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The Persistence of Bullying at School and Public Policy Responses: What Ails?

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**THE PERSISTENCE OF BULLYING AT SCHOOL
AND PUBLIC POLICY RESPONSES: WHAT AILS?**

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

DYSON COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

PACE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

This capstone research project looks at the pervasive problem of bullying in schools and investigates why despite almost all states in the US adopting anti-bullying policies, the problem does not seem to go away but in fact its incidence continues to rise. It shows through a careful literature review how a similar problem namely corporal punishment at schools has gone down in all states that have banned corporal punishment at schools despite the fact that its incidence in homes persists. However, notwithstanding the enactment of legislation against bullying in school, similar trends are not being seen in case of bullying and in fact rates of bullying as well as forms of bullying continue to creep up.

Primary research was conducted through a questionnaire distributed to anti-bullying school counselors/deputy principals/principals of a few schools in the two states of New York and New Jersey. The survey questionnaire was devised using a common anti-bullying policy framework (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program) used in most states and having each question correspond to one policy element of this framework. Surveys were sent out to nine schools in the two states. Finally, six schools in two states responded to the Survey Monkey Questionnaire. The findings of the research provide evidence in support of the hypothesis that while policies exist in both states, inadequate implementation of the policies, a failure to adopt a proactive approach by the schools, weak accountability of schools to proactively implement the policies and a continuing lack of understanding of the nuances of the problem of bullying contribute to the persistence and, in fact, rising trend of bullying in schools. In fact, all the schools seemed

defensive to acknowledge the extent of the problem and also displayed a lack of clear understanding of what the problem constituted in all its ramifications.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Construct of Study

While with the march of civilization, human life has become far less violent than before (Solomon, 2011), the extent to which this is mirrored in the lives of children is debatable. A number of single, extremely violent events in schools such as the Newtown, Connecticut event or the Columbine High School massacre have recently focused media and public attention on violence against children. While such types of violence are different from the type under investigation in this paper, they all underscore and highlight the grim reality that even in a twenty first century environment of increasing concern for individual rights, the right to be educated in safety and without violence is not something that can be taken for granted. Even though the world has become kinder and gentler, the youngest, most vulnerable and most innocent among us are often subject to mindless cruelty. This project focuses attention on one of the most common but perhaps most invidious drivers of violence against children: Bullying.

1.2 Defining Bullying

As a backdrop for the study of the construct of bullying, the research begins with a related topic, viz., Corporal Punishment. Corporal Punishment has been practiced since time immemorial in homes, orphanages, schools and neighborhoods all over the world and is still pervasive in many societies, including in the United States. It has been an enduring blemish on humankind since the dawn of civilization. Corporal Punishment, or its informal term “spanking,” has been a marked characteristic of both parenting and schooling. The broad definition of corporal punishment that this essay will use is “the

intentional application of physical and (psychological) pain (but not injury) as a method of changing behavior” (Guha, 2012). It usually involves parents or teachers striking a child with an implement such as a paddle, which is common in the US. But it can also include other kinds of humiliation such as making the child go into a corner of the room and stand or stay in a fixed posture for some time or do extra work, etc. (Blaya et al, 2008).

In the same way, bullying also reared its ugly head at about the same time as corporal punishment and similarly precedes written history of humankind. Bullying takes place globally transcending barriers of culture, region, religion and language. This near universal phenomenon takes place across all stages of life in human beings. It is witnessed among siblings, peers in the neighborhood and school, between relationship partners, between spouses, colleagues at work, inmates at prisons and seniors in old age homes. The particular focus in this project, however, is on bullying that children subject on their peers. The definition of bullying that this project will adopt is “a long standing violence, physical or psychological, conducted by either an individual or a group and specifically directed against an individual, who is not able to defend himself/herself in the actual situation” (Blaya et al 2008). Once again, bullying can also be verbal, such as name calling, psychological, such as social ostracism, direct or indirect. Indirect bullying is perpetrated via a third person such as relational bullying, etc. (Smith, 2004). Spreading unfavorable stories and rumors and social exclusion are newer forms of bullying. With the spread of Internet and social media, bullying is taking newer and newer forms thereby baffling policy makers and parents.

1.3 The Problem and Extent: What the Data tells us?

A common danger of any everyday occurrence is that people tend to become blasé and callous about what they see around them all the time. Both corporal punishment and bullying belong to this category. Thus, while high profile instances of extreme cruelty get all the media attention, the routine, everyday insidious behavior of spanking and bullying fails to shock us anymore. Thus, in 1999, 94% of American parents (Gershoff, 2002) spanked their children by the time they were 3 or 4 years old. An ABC poll conducted as recently as October 2012 (polled over 1000 parents on telephone) (Crandall, ABC News, 2008) reported that although only 26% approved of corporal punishment at school, over 65% of Americans supported spanking of children in principle and half of them admitted to doing it themselves. The high prevalence of corporal punishment at home is fairly universal across the world. Lansford et al (Lansford, 2011) cite a study according to which 63% of parents across 24 developing countries were reported to have used corporal punishment against their children aged 2 to 4 during a month preceding the date of the survey (Guha, 2012). High prevalence is not limited to developing countries alone. Empirical research has amply demonstrated that 133 million to 275 million children all over the world are subjected to domestic violence yearly. The advanced nations of the world witness 4.6 to 11.3 million cases of child abuse at home yearly. In the developing countries, the figures are much higher. In South Asia, the numbers ranging between 40.7 million to 88 million children getting corporally punished at home is simply appalling. In Sub-Saharan Africa there are 34.9 million to 38.2 million cases every year while in the Latin American and the Caribbean countries there are 11.3 to 25.5 million every year. (Lansford et al, 2011)

When it comes to bullying, again the prevalence has been quite high and has been steadily increasing in the US between 2001 and 2007. Statistics from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health 2011, shows that in 2009, one in five high school students was bullied at school during the past year. About 8% of students at high school level admitted to bullying others. The report also talks of increase in cyber bullying. In 2010, one in five adolescents reported having been cyber bullied during the past year, while one in ten admitted to being a cyber bully themselves. The report further indicates that boys were more likely to be bullied physically while girls are more often bullied through the Internet and through psychological means such as social boycott. In 2008, an estimated 20% of children between the ages of 2 and 17 suffered at the hands of bullies (Child Trends Data Bank, 2013). A study conducted in 2005 (Due et al, 2005) shows that Sweden with 5.1% for girls and 6.3% for boys has the distinction of having the minimum incidence of bullying for boys as well as girls, while the Eastern European country of Lithuania has the dubious distinction for maximum incidence of bullying for both sexes with 38.2% for girls and 41.4% for boys. For Hungary, the incidence is 16.7% for boys while it is 13.7% for girls. For Russia, the corresponding figures are 25.3% and 24.2% respectively. This study reports the incidence in US as 16% for boys and 11.3% for girls. Further, as a Plan International Report indicates, school bullying is a worldwide phenomenon including developing countries with percentages ranging from 20% in China to 66% in Zambia.

Thus *corporal punishment at home* and its explicit or implicit endorsement by parents all over the world and *bullying at school of children* represent two of the most common health hazards as well as human rights violations for children worldwide

including in the United States. The fact that this is in spite of increasing human rights awareness and activism and legal reform in many countries (as will be examined in details in the section on literature review later), underscores the seriousness and persistence of the problem. Further, in the US, there are considerable differences in incidences of both corporal punishment at home and bullying at school across different states and regions of the country and the twin forms of violence against children follow similar regional and state patterns (High, 2000 & Center for Effective Discipline, 2010).

1.4 Defining the thrust of research, the hypothesis and the questions

The literature review will show a very definitive trend in the two constructs of bullying at school and corporal punishment at home. The conclusion from the review on the basis of publicly available data is that while corporal punishment in schools (and not at home) is definitely declining across regions and states: registering a 18% decline from 1980 to 2005-06 (The Center for Effective Discipline, 2010), there seems to be a steady almost corresponding increase in the incidence of bullying during almost the same period. Thus, while in 2005, one in seven (14%) children reported being bullied (MBNBD, 2013), in 2010 this rose to one in five or 20% (Child Trends Data, 2013). A key point to underscore here is that despite widespread sanction of parental corporal punishment, it has been possible to reduce corporal punishment *at school* substantially across all regions of America. Obviously, the only other variables here that seem to have made the difference are (a) the fact that far fewer parents endorse corporal punishment at school even while they (Crandall, ABC News, 2008) continue to support it at home and (b) the policies and measures adopted in US schools in this regard. The research will make the point therefore that both people's attitudes and policy responses can make a

major difference. This will therefore beg the question as to why similar change is not yet noticeable in case of bullying at school. This will involve a study of the evolution of policy responses to bullying at school, an assessment of how they are working and what further can be done both in terms of policy fine-tuning and change of attitude. After all, if this combination has worked for corporal punishment at school, how to marshal them to end the bullying that children from KG to high school are being subjected to? Given that study after study attests to the harmful and lasting effects of bullying on children, ranging from effects on performance to serious, lifelong mental health problems, it is hoped that this research will contribute to enhancing the understanding of how to maximize efforts to address this critical health and human rights issue of the times.

1.5 Research Questions

This research will seek answers to the following questions:

Step1: Through literature review and publicly available data and meta analysis:

1. Are there time and regional trends across states in the US in terms of incidence of bullying at school and corporal punishment both at home and in school?
2. What have been the policy responses and efforts to bring about attitude changes to check corporal punishment at school?
3. What are the major policy responses so far for tackling bullying at school? A quick comparative analysis across different states is looked at.

Step2: Through primary research

4. What has been the impact of policy responses to address bullying in schools?
5. Which strategies have worked and which haven't?
6. What should be the next steps in this effort?

The primary research for seeking answers to questions 4, 5 and 6 will be carried out through an online survey among 5 to 6 randomly selected public school counselors through the help of the New York and New Jersey School Systems. Through these questions the research will test the hypothesis that the problem does not lie so much in the absence of policies to address bullying but in the way these policies are actually implemented on the ground.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 The scourge of bullying

Bullying is a pervasive phenomenon in American schools (National Association of School Psychologists, 2002). Bullying encapsulates demonstration of physical prowess over others, psychological intimidation bordering on physical prowess, hostile behavior, terrorization, coercion, banter and pestering incessantly or intermittently (National Association of School Psychologists, 2002). Bullying is an intolerable and utterly disruptive behavior. It degrades the ambience in the school, adversely impacts academic results of pupils, negatively influences position and status in school, leads to turmoil and torment for the victims of bullying and finally can possibly result in dreadful injuries as a consequence of terrible assault (Ibid).

It is absolutely crucial for the physical and psychological health and well-being of students that the practice of bullying is rooted out from schools by the authorities in school. The view that bullying is an innate part of the process of becoming matured human beings and is thus a necessary evil is flawed (Ibid). There can be no justification for bullying. Bullying practices are ingrained from being socialized in environments ranging from the family, school, peers in school or neighborhood and ultimately through print, electronic, online and social media. Like any learned behavior, such behavior can be unlearned through social psychology (Ibid). Young minds can certainly be weaned from the practice of bullying at home or at school. This can be done through transforming the culture of society by using social psychology as a lever to bring about behavioral reform among children at home and school (Ibid).

2.2: Prevalence of bullying at school and corporal punishment: time and regional trends across states

A. Bullying data analysis

As a first step, it would be important to understand trends: both time trends and regional trends and then juxtapose these trends with the adoption of legal and policy measures across states to see if there is any clear correlation and /or causation. Subsequently, the same analysis will be carried out for corporal punishment at school and the literature review will show that policy measures have begun to show results, quite impressive ones at that, in so far as corporal punishment at school is concerned. The literature review will also show that in so far as bullying at school is concerned, there is no let up in prevalence so far. In fact, prevalence seems to be increasing, albeit with state-wise differences.

Publicly available data from 2000, across states of the US, collected by Bully Police USA (High, 2000) clearly shows how widespread and dangerous the trends of bullying were 13 years ago. On an average nationally 18.9% school age children (from 2000 census) from ages 5-18 in US schools reported being bullied. The prevalence in states varied between 22.8% in Utah to 14.4% in DC. The next set of data examined was the data published by the National Center for Education Statistics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012) on bullying for the years 2005, 2007 and 2009. A chart has been produced on the basis of that data and presented below:

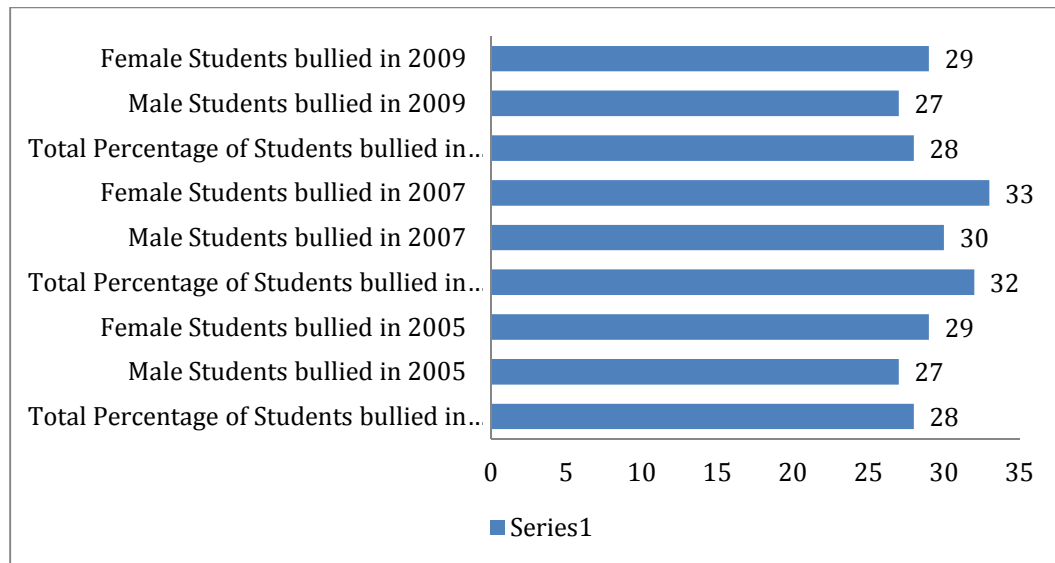


Figure 1 Percentage of students between the ages 12-18 who reported being bullied in 2005, 2007, and 2009 (disaggregated by sex)

(Source: National Centre for Education Statistics, 2012)

The most revealing aspect of the data is that 5-7 years later there was clearly a sharply rising prevalence of bullying at school. While national estimates were about 19.8% of children (in the age group 5-18) reporting being bullied in schools in 2000, in 2005 this went up to 28% (in the age group of 12-18); to 32% in 2007 and then there was a slight 4% dip to 28% in 2009. Although the age group covered in 2005-2009 was 12-18 as compared to the age group of 5-18 in the 2000 data, there is no indication of any improvement in statistics if the 5-11 years cohort had been added. In fact, as the National Association of School Psychologists (National Association of School Psychologists, 2002) explain, physical bullying grows in elementary school, reaches the highest in middle school and goes down in high school. The trend line generated below from this data shows the stubbornly high prevalence of bullying in schools across the US.

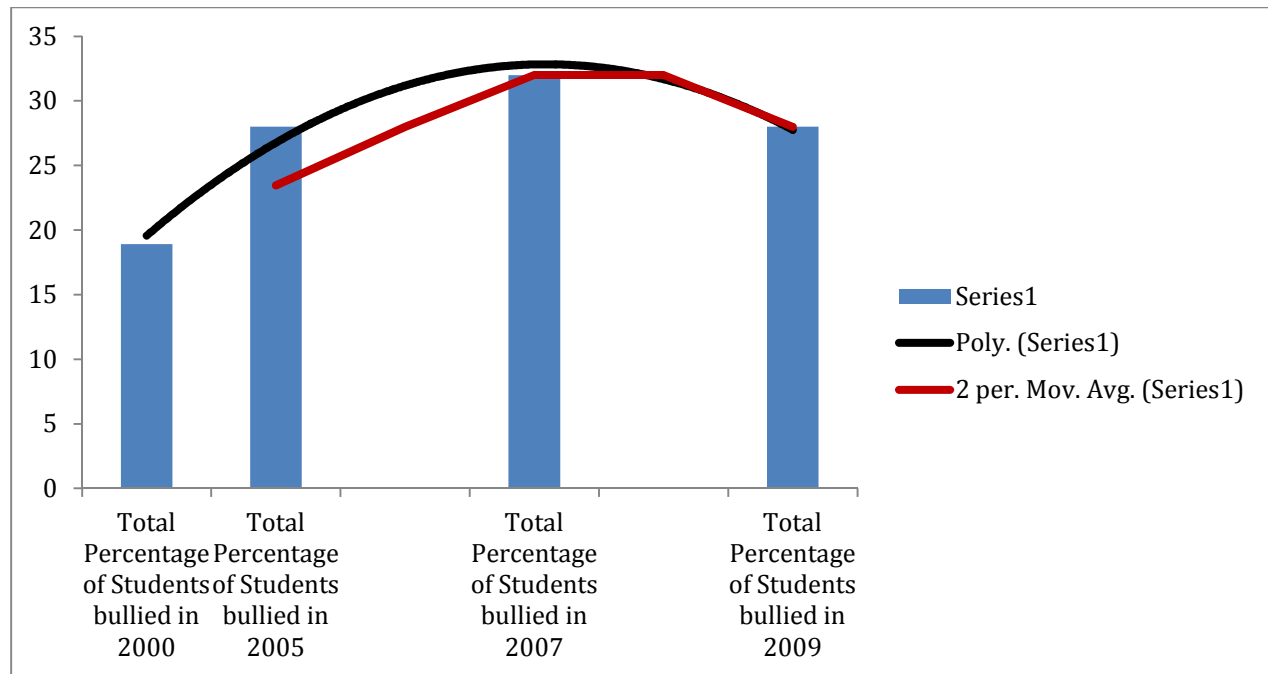


Figure 2

Total percentages of students bullied in 2000, 2005, 2007 and 2009

(Source: National Centre for Education Statistics, 2012)

In terms of state trends, the 2000 data shows, while there were state-wise differences, such differences were not all that sharp, ranging from 14.4 % in DC to 22.8% in Utah and Alaska. Thus, in 2000, Alaska, Utah, Idaho (21%), New Mexico (20.8), Texas (20.4%), Louisiana (20.2%), Mississippi (20.1%), California (20%), South Dakota (20%), Wyoming (19.8%), Nebraska (19.5%), Minnesota (19.5%) and Kansas (19.5%) were the worst performing states hovering above or around the national average. Clearly, the stereotypical expectation of conservative Southern attitudes towards spanking also being true in driving up bullying at school is not fully borne out in the data. Similarly, the best performing (relatively: as 14-16% is also very large translating to one in 6

children) states in 2000 were, DC (14.4%), West Virginia (16.7%), Florida (16.9%) and Massachusetts (17.3%). Attitudes towards corporal punishment at home, however, continue to be a strong Southern characteristic. A chart derived from this state wise prevalence is shown below.

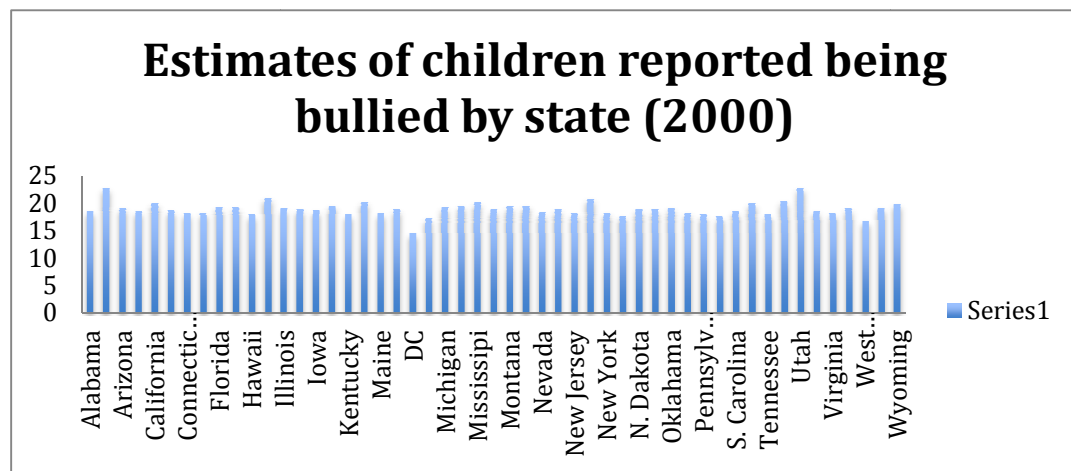


Figure 3: Estimates of Children Reported Being Bullied by State (High, 2000)

The next set of statewide break up in fact reinforces this non-stereotypical trend. According to the Random Facts website, in 2007, the states that were the most afflicted with bullying were California, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Child Trends Data Base presents data as recently as 2008. It shows an average victimization rate among male children from the ages of 2 to 17. Physical bullying amounts to 17%, teasing or emotional bullying is 21 % and cyber bullying is 2 %.

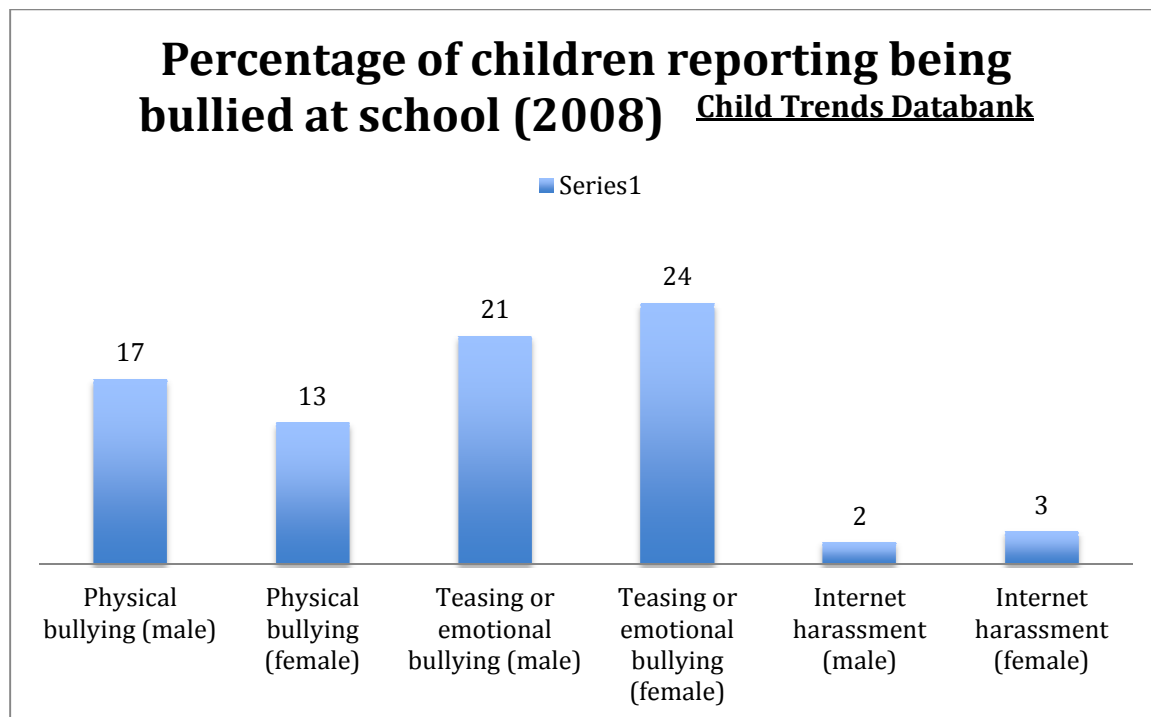


Figure 4 Percentage of children reporting being bullied at school, 2008

Source: Child Trends Data Bank

The National Association of School Psychologists therefore underscores a few key facts about bullying. About 30 % of American pupils are at the giving or receiving end of bullying. Between grades 6 to 10, about 3.7 million students are bullies while 3.2 million students are bullied according to the American Medical Association (cited by National Association of School Psychologists). From 1992 onwards, 250 students have been shot to death in schools. Bullying in the past has often triggered such tragic incidents.

There is a strong correlation between being a bully in school and leaving school before graduation. A similar strong correlation is also witnessed between being a victim of bullying and the inability to graduate from school. Harmful psychosocial adaptation

and strong criminal tendencies have been associated with bullies and victims. Verbal abuse remains uniform in elementary school. Younger pupils are more likely to be hectored than the older ones. About a quarter of American teachers either condone or endorse bullying. Teachers intercede in 4 out of 100 cases in bullying. 66 % of pupils are firmly convinced that school response to bullying has been callous and unproductive.

A grading by BullyPolice.org based on legislation and its content has carried out a rating of all states. So far, 49 states have passed legislation against bullying at school: the most recent being South Dakota in 2012. According to this grading, based on legislation, the best performing states according to the quality of legislation are: West Virginia, South Dakota, North Dakota, New Mexico, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, DC, Alabama, Texas and South Carolina: all graded A or above. The worst are Illinois, Alaska, Minnesota, Vermont, Iowa, Connecticut, Maine, Washington, Montana, New Hampshire and New York and Pennsylvania: all graded C or below (Montana being graded F).

B. Corporal Punishment Data Analysis

When it comes to corporal punishment, estimates and trends of both CP at home and CP at school will be juxtaposed with policy measures and legislation in the different states of the US. According to Center for Effective Discipline (Center for Effective Discipline, 2010) in 1976, a total of 1,521,896 children were subjected to corporal punishment at school, which reduced to 223,190 in 2006, representing a dramatic reduction of 85%.

YEAR	# WHITE	# BLACK	TOT. KIDS HIT
1976	992,675 65	447,314 29	1,521,896 3.5
1978	940,467 65	411,271 29	1,438,317 3.4
1980	901,032 64	403,386 29	1,408,303 3.4
1982	no statistical projection was made this year		
1984	852,427 64	374,315 28	1,332,317 3.3
1986	659,224 60	345,411 31	1,099,731 2.7
1988	549,572 61	255,296 28	898,370 2.2
1990	346,488 56	208,543 34	613,760 1.5
1992	295,050 53	215,684 39	555,531 1.3
1994	256,363 54	182,394 39	470,683 1.1
1997	241,406 53	178,114 39	457,754 1.0
1998	199,572 55	135,523 37	365,058 0.8
2000	181,689 53	132,065 39	342,038 0.7
2003	159,446 53	115,819 38	301,016 0.6
2004	143,002 53	104,627 38	272,028 0.57
2006	119,339 53	79,613 36	223,190 0.46

Table 1 Number of students struck each year in U.S. public schools

Center for Effective Discipline (Center for Effective Discipline, 2010)

In the following figure, this data has been plotted in Excel and a trend line generated, which can be compared with the bullying trend line shown above (Figure 2). The dramatic fall in corporal punishment as contrasted with the still very high bullying rates is quite striking.

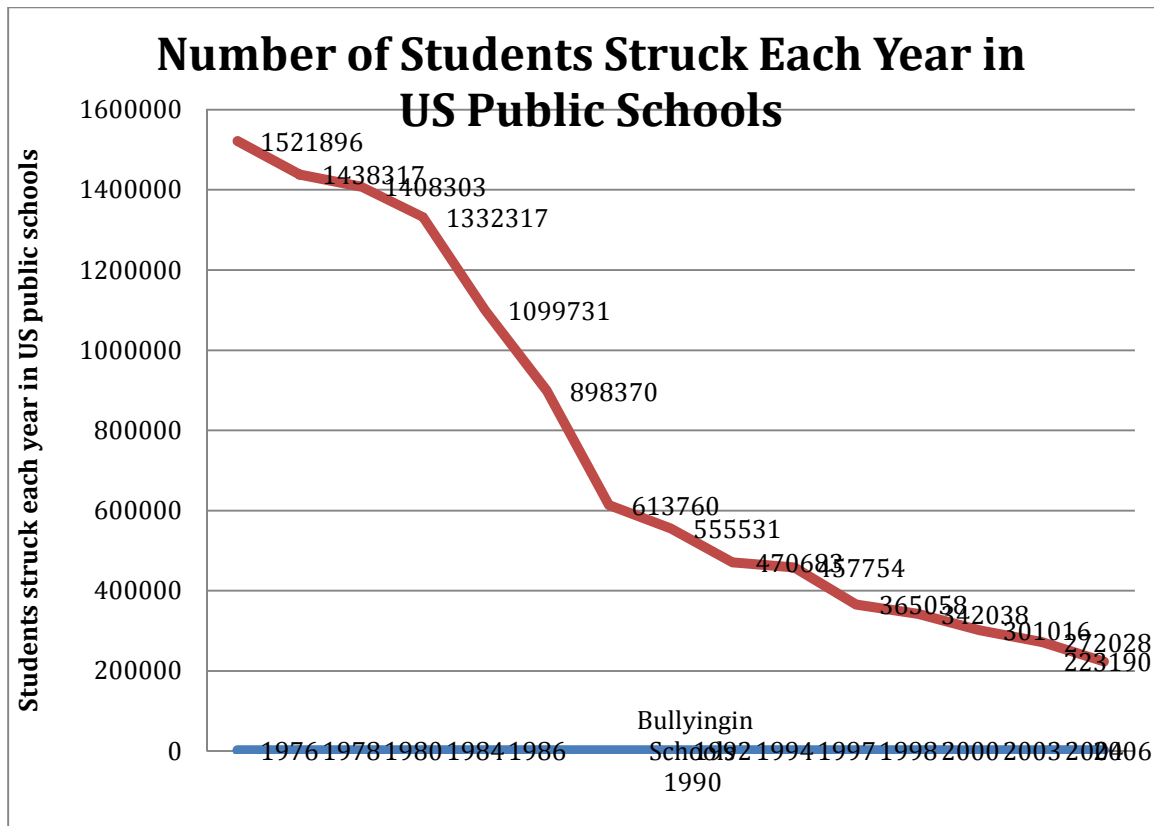


Figure 5

Number of students struck each year in US public schools

(Center for Effective Discipline, 2010)

The following table shows the state-wise breakdown of the total number of children who were subjected to corporal punishment in 2006:

State	Number of Students Hit	Percentage of Total Students
Alabama	34,097	4.6
Arkansas	22,575	4.7
Florida	7,303	.3
Georgia	18,404	1.1
Idaho	131	.05
Indiana	613	.05
Kansas	54	.01
Kentucky	2,210	.3
Louisiana	11,091	1.7
Missouri	5,194	.6
Mississippi	38,214	7.5
North Carolina	2,736	.2
New Mexico	749	.2
Ohio	672	.04
Oklahoma	15,153	2.4
South Carolina	1,421	.2
Tennessee	14,901	1.5
Texas	51,170	1.1
Wyoming	0	0

Table 2 Corporal Punishment in U.S. public schools □ 2005-2006 School Year: data released

March 2008: Center for Effective Discipline, July 1, 2010

In 2008, these were the only states that reported instances of corporal punishment at school. If on this table is juxtaposed the 31 states, which have banned corporal punishment, only two such states are in this list: Ohio and Wyoming with almost no or almost negligible number of cases of corporal punishment in schools. All the remaining 19 states are ones, which permit corporal punishment in schools. Secondly, the ten worst performing states during 2005-06 were Mississippi (7.5%), Arkansas (4.7%), Alabama (4.5%), Oklahoma (2.3%), Tennessee (1.5%), Texas (1.1%), Georgia (1.1%), Missouri (.6%) and Florida (0.3%) (Ibid): all except Ohio and Wyoming were southern states. Both non-southern states had either none or very small incidence levels of corporal punishment. As mentioned earlier, the regional and state wise trend of school corporal punishment clearly mirrors the commonly expected north-south divide.

2.3. Policy responses to check corporal punishment at school

The use of corporal punishment by schools is covered by the Latin term “*loco parentis*” meaning schools have the same right as parents over minors (Wikipedia on Corporal Punishment). States have the power to ban corporal punishment in schools and 31 states have already done so. The first state to ban was New Jersey in 1867. The next state to ban it was Massachusetts more than 100 years later in 1971. These bans are imposed through a range of statutes, codes, penal laws and administrative regulations. The state to ban it most recently is New Mexico in 2011. Usually private schools are exempt from state regulation, although in some states like New Jersey and Iowa, even private schools are prohibited from imposing corporal punishment.

States, which allow it generally, require schools to get permission from the parents who can choose whether they will let their children be subjected to corporal

punishment at school. It is up to the school principals to impose such punishment. Most of the schools, which allow it, are in rural areas and many of these rural areas have only one elementary and one high school. Therefore, parents don't have an option to send students to any other school. Generally, the rules require that male teachers punish only male students while female teachers punish only females. Even in states, which allow corporal punishment, the urban schools don't practice it.

In 1977, the highest court in the US, viz., the Supreme Court held (in *Ingraham vs. Wright*) corporal punishment in Florida's public schools to be within the realm of legality. Till today there is no federal law to ban corporal punishment. Efforts in Congress have so far proved futile. It is the initiative of the states that has checked and substantially reduced its use. This is also symptomatic of the American Inter Governmental System where education matters fall within the jurisdiction of states.

In over 35 countries, corporal punishment at home is prohibited. USA is not one of them. It is legal in almost all states. Delaware is the only state that has banned it in 2012 (Wikipedia on Corporal Punishment at home). As seen earlier, about 56% of Americans polled by ABC in 2012 supported corporal punishment in principle as a way to discipline children and change behavior. Corporal punishment is believed to lead to immediate compliance. However, it negatively affects inculcation of morality in children. It is often a response to increased aggression. Aggression in the child can also be a reaction to parental corporal punishment (Psych Page, www.psychpage.com). Thus, the two have a symbiotic relationship. It has been robustly linked to long-term anti-social behavior. As Gershoff (Gershoff, 2002) has found in her meta analysis, corporal punishment significantly erodes the relationship between parents and children; adversely

affects mental health; and foments long term abusive mannerisms and attitudes in those being subjected to corporal punishment.

Straus and Stewart, according to Gershoff (Gershoff, 2002), discovered that 95% of American parents smacked their children till the age of 4. When it comes to 5 year olds, they are subjected to corporal punishment twice each month. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, 1.3% of children either face domestic abuse or parental neglect.

The war against corporal punishment at home has to be conducted on many fronts. Parents and caretakers must be provided with other innovative choices to reform their children than resort to the barbaric practice of corporal punishment. In this, the public representatives should try to engage their constituents to legislate reforms, which abolish corporal punishment at home and school. Teachers as well as parents need to be enlightened about the deleterious health outcomes of corporal punishment. The laws of the states should be amended to unequivocally make hitting a child at home or school a misdemeanor. The relative success achieved in significantly reducing hitting of children at school through its banning in 31 states should be replicated for corporal punishment at home. (Center for Effective Discipline, 2010)

2.4. Policy responses to bullying at school

As Emily Bazelon (Bazelon, 2013) points out in her recent bestselling book, “Sticks and Stones”, America took time to wake up to the menace of bullying. A quarter of century had to pass after the Scandinavian countries implemented effective measures to deal with bullying and a number of terrible incidents had to occur including the Columbine massacre before the US took notice. Colorado, California, Mississippi,

Connecticut, West Virginia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Minnesota, New Jersey, Illinois and Delaware all enacted anti-bullying legislation in the early 2000s. According to Bully Police USA, a major anti-bullying advocacy group, all but one state, Montana, has enacted such legislation: the earliest being Georgia (1999), New Hampshire (2000), Colorado, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oregon and West Virginia (all in 2001). The most recent state to pass such a law was South Dakota in 2012. Bully Police has rated states based on the comprehensiveness of their anti-bullying laws.

The portmanteau of policy and legal actions of the states rated A++ consists of a number of elements. First and foremost, state laws must mandate every school district to establish a policy forbidding bullying on school property. The policy must clearly state what is bullying, the punitive action for indulging in bullying, clear procedures for inquiring into such incidents and protection against reprisal of those reporting incidents of bullying as well as punishments for making false allegations. The policies are also going to lay down complaint and reporting procedures, identify designated school officials to receive such complaints and provide immunities from damages for those responsible for taking action provided it is done in good faith. The best laws also provide for technical assistance including training for implementing the anti-bullying policies.

Dan Olweus (Olweus, 1993), the famous Swedish psychologist (as cited in Emily Bazelon, 2013), focused world attention on the topic in 1978 and called for all schools to put in place a campaign to eliminate bullying. He explained that anti-bullying measures must embrace three inter-related levels:

1. The entire school: for example clear rules against bullying, increased oversight during break periods etc.
2. At the class room level: this has to be done through repeated teacher led meetings with students
3. At the individual level: procedures for tackling individual cases of bullying, necessary follow-up with bullies, victims and families, etc.

Olweus (Olweus, 1993) also provided what is the best definition of bullying as comprising three necessary elements to qualify as bullying as separate from conflicts between individuals. These three elements are: physical or psychological abuse; with a repetitive pattern (as opposed to one off incidents); and involving asymmetry of power between the bully and the bullied.

2.4. The Problem: the persistence of bullying:

The literature review has shown that bullying is quite an intractable problem in the United States. Though, a late starter in acknowledging and addressing the problem, compared to countries in Europe, anti-bullying policies are today almost universal in this country and have been so for slightly more than a decade.

However, unlike corporal punishment, there is still no evidence of a real dent having been made. What explains this? In fact there are no regional trends when it comes to bullying. The usual explanation of a southern culture does not work in this case.

Olweus (Olweus, 1993), as cited in Bazelon (Bazelon, 2013), explains this as a problem of poor implementation. Bazelon also talks of other different strategies to combat bullying. Her sense is that schools often change strategies when new principals take over.

Her suggestion is “select a strategy and adhere to it rather than moving on to a different strategy every few years.” Eliminating bullying is a long-term commitment.

Implementation takes time and there cannot be short cuts. Attitude change requires steadfast and unwavering commitment over a long period.

Primary research will examine how anti-bullying policies are being actually implemented in schools and whether there are gaps, which need to be filled.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Hypothesis:

After having examined the huge wealth of literature and secondary analysis of the problem of bullying--its prevalence, time and regional trends and the legal and policy measures rolled out in the different states--the question persists as to why bullying continues at such high levels with no apparent effective dent made so far. This is unlike corporal punishment at schools, which shows appreciable decline and, where it still persists, there is a clear correlation with region-specific cultural mores. Bullying defies any such clear typecasting correlations apart from the fact that the US has been a late starter to acknowledge and address the issue. The hypothesis of this project is that what is being faced is more a problem of implementation and therefore the analysis needs to move from the big and middle worlds that the introduction and literature review sections have covered so far to the small world in which policies are implemented, viz., the school level. After all, as Olweus (1993) had said, if the goal is to bring about a sustained change in attitudes of teachers, children (bullies and the bullied) and parents, success cannot be gauged by what laws and policies the legislature has passed but by the actual outcomes of such laws and policies through their actual implementation and this is what the primary research will seek to find out.

3.2. Primary Research questions:

1. What has been the impact of measures to address bullying in schools?
2. Which strategies have worked and which haven't?
3. What should be the next steps in this effort?

3.3. Research design and participants:

The research seeks to understand how anti-bullying policies are being actually implemented on the ground and their impact. The research findings are expected to throw light on how schools are implementing the state policies and what practical improvements can be brought about in such implementation. Finally, the project will not attempt action research but simply focus on descriptive research, i.e. observe the situation as it is and will not seek to modify or alter the situation.

The main participants are six school principals/deputy principals/counselors from New Jersey and New York City, drawing from contacts facilitated by colleagues, friends and acquaintances. A survey questionnaire was emailed to these selected principals/deputy principals/counselors and the tool used was the Survey Monkey. Additionally, face-to-face interviews were conducted with two school principals/deputy principals. These interviews complemented the survey in terms of more information about which types of bullying (physical, relational, psychological and cyber) are actually being impacted upon and which are not and also the support and resources that counselors have at their disposal to address the problem.

By looking at the responses from participants, the research seeks to arrive at answers to the three broad questions that this research seeks answers to through its primary research.

3.4. Survey Questions and Data collection

As the literature review brings out, the policy bag for combating bullying in schools encompasses many tools and components. The survey questionnaires comprise

questions relating to all the components of the policy bag and seek to find which of these are being actually implemented and which are not. In drawing up these questionnaires, the different steps suggested in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and the different components set out in the New Jersey legislation (updated in 2010) on bullying prevention have been drawn upon. The questionnaire also correlates findings on the quality of implementation of policies with the counselors'/principals' perceptions of how effective anti-bullying measures have actually been in practice.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 The Questionnaire and Respondents

The research questionnaire was sent to 9 schools: 6 in New York City and 3 in New Jersey including one private school in New Jersey, one charter school in New York City and the remaining all public schools, including high schools and one middle school. It was emailed to Principals and Deputy Principals in most cases and only in one case to the Guidance Counselor. It became clear during initial interactions that in most cases the response could only come from the highest level in the school, i.e. Principal/Deputy Principal. Even when it came from the School Counselor, it could not be sent without the Principal's approval. Survey Monkey was used to administer the survey. The potential respondents were emailed with a link to Survey Monkey. Full confidentiality was maintained because from the Survey Monkey responses it is impossible to know the identity of the respondent.

One disclaimer needs to be added. No attempt was made to survey or interview students. It was felt, first of all, that a general trend of bullying rates not declining across the country was already established in the literature review. Secondly, subjecting a student who had been bullied to a survey or interview ran the risk of making such a student relive the bullying episode and getting re-traumatized.

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) consisted of a total of 25 questions and the questions belonged to three categories:

- (a) Questions 1 through 18, listed out the major elements of a recommended policy mix identified in the literature review for

addressing bullying in schools (Olweus, 1993) and sought to ascertain whether all or some of these elements were being implemented in the schools being surveyed. This included questions 1 (a) and 1(b), which required respondents to provide the definition adopted by the schools. These two are fundamental in the sense that they guide and determine all other actions. Some of the other questions related to the quality of implementation of policy elements are related to actions and approaches that needed to be taken or adopted when confronted with incidents of bullying such as questions 7, 8, 15, 16, 17 and 18. Others such as 3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14 are related to recommended proactive policy measures to prevent bullying before it could occur and exercising vigilance and creating the right attitudes.

- (b) Questions 19 through 24 sought to obtain the perceptions of the respondents about the extent of prevalence of bullying, the intensity of the problem in its different types of manifestation and the availability of resources at the school level for staff to address the problem.
- (c) Question 25 solicited open-ended suggestions if any from the respondents.

The next section will provide a detailed analysis of the answers to questions in the three categories of questions described above: definition (existence and quality), policy elements that guide reactions to the problem, policy elements that guide proactive approaches to prevent the bullying and perceptions of the respondents about the existence

and intensity of different forms of bullying. The responses are analyzed and grouped into four analytical categories:

1. Areas where anti-bullying policies seem to be working well,
2. Areas where clear implementation gaps exist,
3. Areas where some improvements are possible, and
4. Overall perceptions about the intensity of the problem.

All questions except the one that requires reproducing of the adopted definition and the one that requires open-ended comments were in the form of multiple-choice answers. Six schools responded to most of the questions. The seventh school actually skipped all questions. Two schools provided open-ended comments in the survey, one of whom sent it by email because of some technical problems accessing the writing space in the Survey Monkey.

4.2 Findings of Survey

1. Question1: Is there a clear definition of bullying adopted for your school?

Five out of six schools reported in the affirmative while one reported that there was no definition. In the space below the question, five definitions were provided. The first definition is a long one and is actually a full reproduction of the official definition that the New Jersey law against bullying in school provides (Bully Police USA, 2002):

- i) Harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as any gesture, written, verbal or physical act or electronic communication, whether it be a single act or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by an actual act or perceived

characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory handicap or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus or off school grounds that: a.) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstance, will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property or placing a pupil in reasonable fear or harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or b.) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with the orderly operation of the school. Any incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying needs to be reported to building administration immediately. An investigation will follow.

The second respondent provides a very short definition:

- i. Bullying includes verbal or written forms of teasing as well as physical threat.

The third respondent does not provide the actual definition but refers again to the New Jersey State Act and is therefore in effect identical to that provided by the first respondent:

- ii. Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication as defined by NJSA18A:37-14.

The fourth respondent does not provide the definition but refers to the regulations of the NY City School Chancellor:

- iii. As defined by Responsive Classroom and Dept. of Education Chancellor's Regulation.

The fifth respondent provides the following definition:

iv) The school expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff

The definitions will be analyzed in details in the following chapter 5. Respondent school number six had not adopted a definition for bullying according to the response.

- ii) Question 2: Formation of Bullying Prevention Committee: four and therefore most (66.67%) schools reported having formed them while two reported as not having formed them.
- iii) Question 3: Distribution of anonymous questionnaire among students to establish baseline about prevalence, types and nature of bullying: Only two reported this as a relevant policy component in their school while four reported in the negative. Thus, in an overwhelming majority i.e. 66.67 % of schools this policy requirement was not complied with.
- iv) Question 4: The school is graded every year by some external authority on its performance in addressing bullying: three schools, i.e. 50% of respondents report this as a regular practice while the remaining two schools report it as not happening regularly while one school reported it as never having happened.
- v) Question 5: Regular training is organized for members of the bullying prevention committee: Four schools, i.e. 66.67%, reported it as a very relevant while two schools, i.e. 33.33%, reported that this policy element

was not at all relevant for their schools.

- vi) Question 6: Adoption of school wide rules against bullying: Four schools, i.e. 66.67%, reported this as a most relevant policy element for their schools, i.e. such rules were clearly in place and followed.
- vii) Question 7: School teachers and guidance counselors are regularly trained on how to grapple with bullying: Five schools responded to this and out of the five, four schools, i.e. 80% reported this as a most relevant element of their anti-bullying policies.
- viii) Question 8: Principal has designated one staff member as the school's Anti-bullying specialist: all six respondent schools, i.e. 100%, reported this as a most relevant element of their anti-bullying policy mix, i.e. it is being implemented.
- ix) Question 9. A school safety team has been set up to promote a bully free environment in the school: Three schools, i.e. 50% report it as a most relevant element of their policy mix, i.e. it is being actively implemented. One school reported that it is not relevant, i.e. not being implemented. Two schools report it as being moderately relevant, meaning, that it is not very actively implemented.
- x) Question number 10: A week of respect is observed in the school starting from the first Monday of October each year: three schools, i.e. 50% report this as most relevant, i.e. it's a regular practice while two schools report

this as not relevant at all i.e. not a practice while one school reports it as being moderately relevant, which is interpreted as meaning it may only be

xi)

only irregularly practiced.

xii) Question 10 was by mistake repeated in the survey and showed the same results.

xiii) Question number 12: Staff including drivers, teachers and administrators are regularly educated about bullying: about half of the schools, i.e. 50% report this as a most relevant element of their policy mix while two schools report it as moderately relevant, i.e. interpreted as an occasional practice (not so regular) and one reported it as not relevant (i.e. not ever practiced).

xiv) Question 13: Information meetings are regularly held with parents: Only two schools, i.e. 33.33%, report this as most relevant or a regular practice while three report, i.e., 50% this as moderately relevant, i.e. interpreted as an occasional practice and not a very regular one while one reports that this is not relevant, i.e. interpreted as not observed at all.

xv) Question 14: Regular class room meetings are held with students to develop empathy and knowledge about the problem of bullying: Four out of six respondent schools (66.67%) report this as a most relevant policy element while one reports this as moderately relevant and one reports this as not a relevant policy element.

- xvi) Question 15: Clear procedures laid down for complaints against bullying:
all six respondents (100%) report this as a most relevant policy element.
- xvii) Question 16: Regular interventions are held with both bullies and the bullied by the counselor: An overwhelming majority or five out of six schools, i.e., 83.33% report this as a most relevant policy element in their schools while one respondent reports this as a moderately relevant policy element.
- xviii) Question 17: Discussions with parents of both the bullies and the bullied are organized: An overwhelming majority, i.e. 5 out of 6, or 83.33% respondents report this as a most relevant policy element while one reports this as moderately relevant.
- xix) Question 18: Clarity exists on what constitutes cyber bullying: again five out of six respondents or 83.33% of responds report this as almost relevant element of their policy mix while one respondent reports this as a moderately relevant policy element.
- xx) Question 19: The intensity of the problem of bullying in your school: All six respondents report that this is not an intense problem in their schools.
- xxi) Question 20: Trends in physical bullying (hitting, punching, shoving, kicking etc.): three out of six respondents, i.e. 50% of respondents report that this is a declining trend while another 50% report this as a stationary trend.

- xxii) Question 21: Verbal bullying (abuse, name calling, insult etc.): five out of six respondents, i.e. 83.33 %, report this as a stationary trend while one reports this as a declining trend. None report this as a rising trend.
- xxiii) Question 22: Relational bullying (social boycott of one person from a peer group, spreading rumors etc.): four out of six respondents (66.67%) report this as a declining trend while two report this as a stationary trend.
- xxiv) Cyber bullying (use of on line, especially social networking websites to bully: such as Facebook, hi5, Orkut, email, text messages, smart phones: three out of six schools, i.e. 50%, report this as a declining trend while two report this as a stationary trend while only one reports this as a rising trend.
- xxv) Do you feel you have adequate support and resources from the school management to effectively discharge your duty: Five out of six respondents, i.e. 83.33%, strongly agreed with the statement while one disagreed.
- xxvi) If you have other suggestions about the nature of bullying in your school or about what policies can work, please feel free to write in the space below: only two responded: one in the text box provided and one unable to access the text box reported on email. These are provided below:

“While many incidents are investigated as "bullying" in our middle school, very few are actually found to constitute bullying. This is because the majority of incidents involve conflict (two-sided) not bullying (one-sided). We find that when middle

school aged friends have a "falling out", they often resort to name-calling both in person and online. We investigate these incidents as potential bullying but more often than not they are disciplined as code of conduct violations, not bullying (usually the students are friends again before the punishment is even handed down)."

By email: "We have one person in charge of dealing with issues related to bullying and she has attended workshops to ensure she incorporates the best procedures in her session. We do not have a committee in place. If you have suggestions towards this end we would be very receptive to this information. We welcome this and if you are interested in speaking with myself or a guidance counselor further we would also be open to this."

Chapter 5. Analysis of Findings

On a careful consideration of the Survey Monkey generated data, within of course the limitation of a very small sample, redeemed in part though by the fact that the response was totally anonymous, the following preliminary analysis is offered:

1. Areas Where the Anti Bullying Policies are Working Well

According to the survey results, anti-bullying policies do seem to be working well in certain areas such as

- a. Question number 7 deals with regular training on how to grapple with bullying. About 80% of respondents report compliance.
- b. Designation of a staff member as the school's anti-bullying specialist (Question number 8:100% responses report this as having been complied with)
- c. Laying down of clear procedures for dealing with complaints against bullying (Question number 15: 100% report compliance on this policy element)

- d. Regular interventions held with both bullies and the bullied by the counselor (Question number 16: 83% report compliance)
- e. Discussions organized with parents of both the bullied and the bullies (Question number 17: 83% report compliance)
- f. Clarity regarding what constitutes cyber bullying (Question number 18: 83% report clear understanding)

2. Areas of Policy Implementation with Gaps and Inadequacies:

1. *Existence of clear **definition** of Bullying 1(a) and 1(b):* This is a fundamental first step for grappling with the problem of bullying. Five out of six schools surveyed report having a “clear” definition of bullying. This is certainly prima facie a positive implementation of anti-bullying policies, which require schools to have a definition. However, the fact that one school out of such a small sample doesn’t have any definition is a problem and shows the inadequacy of policy implementation. This is further compounded by the *quality of the definition of bullying*: This is the biggest area of inadequacy in policy implementation. It is obvious from the findings that despite New York State and the City as well as New Jersey having laid down policies on bullying, this does not translate and percolate to the ground uniformly. This is clear from an examination of the definitions provided, which are reproduced below for comparison and analysis:

- a. **Respondent 1:** Harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as any gesture, written, verbal or physical act or electronic communication , whether it be a single act or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by an actual act or

perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical , or sensory handicap or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus or off school grounds that:

a.) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstance, will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property or placing a pupil in reasonable fear or harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or b.) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with the orderly operation of the school. Any incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying needs to be reported to building administration immediately. An investigation will follow.

- b. **Respondent 2:** Bullying includes verbal or written forms of teasing as well as physical threat.
- c. **Respondent 3:** Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication as defined by NJSA18A:37-14.
- d. **Respondent 4:** As defined by Responsive Classroom and Dept. of Education Chancellor's Regulation.
- e. **Respondent 5:** The school expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff

These definitions will be examined by comparing with the criteria of good definitions articulated by Dan Olweus (Olweus, 1993) cited on page 22 of the project. The definition of bullying needs to comprise three necessary elements to qualify as bullying as separate from conflicts between individuals. These three elements are: **physical or psychological** abuse; with a **repetitive pattern** (as opposed to one off incidents); and **involving asymmetry of power** between the

bully and the bullied. From this point of view, the definition provided by respondent 5 does not approximate the definition of bullying. The definition provided by respondent number 1 is very comprehensive: it covers the aspect of physical and/or psychological abuse and electronic communication as a means of bullying. In fact, it is the definition prescribed under the New Jersey Act (Bully Police USA, 2002) “ concerning the adoption of harassment and bullying prevention policies by public school districts.” New Jersey is also one of the first states to extend the application of this law to even private schools. The definition adopted in New York, which is referred to by respondent 4, defines bullying as (National School Boards Association, 2012) : “Harassment”: (1) creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or (2) conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his physical safety; such conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse includes but is not limited to that based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.”

However, neither of these definitions include two crucial elements: the repetitive nature and the asymmetry of power listed by Dan Olweus (Olweus, 1993). Probably, this is what tends to hinder the understanding of bullying and explains an open-ended comment by respondent number 6, which says:

“While many incidents are investigated as "bullying" in our middle school, very few are actually found to constitute bullying. This is because the majority of incidents involve conflict (two-sided) not bullying (one-sided). We find that when middle-school aged friends have a "falling out", they often resort to name-calling both in person and online. We investigate these incidents as potential bullying but more often than not they

are disciplined as code of conduct violations, not bullying (usually the students are friends again before the punishment is even handed down).”

With Olweus’s (Olweus, 1993) definition criteria, it is clear that the kind of situation described by respondent number 6 is not bullying not because of any fuzzy reason of overlap with “two-sided conflict” as described by the respondent but because it is not repetitive and does not involve asymmetry of power.

2. *Policy provisions which call for a proactive approach to detecting and addressing*

Bullying: The other policy areas where considerable deficits in implementation are noted are those articulated under questions 3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14. These provisions are what distinguish a proactive anti-bullying approach from a reactive anti-bullying approach. The following enumeration will explain:

- a. Question 3 requires surveying students through an anonymous questionnaire to create a baseline on the prevalence and type of bullying. The results show 67% report that this does not happen in schools: only 33% report compliance. Not involving students to proactively understand and anticipate the problem is a major gap in policy implementation.
- b. Question 4 is about external grading of schools in respect of performance in addressing bullying. Half of schools report not being graded. This is again a case of non-implementation of a policy directive, which is likely to result in poor accountability.
- c. Question 9 is about the setting up of a school safety team to promote a bully free environment in the school. 50% report non-compliance: again a case of slippage in terms of a proactive approach.

- d. Question 10 is about observing a week of respect every year: a step towards inculcating mutual respect is a crucial attitude that can go a long way in obviating bullying. Only 50% report compliance.
- e. Question 12 is about regular orientation of all staff about bullying. This is again an important step to promote a proactive approach that seeks the support of all staff and not just one anti-bullying specialist or the class teacher. Only 50% report compliance.
- f. Question number 13 is about holding regular information meetings with parents. This is also a critical and proactive step to prevent bullying by engaging parents in the anti-bullying drive. Only 33% report compliance thus showing very poor implementation.
- g. Question number 14 is about holding regular classroom meetings with the students to develop mutual empathy and knowledge about the problem of bullying. Almost one third of the respondents report that such meetings are not held regularly. This again is a proactive step to promote a bully free environment.

3. **Areas Where Policy Implementation Need Some Improvement:**

- a. Question number 6 is about the adoption of school-wide rules about bullying. About one third report not adopting school wide anti-bullying rules. This is surprising and clearly shows sloppy implementation on the part of some schools. Similarly, questions 2 and 5 are about formation of bullying prevention coordination committees and their training. In both

cases, one third of respondents report non-compliance. This again shows unsatisfactory performance in terms of policy implementation.

4. Overall Perception of the problem of bullying and its intensity:

1. There is an overall sense of a conservative response to questions sometimes bordering on denial of the seriousness of the problem. It is however not clear whether this is by deliberate intent or for lack of a nuanced understanding of the issue. This conclusion is prompted by four sets of responses.
 - a. First, in response to question 19 as to whether the problem of bullying was intense, every respondent has reported that the problem was not intense. In issues like bullying, where there is often a shroud of silence, a stronger acknowledgement of the issue would perhaps be a more constructive response. After all, even one student bullied is one too many. The data generated by the National Centre for Education Statistics, 2012 reports a bullying incidence of 29% for girls and 27% for boys in 2009. This is high and when viewed against a rising trend nationwide and New York being cited as one of the worst affected states (page 12), makes this response of describing the problem as not intense as one of serious understatement.
 - b. Secondly, in response to question number 21 on verbal bullying, no responder acknowledged it to be a rising trend: the majority felt it was a stationary trend while one felt it was declining. This again seems to be

quite out of touch with reality when viewed against the extensive literature review undertaken in this project. Emily Bazelon in her best-selling book “Sticks and Stones” says that name calling has become a major problem especially with social media where name calling is no longer a one off “ephemeral” (Bazelon, 2013) event but it leaves a permanent and lasting trail.

- c. The response to question 22 similarly on relational bullying is an understatement when viewed against available evidence from the literature review. Relational bullying is reported in the literature as a new and rising trend catalyzed particularly by social media. The response in the survey, however, has a majority reporting it as a declining trend while none see it as a rising trend.
- d. Finally, the response to question 23 on cyber bullying has about half of the respondents reporting it as a declining trend while the remaining are divided into reporting this as stationary trend and in case of one respondent only it is reported as a rising trend. This overall response is clearly counterfactual.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations:

To summarize, the analysis of survey data points to the following broad directions:

1. *Lack of clear and good definition and understanding:* What underpins this scenario is actually a profound confusion and lack of clarity about the understanding of the term bullying. This is exemplified in both the way it is defined in the schools and in the open-ended comments received from respondents. When it comes to the definition, the problem lies in the very statutes and policies wherein bullying has been defined in the two states. Two crucial elements, i.e., the aspect of the asymmetry of power and the aspect of repetitive nature of the problem, have been missed out in the definitions.
2. *Approach reactive, not proactive:* Secondly, in terms of enforcement and redress action, or in other words policies, which lay down how schools should react to bullying when it occurs, the performance is good and schools are taking the provisions seriously. However, implementation failure is marked when it comes to those provisions which stipulate a pro-active and preventive policy that seeks the involvement of students, parents and all sections of school staff and which seek to inculcate values of empathy and love. The implementation of these policies is perfunctory at best.

3. *Defensiveness and denial:* There persists in school managements certain defensiveness in acknowledging the problem of bullying. The defensiveness became evident not only in a tendency for denial but also in considerable caution in sending out information without the highest-level approval and sign off: this was obvious to the research during the process of approaching schools. The defensiveness of schools in this issue is also evident in the apparent reluctance to subject themselves to any external grading in this regard. Secondly, this tendency to understate the problem became evident in the responses, which counterfactually painted too rosy a picture. As Emily Bazelon (Bazelon, 2013) puts it, both exaggeration and understatement of the problem should be avoided because their outcomes can have deleterious effects on children.

Conclusions:

To recapitulate, this research project through its literature review section had carried out a comparative analysis of corporal punishment at school and bullying in school. Publicly available data clearly showed that while corporal punishment in schools had gone down fairly dramatically across the country, bullying in schools had been rising across the country. Further, while the incidence of corporal punishment at schools had gone down, available evidence pointed to the fact that corporal punishment at home had not declined and in fact showed predictable regional trends (the so called north-south divide) with the southern states showing stubbornly higher incidence of corporal

punishments at home than the northern states. This was markedly contrasted with a nationwide decline in corporal punishment at schools across all states without any noticeable difference. The most important variable, which could have made this possible, despite parental attitudes resisting change, is policy and the power of effective implementation. Corporal punishment in schools has gone down because of good policy and good implementation, which could overcome regional biases and attitudes.

As a student of public administration, this offered an exciting possibility of testing the power of policy implementation in a similar area: an area that has come up for more and more scrutiny as a human rights and mental health issue: bullying at schools. Accordingly, the key elements of present day anti-bullying policies were mapped and used as a framework for primary data collection from schools. The schools were selected based on friends having contacts and in particular contacts from the Harlem Children's Society, New York, a leading NGO promoting STEM education in the US and several other countries. The application of public policy towards bullying was tested through a survey administered to a total of nine initially willing schools. Finally, six schools from New York City and New Jersey responded.

The analysis of data in the previous section has clearly vindicated the hypothesis that one important reason why anti-bullying policies have not yet had a significant impact on the incidence of bullying at schools is inadequate and perfunctory implementation, especially of the proactive elements of the policy framework, weakness in the policies in terms of effectively defining the problem and a general defensiveness among school leadership to seriously acknowledge the problem.

Recommendations;

Drawing from the analysis, a key first step would be to strengthen the systems of accountability of the schools to demonstrate effective implementation of the anti-bullying policies. Thus, provisions such as annual outside assessment / external audit and grading of schools in terms of not only the incidence of bullying because bullying gets typically underreported particularly when policy implementation is perfunctory, but also in terms of evidence and record of implementation of all elements of the policies needs to be instituted. The second step would be to hold serious and regular training and orientation of staff. The third step would be to hold principals, class teachers as well as the school counselors responsible and not just the school counselor. Fourth, it would be important to make compliance with all elements of the anti-bullying policies a part of the performance assessment of the staff. Finally, since incentive systems are the key, schools should be provided resources and tools to implement all aspects of the policy framework.

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Appendix 1: Survey Monkey Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Survey Monkey Response