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### **Original Article**

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## **EDUCATION THROUGH THEATRE: HOW THE CHILDREN DESERVE**

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### **Abstract:**

Theatre is known for entertainment but that is not the end. Theatre gives messages; it teaches the young and old through its interactive and communicative action method, easily called learning by doing. Children should not be out of this avail of pedagogy because Child Education is the potential area for entertainment education. Co-curricular Activities are the fundamental elements for teaching. These activities would be more effective if we retouch and modify by Theatrical Method. As the children love to learn by doing, thus they love the text. This paper shows how the teaching method children deserve, how this strategy of education through theatre helps them to love the textbook.

### **Key Words:**

*Co-curricular Activities, Theatre,  
Pedagogy, Psychology,  
Physiology.*

## 1. Introduction:

The children are called ‘growings’ or ‘becomings’, gradually grip moral and logical sense, its application and implementation. However, this research is based on children’s potential practical problems and their solution from theatre. The quarries were all about a child’s needs, his readiness for learning, his ability, his previous performance, and the problems of growing up. Either they are enjoying the lessons or not. What society needs and demands in its citizens. Education helps the child to develop their understandings and skills. Then how is the implantation of teachers own scale of life values while they don’t diagnosis the reason of lack of readiness in learning. May be the students are doing well in exam but that doesn’t indicate they are learning. They are doing well because they have to do but they are not learning properly or they don’t love to do. It is happening because of teaching method.<sup>1</sup>

This research follows 3 types of schools to find the way of using Systematic Theatrical Pedagogy in schools, they are-

1. Cadet School / Army School which is controlled by army personnel,
2. Private School which is controlled by some ‘so called’ Trusty Board (not Orphanage / Madrasas)
3. Govt. School, orphanage and Madrasas

Student’s normal age and mental age are not always same but our curriculum is mostly going to be the same for all children. Rarely, the teachers make our personalities comfortable for the children in and out of the school. But schooling is not only in school yard, moreover beyond the school. They have the right to know the factual information, to gain knowledge of aesthetic appreciation and Skills of understandings and generalization. They build their ways of thinking and start to utilize their creative abilities. We should focus on their interest, attitude and habits; moreover on their personality adjustment. We prefer to say ‘Let them enjoy’; rather than to say ‘Let’s enjoy’. Still hugging our students is not so frequent here. School is the most important element to build their personality. “We contend that children must be recognized as individuals with human rights as well as special needs for protection.”<sup>2</sup> This research finds how Children Theatre does all these very consciously.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 35, Laurence D. Haskew, This is Teaching

<sup>2</sup> Saunders, Bernadette J. and Goddard, Chris, Physical Punishment in Childhood: The Rights of the Child, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. 2010

Again, in Indian sub-continent still continues tolerate physical punishment to some degree. The students are scare to speak or ask because they have panic for physical punishment, even if they do not understand the math, grammar or any scientific formula. In this context, physical punishment may dampen children's curiosity and spontaneity, and enhance their vulnerability to abuse. Saunders and Goddard say,

“The silencing and powerlessness of children who suffer degrading and unjust treatment by adults responsible for their care and protection is a characteristic of childhood often maintained by sanctioned physical punishment.”<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Not to Punish but to Correct:**

‘Physical punishment’ is, Nilsson says that “any punishment in which physical force is intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort: hitting children with a hand, or with a cane, strap or other object, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting or pulling their hair, forcing them to stay in uncomfortable positions, locking or tying them up, burning, scalding or forced ingestion– for example washing mouths out with soap.”<sup>4</sup> (2003, p.3) This punishment may come from in and out of school and home. Parental cruelty to children or physical and psychological punishment like corporal punishment from schools, scolding or abashing affects these vulnerable young human beings. As the children don't bear full moral responsibility of any deed, so there is limitation of anger and encouragement from the both sides of parents and teachers.

Psychologists say that praising (Motivation) is more effective than punishment. All children are different and every child doesn't need same encouragement. So the way we deal with one child should not be the way to deal with all. We disagree of punishing physically like slapping or spanking, or sometimes even more aggressively as when parents hit their children, because we believe, “terms such as ‘a light smack’ or ‘a tap’ on the hand or bottom may euphemistically refer to a child's first lesson that violence is an acceptable means to achieve ends or to resolve

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<sup>3</sup> Saunders, B.J. and Goddard, C., (2008), Some Australian children's perceptions of physical punishment in childhood. *Children & Society*, 22, 405–17.

<sup>4</sup> Nilsson, M.(2003) *Global Initiative Handbook: Hitting People is Wrong – and Children are People Too*. Sweden: Save the Children.

conflict”<sup>5</sup>. So, consultation plays a vital role to make them realize for their wrong doings. We emphasize on relationship. If you make a relation that naughty boys abuse and misbehave with you then that not proper relation to cool the naughty boys.

Be a good friend and shelter for the children and remember words always affect children. Such words as “I am disappointed in you; I know you know better” make them feel guilty; they understand that parents upset, and the next time they will think before doing something bad. Beside this it is very important to show the correct way and examples. Emotional punishment is the best. In order to educate or correct the child parents can restrain them to watch TV or playing with his friends and highest, starve them for once in that day but never locking them in the room. Talking to them eyes to eyes is important. Three moods can be shown and shuffling them time to time according to the situations in a cool brain and in a planned way to correct them-

- a. Formal Mood
- b. Anger Mood and
- c. Emotional Mood

Noticeable-

1. First of all, clarify their mistake and disobedience and forgive them and let them know that you forgot them and forget it.
2. Secondly, forgive them and warn them for their mistakes. Take promise from him.
3. Make sure that it is done in controlled mind. Because, taking anger out on a child can potentially do more harm than good.
4. The punishment should fit the Crime.
5. Punishing once for one crime and not to treat all crime in same way. So, always hollering, screaming, and beating for every wrong is a poor way.
6. Tell the child what wrong he did, emotionally with/without crying.

This punishment should be more effective to touch their souls. Encouraging child to get inspired in achieving bigger goals and offer gift for good job in and after, at least admire them can change meaningfully. Motivate them to do so more. Again, praising a child constantly makes

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<sup>5</sup> Nilsson, M.(2003) Global Initiative Handbook: Hitting People is Wrong – and Children are People Too. Sweden: Save the Children.

him/her confused. Fake praising may turn out as a waste. Child should understand the reason of getting the compliments. There should be an admirable work done by child so that he can relate the positive remarks for the compliments. This will be accurate way to encourage a child, which can make him/her to try to repeat the similar work in the future. Praise should be made up of a lot of attention, gentle smiles, quiet compliments and mostly brief descriptions of child's activity.

### 3. Impact of Childhood Punishment

Parents often provide pedagogical reasons for physical punishment or 'virtuous violence'<sup>6</sup> "as a means of promoting responsible, appropriate and safe behavior, which ultimately furthers the welfare of the child".<sup>7</sup> It may be perceived "as an aid to a duty, bestowed on parents by society or God, to teach their children correct, or acceptable, behavior as opposed to behavior that is deviant or inappropriate."<sup>8</sup> However, the only desirable behaviour of child punishment is increasing immediate compliance, beside this there are so many **immediate and long term negative impacts** of childhood Punishment.

Anne B. Smith<sup>9</sup> stats that physical punishment is associated with increased child aggression, antisocial behavior, lower intellectual achievement, poorer quality of parent-child relationships, mental health problems (such as depression), and diminished moral internalization.<sup>10</sup> Punishment makes the children shocked, sad, angry, dejected, disliked, embarrassed, depressed, regretful and let down by their parents. Some children felt unimportant. Others felt insecure and fearful of being hit again. Some children defiantly hid their feelings from parents. Some felt parents may be too distanced from them to understand how they feel. It may also curb children's spontaneity and curiosity.<sup>11</sup> Along with these, we can list out of some long term effects<sup>12</sup>-

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<sup>6</sup> Straus, 2009 , p. 1315

<sup>7</sup> Spink and Spink, 1999 , p. 27

<sup>8</sup> Bartkowski, 1995 ; Ellison and Bradshaw, 2009

<sup>9</sup> Anne B. Smith, Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin

<sup>10</sup> Smith, Anne B., The state of research on the effects of physical punishment, Social Policy Journal of Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Government, March 27, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Physical Punishment in Childhood: The Rights of the Child, by Bernadette J. Saunders and Chris Goddard  
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<sup>12</sup> Gershoff, E.T. (2002a) "Corporal punishment by parents and associated child behaviors and experiences: A meta-analytic and theoretical review" *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(4):539-579.

1. Decreased moral internalisation,
2. Increased child aggression,
3. Increased child delinquent
4. Increased Antisocial behaviour,
5. Decreased quality of relationship between parent and child,
6. Decreased child mental health,
7. Increased risk of being a victim of physical abuse,
8. Increased adult aggression,
9. Increased adult criminal and antisocial behaviour,
10. Decreased adult mental health,
11. Increased risk of abusing own child or spouse.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4. Facts: Blind pressure on ‘Growings’**

I experienced and observed a huge difference in the culture of teaching in the schools. Liberalism and moral responsibility in Education is one of the most important preconditions of the curriculum. Unexpectedly, blind pressure on our ‘Growing’ stars makes them going down. Let me explain a little here-

##### **4.1 Physical Condition:**

Children who are in a good physical health condition are much better able to learn to read than are children who have aching teeth, runny noses, headaches, sore eyes, or other physical ailments. In addition, children who have poor health are absent from school more frequently than are healthy children. Childhood arthritis, mumps, measles, chicken pox, and other childhood communicable diseases do not in and of themselves causing reading retardation, but they do interrupt the child’s instructional program. Furthermore, in teaching such children, we have been impressed by their lack of energy because of poor diets, substandard housing, inadequate medical care, and other factors that contribute to a generally debilitated physical state.<sup>14</sup> Again, lack of auditory acuity, visual acuity or of special needs are potential elements of retardation.

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<sup>13</sup> Gershoff, E.T. (2002a) “Corporal punishment by parents and associated child behaviors and experiences: A meta-analytic and theoretical review” *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(4):539–579.

<sup>14</sup> Page 24, Smith/Johnson, Teaching Children to Read, 1975

#### **4.2 Emotional Condition:**

Again, the pressure placed on children to learn to read by parents, teachers (school and home tutors), and administrators is considerable. Some children react well to these pressures and excel. On the other children, this pressure appears to have a deleterious effect. The pressures both in and out of school to succeed in reading can create enough anxiety within certain children to interfere with the learning process. These children in effect try too hard to please those who are fearful that they may not learn to read well. Some children come to school anxious about people or conditions in their lives have nothing to do with reading. Frequently family quarrels, a death, a divorce, or a serious illness in family- all elicit worry, fearfulness, defensiveness, hostility, or other strong feelings that interfere with the concentration necessary to learn to read. Children with a great deal of emotional anxiety from one source to another are likely to experience much more difficulty learning to read than are children who are in good emotional health while they are receiving instruction.<sup>15</sup>

#### **4.3 Environmental Condition:**

A child's environment, both in and out of school, may and may not promote the development of good reading ability. In some homes, families use reading a great deal, and the children in those families learn to regard reading as a valuable and normal daily activity. They come to school already knowing what reading is all about and how to use it for personal enrichment. In other homes, scenario is quite different. Children never see family members reading, never hear talk about what someone has read, and are infrequently, if ever, read to and talked with about stories and pictures. The only pictures that hold their attention are on television, and the life-style of their families appears to place much greater value on that machine than on books, magazines, and newspapers. We believe that these children are at a great disadvantage on regarding to read.

The school environment is also exerts a great influence on children's reading growth. Some schools are in a continual state of flux, changing from one organizational plan to another or one reading program to another. Some teachers are warm and insensitive in their relationships with children; others are cold and insensitive. Some classrooms are disorganized and at times almost chaotic. In some schools children have very less access to library books and instructional materials, as well as utilize tinsel opportunities and encouragement. In other schools these resources are adequate. There is a clear discrimination in schools. Schools are not organizing

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<sup>15</sup> Page 25, Smith/Johnson, Teaching Children to Read, 1975

programs to contribute to learning as for the convenience of administrators, teachers, or the “special” teachers who often serve more than one school.<sup>16</sup> It sounds ridiculous that we have found financial punishment for children in some schools in Bangladesh. For absence, less marks in exam as well as for less home works, charging money is not only ridiculous and illogical but offensive also.

### **5. Children Theatre and Education**

Children Theatre is a way where children love to learn and make them happily engaged in creative work. If we combine children’s theatre in education it will entertain to make them happy, create an imaginary world in the children’s mind, to make them enjoying education. It influences them in academic study by motivate their will and consciousness for their physical and psychological advancement as a human being. Concerning gender discrimination and social value, strengthen sacrificing mind, love, fondness and kinship, creating social value and manner, understanding literacy, philosophy, scientific approach, psychological development of children are the major objectives of children’s theatre. Enduing theatrical approach in teaching method can bring a vast change in pedagogy. It is a time befitting demand to abolish the dividing line of children’s theatre and children’s education. Children’s Theatre is a practical process of learning. So, visibility and physical action make subject matter more acceptable and easy to learn. Giving lecture, reading, discussion, practice by doing all these processes are blended in Children’s Theatre. Children’s Theatre is a theatre for Young Audience, specialized in performance those are family friendly where stories are derived from folk tales, fairy tales, real life issues and many historical events, life of great men. Plays may be adventurous in nature. Children’s Theatre works for collective growth of children’s body and mind.

There is nothing called Children Punishment in Children Theatre. We emphasize on the relationship and understanding each other. They pass warm energy through touch, make them concentrated leaving everything. Kids love colors, artists appear with colors, where to go. Theatre personalities can build such a relation with the kids, kids feel trainers are one of the kids. Kids are restless, theatre practitioners also that. Here schooling is different. Structure of dialogue between teacher and students is all about their interpersonal relationship; one of the most important initial concerns of the school teacher needs to be. Embrace or hugging the kids to pass the warm energy is an effective way, and if it is with a smiley or little kiddy face, to make them more open and free to access and trustworthy.

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<sup>16</sup> Page 25-26, Smith/Johnson, Teaching Children to Read, 1975



There should nothing extra called ‘Extra Curricular Activities’ in Curriculum rather than this so called ‘extra’ this the vital medicine for children. Curriculum development is one of the major functions of the elementary school is to work cooperatively with members of the school staff to plan and implement a curriculum that allows the child to grow in cognitive knowledge as well as in the personal values and affective skills that contribute to maturity.<sup>17</sup> Here curriculum is a specialized learning environment deliberately arranged for directing the interests and abilities of children toward effective participation in the life of the community and nation.<sup>18</sup> But our education makes our children ‘other’ from the society. Here ‘other’ in the sense, they are not considered as ‘person’ and ‘member’. There is the big WRONG in the society, where theatre considers them the most potential person and member in society. Recent student movement for ‘Safer Road’ in Bangladesh has proven that.<sup>19</sup>

However, school is child’s major life environment in which the teacher has his main input. It is about not only the particular setting of school of class that only contact with the children themselves, but also the control over the learning environment functions. Teacher must be oriented to get out of their offices and to the places where the action is. But theatre creates the situation in front of the child in an artistic manner. This way is the best way to give Information with Example. Moreover arrangement of tools, sets, props and all other elements give them the best chance to experience the thing. It helps the students of special needs.

No home work should be given in holidays. It is hypocrisy of schools in the name of holidays; those days are their own time, they are having the right to give time for themselves, they are not bound to give the share. Extra home works in vacations, weekends or holidays, over load of study as well as reducing or stop giving time for playing every day should be accused. Children are not SLAVES.

Educationist researched on teaching methods- how people learn, how teaching would be more effective. In the Learning Pyramid, we can see research shows that ‘Practice by Doing’ & ‘Teaching Others’ are the most effective way. Then, what does it mean? It indicates theatrical

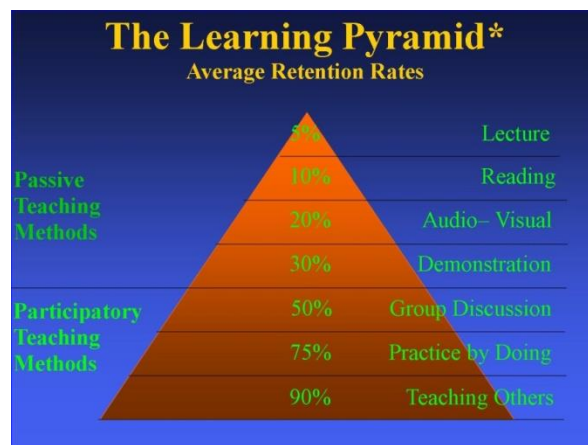
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<sup>17</sup> Page 186, Donald B. Keat, Fundamentals of Child Counseling, 1974

<sup>18</sup> Page 188, Donald B. Keat, Fundamentals of Child Counseling, 1974

<sup>19</sup> [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018\\_Bangladesh\\_road-safety\\_protests](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_Bangladesh_road-safety_protests)

way to teach. Children's Theatre not only emphasizes on learning, but also on Physical, Psychological, Intellectual, moral developments.



*Adopted from National Training Laboratories Bethel, Maine*

Therefore, addressing norms and beliefs those are deeply rooted in a society by play is more interesting. Showing behavior is better than just describing it. Observing others is a way that people learn and adopt a new behavior. Educating the young audience for public awareness can be done by puppet shows or street theater on a large scale by company theatre. Attracting young audiences with an entertaining format, for example, a puppet show program named 'Sesame Street', in Bangladesh 'SisimPore' and in India, it is 'Galli Galli Sim Sim' entertains children and teaches in arts and science. Rather than above issues, what are the things make children's theatre more suiting let us discuss.

**Games** in theatre are not exceptional events. This is basically group work as well as individual's participation. Children have a very short span of concentration where these games help to get the body and mind fully concentrated in work. Merely in pre-primary or primary schools there is no such kind of scope, more over in schools children are bound to learn without any satisfaction or loving the subject matters without concentration. Theatre teaches meditation and play concentration games like Hunting game, Touch Pass, Who is the killer and so on. Theatre creates a big space for learning by playing these games. Obstacle Games, many more skill developing games, Games of breathing and body movement make body and mind stable. In India and Bangladesh **Yoga** (includes moods of 'Asana' and limbs exercise) and **Pranayam** (breathing exercise) are very popular and not even in USA but all over the world it became popular. Yoga, Pranayam and games make children happier, healthier, stronger, sharper, worthy and capable.

Again, **Drawing** is very important for them. Not only drawing some animals, birds or fruits, or and any land, but gradually they start drawing difficult diagrams easily, they learn constructions, human body, geography, universe. Color and characterization, sign and signals opens mind and brain of a child. **Music** is also a vast knowledge. Theatre can give a primary lesson. It is very important to create the sense of swaras, rhythm and peach. Reciting is not only reading something but more than that. Correct pronunciation and its variations, scale and peach of 'swara', vocal exercise all these things are included in reciting.

## 6. Summary:

In a **Disciplined** manner Children become free and frank to discuss serious, contemporary any types of issues where they are afraid of their teachers and parents in schools and homes. They learn philosophy, theology, science, literature and arts in such an artistic manner that is **more than learning, near to acquisition**. Animated cartoons, comics, graphic novels, photo novels, puppet shows all are theatrical approach but theatre emphasize on **practice by doing**. Practicing improvisation, carouse, comparative and positive evaluation and promotion of work make them confident. Theatre shows unending way of possibilities instead of failure and pressure sensation. It improves thought process. By showing characters and make them participate it introduces social norms and values as well as social awareness like dowry, child marriage, social kinship, helpful for human and animal kinds and so on. For **Psychological Development** of a child, theatre can be a good way. It builds child's own spectacles. Motivational aspects, programs and training camp can assure their psychological development. It influences children's behavior by engaging emotion, motivation, interaction, communication and examples. Entertaining Process encourages children to love books. They leave 'learning for exams, vomiting on answer script and getting 98% mark.' Instead of that, they 'learn for life, write on paper and get highest mark'. Theatre is medium to express mood and feel of life. It builds their **Foundation for Future** by highlighting the way of life. They achieve high quality skill and technique in management, presentation, performance along with colors and costumes, light and music. Theatre is not a coaching class or merely a class room. It's a family. Shows and works are **Family Friendly**. Situation comedy and improvisation make drama to game and game to drama. They become responsible and feel accountability.

Though Theatre is known for entertainment but that is not the end. It creates a massive scope for the children. The way theatre pursues the method of Pedagogy no where it possible. According to USAID magazine (January 2008), theatre has major role in Entertainment

Education for children.<sup>20</sup> It teaches the young as well as the old through its interactive and communicative action method, easily called learning by doing. Children should not be out of this avail of pedagogy because it is the potential area for entertainment education. Co-curricular Activities are the fundamental elements for teaching. These activities would be more effective if we retouch and modify by Theatrical Method. As the children love to learn by doing, thus they love the text. This is the most potential way of teaching for children to help them to love the textbook.

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