



Corporal Punishment

Why in News?

Recently, The **Chhattisgarh High Court** observed that subjecting a child to **Corporal Punishment** in school in the name of discipline or education is cruel, while dismissing a petition of a woman teacher accused of abetting the suicide of a student.

Key Points

- According to the court, imposition of corporal punishment on the child is not in consonance with his right to life guaranteed by [Article 21](#) of the [Constitution of India](#). Being small does not make a child a less human being than a grown up.

Corporal Punishment

▪ About:

- Corporal is defined by the **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**, as “**any punishment in which physical force is used** and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.”
 - According to the Committee, this mostly involves **hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking)** children with a hand or implements like sticks, belts, etc.
- According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), corporal or physical punishment is **highly prevalent globally, both in homes and schools**.
 - Around **60% of children aged 2-14 years** regularly suffer physical punishment by their parents or other caregivers.
- There is **no statutory definition of ‘corporal punishment’** targeting children in India.

▪ Types of corporal punishment:

- **Physical punishment**, as defined by the [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#), encompasses **any action that inflicts pain, injury, or discomfort** upon a child.
 - This includes coercing children into uncomfortable positions such as **standing on a bench, against a wall in a chair-like stance**, or with a school bag on their head.
 - It also involves practices like **holding ears through legs, kneeling, forced ingestion of substances**, and confining children to enclosed spaces within the school premises.
- **Mental harassment** pertains to non-physical mistreatment that **adversely affects a child's academic and psychological well-being**.
 - This form of punishment encompasses behaviours such as sarcasm, name-calling, scolding using **derogatory language, intimidation, and the use of humiliating remarks**.
 - It also includes actions like ridiculing, belittling, or shaming the child, creating an environment of emotional distress and discomfort.

