# Corporal punishment persists in Indian classrooms despite the RTE Section 17 ban

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**16 November 2026:** Police in Kozhikode, Kerala, have registered a case against a teacher for allegedly caning a 10-year-old Class 5 student (reported 15 November). Around the same time, a Hindu explainer asked why **corporal punishment persists in Indian classrooms more than 15 years after the ban**, citing WHO, Ministry of Women and Child Development and NGO survey data.

## Legal framework (verified facts)

- **Section 17, RTE Act 2009:** physical punishment and mental harassment of children in educational institutions are **prohibited** - an explicit statutory ban.
- **Child rights:** the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and monitoring by national/state child rights commissions (NCPCR/SCPCR); in the Kerala case, the father approached the state SCPCR.

## Studies and data

- **'Child Abuse in India - 2007' (Ministry of Women and Child Development):** two out of three schoolchildren reported facing corporal punishment.

- **Agrasar (NGO) survey, Gurugram 2018: 80% of students from marginalised communities** reported such punishment from teachers - a clear caste/class dimension.
- **WHO report:** corporal punishment overloads the nervous, cardiovascular and nutritional systems, changes brain structure and function, causes mental health issues and impairs cognitive and socio-emotional development.

### Why it persists

- **Cultural legitimacy:** the "discipline" culture normalises violence; threats from teachers (such as failing students) suppress complaints.
- **Weak enforcement:** despite Section 17, school-level grievance mechanisms and monitoring remain inadequate; managements often shield teachers.
- **Alternatives missing:** gaps in positive discipline and teacher training point to the policy direction.

### Quiz: Test your knowledge

▶ Q1: Consider on corporal punishment: 1. Section 17 of the RTE Act 2009 prohibits it 2. The MWCD 'Child Abuse in India 2007' study found two-thirds of children faced it 3. The Agrasar 2018 survey covered Kolkata schools. Which are correct?
▶ Q2: Which provision in India prohibits physical punishment and mental harassment of children in schools?

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**In short:** Amid a case of a 10-year-old being caned in Kozhikode, a new report notes corporal punishment continues despite the Section 17 ban; MWCD 2007 found two-thirds of children affected; WHO flags long-term effects on brain development.

### Question: What is the legal position on corporal punishment in Indian schools?

Section 17 of the RTE Act 2009 prohibits both physical punishment and mental harassment in educational institutions - a complete statutory ban.

### Question: What effects of corporal punishment have been reported?

Per WHO: overloading of nervous, cardiovascular and nutritional systems, changes in brain structure and function, mental health issues, and impaired cognitive and socio-emotional

development.

## Question: What happened in the Kozhikode case?

On 6 November, a teacher in Kerala's Kozhikode allegedly caned a 10-year-old Class 5 girl in front of classmates; police registered a case and the father also complained to the state child rights commission.

## Sources:

- https://www.thehindu.com/education/why-corporal-punishment-persists-in-indian-classrooms-despite-the-ban/article71701043.ece (The Hindu, 14 November 2026; WHO, MWCD 2007 and Agrasar 2018 figures as quoted)
- https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/kozhikode-teacher-charged-after-caning-10-year-old-class-5-student/article71704163.ece (The Hindu, 15 November 2026)