

Firmly deal with corporal punishment in schools

A headteacher brutally tortured a 14-year-old pupil in Mityana district. The tragedy at Bright Way Junior School is a chilling reminder of the dangers of corporal punishment. The school has since been closed and its headteacher rearrested.

Despite the legal ban on corporal punishment in schools, cases of violence against children continue. The National Violence Against Children Baseline Survey of June 2025 paints a grim picture. It shows that boys in secondary schools and technical institutions suffer mostly physical violence, while girls are subjected to sexual abuse. These findings confirm that schools are becoming breeding grounds for cruelty.

In Mityana, a pupil accused of theft was not afforded due process, counselling or parental involvement. Instead, she was beaten, tied with ropes and locked away overnight. This was not discipline; it was torture. That fellow pupils watched in tears as their classmate suffered shows how violence perpetuates fear and trauma among all children, not just the direct victim.

Parents, teachers and community leaders all share



EDITORIAL

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responsibility for this challenge. Teachers are entrusted with the care of children.

When they resort to corporal punishment, they betray that trust. Parents who ignore their children's needs or push them into child labour also fail in their duty. And education authorities who do not enforce the ban on corporal punishment allow this cycle of abuse to continue.

Stakeholders must confront this problem with urgency and resolve it decisively. Corporal punishment must be treated not as a disciplinary lapse, but as a criminal act. The arrest of Bright Way's headteacher is a step in the right direction, but such action must be consistent and serve as a deterrent.

Schools must strengthen violence prevention frameworks. Communities must embrace a socio-ecological approach to violence prevention. This means tackling the root causes such as poverty, broken families, peer pressure and harmful cultural norms. Parents must reclaim their role in nurturing children, while schools must prioritise counselling, mentorship and positive discipline methods.

Discipline does not mean pain. Respect, guidance and encouragement are far more effective in shaping responsible citizens than beatings and humiliation. Every child deserves dignity, safety and the chance to learn without fear.

Corporal punishment is violence — one that cripples children physically, emotionally and psychologically. It must be brought to an end.