.
- The find the association between the degree of adoption of different disciplinary process and the occurrence of misconducts in the high schools in Trichy in total and in terms of locality and type of management.

## METHODOLOGY

The stated problem demands quantitative data for adopting **Survey method** of research, suitable for analysis. All the students studying from standard 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> in the schools in Trichy district form the population of the study. The sample of the study is formed of 320 students studying from standard 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> in the high schools in Trichy district, chosen by stratified random sampling method.

## RESEARCH TOOLS

- Misconduct Checklist Prepared by the Researchers.
- Disciplinary Process Questionnaire Prepared by the Researchers.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

**Table 1: Prevalence of Misconduct among High School Students**

Highly Prevalent	Moderately Prevalent	Low Prevalent
Overt Aggressive Behaviour (41.2%)	Covert Disruptive Behaviour (21.4%), Attention Problems (20.3%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (17.1%)

Overt aggressive behaviour was highly prevalent (41.2%); Covert disruptive behaviour (21.4%) and Attention problems (20.3%) were moderate; and Emotional opposition behaviour (17.1%) was of low prevalent.

**Table 2: Prevalence of Misconduct among High School Students in terms of Locality**

Locality	Highly Prevalent	Moderately Prevalent	Low Prevalent
Village Panchayat	Overt Aggressive Behaviour (40.1%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (19.5%), Covert Disruptive Behaviour (19.9%)	Attention Problems (20.5%)
Town Panchayat	Attention Problems (38.5%)	Overt Aggressive Behaviour (23.2%), Covert Disruptive Behaviour (21.1%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (19.8%)
Municipality/ Corporation	Covert Disruptive Behaviour (39.4%),	Attention Problems (20.9%), Overt Aggressive Behaviour (20.4%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (19.3%)

The students of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> standard in the schools in Village panchayat were highly prevalent in Overt aggressive behaviour (40.1%); moderately prevalent in Emotional opposition behaviour (19.5%) and Covert disruptive behaviour (19.9%) and low prevalent in the misconduct Attention problems (20.5%).

While analyzing the data of Town panchayat students, they were found to be highly prevalent in Attention problems (38.5%); moderately prevalent in Overt aggressive behaviour (23.2%) and Covert disruptive behaviour (20.4%); and low in Emotional opposition behaviour (19.8%).

In the case of Municipality/Corporation, the high school students were high in Covert disruptive behaviour (39.4%); moderate in Attention problem (20.9%) and Overt aggressive behaviour (20.4%); and low in the prevalence of Emotional opposition behaviour (19.3%).

**Table 3: Prevalence of Misconduct among High School Students in terms of Type of Management**

Type of Management	Highly Prevalent	Moderately Prevalent	Low Prevalent
Government	Overt Aggressive Behaviour (40.4%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (21.1%), Attention Problems (20.2%)	Covert Disruptive Behaviour (18.3%)
Aided	Overt Aggressive Behaviour (41.2%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (22.1%), Covert Disruptive Behaviour (20.4%)	Attention Problems (16.7%)
Private	Covert Disruptive Behaviour (39.7%)	Attention Problems (21.9%), Overt Aggressive Behaviour (20.5%)	Emotional Opposition Behaviour (17.9%)

The students of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> standard in the schools purely run by Government, were found to have high prevalence of Overt aggressive behaviour (40.4%); moderately prevalent in Emotional opposition behaviour (21.2%) and Attention problems (20.2%); and low prevalent in the misconduct Covert disruptive behaviour (18.3%).

While analyzing the data of high school students in Government aided schools, they were found to be highly prevalent in Overt aggressive behaviour (41.2%); moderately prevalent in Emotional opposition behaviour (22.1%) and Covert disruptive behaviour (20.4%); and low in Attention problems (16.7%).

In the case of students of private schools, they were high in Covert disruptive behaviour (39.7%); moderate in Attention problem (21.9%) and Overt aggressive behaviour (20.5%); and low in Emotional opposition behaviour (17.9%).

**Table 4: Adoption of different Disciplinary Process among High School Students**

Highly Adopted	Moderately Adopted	Low Adopted
Informal (41.4%)	Formal (32.8%)	Creative/Innovative strategy (25.8%)

Informal disciplinary process was highly adopted (41.4%); Formal disciplinary process (32.8%) moderately adopted; and Creative/innovative (25.8%) was of low adoption in the schools in Trichy district.

**Table 5: Adoption of different Disciplinary Process among High School Students in terms of Locality**

Locality	Highly Adopted	Moderately Adopted	Low Adopted
Village Panchayat	Informal (44.6%)	Formal (29.8%)	Creative/Innovative strategy (25.6%)
Town Panchayat	Formal (41.8%)	Creative/Innovative strategy (34.6%)	Informal (23.6%)
Municipality/Corporation	Creative/Innovative strategy (42.7%)	Formal (33.4%)	Informal (23.9%)

The data collected from the high schools in Village panchayat were found to show high adoption of Informal disciplinary process (44.6%); moderate adoption of Formal disciplinary process (29.8%) and low adoption of Creative/innovative strategy (25.6%).

In the case of high schools located in Town panchayat, the highly adopted disciplinary process was Formal (41.8%); moderately adopted was Creative/innovative strategy (34.6%); and low adopted disciplinary process is Informal (23.6%).

It is found that Creative/innovative strategy was highly adopted (42.7%); Formal process was moderately adopted, and Informal disciplinary process (33.4%) was of low adoption in the schools in Municipality/corporation area (23.9%).

**Table 6: Adoption of different Disciplinary Process among High School Students in terms of Type of Management**

Type of Management	Highly Adopted	Moderately Adopted	Low Adopted
Government	Formal (40.4%)	Informal (34.6%)	Creative/Innovative strategy (26%)
Aided	Formal (42.8%)	Creative/Innovative strategy (37.4%)	Informal (19.8%)
Private	Creative/Innovative strategy (38.2%)	Formal (34.4%)	Informal (27.4%)

While analyzing the data in terms of the type of school management, the Formal disciplinary process (40.4%) was highly adopted, Informal process was moderately adopted (34.6%); and the low adopted process was Creative/innovative strategy (26%) in the schools managed by Government.

In the case of Government aided schools, the dominant process adopted was Formal (42.8%); moderately adopted was Creative/innovative strategy (37.4%); and the low adopted was Informal process (19.8%).

In the case of schools run by private management, the dominant disciplinary process was Creative/innovative strategy (38.2%); moderately adopted one was Formal process (34.4%); and the low adopted was Informal process (27.4%).

**Table 7: Association between different Disciplinary Process and the Occurrence of Misconducts among High School Students in terms of Background Variables**

Dependent vs. Independent Variables	Background Variable	Category	n	$\chi^2$ value	p' value
Misconducts vs. Disciplinary process	Total	Total	20	19.2	0.00**
	Locality	Village Panchayat	8	31.4	0.00**
		Town Panchayat	10	29.5	0.00**
		Municipality	12	21.6	0.00**
	Type of Management	Government	18	25.8	0.00**
		Aided	12	30.6	0.00**
		Private	0	33.8	0.00**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

The association analysis clearly reveals the presence of significant association between the adoption of disciplinary processes and the misconducts prevalent among the high school students in terms of total sample, type of locality, and type of school management.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The computed percentage analysis for the total sample reveals that the misconducts coming under Overt aggressive behaviours are highly dominating in the students of high school classes, excepting the students of standard X, who are not included in the study. It is a clear indication of nonchalant attitude prevailing in schools among teachers and authorities to curb misconduct in any form in the early stage itself. The open and uncontrolled expressions of anger, in physically assaulting peers, tearing of books, damaging instruments, appliances, etc. are a sign of arrogance strongly woven with pride, intolerance, egoism, sadism and inhuman tendency to harm and trouble the weak. It is mainly because of lapses on the part of institutions to control the disorderly behaviour of their students in time. It is explicitly seen in the subsequent findings that the most desired disciplinary process 'creative and innovative' ones is the least adopted process in the institutions, while the ineffective and insufficient 'informal disciplinary process' is a largely adopted one. In such a condition, it is the only possibility.

Moreover, the associational analysis involving the presence of misconducts and disciplinary processes in terms of locality of institution, and type of school management has confirmed the relationships between the two variables aided by the nature of locality and type of management. The degree of academic and occupational exposure is found to increase, step by step from Village panchayat, to Town panchayat and then to Municipality. Similarly the system of overall supervision of teachers and students by the school authorities/management is known to increase successively from Government institutions to Government aided institutions and then to privately managed institutions. It is a known fact that with the increase in academic and occupational exposures, there would be increase in the awareness of people to promote their academic competence and occupational wellbeing by controlling all unwanted negative characteristics. Likewise the more systematic supervision over teachers and students by school authorities would affect more vigilance in them to bring out their best in their work with an awakened conscience. Hence the resultant association between misconducts and disciplinary processes is a reality, claiming a good space for the introduction of Restorative justice.

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