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**DISCIPLINE/INDISCIPLINE  
AND VIOLENCE IN  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Final Report**

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**MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL**

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# Discipline/Indiscipline and Violence in Secondary Schools in Mauritius

(MRC Research Project)

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Mauritius Institute of Education, Réduit, May 2006

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Dr. V. Ramharai  
Lead Investigator

# Executive Summary

Indiscipline has nowadays become a matter of great concern in the field of education. Rapid transformation registered in the economic structure and social fabric, brought about by globalisation have meant, among other things, additional pressure on secondary schools. The response of schools to the challenges of revisiting content, curriculum, teaching strategies has varied from country to country depending on the resources available and the political will to effect the desired changes.

The past decades have witnessed a ‘degeneration’ (a) of students’ behaviour, both within and outside school premises, within or outside the class, (b) between teachers and students and (c) among students themselves. At different instances, the question of indiscipline has been placed at the forefront of the educational debate. Questions have been raised and issues discussed. The present study represents the laying down of the basic foundations of research in that area. Its aims and objectives are:

- (i) to explain the disruptive classroom and outside classroom behaviour of secondary school students;
- (ii) to understand the extent to which indiscipline and violence are affecting the Mauritian secondary schools;
- (iii) to identify and describe the different forms of indiscipline and violence in schools;
- (iv) to examine the attribution of students and teachers about the issue of indiscipline and violence;
- (v) to explore the mechanisms that exist in schools to deal with problems of indiscipline and violence.

A survey was carried out over a period of nine months to collect data from a number of schools using instruments which would allow for breadth and depth of understanding and to this end, a wide range of tools have been used for different categories of stakeholders. To allow us to listen to the plurality of voices, the interview is used with teachers, students, rectors and support staff. Additionally, a questionnaire has been devised and administered to allow for representativeness and breadth of data. The questionnaire has enabled us to gather

both quantitative and qualitative data. The conceptual framework adopted in the context of the project is strongly grounded in current literature and demonstrate our understanding of the issue of indiscipline and violence at school.

The interactive nature of group interviews enabled us to collect quality data that helped to validate the experiences of each individual participant by presenting them with the experiences of others in the group.

From what we have heard, read and analysed, it is clear that the scope, impact, and complexity of the problem have substantially increased. To make the rules and regulations more stringent is but a short-term solution which, no doubt, will not work to the satisfaction of everybody. The findings generated clearly show that

- (i) there is no set 'profile' of the indisciplined student either psychological, pedagogical, economic or social. Though an appreciable percentage may share a common set of characteristics, there are no defining variables that could predict whether a student will indulge in acts of indiscipline. Sometimes students coming from well to do background and having high academic achievement may indulge in serious acts of indiscipline as has been repeatedly observed;
- (ii) the problem of indiscipline affects all schools irrespective of gender and school type, though the degree and magnitude vary from school to school. Cases of violence though less common, occur more often outside than on school premises;
- (iii) the measures taken to deal with both indiscipline and violence are barely adequate given the fact that there exist no administrative or legal guidelines which could be referred to in such cases. Actions taken are often ad-hoc and uncoordinated both within and across schools of the same type;
- (iv) teachers, most prominently, feel disempowered to deal with cases of indiscipline and violence because of lack of support from the relevant authorities, political interference and an incapacitated school administration;
- (v) it is perceived that confessional and private schools have a greater "marge de manœuvre" in taking sanctions and measures because the management and administration have a degree of autonomy in taking decisions;
- (vi) the factors enhancing school and classroom discipline is a complex matrix of both internal and external variables involving, on the one hand, pedagogical efficiency,

teacher personality, leadership and management style, parental collaboration, students' expectations of school and education, teacher-pupils relationship and school culture. On the other hand, the school is also at the receiving end of a number of societal problems such as the collapse of the family, an increasingly economic conception of education and the frustrations and delusions of too large a section of the population;

(vii) teacher professional status has seriously declined in the past few years leading to an erosion of teacher's authority in classrooms;

(viii) there is a differential perception as regards the causes of indiscipline and violence in our schools. Students point out to the obsolescence of the curriculum with heavy academic bias, the inability of schools to respond effectively to their legitimate expectations and aspirations, the lack of professional commitment on the part of a large number of teachers and a 'laissez faire' attitude on the part of school management and administration that engenders an unfair, sporadic and often biased application of sanctions;

(ix) adults within the school set-up attribute the increasing occurrence of discipline problems, inter-alia, to the changing social mores, demise of parents and authorities from their responsibilities as well as the all pervading influence of the media;

(x) each school has developed its own set of rules and regulations and the provisions for some vary across schools. In some they are elaborately framed with the focus on a code of conduct that is expected of students, in others, and a large majority, they are only very superficially framed and focus on punctuality, school uniform and attendance. However, what is also blatantly missing from these documents is an explicit procedure that defines the application of sanctions and the role of various stakeholders in the enforcement of those rules or code. Since such a procedure is very rarely defined, it almost inevitably follows that clear-cut and coherent measures cannot be taken.

Given the situation described above, it becomes clear that a multi-pronged approach should be adopted to effectively bring about a permanent solution to the twin problems of indiscipline and violence. It is also equally obvious that considering the issue as an appendage to more general concerns related to pedagogy, curriculum, school management, leadership and teacher training will not only be ill-advised but preclude the implementation of any long term solution.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

Education in a country has an important role to play in the life of an individual and in the development of a country. It is a basic human right and every child should be given the chance to acquire it. A country, with a workforce which is highly uneducated, will surely face economic and social problems. But the right to education implies the right for every child to learn in an environment conducive to learning and not one where disruptive behaviour among students prevails. The issue of school discipline represents one of the most pressing concerns of all stakeholders in education because it plays an important role in establishing a positive school ethos and in setting up a desirable atmosphere to teaching and learning, thus impacting directly on the quality of education in our institutions. The pedagogical relevance of discipline in the process cannot be overestimated to the extent that discipline and pedagogy are interlocked in a mutually self-reinforcing spiral. Pedagogy affects discipline and disciplinary outlooks also determine the nature of pedagogy used in classrooms.

### **1.1. An Overview of the Issue**

The claim that Mauritian schools have generally suffered from a deterioration in terms of discipline deserves to be urgently attended to for the following reasons: firstly, because of the need to make our schools secure locations for students, teachers and administrative staff; secondly, addressing the issue of indiscipline and violence is also a means to scrutinize a number of related problems and reach a coherent solution and thirdly, adopting an approach which is basically premised on the assumption that the educational issues should concentrate on classroom interactions. A school-based approach which seeks to integrate the perspectives of all educational actors can be beneficial in analytical terms and also provide a synthetic understanding of how schools function as a macro-system, not only as a micro-system.

The need to urgently redefine the interface between education and misbehaviour has become important because the complexity of the issue and the forms of violence have changed the school environment and the attitude of those facing school-age children nowadays.

Many countries have committed themselves to 'Education for All' and the Mauritian government is striving hard to achieve this goal. Not only more schools have been built in the secondary sector between 2002 and 2005 but the government has also passed a law making education compulsory up to the age of sixteen. 'Education for All' does not mean only giving access to schools; it should be also linked with the output, the quality of education, the level of drop-out and the behaviour of both pupils and teachers in attaining these goals. When misbehaviour and violence prevail and undermine teaching and learning, this becomes a serious concern.

## 1.2. School and Society

Mauritian primary and secondary schools have witnessed industrial and social changes brought about by a once booming economy. The Mauritian youths are now living in a society transformed by technological progress, on the one hand, and still tied to traditional, patriarchal and institutional structure, on the other. What happens in society affects the school. The following two examples show how society and school are interrelated:

VOL A LA TIR. Deux étudiants arrêtés. Deux étudiants de 18 et 19 ans respectivement qui attendent leurs résultats de HSC ont été arrêtés à la suite d'une tentative de vol sur une touriste réunionnaise. Cela s'est passé vers 15 heures, jeudi, sur la route en direction du complexe les Flamants lorsqu'elle a été attaquée par les deux suspects qui voyageaient en cyclomoteur.<sup>1</sup>

### Un étudiant arrêté pour trafic de drogue

X, 18 ans, est provisoirement accusé de trafic de drogue. Une perquisition à l'avenue (...) samedi, a permis de saisir notamment 37 *pouliahs* de gandia et Rs 750 soupçonnés de provenir de la vente de drogue. Le suspect, étudiant en Form V dans un collège confessionnel de Plaines-Wilhems, était surveillé par les hommes (...) de l'Anti-Drug & Smuggling Unit (ADSU) de Rose Hill depuis qu'ils ont eu vent du trafic auquel il se livrait lors de concerts et dans les discothèques.

Le suspect a déclaré avoir acheté une quarantaine de *pouliahs* à un inconnu (...) pour Rs 4000. La valeur marchande de la drogue est de Rs 16,650. Il a comparu au tribunal de Rose Hill et est maintenu en cellule jusqu'à lundi. La cour a émis une *objection to departure* contre lui et ses avoirs ont été gelés. L'ADSU poursuit son enquête pour découvrir d'où provient la drogue<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *L'Express*, 13 janvier 2001

<sup>2</sup> *L'Express*, 10 May 2005

Even though these illegal acts are committed by students outside the school premises, these youngsters are still « des étudiants du secondaire ». Students do not get involved in drug trafficking outside the school only. Cases of drug trafficking were once reported to have taken place on the school premises and the student was sentenced to one year imprisonment under Section 48 of the Dangerous Drugs Act, 2000<sup>3</sup>.

Prostitution is another serious problem which has an impact on some secondary school girls. The desire to look beautiful by wearing expensive dress or to be 'in' has led these girls to tell lies to their parents or to play truant so as to make some money by being involved in prostitution<sup>4</sup>. When this happens during school hours and parents think that their daughter is attending school, both educational authorities and parents should show great concern and should be more alert.

Caught at the crossroads between the turbulence in their own individual lives and that of societal demands, between the demands of a webbed, globalised world and the need to find some form of anchorage, adolescents perceive a terrain in schools and at times outside schools where they can give vent to their anxieties and frustration. Today secondary schools in Mauritius cannot be seen as a world apart. They are invaded by all sorts of ills that exist in society. They are not only experiencing a conflict between two generations but also across a generation segregated on racial, ethnic and economic grounds.

The issue of discipline and misbehaviour is a very intricate one because it cannot be limited to only the school environment. The latter is also affected by what students do outside the school premises and after school hours. What happens on the school premises is generally under control but what happens outside is not within its control although it has far-reaching consequences. For example, what occurred in February 2005 when the HSC results were made official and the name of the scholarship winners were known is still fresh in our mind, and the school whose students behaved badly is still bearing the consequences.

Various forms of misbehaviour used to occur during the intercollege sports competition. This may be one reason why this competition was abolished. The same occurrence has been

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<sup>3</sup> *Le Défi-Plus*, 7-13 February, 2004

<sup>4</sup> *Week-end Scope*, 10 September 2002, *Cinq-Plus Dimanche*, 30 March 2003, *Le Défi-Plus*, 21-27 June 2003, *Le Mauricien*, 11 June 2005

observed over these past years with the Jump Around Youth Concert where students of all secondary schools meet in a particular place to hold a concert on the eve of the National Day. Not only ‘font-ils du spectacle’ but also ‘se donnent-ils en spectacle.’ We are not saying that such events should be abolished. We believe that they should form part of school life. But our concern lies with the ‘why’ of such misbehaviour and indiscipline during such activities. Could it be that the shortage of such activities leads the youth to really ‘se défouler’ when they get the opportunity to be together?

### **1.3. Indiscipline, Disruptive Behaviour, Misbehaviour and Violence in the School Setting**

Talking about discipline/indiscipline in Mauritian schools is such a sensitive issue that no rector or officer from the Ministry of Education wishes to raise it publicly. It is only when the local press started to pinpoint some acts of vandalism in schools and students’ misbehaviour on certain occasions (such as Jump Around Youth Concert, Music Day, and the former Intercollege Sports Day) that the issue is being seriously considered.

Indiscipline often refers to such actions committed by students. This goes against the school rules and regulations or those which are against an established and accepted code of conduct. The teachers are directly concerned because they are the ones whose responsibility is to maintain discipline at school. It is generally acknowledged by teachers in Mauritius that misbehaviour of students has always been an integral part of the teaching/learning process. But it becomes an issue of earnest concern when disruptive behaviour such as talking and eating in class, asking permission to leave the class at any time, continuous challenging of the teacher’s authority, serious abuse of school rules, physical and verbal aggression towards other students and, at times teachers, are prevalent. Punishment such as asking the student to leave the class, to write lines or to stay after school hours is of no avail on the one hand and new forms of undesirable behaviour such as smoking, taking alcohol<sup>5</sup>, sexual problems, gambling, drug trafficking and pornographic materials appear in the school environment, on the other.

In the context of the school, violence is often understood to be physical power used deliberately in view of causing physical pain. It includes injury or harm to human beings or

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<sup>5</sup> *Week-End*, 20 February 2005

damage to school property or private property (teachers' cars, for example). Physical violence is often associated with kicking, beating, threatening with fists, knives and bullying. These types of violent actions are associated with boys while girls usually get involved in pulling hair, verbal assault, pushing and shoving. Another type of violence is psychological, difficult to identify because there is no trace of physical brutality. Violence in school is not instrumental, that is, a means to an end, but often viewed as expressive, that is, an emotional response to a remark or foul language (R. Webber, J. Bessant, R. Watts, 2003).

According to R.S. Newman and B.J. Murray (2005: 347), peer harassment has been defined in numerous ways. Many researchers use the terms 'harassment', 'victimization', and 'bullying' interchangeably. They argue that harassment can also be seen as an unprovoked aggression in which there is an imbalance of power or strength between two children, a perpetrator and a victim. It does not refer to aggression that is either unambiguously provoked or in which it is ambiguous whether there has been provocation. Harassment can involve either direct (e.g. teasing, threats and physical aggression) or indirect aggression (e.g. social ostracism, spreading of rumours).

We agree that classroom discipline is also a pedagogical issue (Robertson, 1998). A well-behaved class is an indication of successful teaching (Placek & Dodds, 1988; Parker, 1995), hence our concern with preventing indiscipline and violence in schools.

#### **1.4. Discipline and the Teacher**

The teachers are privileged actors, spectators and at times victims insofar as they are either at the receiving end of violent outbursts or are the only adults around when it happens. They are the most up-to-date sources of information of what goes on within the four walls of the school and the classroom. Also, in many cases, the teachers' reactions can be crucial in determining the subsequent course of events, and the way teachers handle these situations determines the outcomes.

How teachers react to such instances will vary depending on their experience as teachers, their age, their attitude towards teaching, an interpretation of what the official procedure warrants and their relationship with the students and, most importantly, through their own perception of what contributes to exacerbate the problem of violence in schools. If the locus

of control is perceived as external, it is likely that teachers will adopt a 'laissez-faire' attitude which can cause the situation to deteriorate.

Some teachers feel they are alone in the fight against indiscipline. Authorities in schools show more interest in results, in teachers' level of absenteeism and in admission to Form one than in indiscipline.

It has often been argued that teachers use coarse language against certain students in class, especially those who are less academically engaged or who are members of a particular community and exhibit poor classroom behaviour. Racial dynamics seem to play an important role in maintaining discipline or in encouraging indiscipline in class or within the school premises. This kind of attitude of teachers can be explained by a misinterpretation of some students' cultural style. They misread these students' behavioural styles. Their way of talking and of dressing themselves, which is accepted in their homes and neighbourhood, is seen as defiant. These students' attitudes and behaviours are not worse than those of other students but they are simply different. This cultural style often clashes with teachers' views of appropriate behaviour in the school setting. This lack of understanding may be one cause of misbehaviour and here the responsibility should be reviewed. It could lie more with the teachers and the school than with the students. However, cultural differences become a source of strain when they are combined with low status. Students attempt to maintain their identity with the complicity of peer groups that reject symbols and behaviours that are viewed as 'adult'.

The way both students and teachers behave in school is very important. Today we know we cannot keep a school environment without discipline. In spite of the rise in disciplinary actions in school, it still remains a taboo to acknowledge that indiscipline exists in many secondary schools, even if it is not on a large scale.

Absence of sanctions can lead to the reinforcement of indiscipline. Administrators have to be careful not to tarnish the school reputation. The power and the authority of the rectors have been eroded over the years, and the fact that they lack the necessary scaffolding devices to deal with these kinds of problem could only lead to a worsening of the situation. Teachers have to worry about their jobs and see to it that they are not treated as incompetent teachers, in the sense that they are unable to maintain discipline in their class. In 1984, teachers in a

secondary school in Port-Louis were working in an atmosphere of fear because a student had called for a *gros bras* to terrorize the teachers and police protection was sought for the teachers. A rector in Plaines-Wilhems had once asked for a garage to be built on the school premises so that he could keep his car out of the reach of students. To-day, if teachers punish students, the latter may wreak vengeance by scratching the teachers' cars. This is one way to retaliate to punishment and, when teachers have to bear the cost of such acts of vandalism, they prefer to stop punishing students for their misbehaviour. The fact that these students cannot be punished gives the impression that the laws are on their side.

### **1.5. Students' Absenteeism and Truancy**

Students show their disapproval of school rules and regulations also through truancy and absenteeism. It is known that some schools in Mauritius, be it public or private, have a rather high level of truancy and a high rate of absenteeism. Truancy can be defined as a situation where a student stays away from school without the knowledge and authorization of his/her parents and/or that of the school. In a study carried out by the Ministry of Education in Mauritius (1993), the problems of absenteeism and truancy were surveyed, and it was found that these were not serious and generalized problems in secondary schools in Mauritius. Only a small number of certain types of schools were experiencing relatively serious indiscipline and truancy problems. Though the Ministry had come up with some short term measures to combat poor attendance in school, it has not yet been able to categorise the absentees and differentiate between persistent absentees, the inconsistent and the occasional ones because there was no follow-up of the situation (K. Reid, 2005). Such information is important in order to treat the issue of school attendance which several teachers in the study consider as a serious act of indiscipline since this can impact on the students' results at the end of the year. However, the report does identify four factors which are related to truancy and absenteeism. They can relate to (i) the performance and the personality of the teacher, (ii) the administrative aspect of the problem and the infrastructure of the school, (iii) parents who lack control over their children and (iv) the economic development of the country. The report does not identify the places where the students go when they absent themselves from school. It is a fact that boys and girls do not go to the same places when they play truant. According to a local paper<sup>7</sup>, girls prefer the seaside and the company of their boyfriend or the house of a friend whose parents are at work so that they can smoke or take alcoholic liquors. Some of

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<sup>7</sup> *The Sun*, 14 October 1997

them go to their boyfriends' place and this meeting may entail serious consequences afterwards. One can refer to recent events concerning a pornographic clip that was in circulation recently through MMS among students in secondary schools. Game and pool houses have replaced the 'baby-foot' shops of the sixties and seventies for the boys.

And when both parents and school cannot control their children from loitering along the streets, there can be serious consequences such as death, pregnancy among girls, consumption of alcoholic drinks and drugs.

According to the weekly paper<sup>9</sup>, some 50 cases of pregnancy among teenage students were recorded. The girls were allowed to pursue their studies for some time despite their pregnancies. *Le Mauricien* (7 March 1998) reports:

Phénomène marginal, voire quasi-inexistant il y a une vingtaine d'années, le nombre de collégiennes se retrouvant mères et poursuivant leurs études est en augmentation – la chose étant devenue même, selon certains, un véritable fait de société.

The report on discipline in school, commissioned by the Ministry of Education in 1994, found that indiscipline is linked to truancy, smoking, theft and vandalism. No mention was made of pregnancy as having a correlation with truancy. The main factors causing indiscipline are peer influence, pupil background, poor classroom management, ineffective teaching methods, lack of leadership and ignorance of rules and regulations of the school. From the report, we gather that promoting and maintaining discipline are not adequately addressed in the school setting.

According to K. Reid (2005), truancy and school absenteeism have many other causes. Some of them are linked with deprivation, childhood pathologies, disturbed adolescent development, parenting styles, drug usage, levels of self-esteem and academic self-concept as well as attitudes towards parents and teachers. These aspects were not taken into consideration in the study commissioned by the Ministry.

## **1.6. Indiscipline and the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research**

Some factors inherent in the organizational structure of the secondary school system may at times lead to indiscipline. Frequent transfer of teachers, insufficient number of teachers in a

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<sup>9</sup> *Le Dimanche*, (26 September, 2004)

particular subject area, lack of Science laboratories, the absence of an appropriate school library or even the construction of a secondary school that is not completed and students are sent to another school where they are looked down upon and addressed as 'refugiés', may lead to sit-in or strike by the students because the latter may perceive it as the only way left to make themselves heard by the Ministry.

So, going through the various grievances as reported in the press, we have been able to identify three types of indisciplinary actions: the first one is linked with the pupils, the second to the teachers, the third to the structure of secondary school system. The first one is very important because these acts can occur on as well as outside the school premises. In both cases, such acts have serious consequences for students.

### **1.7. From Indiscipline to Violence**

For teachers, the work environment has become more insecure than ever. Unacceptable attitudes and misbehaviour are on the rise. This feeling is more associated with the frequency of indisciplinary actions by the students than by the nature/quality of the action itself. This places the teachers in a position of vulnerability towards the pupils. They no longer have control over their students. Their authority is challenged. With the democratization of education and the increase in the number of students in secondary schools, it is not easy for teachers to run a larger size class. They also feel powerless when it comes to implementing disciplinary measures.

Frequent reports of physical brutality, acts of vandalism and bullying, theft and drug trafficking have made the headlines of local newspapers and it is very hard to deny that the nature of indiscipline in Mauritian schools is changing, putting at stake the teaching and learning environment. Many reasons can account for the feeling of insecurity that prevails in some schools. In a newsletter sent to parents, a rector wrote:

So many students these days are involved in all sorts of crimes. Very soon, the school will become an impossible place unless we immediately have prevention programmes to deal with problems of crime and violence.<sup>10</sup>

Parents frequently complain about the passivity of the school in handling discipline problems in general and incidences of violence in particular. The teacher is often either obscured

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<sup>10</sup> *L'Express*, 23 August 1998

completely or propelled in the limelight as being the major cause of violent reactions on the part of students.

Coupled with indiscipline, acts of violence have become more frequent in schools. Instead of being a place free from threat and danger, the school has become insecure. At any time, teachers can feel threatened either by a student or by a parent or by a group of outsiders. The press reported that a lady teacher was assaulted by a fourteen-year-old boy in a secondary school<sup>11</sup>, the father of student X assaulted student Y on the school premises<sup>12</sup>, a group of persons entered the compound of a primary school with the intention of harming a teacher<sup>13</sup>. There have also been cases of fights with ‘cutters’ among students. From indiscipline we have moved to physical violence and, unless immediate measures are taken by the Ministry to master the situation, it would be too late to make schools become a safe place to work.

### **1.8. Discipline and the Democratization of Education**

It is often argued that before the advent of free education in January 1977, students observed more the rules and regulations prevalent at school. We must admit that at that time, education was accessible to a limited group. Parents were making much sacrifice to pay the school fees and so they were keen to see their children succeed. Teachers also showed that they could maintain discipline in their class, otherwise they were sacked, especially in private paid schools. To-day some argue that teachers are more concerned with private tuition than the work they should be doing in class. Students prefer to concentrate on their private tuition so much so that private tuition is given priority to the work in class.

For some teachers, the indifference and lack of interest of students in coming to schools are related to the proliferation of private tuition. As long as private tuition persists in the educational landscape, as long as it continues to supersede the importance of going to school, secondary schools would go down the drain because private tuition, in many ways, has made school work either secondary, futile or an optional service. It has devalued the school with its over-riding influence in the educational system and the authorities have to seriously think of how to bring back students to schools (especially during the third term) and how to reinstate discipline. In some schools, students have developed a mentality characterized by

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<sup>11</sup> *Le Mauricien*, 17 March 2005

<sup>12</sup> *Le Mauricien*, 6 June 2005

<sup>13</sup> *Week-End*, 6 March 2005

indifference, an ‘I don’t care’ attitude, defiance, lack of interest, lack of respect for an institution which is supposed to be a temple of knowledge.

Before free education was introduced in schools, parents and students considered the school as a place of worship; it was a sacred place where knowledge was imparted. They had a vision that the institution was a centre of knowledge, and this perception could not be questioned. Today, the perception is different. The democratization of education has opened access to all.

Moreover, the way that the admission exercise has been carried out after the introduction of the CPE exams can also be seen as a factor of indiscipline. The ranking or the grading system and the desire to have admission in a good secondary school has led children living far away from their school to travel long distances, by bus. Besides, regular transfer of teachers in state schools and the low salary are perhaps some of the factors that can contribute indirectly to the absence of discipline in a school.

Discipline problems are multifaceted. Discipline or the lack of it is not only an educational issue, but is also related to family, social, pedagogical, psychological and cultural issues. Nobody can deny the fact that what is happening in society is very often reproduced in school. And since societal issues are complex, the problem of discipline becomes even more complex because it calls for a holistic approach.

### **1.9. The Educational Context of the Study**

Mauritius is a small island situated in the Indian Ocean about 800 kms to the east of Madagascar. It was a French colony from 1715 to 1810 when the British took over in 1810. Mauritius became independent in 1968 and acceded to the status of Republic in 1992. The country has inherited an education system based on the British model since colonial times. It consists of four main sectors: pre-primary (children aged 3-5 years), primary (children aged 5 – 11 years), secondary (students aged 11 – 20 years), tertiary (students aged 18 years onwards).

Apart from pre-primary schools, education in Mauritius is free and it is compulsory up to the age of 16 since the beginning of 2005. Up to 2002, the end of primary schooling has been sanctioned by a very competitive examination, the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE).

The ranking of the pupil determined the secondary school he/she should attend. The official rate of failure in this examination was around 40%, but some people say it was much higher. Those who failed at that time got a second chance and after two failures, they dropped out of the regular system of education. As from the year 2003, the ranking system has been replaced by a grading system and since then the atmosphere of competition has decreased a lot in the primary schools, according to many teachers. However, the percentage of failure has remained the same.

Those who pass the CPE move on to secondary schools where, after completing Forms I to V, they sit for the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations (S.C.). After two further years of schooling, they can sit for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination (HSC) (Form VI). Those who fail the CPE are asked to join the pre-vocational classes set up since January 2003 in each secondary school. This intake seems to be in line with the policy of regionalisation decided by the then government in 2003.

### **1.10. Types of Secondary School**

There are six categories of secondary schools in Mauritius: State schools, private confessional schools and private non-confessional schools, those falling under the aegis of Mauritius Education Development Company (MEDCO) and Rodrigues Education Development Company (REDCO) and private paid schools. The first four categories depend largely on the grant offered by the government, according to the facilities they offer and the number of students who have been registered in the schools. The last category concerns the private fee paying schools. Some follow the French system of education, others a mixture of Mauritian and international trends. There are also those which prepare their students for the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations. It seems that there exist some 35 to 40 private paid secondary schools in Mauritius.

State schools are owned and administered by the State, confessional schools by religious organizations and private non-confessional schools by private individuals. A wide disparity exists among the three categories of schools in terms of infrastructure and resources, student intake and student support, among others.

The majority of State Schools tend to have a good infrastructure, to be well-equipped so far as resources for learning are concerned (e.g. library, laboratory, sports facilities). Students who have scored good grades at the CPE can secure a seat in these schools.

The private confessional schools provide adequate infrastructure and resources to students. They also recruit students with good CPE results. They offer a counselling service to students, and values education forms part of their curriculum. A sense of belonging to the school is promoted through various extra-curricular activities.

Generally the private non-confessional schools (apart from a few exceptions) are not well-equipped. Some can even be said to offer very poor conditions for teaching and learning to take place. The private schools tend to attract students who have not been admitted to the state or confessional schools.

The Mauritius Education Development Company (MEDCO) was created to take charge of those schools which were closing down due to lack of funds and the MEDCO teachers would have been unemployed. So the government created this company to protect the future of the students and that of the teachers in these schools. These schools are somewhat in poor conditions.

The Rodriguan Education Development Company (REDCO) was created to look after those secondary schools built by the government in Rodrigues. It is fairly autonomous in the recruitment of its teachers, for example. The secondary schools benefit from appropriate infrastructure.

Besides infrastructure, student intake and student support, and many other variables such as location, management style, school culture contribute to the construction of the identity of a secondary school in Mauritius.

Starting with only 4 State Secondary Schools (SSS) just after independence (one for girls and 3 for boys), the government now counts 60 SSS all over the country. There were 13 confessional schools, but there are now 18; whereas we have less than 100 private non-confessional secondary schools. Some 15000 students sit for the School Certificate examinations and some 6000 for Higher School Certificate examinations each year. About

20,000 students start their first year in secondary schools each year. If a school has an average of 600 pupils, we can without doubt say that we have a minimum of 60,000 pupils in all Mauritian secondary schools.

Every reform project in education in Mauritius is based on the structure of the educational system. However, none of the reports has been implemented totally as per the recommendations up to now. The educational set-up is still the same since the colonial period. Some of the minor changes that have occurred since independence are: the introduction of the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) in 1982 and the replacement of ranking by a grading system in the CPE exams in 2002. More examinable subjects have been introduced in secondary schools so as to cater for the needs of the country. The School Certificate and Higher School Certificate have not been Mauritianised yet.

### **1.11. The Normal Stream v/s the Prevocational Stream**

Since 2003, admission to Form I has been regionalized, except for confessional schools and private non-confessional schools. The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research has also imposed a prevocational class in each school for those who have failed the CPE exams. The school-leaving age is 16 years old. The new law has been implemented since January 2005.

Since 2003, most secondary schools are bound to have a prevocational class. Those who have failed the CPE are enrolled in the prevocational stream for a period of three years, after which they are left to themselves to find a job. Since the introduction of this class in the mainstream system, teachers generally claim that these students are the most indisciplined, turbulent and lazy. They misbehave and create serious problems in the school.

Taking care of those who have failed their CPE exams has always been one of the objectives of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. It all started in the late 1970s when the Ministry of Education created the Community Schools to be run in the afternoon in the Junior Secondary Schools, (now SSS). They were phased out and the pupils were channelled to training centres such as the ITTC, the Gandhian Basic School. In the early 1990s, prevocational training centres were launched in several places, and in 1996 the Basic Secondary Schools (BSS) were created for those who had failed the CPE to replace these training centres. In 1998, the BSS were also phased out to be replaced by the State Secondary Schools-Vocational (SSS-V). Finally in 2001, these secondary schools were again

phased out to join the mainstream, and the government decided that in each secondary school, there should be a prevocational class to cater for the CPE failures. According to many rector, the prevocational classes are posing some serious problems in the secondary schools.

The objective of these classes is to provide an education enabling the pupils to be functionally literate and numerate and get a training that can allow them to earn a livelihood later on. It is said that these students feel inhibited by the presence of those who are following the formal education stream. They have the impression that this is not their school and that they are being given a place out of charity. Students of the normal stream tend to look down upon them and make nasty remarks. Prevocational students react badly to this attitude and misbehave.

Factors such as recruitment of Form I students, percentage of success at the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate exams as well as the perception of discipline in a school contribute to the positive or negative image of a secondary school. Whereas some parents send their children to these schools according to these criteria, others have no better choice than to send their children to whichever school is available. We must then ask ourselves how discipline/indiscipline and violence can affect the management and the teaching and learning process in a school.

### **1.12. Discipline and Educational Reforms**

In several reform projects on education, the word “discipline” in primary and secondary school is not or is rarely mentioned, assuming that this is not a major problem in our schools. In the *Proposal for Structural Reform* (1990:89), one can read the following:

- (1) making the school a pleasant place by providing, amongst other things, more room for physical movement both inside the classroom and on the playground;
- (2) providing for the weaker pupils, particularly at the end of Level III, a more favourable pupil/teacher ratio.

Those recommendations were proposed in the context of ‘nine-year schooling’; they underline that the present school infrastructure does not help teachers to do their work in an appropriate environment and does not allow learners with difficulties to improve. School infrastructure and student/teacher ratio are, without doubt, related to discipline problems,

although this is not mentioned in the report. Good pedagogy relies on good infrastructure. A pupil studying in an adverse environment may develop a negative attitude towards studies.

In the *Master Plan for the Year 2000* (1991), again we find excerpts which could relate to discipline in schools:

- The present Students Councils will be maintained and students will be encouraged to participate in decision-making through School Councils to be set up in all schools, and the Regional Educational Advisory Committees (p. 99),
- Government will encourage the establishment of School Councils in all schools and colleges in Mauritius and in Rodrigues by the year 1995. These Councils will
  - (a) advise and help to implement decisions concerning the general welfare of the students;
  - (b) ensure that parents and the community are aware of what is being taught and how it is taught;
  - (c) advise on the improvement of school facilities;
  - (d) assist students in needs; and
  - (e) organize co-curricular and cultural activities for the benefit of students.

Meetings with administrators and students councils should be done more often to discuss their needs, welfare and disciplinary problems. If officially Student Councils do exist, unofficially it is mere eyewash according to the students. This council could help to solve the disciplinary problems in a school. We can find such arguments in the *Action Plan for a New Education System in Mauritius* (1998:74).

One aspect of students' indisciplined attitude to school is absenteeism, especially when the exams are near. Some reasons justifying students' absenteeism before School Certificate and Higher School Certificate are found in the *White Paper on Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education* (1997:29).

Absenteeism during the weeks preceding examinations, especially for SC and HSC, has reached a scale which no system of schooling can tolerate any longer. Poor teaching, teachers' absence, some unscrupulous teachers, private tuition and fierce competition have been identified as the main causal factors. Strong measures will be taken to phase out in due

time those undesirable factors. At the same time, legislation will be introduced to make it mandatory for students to complete a set number of school days before being authorized to sit for the examinations. Another deterrent may be the scaling of their school performance.

According to the authors of this report, teachers' incompetence, private tuition and competition contribute to absenteeism. Three years before, another set of reasons were given to explain absenteeism in schools. In a report commissioned by the Ministry of Education (cf. *Discipline in Secondary Schools*, 1994:19), we can read the following:

The main reason for absenteeism is 'revision at home'. Pupils prefer to stay at home to study or to revise rather than come to school. This may lead us to reflect on the teaching-learning situation.

Other reasons given for absenteeism are as follows:

- (i) sickness
- (ii) attendance at religious functions
- (iii) homework not done.

They do not refer to absenteeism in relation to days, weeks or months preceding the examination period. The *White Paper* does not speak about absenteeism during the year but at a specific time during the year.

The issue of discipline was raised openly for the first time in 1997 in the *White Paper on Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education* (1997:38-39):

Discipline or lack of discipline often finds its source in frustration, alienation or a sense of impotence in the face of remote authority. The Regional Education Directorates will be responsible for enforcing discipline based on the national guidelines. It is envisaged that, with the devolution of more power and responsibility to regional and local levels, discipline among both students and staff should become less of a problem.

As attitudes towards education and the education system become more positive, as members of regional and local school boards assert their professional authority, and as heads of schools improve their skill in administration and personnel management, fewer acts of indiscipline are likely to arise.

For the first time, the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research (1997)

- (i) takes note of the issue of indiscipline in schools in an official way. Formerly, the problem seemed not to exist ;
- (ii) draws attention to the causes of indiscipline in schools – frustration, alienation and the feeling of helplessness towards authority ;
- (iii) refers to ‘national guidelines’ concerning disciplinary measures and think that with the new distribution of responsibilities, indiscipline should no longer be a problem ;
- (iv) says that discipline does not only concern students but also teachers and the administration of the school. Good management can contribute to solve the problem of indiscipline.

The role of the inspectors is stressed in the *Action Plan for a New Education System in Mauritius* (1998:78)

The inspectors will be expected to focus attention particularly on...discipline, extra-curricular activities and general standards.

### **1.13. From Ministry to Schools**

The Ministry of Education has never been able to draft a common set of rules and regulations for the schools under its responsibility. In fact, the only official document that exists is the *Education Act* of 1957 as subsequently amended, Section 38 (1) (k) of Part V reads as follows:

#### 38. Regulations

(1) The Minister may make regulations generally for the purpose of this Act and, in particular, but without prejudice to the generality of his powers, for ...

(k) discipline in schools and methods of enforcement ...

Since the Ministry has not been able to set out the rules and regulations which should accompany the teaching and learning process, each head of schools, state and non-state, has set out his/her own rules and regulations conducive to a good teaching and learning atmosphere in the school.

Emphasis is laid upon uniforms (which give the school its identity), late arrivals, absences, truancy, misbehaviour in school buses and on school premises. Many of them have not been updated since no mention is made of new forms of indiscipline on school premises such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs or drug trafficking, smoking or the presence of pornographic materials in schools.

It is not surprising that some rectors have sounded the alarm several times, the latest being from one private school rector who writes:

...les problèmes disciplinaires et l'absentéisme sont en croissance dans les collèges. Pour endiguer ces fléaux, il faut légiférer pour que chacun connaisse clairement les règles du jeu et les sanctions auxquelles il s'expose. Il faut que les chefs d'établissements aient des outils efficaces à leur disposition pour exercer leur métier et mettre fin à ce sentiment d'impuissance qui prévaut aujourd'hui par rapport à ces problèmes... Il faut aussi revoir le régime des punitions traditionnelles internes aux collèges car il n'effraie plus les élèves, et donc leur effet dissuasif s'estompe... que faire face à un élève qui ne demande que d'être exclu d'un cours ? L'école est démunie lorsque le renvoi temporaire est vécu par l'élève comme une libération. La sanction, pourtant nécessaire, perd toute signification.<sup>14</sup>

This appeal concerns all the secondary schools in Mauritius. Helplessness prevails everywhere and every one is looking towards the Ministry for a lifebuoy since they do not want to go against the law or to be branded in society. There is a strong plea for clear policy guidelines on the issue of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools.

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<sup>14</sup> Mauritius Times, 18 – 23, 2005.

# CHAPTER 2

## Conceptual Framework

The relationship between the school and society is a multifaceted one. On the one hand, the school is often considered as a miniature reflection of the social set-up, embodying the sets of beliefs, values and attitudes that prevail in society at large. On the other hand, and paradoxically, the school is also expected to cultivate in its students the ability and dispositions to critically renegotiate those very beliefs and values with a view to changing and improving society. That those two apparently conflicting yet concurrent roles should co-exist vexes no one and can lead us to two conclusions. The first one is that the school has been and is successful in its endeavour to reconcile these two roles. This position is logically and rationally problematic for one simple reason: the transmission role does not sit very nicely with an emancipatory function. The second position is that there exist some weaknesses in our own understanding of both functions and that there is a risk that neither is being fulfilled by the school. The problem of school discipline cannot be considered outside the parameter of the evolving social context. Our theoretical premise is that the root causes of indiscipline and violence have to be located within the wider social context and the changing perception of the role and function of the school.

### **2.1. Education and Schools: a Sociohistorical Perspective**

Taken from a historical perspective, the school has been at the receiving end of a variety of economic, social and political changes that have altered the expectations and culture of its clientèle, shaped its role and mandate and radically transformed our understanding of education. In Mauritius also, the past three decades have witnessed a radical change in our educational landscape not only on account of the policy decisions, but also at the level of the perception of the role of the school from the perspective of different stakeholders. Various factors can account for this change in perception.

Prime among these is the economic denominator. Though it is undeniable that, historically, in Mauritius, one of the most fundamental functions of the school is to prepare children to enter adult life, it is also equally true that such preparation relates primarily to a process of certification. With trade liberalization and the wide ramifications of globalization, economic

compulsions have also come to drive the logic of education at both policy decision and public pedagogy. What is unsettling is not the fact that education is perceived as a means of human resource management and as a means of selection but rather that this stand has perverted the teaching and learning process insofar as it has altered the role and expectations of the school in the most fundamental ways and changed our understanding of the teachers' function. Changing economic configurations have had a long lasting impact on education as they have also influenced the social worth of education. The impact of such changes has been strongly felt at the level of the school and the teacher's authority. Declining school and teacher's authority have in turn affected school discipline in an irreversible manner.

On the ideological front, the public discourse centering on equality of opportunities has meant concurrently that the acquisition and extension of academic qualifications no longer ensure social status. While historically, in Mauritius higher education achievement and attainment meant access to government jobs and higher status in society, this is no longer the case. Economic development has also signified that earnings in the private sector even for semi-skilled workers have, in a more conspicuous way, outstripped those in the public sector. It became possible in the 1980s to earn more in the informal sector and without formal qualifications than those working in the public service. Such economic phenomena drove home the message that education was no longer a prerequisite for improved economic status. This explains, to a certain extent, the changes in the expectations of pupils and parents from education, schools and teachers. Since we have been functioning in a system where education has long been perceived as an agent of economic and social mobility and, given that it no longer produced these historical privileges the social worth of education became considerably eroded. Alongside the declining social worth of education, we have to consider its effects on the social status of teachers, both of which could account for the rise in acts of indiscipline and violence in our schools.

According to Esteve (2000: 203), society today tends to rank social status in terms of earnings. The Mauritian case is no different. Teachers' salaries have not grown as rapidly as other comparable jobs in both the public and the private sector. Indeed he identifies the teachers' feelings about their salary as a key component to their collective identity crisis. Many parents consider that those who join the teaching profession have failed to make it to a better job and higher salaries or are looking for a less strenuous profession with paid leave. This public value judgment of teachers, which is largely negative, is often transmitted to their

children and affects the behaviour of the latter towards teachers in particular and teaching in general. In Mauritius this phenomenon is further compounded by the existence of private tuition. The common belief is that since it is a paid service the quality of teachers' input during private tuition is higher than that provided at school. Consequently, there results a complete disregard in many cases for the work accomplished during school hours and the value attached to school teachers. This disregard often becomes visible in the non-compliance of students to teachers' instructions and the school rules. Sometimes this may give rise to overt violation of rules with no fear whatsoever of the repercussions; otherwise it may take the more covert forms of flouting teachers' or rectors' authority. Nowhere has this change been felt more than at the level of classrooms and schools where teachers and administrators have had to wrestle, for the past two decades, with the rising tide of non-compliance with school rules on the part of both parents and students and a rapid degeneration of discipline across all schools. Though it is clear, at least from the authorities' perspective, that measures of both preventive and punitive nature will have to be taken to restore, in some cases, a situation where the basics of teaching and learning can take place. It is a matter of conjecture at the moment as to the very causes and mechanisms through which the situation gets perpetuated or even worsens in some cases.

It is not easy to point out to a single set of factors that have thus affected the state of discipline in Mauritian schools. Apart from the effects of changes in economic configurations mentioned above, there is a whole set of factors that emerge both from within the system itself and from outside it.

### **2.1.1. The Mauritian Experience**

Rapid industrialisation of the island in the late 1970s and the 1980s brought about deep-seated changes at the heart of the Mauritian society. On the one hand, the basic unit of the society, that is, the family experienced significant transformations in terms of its structure and functions. When the doors of the job market were thrown open to women, it meant that mothers, who were until then responsible for informal education inclusive of moral education, would be away from home for a longer period of time. Additionally, with an increase in income and standard of living, it became possible for nuclear families to settle individually and the essential functions performed by the members of the extended families

were not taken up by any other agents of secondary socialization. As a result, much of the informal education that was catered for in the home was no longer attended to in the formal system of education, that is, the school. Such informal education is, however, a support to the formal process of education. It leads to, amongst others, the development of social skills and moral resources necessary for acceptance within the social milieu of the school. When the family ceased to perform these essential functions, it is highly probable that the impact was also felt in the school arena as teachers comparatively were not prepared to shoulder those responsibilities that traditionally fell under the purview of the home. It is thus theoretically plausible to consider that such a gap which could neither be filled by parents nor by schools has led to no significant measures but to an intensification of discipline problems in our schools.

Teachers, as key actors in the process of education, also found themselves facing various challenges that shaped the performance and understanding of their role and have simultaneously limited their effectiveness and the quality of their work. For the past two decades education has been characterized, as Esteve (2000: 198) puts it by “*compulsory schooling of all our children in primary schools and unprecedented pupil populations in all secondary schools.*” Mass education poses several challenges at the level of the organisation and personal negotiation of the teaching and learning activities for teachers, especially in view of the fact that pupils come from a heterogeneous background and are of mixed ability. The challenge of multicultural and mixed ability classroom has not been successfully dealt with in our system of education. High rates of failure produced by a system which favours elitism and does not cater for the needs and aspirations of students from diverse cultural backgrounds accentuate frustrations and disillusionment and make the problem of indiscipline more and more intricate.

While the definitions of roles have, by nature of the fast moving social, economic, cultural and political climate, increased substantially in scope, teachers together with the management of schools have been disconcerted by the limits imposed by an overly bureaucratic system driven by the economic and political compulsions centred on results and performance. Conversely, the influence of teachers and schools on adolescents has considerably weakened because of the possibilities offered by all forms of media in terms of access to knowledge and learning experiences (Geertz: 1999: 23). It is virtually impossible in an age of technology and the internet to overlook the role of the media. Raynal (2002) argues that the learning which

takes place outside the four walls of the class enables students to make sense of the world through a variety of ways and that their knowledge and experience are not compartmentalized. Yet, despite the rapid changes in the technological, social and cultural changes in the environment of the child, the school and educators have remained surprisingly unimaginative as to the myriad ways in which children can be educated. Such a situation clearly demonstrates that schools can no longer be conceived as the only structure capable of providing education. As described by Raynal (2002), there has been a significant distancing between the school and the reality of its students.

Indeed, the Mauritian situation is also similar to what has been described above. Successive waves of educational reform have tried to address the issue of access and quantity in the context of mass education. But the more fundamental reform in pedagogy has been, at best, inadequately addressed. Our system has remained extremely rigid, the teaching methods have become obsolete and the examinations system outdated and inadequate to measure the multidimensional aspects of learning. Our model has remained the 1 class, 1 teacher, 1 subject. Our assessment procedures, because they do not recognize the knowledge and all the learning that occur within the social space of the school and those peripheral to the school, already condemn a large majority of students to failure. Both students and their parents, especially those coming from disadvantaged areas, become painfully aware of the fact that opportunities for success recede as they move up the educational ladder. When both parents and students do not attribute either an economic or social significance to education, it is less likely that the school and its members and its rules would be held in high esteem.

Additionally, the belief that students grow up nicely and without crisis seems absurd in our contemporary context, especially in view of the amount of knowledge produced by educational psychology in the recent years. Despite this, the current position of the school as revealed by its processes show that no importance is attributed to the psycho-social and psycho-emotional aspects of learning. As Raynal argues, there is a complete denial of the pleasure of learning. Instead of being a pleasurable exercise, learning amounts more often than not to the taming of the body. The pedagogy used has remained largely teacher-centred as all innovative practices have fizzled out, eaten up by a system that bulldozes revolutions. Those teachers who have dared to adopt a pedagogy that values those who learn differently are few, and their practices have been relegated to the periphery of traditional educational practice.

For many who believe the agenda of education should be emancipatory, moral and critical (Ballion: 2002: 14), the present system carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. If education is to become the selective mechanism *par excellence* and this selection is driven by the economic logic of the market, it means that, increasingly, the size of the elite will be irremediably reduced, creating in its wake a high degree of frustration among the marginalized. Ironically, the marginalized will, in time, constitute the majority of students and their frustration could take possibly more violent and overt forms, as manifested by the mounting outbreak of violence and revolt against authority within the school setting.

Indeed, in Mauritius, the present situation in most secondary schools comes close to the description given above. While some theorists would situate the problem of indiscipline and violence as being external to the context of the school and wider society, our position looks more deeply into the setting of the school for a greater understanding of the disease and not only the symptoms. Of course, our position does not preclude an understanding that is grounded in wider social phenomena such as the demise of the family and other institutions, the erosion of traditional values and the influence of the media.

However, since our focus is primarily on the factors internal to the school, it becomes pertinent to address both the pedagogical and psychological aspects of education and schooling that can provide useful insights into the problems of indiscipline and violence.

## **2.2. The Pedagogical Aspect**

It is generally acknowledged by teachers in Mauritian secondary schools that indiscipline and violence are widely prevalent among students. However, many rectors deny this fact in their school and, instead of recognising its existence, they adopt a ‘crisis-management’ approach when they are faced with such an issue. It is, therefore, important not only to understand student and teacher behaviours and the interaction between the two but also the management style in a school. Indiscipline and violence are perceived as a social issue and failing to address it seriously could lead to an unhealthy atmosphere in the schools.

### **2.2.1. Teaching and the Teacher Factor**

One of the important pedagogical concerns for teachers is classroom discipline as this ensures the conditions for effective teaching and learning. An important element to consider at the outset is teachers' conception of discipline. This depends on a number of factors ranging from teachers' personality, their teaching experience, their own experience as students to the training that they have been getting for classroom management. Slee (1995) views discipline from three main angles. Firstly, discipline is regarded as an educational concept where it is a process directed by democratic principles. The second view, namely, the behaviourist's perspective, considers discipline in terms of conditioning. The functionalist perspective, on its part, looks at discipline as something which disturbs the organizational equilibrium of schools and where the quest is for social order with minimal resistance. In this orientation, discipline is regarded as the deployment of control for bureaucratic efficiency.

### **2.2.2. Teacher-Student Relationship**

One of the important components of the learning environment is teacher-student relationship. The teacher's behaviour vis-à-vis his/her students determines the classroom climate. Their behaviour in relation to discipline control and conflict resolution is a crucial element to consider. Many of the problems of control that arise in the classroom are a direct consequence of the way in which the teacher acts or reacts towards the children concerned (Fontana, 1987). Teacher behaviour is the only kind of behaviour that is under the teacher's own control. It is all too easy to make vague cause-to-effect relationships and take decisions on the basis of a number of assumptions which may be subjective. In this respect, Fontana (1987: 5) points out the need for self-examination to better address the problem of discipline:

Self-examination of professional behaviours is simply a way of establishing, calmly and objectively, what part we ourselves played in instigating or sustaining certain classroom activities, and then of proceeding from this to develop improved strategies of response, as necessary for dealing with similar eventualities when they arise in the future.

Such a self-reflection process will prevent teachers from inventing all sorts of reasons to justify their actions against certain disciplinary problems.

Student-teacher relationships are a key feature of school life. In general, students prefer teachers who are competent and willing to help, understand their points of view, who have a friendly approach and a sense of humour or who talk and listen to them. Teacher behaviour is

central in determining the type of student-teacher relationship. The potential for the behaviour of a teacher to be appreciated or condemned as a model is high in a class. Teachers who are either too strict or unable to keep order in the classroom could cause students to dislike schools, which in turn could lead to an increase in aggressive behaviour (S. Yoneyama & A. Naito, 2003: 318). Negative teacher behaviour, like public humiliation, shouting, telling students to 'shut up', responding sarcastically, name-calling, affects student-teacher relationship (Pomeroy, 1999). These actions are perceived to communicate a downgrading message to the student. Further, students feel that their points of view are not valued when teachers do not listen to them. Poor teacher-student relationship can be explained by the fact that teachers rarely listen to students. The latter consider listening to them as essential in the teacher-student relationship. Indiscipline and violence tend to occur more often in a class where teachers are less willing to listen to students. The negative attitude of a teacher towards a student may provide an excuse for the latter to get involved in acts of indiscipline and violence.

At times teachers tend to take sides and are not democratic. It has been argued that teachers provide a reason for indiscipline and violence by favouritism or by ignoring or pretending not to notice students' misbehaviour. Another point put forward by Pomeroy is that students tend to argue with teachers as the latter fail to meet the social and emotional needs of the former. Sometimes, teachers also fail to settle student-student conflict and this influences teacher-student relationships. Moreover, the literature points out the influence of racism in terms of differential student treatment and its impact on student-teacher interaction.

Teachers' authority and strictness are also important features which ensure classroom discipline. Pomeroy (1999) argues that the way in which discipline is applied also matters. The tone and wordings used by the teacher are important. Rigby (1997) argues that uncertainty and hesitancy on the part of the teacher to intervene may encourage students to misbehave. Management of indiscipline equally involves preventive intervention, like keeping continuous track of late-comers and absentees, phoning parents for inquiry, and so on.

Pomeroy points out three essential characteristics of disciplinary actions. First of all, the disciplinary action should be fair. Secondly, the corrective measures should be applied

without humiliating the student. Finally, the disciplinary action should be motivated by a concern for the well-being of the students.

The interactions between teachers and students can also be understood in terms of the school as a hierarchical system. As pointed out by Pomeroy (1999: 475)

In school, the framework which underlies the young people's interpretation of events and interactions, within a social system, is the framework of hierarchy. Interactions are seen to take place between individuals who hold different positions in the hierarchy. Most clearly, the young people interviewed perceive themselves as occupying the lowest position in the hierarchy while teachers assume the highest position. The interviewees identify a hierarchical imbalance in the teacher-student relationship and clearly identify that teachers possess an unequal and greater share of power.

Pomeroy remarked that this hierarchy can be viewed at three levels with teachers at the top end, more-able and better-behaved students somewhere in between and disruptive students at the lowest end. We may add that it is a four-levelled hierarchy – the administrators, the teachers and the well-behaved students and finally the disruptive students. The teacher himself/herself has to work within a hierarchical, power-dominant management structure in which very often he/she feels powerless.

Indiscipline can also be a form of threat to teachers. Teachers, especially young teachers, feel insecure about their ability to handle large classes. As pointed out by Fontana (1987: 11), a class of 30 adolescent students can be an intimidating sight to an inexperienced teacher (and to many an experienced one, too, come to that), and can lead to a loss of that initial confidence which is an essential element in relating to a class.

Learning, therefore, is one of the facets of school life to which least attention is paid in the discourse on indiscipline and violence. According to Rigby (1996), inadequate teaching methodology or poorly motivated teachers may be an important cause of misbehaviour in class. Students cease to listen to teachers because it no longer pays to attend boring classes and, for them, studying at school has become even less relevant. Moreover, a sense of being a loser or a sense of failure and lowered self-esteem could provide sufficient excuse to vent frustration and exacerbate indiscipline and violence.

### 2.3. Teachers' Belief and Self-efficacy

Beliefs are judgments and evaluations that we make about ourselves, about others, and about the world around us (Yero, 2002). Teachers' belief system consists of values and beliefs about their conceptions of how students learn, the aims of education, teaching approaches, etc (Barry and King, 1998). Among others, teachers form their beliefs from their past experiences as students.

Believing and perceiving is a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. *“When people believe something is true, they perceive (pay attention to) information supporting that belief”* (Yero, 2002). Beliefs alter expectations. People perceive what they expect to perceive. Extending this reflection, one may argue that teachers' views on indiscipline may not be facts but shaped by the circumstances in which they work and their past experiences.

Another notion that is relevant in the present discussion is the notion of self-efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1994). Teachers' management of discipline depends also on their self-efficacy.

Apart from personal characteristics, another important feature in the management of classroom discipline is teachers' knowledge of theories about students' behaviours, child psychology, theories of adolescence, their understanding of the nature of disciplinary problems or their pedagogical knowledge. Teachers' subject content knowledge and their teaching style (authoritative, laissez-faire, and democratic) are other important factors. For instance, Fontana (1987: 9) points out that

More able children will even tolerate a quite high incidence of arbitrary or insensitive behaviours in a teacher if he or she is known to have an expert knowledge of the material and to be successful at getting people through examinations.

All the above-mentioned factors imply that pedagogical training is of prime importance in the management of discipline. Are teachers sufficiently equipped with appropriate pedagogical know-how to manage classroom crisis?

The literature shows (Katerina, Dimitris & Kostas, 2003) that there are two categories of strategies that teachers use to cope with disciplinary problems. The first category involves

rewarding appropriate behaviours and preventing or punishing misbehaviours. The second category refers to strategies that make students take responsibility for their own behaviour.

It is also insightful to explore the cases of well-behaved students to have a better understanding of indiscipline. Katerina, Dimitris & Kostas (2003) find that pupils exhibit proper behaviours for self-determined reasons. Further, their research shows that there is a strong correlation between reasons for students' good behaviour and their perceptions about strategies used by their teachers to maintain discipline.

Teachers experience personal senses of accomplishment and failure and highs and lows in their profession. These are influenced by the circumstances of the classroom situation. Teachers' morale, spirit and motivation are linked to their work conditions. Teaching in an indisciplined classroom may be very stressful and challenging.

## **2.4. The Psychological Aspect of Adolescence**

Stanley Hall (1904) proposed a 'storm and stress' view of adolescence as a turbulent time charged with conflicts and problems. To-day, adolescents, including Mauritian adolescents, face demands, expectations, risks and temptations that are specific to this generation. Yet the majority of adolescents successfully negotiate the path to adulthood. The 'storm and stress' seems to be experienced by a small group rather than the majority.

In the context of the present study, it could be that those adolescents who go through the 'storm and stress' are the ones more likely to display indiscipline and violent behaviour. At the same time, even those adolescents who experience a positive transition from childhood do, in the process, indulge in some minor forms of misbehaviour. After all, we have all been adolescents.

The main argument here is that, while adolescence should not necessarily be equated with indiscipline and violence, a few adolescents express their transition problems in violent and indisciplined behaviour.

Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980, 1994) have theorized that the adolescent goes through an 'Identity Crisis' as part of his growth towards adulthood: "Who am I?" is the question. Finding an answer to this question, usually in late adolescence around 19 yrs, brings a sense

of harmony to the adolescent who finds a vocation to aspire to, makes commitments to people, ideas and values. But resolving this 'identity crisis' is not a smooth process. In the search of their identity, very often adolescents go through a period of Identity Moratorium (Marcia, 1980).

This period is one of questioning, struggle, experimentation, exploration of alternatives. In search of an identity, the adolescent will experiment with different identities until he achieves self-understanding and as a consequence, such persons feel confused, unstable, discontented. They are often rebellious and uncooperative (Rice, 1996).

The Moratorium period could explain some forms of indiscipline and violence among Mauritian adolescents. To prove that they are independent and no longer children, they may rebel against all forms of authority figures, especially parents and teachers. This can take the form of verbal abuse, challenging teachers' authority in the classroom. Some may experiment with new adult-like behaviours to show that they are grown-up, for example: smoking, alcohol consumption, active sexual life.

The present society makes it even more difficult for adolescents who are in the 'moratorium' period. We live in a world where material needs are priorities. Adolescents feel the need to be 'in'; they need an up-to-date mobile, trade-mark sports clothes and shoes. They need to go out. All this requires money. So, some of them start stealing. As Dolto & Dolto-Tolitch (1989: 94) writes

on vole parcequ'on est pressé de grandir ...En volant on s'accapare une panoplie de grand, ce qui, dans notre société, veut dire s'emparer des objets qui coûtent de l'argent et qui vous donnent une impression de liberté.

In their quest for freedom, they believe external signs will give them that feeling. They want to create an illusion of being a successful grown-up.

As part of the 'identity search' process, the adolescent looks up to the peer-group for support. "*Research has confirmed this shift from dependency on parents to dependency on peers*" (Papalia and Olds, 1993). The peer-group generally consists of a group of adolescents within the same school or the same neighbourhood. It can be a single-sexed or mixed group of approximately the same age. The group shares common interests and adopts the same ways

of behaving, types of clothes and language code. There is often pressure within the group to conform to its norms. Conformity to peer pressure can be positive if it involves prosocial behaviour like participation in sports or fund-raising activities for social groups. But it can also be negative if teenagers engage in all sorts of negative behaviour, use seedy language, steal, vandalize and make fun of parents and teachers (Santrock, 2004)

As adolescents feel more confident in their identity, they will become more autonomous and independent of the peer-group usually towards 18 years. But prior to that, members of the peer-group are constantly influencing and are being influenced by each other. Some peer-groups due to unfavourable living conditions and troubled backgrounds, may at times be organized around mainly anti-social behaviour. Feeling excluded from the mainstream in society and at school, they fall prey to stealing objects that they cannot have and become delinquents. Some groups express their 'mal être' in racquetting, glue sniffing, vandalism, drug consumption and premature sexuality.

The 'Personal Fable' is another characteristic of adolescence described by Elkind (1976). It is part of adolescent egocentrism which involves an adolescent's sense of uniqueness and invincibility. This feeling leads the adolescents to believe that they will never suffer the terrible experiences which other people go through. They are invulnerable. 'This won't happen to me'. The 'Personal Fable' explains a lot of the reckless and risk-taking behaviours of some adolescents. It includes trying drugs, unsafe sex, swimming in dangerous places, playing truant. Sometimes under the influence of the peer-group, the adolescent will even go to the extent of risking his life to show what he is capable of doing. He enjoys the strong sensations which accompany risky behaviours and experiences relief from anxieties. We have had cases of adolescents playing truant and drowning while swimming in dangerous places.

Sometimes, this need for strong sensations is turned inward towards one's own body and leads to self-mutilation. Recently there have been cases of 'Marilyn Manson' phenomenon.

Although adolescence appears to be a vulnerable period of life, most adolescents, given appropriate support and understanding, do successfully negotiate their road to adulthood.

# CHAPTER 3

## Literature Review

There is no dearth of literature on the issue of violence and school, considering the number of survey research the results of which have been published in both academic journals and media meant for a wider audience. Much of this literature pertains to the field of psychology and sociology which provide the theoretical framework to help educators understand the causes and identify the possible solutions to indiscipline and violence in schools. Many of the studies have been of a diagnostic nature, seeking to pinpoint the complexities of the phenomenon, together with its various manifestations.

### **3.1. The International Context – an Overview**

In the United States and in Europe, the issue of indiscipline is outdated. Nowadays, bullying and violence have replaced acts of indiscipline. Unless necessary actions are taken immediately, it would not take long for Mauritian students to follow their European or American counterparts.

#### **3.1.1. Indiscipline and Bullying**

Indiscipline and violence in secondary schools are on the rise. In a survey conducted by the Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (BBC, 2000), 70% of the teachers argued that indiscipline has greatly increased over the last five years and 50% attribute the blame on the changing pupils' attitudes.

In some schools the situation has reached such a peak that teachers are asking for protection. Not willing to put themselves in trouble, they adopt a compromising strategy with the students. It seems that teacher's attitudes have changed and the inability to cope with indiscipline has led teachers to doubt their professional competence (Keane, 2001)

Probing into the link that exists between bullying and racism among Asian school children in Britain, Mike Eslea and Kapeela Mukhtar (2000) note that bullying relates to religious or

cultural differences such as the animal forms of Hindu gods, the way Indian Muslims are dressed or the language spoken by Pakistanis.

However, the authors are very careful about their findings. They argue that it would be difficult to generalize from their study to other areas, when they cannot claim that they have a representative sample.

Christina Salmivally (2002) tries to confirm the findings of other studies on age decline in the frequency of students victimized by their peers. She examines the grade-level differences in frequency of victims bullied at school in cross-sectional data gathered from students themselves, their peers and their teachers. The younger the students are the more they are exposed to bullying. She comes to the conclusion that the age decline in victimization cannot be taken at face value. Though her study proves that the students' victims decrease with age, there is no decrease in either peer-reported or teacher-reported victimization. It is the self-identified victims that go down.

New forms of violence or indiscipline at school can be observed in the postmodern world of technology. "Cyber-bullying" which involves the use of mobile phones and internet to transmit abusive, intimidating as well as threatening messages is a new form of bullying among teenagers (Pickering, 2002)

### **3.1.2. Violence at Schools**

Violence in schools has taken such a dimension that even UNESCO has considered it timely to claim for more information on this issue. A project was launched in the mid-nineties and countries like Ethiopia, Israel, Jordan, Malaysia, Slovakia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru were involved. Several aspects of violence in schools were probed into, amongst others, the impact of ethnic minorities and religions, the frequency and types of violence in the socio-cultural context, the impact and consequences of violence on schooling, the initiatives and measures taken by the school to deal with this crisis. The above mentioned study brings into the limelight the dominant factors underlying violence in schools. They can be summed up as follows: economic, family, school and societal. It concludes on the measures taken by the different authorities to tackle the problem (Ohsaka, 1997).

There is a general recognition that violence is on the rise, and that violence at school is but a reflection of the larger societal picture where crime and violence have become inevitable consequences of industrialisation. Thus, factors such as economic pressure, increased family instability, juvenile delinquency and drugs, low academic achievement and exclusion are usually quoted as influencing youth behaviour (Laub and Lauritsen, 1998).

In 1998, the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique published a special issue of its journal *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, in which the problem of violence in European schools was analysed. Violence has become so common at schools that it was high time for some educationalists to reflect on the issue. The problem is multifaceted and has to be addressed urgently. It is not only linked with law and order but also with racism, ethnicity and identity crisis.

The same pattern seems to emerge in a study by Speaker and Petersen (2000) focussing on youth violence and suicide in the United States. The connection between these two phenomena is alarming. The majority of violence prevention programs has been less than successful in overcoming the problem of violence in school. The factors that contributed most significantly to school violence were (1) a decline in the family structure, (2) a lack of school resources or skills to deal with violence, (3) the breakdown in moral/ethical education of youth, (4) family violence combined with drug-related factors, (5) violence in the media.

The data confirms previous researches which considered the role of declining societal modelling, media violence and declining family structure as root causes in the escalation of school violence. The data further suggests that a lack of moral/ethical education is a crucial element contributing to the serious problems of school violence and suicide.

### **3.2. The Mauritian Context**

No data is available on the issue of indiscipline and violence in the Mauritian context. However, some case studies have been carried out by the students of the University of Mauritius and those of the Mauritius Institute of Education. These studies are interesting in so far as they try to analyse one particular aspect of the issue, while acknowledging the fact that no nationwide study is available on such aspects as prevalence, frequency, sex differences, classroom management, leadership skills, teaching and learning strategies,

curriculum and other related issues. Indiscipline and violence in secondary schools in Mauritius have therefore been under-investigated and most discourse has failed to address the larger social context in relation to the school.

### **3.2.1. Case Studies on Indiscipline and Violence at Schools**

One case study on the issue of discipline/indiscipline was carried out by Dhondea in 1997. His study entitled *A Case Study of Discipline Problems in a Boys' School* (1997:5) is based on the observation method because at the time of the study he was working in that school. He describes the school in the following words:

This institution has a reputation like another older SSS for boys. The boys of this school like to measure themselves with (or against) the pupils of that other SSS: it is their model, their rival, their punching ball against which they must test their strength, courage – or nuisance value, disturbing potential. They do not look up to or against Royal College boys: the star schools are not their problem.

His study reveals serious indiscipline problems in that state secondary school. Students in this school have become indisciplined because of external factors, such as students coming from broken homes, parents being violent, students suffering from lack of affection and self-confidence, students being slow learners and physically overdeveloped, the curriculum not being appropriate for them. He also pinpoints how the inappropriate infrastructure of the school has a negative impact on the students, since there is no playground as such for the students. He adds that regular transfer of rectors is a cause of indiscipline in that school, especially as each one has his own style of managing the school, from being inactive to proactive. In such an atmosphere, if the teacher is not well-built and does not have a dominating personality, he cannot work. He also regards teachers' attitude as a cause of indiscipline, unfairness and laziness. However, though the students are indisciplined, it must be recognised that they helped a lot the week before the prize giving day and Dhondea comes to the conclusion that trouble-makers in a school very often give much of themselves and rise to the demands of the situation on particular occasions.

In his study, Dhondea elucidates the interplay of factors which sabotage the system of discipline in Mauritian secondary schools. He enumerates an extensive list of discipline problems that secondary schools face and draws a particular correlation between school performance and discipline problems. He also depicts the importance of the managerial skills that a rector should possess as the main authority of the school.

In her case study entitled *State Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes Towards School Violence* (2000), Phoolbaseea engages herself in a quantitative analysis of different types of violence that teachers encounter in a particular secondary school in Mauritius. However, in her study, she points out that teachers in that particular school agree that they should assume responsibility for school violence; they should be trained to deal with violent students and claim legal right to take action when school violence is concerned. The school as a safe place to work is also questioned. In her conclusion, she writes:

Violence among youths, especially in schools, should become one of our most pressing concerns... Youths, like adults, are now more frequently using weapons instead of fists to settle disputes. Whereas youth violence had once been thought to be a public school problem and a consequence of poverty and family dysfunction, stable suburban and rural communities are now also experiencing it...

Yet, in her study, there is no evidence to support these assertions.

Mewasingh (2003) in her case study entitled *Indiscipline in Boys' State Secondary Schools* aims at showing that effective learning takes place when discipline prevails in a school. She probes into the different forms of acts of indiscipline in a boys' school, tries to explain the causes and how teachers react to this issue because they feel helpless. They are unable to cope with the misbehaviour of the students.

And to show how indiscipline affects teaching in that school, Mewasingh (2003:71-72, 74) gives a voice to teachers. Combining irony and hopelessness, one teacher says:

Ici nous avons les petits démons et les grands démons. C'est l'école de la jungle. Les garçons sont indisciplinés et nous donnent du fil à retordre à longueur de la classe, de la journée, du trimestre, de l'année. Tout le temps desorde meme, tapage meme, casse ici, casse laba. Impossible de travailler.

A lady teacher, in an outburst of anger, declares:

Pa cone dans ki trou zot sorti sa ban fatras la. Maniere zot pena, respect zot pena, bande de nigauds.

Another lady teacher's reaction expresses her dismissal of such students:

Zot desordere. Zot sorti dan camp, zot parents travail si pa dan canne, dan lizine. Perna assez le temps pu zot, gueté si pa zot pe lire. Zot pa meme koné si piti pe all meme l'école. Zenfant la passe so le temps avec camarades, nek kone amizé. Aster ici kan to mette pression lor li parce ki li pa ine faire devoir ou bien pu faire li lire li revolté. L'ordre to pas capave meté ar sa ban garson la, zot ena reponse a tout.

Another young lady teacher is resigning from the job as soon as she receives her letter of appointment for another job:

Mo pe attane kan mo let vini, mo allé, ma lave lamé avec sa ban batards la, pa facile sa, pas facile sa.

A male teacher resorts to corporal punishment in order to maintain discipline in his class:

Des fois mo cogne cogne zot la tête, pince zot la jambe, ris zot cheveux, tape en ti calot. Bizin sa pu corrize zot insolence. Mo garde en ti rotin dan mo la main tout le temps. Mo nek tappe en ti coup. Tranquil net.

Hence, teachers cannot do their work properly because the misbehaviour of the students does not allow for proper teaching and learning to take place. Teachers use different strategies to maintain discipline. However, they recognize that it is difficult to work in a school where misbehaviour of the students forms part of everyday life and the teacher has to bear with it.

Mewasingh concludes that students' misbehaviour in this particular school has led to lack of enthusiasm to teach, apathy towards teaching, boredom, no self-satisfaction and a strong desire to quit the job. Hence, she stresses the inconveniences caused by indiscipline problems to teachers and the resulting impact on their attitudes.

However, the interview data of the teachers could be interpreted as demonstrating poor teacher-student relationship. The teachers complain about the students but they themselves do not seem to respect their students in the first place. The language used to describe the students is very discrediting. This poor teacher-student relationship could be one of the causes of indiscipline in many schools.

### **3.2.2. Case Studies Related to the Issue**

Parapen (1987), in his study on *Absenteeism among Secondary School Teachers of Mauritius: Causes and Effects*, notes that there is a rapid rise in the absence of teachers in the school where he works and that such repeated absences have an adverse effect on both teaching and learning and the smooth running of the institution. One of the objectives of his study is to find out what the effects of teacher absences have on (a) teachers themselves (b) on the management of the school and (c) on students. From data collected, Parapen comes to the conclusion that the majority of students believe that their studies, especially in English and Mathematics, are affected when their teacher is absent. When the teacher is absent, many

students go to the library for further reading while others play indoor/outdoor games. According to Parapen, students have no opportunity to disturb other classes. He adds that many students do not come to school as a consequence of the irregular presence of the teacher. Teachers agree that students are penalized and that the normal working schedule is disrupted. He seems to say that when teachers are absent, students do not misbehave or do not disturb other classes. There is no link between teachers' absences and acts of indiscipline in the school.

Bhadain carried out *A Study on Absenteeism Among Students of Forms V & VI in Private Secondary Schools of Rose Hill* (1993) whereas Dabeedin worked on *A Study to Identify the Causes of Absenteeism Among Students of Form V in Selected Schools* (2000). Bhadain attempts to find out the rate of absenteeism among a particular category of students, to identify the causes and to suggest some measures. Dabeedin's objectives do not differ from those of Bhadain. Among the causes, parental control, places where it is possible to hide from authorities and peer influence are identified whereas issues where the responsibility of the teacher is engaged such as ineffective teaching and teachers' regular absences are discarded by the teachers but not by the students.

Both studies do not try to link absenteeism with the issue of indiscipline whereas it has often been argued that one aspect of indiscipline is associated with absenteeism. The authors do not look at indiscipline at school as a consequence of absenteeism. However, the solutions they proposed to control the level of students' absenteeism can be relevant to tackle indiscipline in secondary schools.

In her study on *The Private Secondary School Teachers' View of their Profession*, Li Chen Hok (1998: 53-55) says that the majority of teachers are of the opinion that discipline is getting worse in private secondary schools in Mauritius and that this adds to the pressure on teachers. The life of a teacher becomes difficult and it has also happened that teachers have had to quit their job because they cannot cope with students in class. According to her, indiscipline must be seriously dealt with and appropriate measures must be taken because the traditional system of school punishment - detention class, rustication, calling parents at school, remarks in journal, expulsion - does not work any more. They do not act as a deterrent. She blames partly the parents who do not care about the behaviour of their wards. She gives examples of parents who have no control of their child. One parent comes to school

and begs a teacher to help him as his son does not want to obey him: '*Missié guetté ki ou capav faire pou moi, li pas lé écoute moi.*' Another parent accepts that his son will not change his behaviour even under pressure: '*sa pa pou capav faire narien avec li, li coumsa même, li pa pou change.*' She adds that corporal punishment is being used very moderately in secondary schools since there were cases where teachers have been referred to the police for inquiry. The law should be strengthened.

Thanay (2005) in her study entitled *An Investigation in the Perception of 'in School Youth' towards Unwed Teenage Pregnancy in Mauritius* points out how teenage pregnancy is perceived in society, especially when the girl is unwed. This social ill is a growing problem and is still viewed as immoral among youths in Mauritius. Cultural beliefs and social traditions stand as obstacles to deal with the issue of teenage pregnancy considered as a deviant behaviour among the population. The study has not, however, investigated any possible link with truancy.

These studies in the Mauritian context seem to concur that indiscipline problems are increasing and becoming more acute. They also seem to attribute the main causes more to external factors such as family background than to internal factors within the school, such as school management and teachers' attitude.

### **3.3. Reports Having a Bearing on the Issue**

Morrison (1998), in his study on *The Children of Modernisation. Adolescence and the Experience of Development in Mauritius*, examines the attitudes, beliefs and activity patterns of young people in relation to education and a host of other personal and social concerns. The first two chapters are of interest for our study because they deal with students' perception of the school and parents and families. Chapter 1 describes the various dimensions of school life as perceived by students while chapter 2 tries to demonstrate the link that exists between the development of these attitudes towards school and the family.

Solutions which the students would prescribe in the school, if given the opportunity, are: strong discipline (77%), teachers with high qualifications (77%) and teachers should care for and understand students (93%) and counselling for students (80%). 45.5% of the students would like to have school class size reduced.

This chapter also lays emphasis on certain expected behaviours that would ensure the students' success. Obeying the rules of the school (66%) and having due respect for teachers (74%) provide examples of success on the part of the students. Powerless teachers produce powerless students, writes Morrison.

Moreover, adolescents in the age range of 16-19 hold the belief that drop-outs tend to drink and use drugs just as young people whose fathers are professionals, businessmen and white-collar workers. Over 47% of young people believe that excessive use of alcohol and drugs contributes to dropping out of school. This percentage stands out as a cause for serious concern within the schools of Mauritius because adolescent belief about the behaviour of their peers is based upon actual knowledge of that behaviour. Over 36% of the students report that young people who dropped out did not receive help from teachers when they needed it. It would, therefore, seem that adolescents at school perceive teacher-student relationship as the main factor in their attitude towards schools.

As far as the role of parents is concerned, young people believe that parents should maintain strong discipline with their children (81%), should help their children with their homework (88%), should visit school and talk with teachers (86%), should never fight with each other in front of their children (86%).

Moreover, authoritative parenting styles have been found to make a strong impact on positive school success, when compared to liberal and highly indulgent styles of parenting.

Another interesting study concerning secondary students is the report prepared by the Centre for Applied Social Research (2004) on the consumption patterns and trends of *Smoking, Drinking & Illicit drugs Among Secondary School Students in Mauritius*.

The authors conclude that, though smoking, drinking and drug taking are prevalent among secondary school students in Mauritius, substance abuse is not necessarily at a level that would constitute a crisis.

They add that many secondary students are aware of the dangers of smoking but still decide to take up the habit. It also remains a fact that, along with alcohol use, smoking is a more socially acceptable form of substance abuse than drug taking. It has also been noted that,

even though it is illegal to sell cigarettes to minors, many of the respondents who smoked stated that they regularly buy their cigarettes from shops and supermarkets.

With alcohol drinking, the main area of investigation focused on the prevalence of drinking, and where drinking was taking place and the consumption patterns. There was little evidence of what could be seen as “problem” or “binge” drinking, that is where young people are regularly drinking large quantities of alcohol in a short span of time in order to become inebriated. There are some students, particularly those in the older age group, who are taking alcohol, some even fairly regularly, but the evidence points less to ‘binge’ drinking and more towards alcohol usage generally controlled and centred on social events. This in itself may be because, like smoking, drinking is not only socially acceptable among most social groups, but is even an integral part of many social events and celebrations.

Turning to drug use, this is a problem of major concern. However, it seems that there is a relatively low percentage of self-confessed drug users among secondary school students.

The National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA) carried out a study on substance abuse in 1999. The study lays emphasis on the knowledge, attitudes and use of illicit drugs which have been unexplored up to now. Feeling that many young people (from 12 to 24 years old) indulge in substance abuse, it was high time to carry out a survey to gather more knowledge about substance abuse among youths, the socio-demographic and family conditions of youth substance abusers and to determine the awareness of existing social structures dealing with youth social problems, the awareness of health, socio-economic and socio-cultural problems arising from substance abuse, the prevalence and reasons for substance abuse.

These studies in the Mauritian context clearly show that the issue of indiscipline and violence is multi-levelled and several dimensions have to be taken into consideration at the same time. It does not only have a bearing on the school atmosphere but also on the teaching and learning process and the development of the students.

# CHAPTER 4

## Methodology

Considering the different proposals that have been put forward in the past ten years concerning the secondary schools set-up (former minister Pillay's lower and upper secondary schools, former minister S. Obeegadoo's Form I to V and Form VI colleges, the present minister D. Gokhool reverting to Form I to VI schools) and the desire to enhance the quality of education in secondary schools, it is obvious that this can only be done in an atmosphere devoid of insecurity for teachers and students and conducive to teaching and learning. Our aim, therefore, is to examine the perception of various stakeholders as far as indiscipline and violence in secondary schools are concerned. The aim of this study is to uncover the forms of indiscipline and violence prevalent in the secondary schools of Mauritius.

### **4.1. Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- (i) to explain the disruptive classroom and outside classroom behaviour of secondary school students;
- (ii) to understand the extent to which indiscipline and violence are affecting the Mauritian secondary schools;
- (iii) to identify and describe the different forms of indiscipline and violence in schools;
- (iv) to examine the attribution of students and teachers to the issue of indiscipline and violence;
- (v) to explore the mechanisms that exist within schools to deal with problems of indiscipline and violence.

The survey method is used as it best suits the scope and objectives of the research. A mixed method has been used to conduct our survey. Our concern is to use data collection instruments which would allow for both breadth and depth of understanding. To this end, a number of instruments have been used for different categories of stakeholders. To allow us to listen to the plurality of voices, the interview is used with teachers, students, rectors and support staff. Additionally, a questionnaire has been devised and administered to allow for representativeness and breadth of data. It is important, in the context of the current project, to

also build a database on what the literature demonstrates as being of relevance to an understanding of the issue of indiscipline and violence in schools. The questionnaire has enabled us to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

We also expected that the interactive nature of group interviews would enable us to collect quality data that would help validate the experiences of each individual participant by presenting them with the experiences of others in the group.

As a complement to our focus, we also have in mind to identify potential related issues which may arise during the survey, the interviews and the final discussion.

## **4.2. Sampling**

Since the Ministry of Education has divided the school environment into five zones (four in Mauritius and one in Rodrigues), we decided that all the five zones should be represented in our sample. Schools were chosen according to their nature (state and non-state – all financed by the government). Private fee-paying schools were not taken into consideration because they are not concerned with the zoning system *per se*. In each school, questionnaires were administered to one class of Form IV and one class of Form V students. Some ten teachers were also asked to fill in a questionnaire. Interviews of rectors, teachers, students, caretakers and representatives of trade unions in the education sector were also carried out.

### **4.2.1. Selection of Schools**

Varying the school type among confessional, state and private secondary schools across our sample could provide a broader perspective of the study insofar as the various schools have different discipline philosophies, policies and rules which impinge on the incidence and perception of violence within the school premises.

The sample was as follows: 27 secondary schools – 8 mixed schools, 9 girls' schools, 10 boys' schools - were identified for the survey. Out of these, we were able to carry out our survey in 25 schools only. Owing to access and time constraints, 2 mixed schools were left aside. 9 state schools and 16 non-state schools were visited in order to collect data.

Schools were therefore elected according to the following criteria: size of the students' population, zoning, gender and category of schools.

#### **4.2.2. Teacher Selection**

In the first instance, it was thought appropriate to have 50% of the sample from SSS teachers and 50% from non-SSS teachers. And data collected showed that nearly 51% of the questionnaires were filled in by SSS teachers and 49% by non-SSS teachers.

Teachers were also selected according to their gender in the first instance. Gender was thought to be an interesting parameter not only on account of the fact that male and female teachers may be subject to different forms of violence but may perceive and react differently to them.

However, the proportion of male teachers was slightly higher than female participants in certain schools. Some female teachers expressed their hesitation to fill in the questionnaire and it was not possible to maintain the gender balance in all schools. Out of these 250 teachers, only 236, i.e 94.4 %, returned the questionnaires duly filled in. In the focus group discussion, the gender balance was maintained as far as possible.

#### **4.3. Methods of Data Collection**

Data was collected from two different sources. A first set of primary data was obtained from (a) structured questionnaire (b) interviews (c) focus group discussions (d) students' essay and a second set from secondary sources (rules and regulations of different schools and press cuttings)

Primary data, collected for specific purposes, is obtained by means of a sample survey. A structured questionnaire dealing with the issue of indiscipline and violence was used to collect primary data in order to capture a detailed set of information in an anonymous way.

The objectives of the survey are:

- (a) to identify different types and degrees of acts of indiscipline and violence at the school level;

- (b) to determine the contribution of the school settings and facilities in maintaining discipline;
- (c) to measure the perception of both students and teachers towards the issue of indiscipline in schools;
- (d) to evaluate the contribution of the ministry and the school administration in handling the issue of indiscipline in schools;
- (e) to study how far external factors to school can contribute to indiscipline and violence.

The survey could inform us about what is really happening in the school. Therefore, two independent surveys were carried out, one concerning the students and one about the teachers.

#### **(a) Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and close-ended items although most questions were of the latter type. In order to reduce the probability of students and teachers not taking positions or adopting 'politically correct positions', a Likert scale was adopted. A number of questions also contained a rating scale. Since our concern was to analyse stakeholders' perceptions, a 31-item questionnaire was administered to the students. Items 1 to 11 and 27 to 31 deal with background information about the students (age, family background, likes and dislikes, pastime). Items 12 to 25 deal with disciplinary problems and item 26 is an open-ended question, asking the students to suggest some measures that could be taken at school to solve the problems of indiscipline and violence. Items 12 and 13 can be considered as one item.

The students' questionnaire can be grouped into four sections: (1) the student profile, (2) the seriousness of acts of discipline, their frequency, (3) the handling of the situation by adults – teachers, rectors – and the teachers' relationship with students as perceived by the students and (4) the link between the students and these acts.

Some 30 students from one class of Form IV and one class of Form V were asked to fill the questionnaire. So in each school we were expecting 60 questionnaires to be handed back. Out of 1500 questionnaires, 1237, that is, 82.73% of the questionnaires were returned. Of

these 1237 questionnaires, 1222 were correctly filled and 51% were filled by boys and 49% by girls.

Administration of the questionnaires was done during lunch time as far as possible. Where this was not possible, students were asked to complete the questionnaire at home and to give it back the next day. A teacher was appointed to collect the questionnaires for us. Not all the students returned the questionnaire.

### **(b) Teachers' Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire consisted of 21 items. Items 1 to 8 concern the background of teachers and the school (student population, facilities offered, etc.). Items 8 to 18, 20 and 21 try to have the perception of the teachers about acts of indiscipline and violence in schools. Item 19 is an open-ended question. Teachers have been asked to propose some solutions to the problem of indiscipline and violence in schools.

These items can be grouped into four sections: (1) the teachers' and the school profile, (2) the seriousness of indiscipline and their frequency, (3) the source of the problems encountered in schools, the characteristics of the trouble-makers and the legal framework, (4) teacher' proposed solutions at different levels.

In both questionnaires, the Likert scale was proposed for some items in order to facilitate the task of the students and that of the teachers.

## **4.4. Questionnaire Design**

In the design of the questionnaire, we have had to take into consideration the fact that the questions would be easily understood. We tried a sample of questions in English with some students and teachers but since using English did not do justice to the stakeholders, we opted for a questionnaire in French. The result was more conclusive. We also felt that question 8 in the teachers' questionnaire and questions 12 and 13 in the students' questionnaire should be addressed to both categories of those surveyed so as to compare their views on the issues raised by this particular set of answers.

## **4.5. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions**

To complete our quantitative data we also carried out interviews and focus group discussions. The qualitative data produced findings not obtained by the questionnaires. The suitability of this technique for our research can be readily established from the general framework of the research itself. Since our concern was not to establish, as in empiricist epistemology, a one to one correspondence with 'The Reality', but to rather understand how administrators, teachers and students as individuals and as a group make meaning out of their daily reality and the socio-cultural processes that underlie the construction of this meaning, interviews and focus group discussions were considered important tools for our research.

The purpose of the interviews was to capture the individual differences pertaining to specific issues which may lead to further and deeper investigations.

The FGDs were intended to be used as a means of triangulating findings of the survey. They enabled us to agree on a set of issues of concern to structure further investigations.

FGDs were carried out with students during lunch time in order not to disrupt classes as far as possible. Teachers were invited either during their free time or during lunch time for the FGDs.

### **The Setting of the Focus Group Discussion**

The interview and focus group discussion were semi-structured and informal. We wanted to keep the interview as close as possible to those informal conversations that teachers usually have among themselves in order to capture the interactive processes occurring among participants.

## **4.6. Students' Essay**

In this study, the students' voice is considered as a critical factor in providing insight into the problems of indiscipline and violence in schools. Besides the questionnaire, it was therefore deemed important to allow students to freely express their personal feelings about indiscipline and violence in their respective schools.

Selected teachers in the schools sampled were therefore briefed to collect students' essays on this issue. The following instructions were given to the students:

- the essay is a free exercise, not a traditional essay;
- students may write in whatever language they wish – Creole, English or French;
- the views of the students are of interest to the researchers, not their writing skills;
- they should not write their names on their sheets of paper;
- copies of the essays will remain strictly confidential and will be read only by the researchers.

This was done to ensure that students enjoy the freedom of giving their genuine feelings. About six hundred essays were collected.

#### **4.7. Secondary Data**

Secondary data is obtained from publications – books, articles published in periodicals and magazines, press reports, official reports from ministries and other departments and, for our study, we have considered the following documents: the Rules and Regulations given by the school administration to the students/parents at the beginning of each academic year and press cuttings.

#### **4.8. Ethics**

Due consideration was given to the ethical aspects of the research such as confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. One important aspect of research ethics is informed consent. The acceptance letter of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources was supplemented by a brief exposé of what the research was about and what would be the implications. For private schools, the same procedure took place. Because of the nature of data required, the privacy of the participants had to be protected as it represents respect for the person and institutions. Because of the issue under study, confidentiality was a must and during the data collection stage, especially during interviews, participants were requested not to mention names. Additionally, during data processing, only the four researchers and the research assistant had access to the data. Most interviews were recorded and the request of some participants not to record their interviews was respected.

#### **4.9. Limitations of the Study**

In analysing stakeholders' perspective, as far as possible, the study focuses on primarily those who are involved on a day to day basis in the activities of the school. At a preliminary stage, the scope of the research required collecting data from stakeholders. Beyond the immediate premises of the school, namely the parents, who despite not being present within the research setting, have definitely an impact on it. However, due to time constraints, this aspect of the study could not be completed.

# Chapter 5

## Data Analysis (Questionnaire)

One of the objectives of the study is to have an overview of the issue of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools in Mauritius. To meet the objective, a questionnaire was designed and administered to both teachers and students. The answers have enabled us to have an idea of the different aspects of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools in Mauritius.

The first part of this chapter (Section 5.1) analyses the students' responses. The second part (Section 5.2) deals with the perception of the teachers concerning these acts of indiscipline and violence. In both cases a series of hypothetical incidents and solutions were provided in the questionnaire and students and teachers were asked to react to the given statements.

### **5.1 Discipline/Indiscipline and Violence as Viewed by Students**

By asking the students to fill a questionnaire, we wanted to have their perception concerning the degree and the frequency of acts of indiscipline and violence in schools. We would like to point out that we have not separated questions concerning acts of indiscipline from those of violence.

#### **5.1.1 Students' Questionnaire**

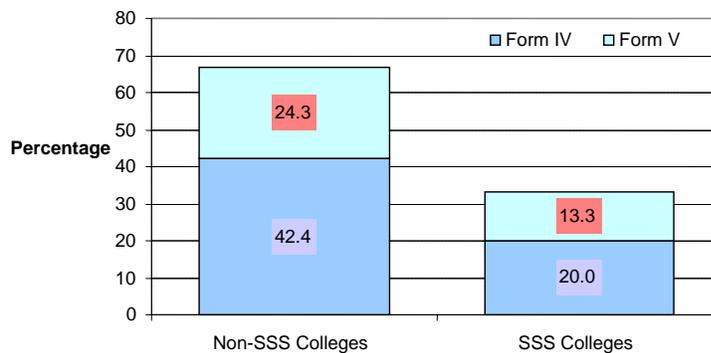
The students' questionnaire consists of 31 questions. Questions 1 to 11 and 27 to 31 deal with background information about the students (age, family, likes and dislikes, pastime). Questions 12 to 25 deal with discipline problems and question 26 is an open-ended question requiring the students to suggest measures that could be taken at school to solve the problems of indiscipline and violence.

Questions 12 and 13 can be considered as one and the same question. It is divided into two because the list of answers is too long and we feel that the students could have been bored due to its length. The two questions are combined into one in the teachers' questionnaire.

Questions 1 to 25 can be grouped into four sections: (1) the students’ profile, (2) the seriousness of acts of discipline, their frequency and the victims’ profile as perceived by the students, (3) the latter’s perception of the handling of the situation by adults – teachers, rectors, ushers and caretakers – and the teachers’ relationship with them and (4) the proposals of the students to enable teaching and learning to be carried out in a conducive atmosphere. Part of the administering of the questionnaire was done in the second half of 2004 and part in early 2005.

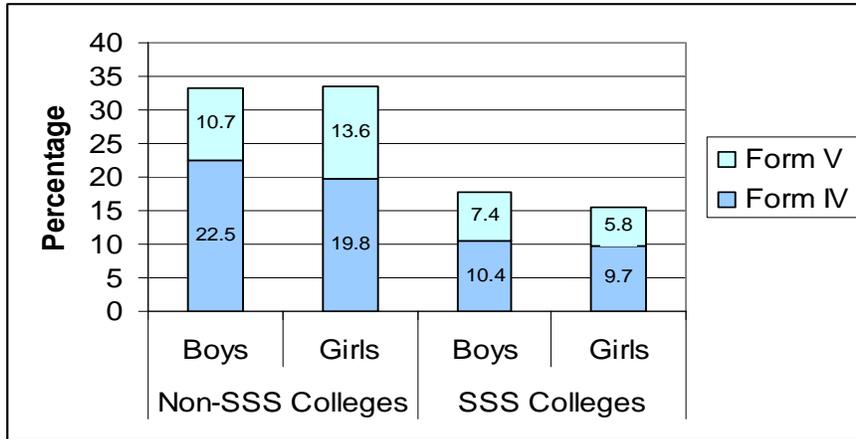
### 5.1.2 Sample Profile

Data was collected from 1222 students taken from 25 out of the 27 originally targeted schools. The sample was taken from 8 girls’, 9 boys’ and 8 mixed schools. State secondary schools represent 33.3% of the respondents while the non-state secondary schools represent the remaining 66.7% (Fig. 5.1). The number of students filling the questionnaire from Form IV was higher than those from Form V.



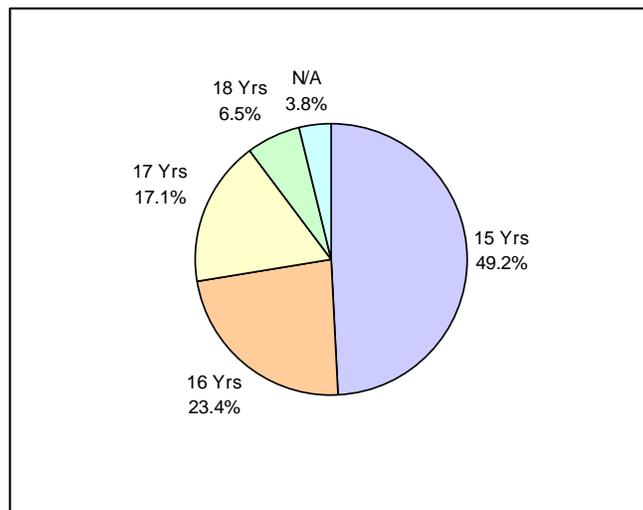
**Fig. 5.1 - Percentage of F IV and F V Students in SSS and non-SSS in the Sample**

The proportion of boys and girls in the sample is shown in Fig. 5.2. Boys filling the questionnaires exceed girls by 2%.



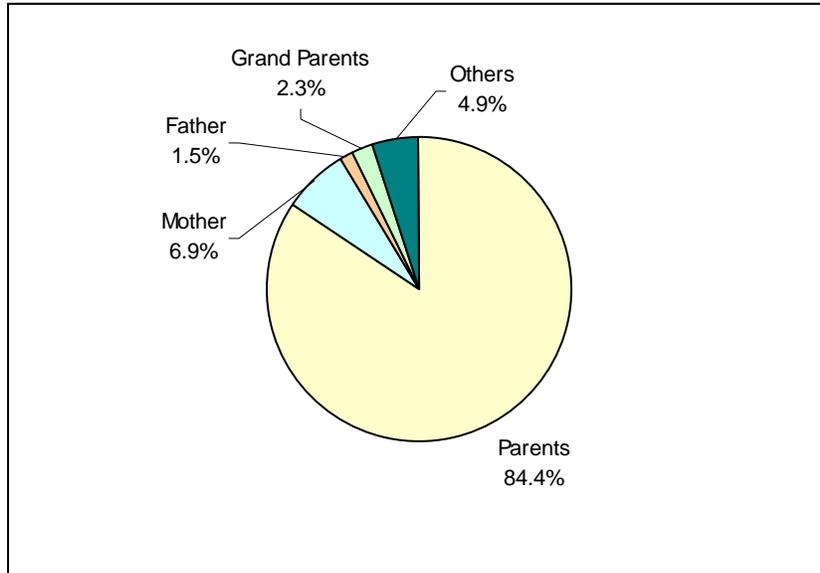
**Fig. 5.2 - Distribution of Students by Sex and School Type**

Fig. 5.3 shows that at the time the questionnaire was administered, the majority of the respondents were 15 years old.



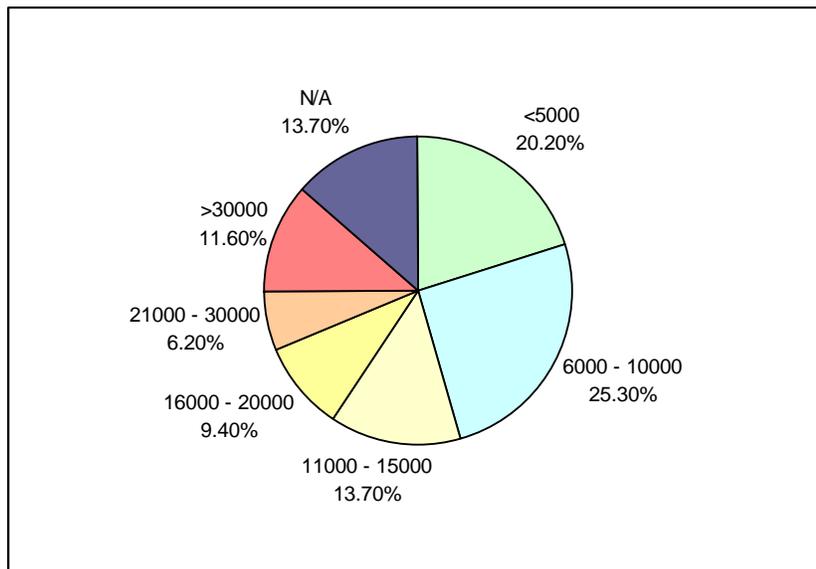
**Fig.5.3 Distribution of Students by Age**

Some 84% of the students live with their parents, while the remaining live with either their mother, father or with their grandparents as shown in Fig. 5.4.



**Fig. 5.4 Family Background of Students**

Fig. 5.5 highlights the distribution of the respondents' economic background in terms of their parents' salaries. We observe that 20 % of the students in the sample come from a very low economic category, 25% of them come from a low income group while 41% come from parents whose salaries are above Rs 10000.



**Fig. 5.5 Income Distribution of Parents**

Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 give more information about the schools involved in the study. We can observe from Table 5.1 that the majority of the schools have between 700-900 students.

No. of Students in School	Rural (%)	Urban(%)	Total (%)
< 500	6.1	5.8	5.9
500 – 700	23.5	19.2	21.6
701 – 900	43.2	38.5	41.1
901 – 1000	11.4	26.0	17.8
>1000	15.9	10.6	13.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.1 Population Size of Rural and Urban Schools in the Sample**

Table 5.2 indicates that most of the classes have 35 to 40 students. Data collected tends to point that both in urban and rural schools, the same number of students are found in a class.

No of Students in Class	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Out of Total (%)
25	9.7	18.8	13.6
30	16.1	17.7	16.8
35	49.2	34.4	42.7
40	22.6	27.1	24.5
>40	2.4	2.1	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.2 Class Size in Rural and Urban Schools**

The sports facilities available in the selected schools are shown in Table 5.3 on an urban/rural basis.

Types of Sports Facilities	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Out of Total (%)
One gymnasium	65.2	32.7	50.8
One badminton court	59.1	38.5	50.0
One football pitch	63.6	31.7	49.6
One table tennis	59.8	43.3	52.5
One volley-ball court	89.4	91.3	90.3
One basket-ball court	68.9	64.4	66.9

**Table 5.3 Sports Facilities in Rural and Urban Schools**

Moving from the students' profile and the school environment, we shall probe into the students' self-description in order to have their profile.

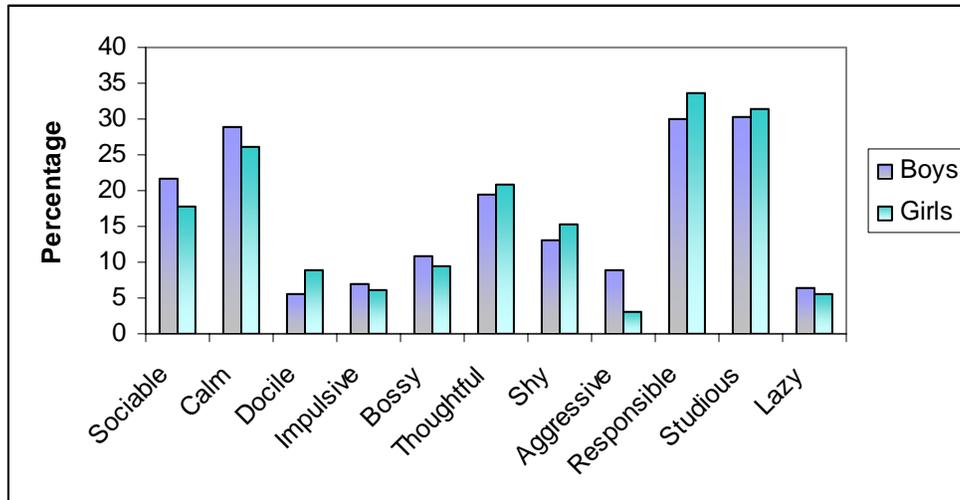
### 5.1.3 Students' Self-description

Since we wanted to know how students view themselves in terms of their characteristics, a series of hypothetical answers were given to them and they were requested to describe themselves by choosing among the characteristics. Table 5.4 displays the results.

Characteristics	Girls %	Boys %	Total %
Sociable	17.8	21.6	39.4
Calm	26.2	29.0	55.2
Docile	8.8	5.5	14.3
Impulsive	6.1	7.0	13.2
Bossy	9.4	10.7	20.1
Thoughtful	20.9	19.4	40.3
Shy	15.2	13.1	28.3
Aggressive	3.1	8.8	11.9
Responsible	33.5	30.0	63.4
Studious	31.5	30.3	61.8
Lazy	5.5	6.5	11.9

**Table 5.4 Students' Self-description**

The data in Table 5.4 suggests that above 60% of students believe that they are responsible and studious while some 55% claim they are rather calm and about 40% are of the thoughtful type. More than 10% claim that they are impulsive, aggressive and lazy. The gender differences in self-perception are illustrated in Fig. 5.6. Girls give higher ratings for characteristics like 'docile', 'thoughtful', 'shy', 'responsible', 'studious' while more boys perceive themselves as being 'impulsive', 'bossy', 'aggressive' and 'lazy'. We note also that more boys describe themselves as 'sociable' and 'calm'.



**Fig. 5.6 Differences in Self-description between Boys and Girls**

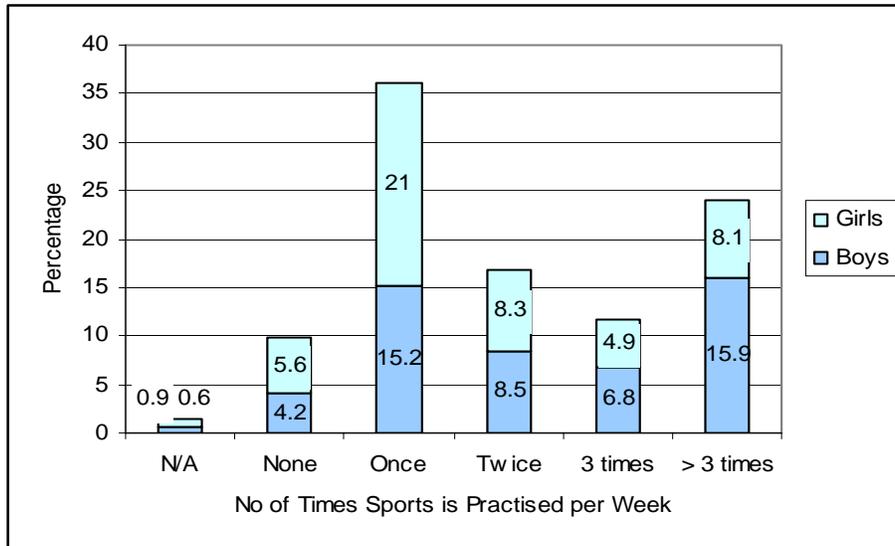
To have a better idea of the students’ characteristics in the sample, we asked them how they spend their pastime. Table 5.5 points out how students spend their leisure time.

Activities	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total (%)
TV, Video	37.0	35.7	72.7
Sports	37.4	19.7	57.1
Going to cinema	17.3	18.2	35.4
Being with friends	21.5	18.8	40.3
Chatting on internet	17.2	17.0	34.2
Reading	17.8	30.3	48.0
Computer games	28.3	18.6	46.9
Outings in group	22.5	21.0	43.5
Going out with boyfriend/girlfriend	20.7	14.8	35.5
Listening to music	39.6	44.0	83.6
Playing music	12.0	6.8	18.8
Others	6.1	8.4	14.5

**Table 5.5 Students’ Pastime**

Television and listening to music are the preferred pastime for both boys and girls. Gender differences are apparent in sports and reading. More boys prefer sports and more girls prefer reading. A good proportion (46.9 %) of the students like computer games. Some 35.5% of the respondents admit having boyfriends or girlfriends.

We also asked students how often they practised any sport. This can be during the physical education class, during recess, at home or after school hours. Fig. 5.7 shows students' responses. It is interesting to note that 88.7% of the students practise sports. From the figure, we can also infer that 36.2% practise sports once a week, 16.8% twice, 11.7% three times and 24% more than three times a week.



**Fig. 5.7 Students' Involvement in Sports**

Students have also been asked to select from a given list those activities that would make school life more interesting. Their answers are presented in Table 5.6. About 60% of students feel that sports, music and dance would make school life more interesting. Group activities are preferred by 77.3 % of the students. A larger percentage of boys are keen in sports while a high percentage of girls are interested in dance, in music and in outings.

Activities	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total
Drama	16.5	24.3	40.8
Sports	35.8	23.8	59.7
Music	28.1	30.7	58.8
Outings with the class	9.3	24.9	34.2
Group activities	38.2	39.1	77.3
Dance	29.0	31.6	60.6
Others	4.5	5.2	40.8

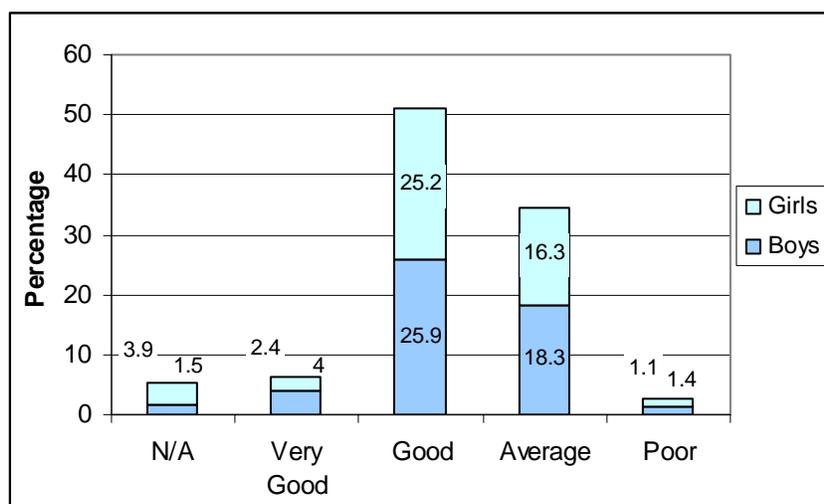
**Table 5.6 Students' Ratings for Extra-curricular Activities**

We have also compared the suggestions of SSS and non-SSS students as shown in Table 5.7. Surprisingly non-SSS students are more interested in dance, drama, outings, sports and group activities as compared to SSS students.

Activities	Non-SSS %	SSS %	Out of total %
Drama	29.1	11.7	40.8
Sports	39.7	20.0	59.7
Music	40.3	18.4	58.8
Outings with the class	25.5	8.6	34.2
Group activities	53.1	24.2	77.3
Dance	38.3	22.3	60.6
Others	21.9	35.9	40.8

**Table 5.7 SSS and non-SSS Ratings for Extra-curricular Activities**

Apart from their self-description, students have also been asked to make an appraisal of their academic performance. The majority of the students feel that their academic performance ranges from average to good. The percentage of good, satisfactory and poor performance are almost equally distributed between boys and girls (Fig. 5.8).



**Fig. 5.8 Students' Perception of their Academic Abilities**

Moreover, to understand students' perception of schooling, the students were asked to choose, from a given list, their motivation to come to school. Students could give more than one answer here.

Reasons	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total
I like to study and succeed in my exams	38.5	38.0	76.5
I want to think about my future	44.7	45.7	90.4
I want to meet friends	31.8	33.0	64.8
I like subjects taught	24.9	25.5	50.4
I want to attain personal and intellectual development	11.5	15.1	26.6
I want to escape from my parents	4.3	4.4	8.7

**Table 5.8 Students' Motivation to Attend School**

Table 5.8 shows that the responses do not vary significantly according to gender. A majority of students are conscious that education is a key element in building their future. Only 50.4% of the students are interested in the subject taught. A small number (8.7%) of students indicate that going to school helps them to remain away from their parents during the day.

On the other hand, students were presented with a set of hypothetical statements to identify the reasons why they do not like schools. The results are highlighted in Table 5.9.

Reasons	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total
Teachers do not show any respect to us	11.5	5.4	16.9
I do not understand teachers' explanation in class	9.8	7.6	17.4
I learn more in tuition classes	12.2	9.9	22.1
Exercises given are difficult	5.7	6.5	12.2
I think that I am not going to succeed in my exams	4.5	3.6	8.1
Discipline is too strict	16.7	13.6	30.3
I do not have friends and I feel I am excluded	1.1	1.3	2.4
Too many exercises to do	10.7	13.5	24.2
I am not interested in subjects taught	3.9	2.1	6.0

**Table 5.9 Students' Ratings for not Attending School**

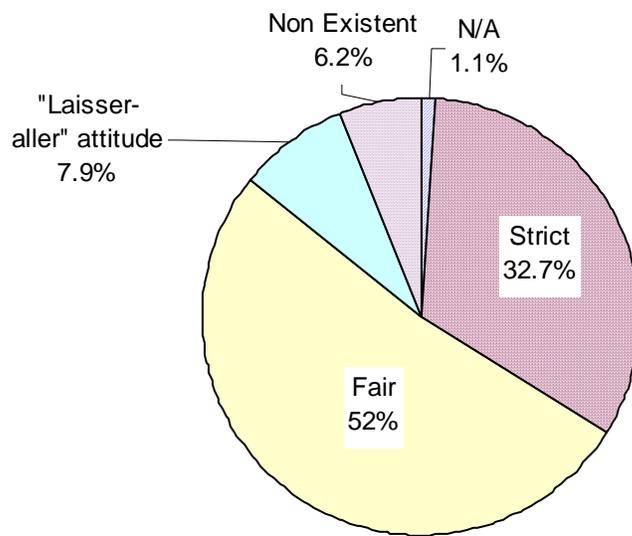
Among the significant reasons why the students do not like schools, we can identify the following:

- a. the discipline is very strict (30.3%)
- b. they have too much work to do (24.2%)
- c. they learn more in tuition classes (22.1%)

Besides the likes and dislikes of the students, we have tried to understand their motivations in attending schools. We note that the issue of discipline is important to them as well as what is happening in the classroom during the teaching and learning process.

### 5.1.4 Students' Perception of Discipline at Schools

Students have been requested to comment on the nature of discipline in their schools and to say whether they have been involved or not in any act of indiscipline.



**Fig. 5.9 Students' Perception of Discipline in Their Schools**

Nature of Discipline	Boys %	Girls %	Total %
N/A	0.6	0.6	1.2
Strict	17.5	15.2	32.7
Fair	22.2	29.8	52.0
<Laisser-aller> attitude	5.4	2.5	7.9
Non-existent	4.9	1.3	6.2
Total	50.6	49.4	100.0

**Table 5.10 Students' Perception of Discipline, Gender wise**

Whereas 6.2% of respondents aver that it is non-existent and 7.9% claim that there is a 'laisser-aller' attitude, 32.7% find discipline too strict and 52% find that discipline is applied in a reasonable way in the schools.

Comparing boys' and girls' perception of school discipline, one observes that girls feel that discipline is less strict in their schools.

Comparing students' perception of discipline in SSS and non-SSS schools, we observe that for the category 'strict' in Table 5.11, non-SSS students' ratings are much higher. Almost the same percentage of SSS students and non-SSS students admit the 'laisser-aller' attitude and state that discipline is non-existent.

Nature of Discipline	SSS (%)	Non-SSS (%)	Total (%)
N/A	0.74	1.2	1.2
Strict	25.8	36.1	32.7
Fair	58.9	48.7	52.0
'Laisser-aller' attitude	7.9	7.9	7.9
Non-existent	6.6	6.0	6.2

**Table 5.11 Students' Perception of Discipline in Terms of Type of School**

Nature of Discipline	Form IV %	Form V %	Total %
N/A	0.9	0.3	1.2
Strict	21.3	11.4	32.7
Fair	31.4	20.6	52.0
'Laisser-aller' attitude	4.7	3.2	7.9
Non-existent	4.0	2.2	6.2
Total	62.3	37.7	100.0

**Table 5.12 Students' Perception of Discipline in Form IV and Form V**

More Form IV students (Table 5.12) find that discipline is strict or is applied in a fair manner in the schools.

The analysis that follows is concerned with students' involvement in indiscipline. 45.8% of the respondents recognize that they have committed an act of indiscipline.

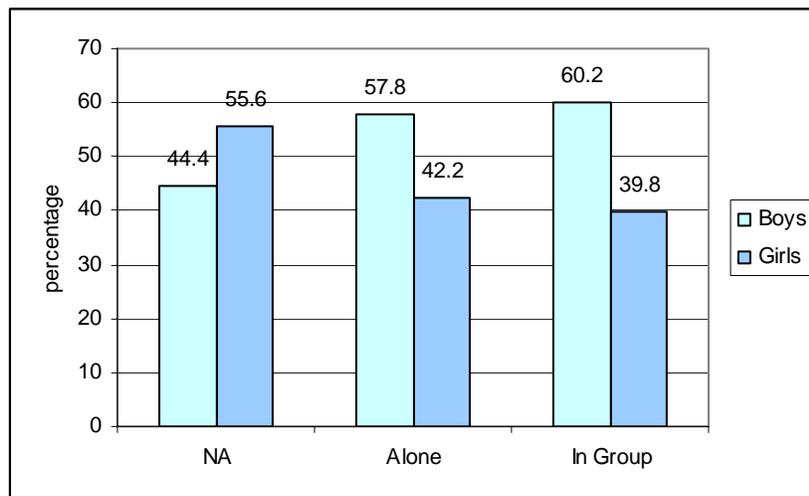
We have also asked the students to list acts of indiscipline in which they have been involved. The following cases come out regularly in their answers: using mobile phone, disrupting

classes, not wearing appropriate dress to come to school, not doing exercises that are given and showing no respect to teachers.

To a lesser degree, they acknowledge having been involved in bunking classes, smoking, coming late to school, using foul language in class, playing cards in class, playing truant, wearing fancy jewels (for girls).

They also recognise having fought with their friends and broken school property on some occasions.

A comparison of boys' and girls' involvement in indiscipline is shown in Fig. 5.10. The data also shows that more boys are involved in acts of indiscipline as compared to girls, be it individually or in group.



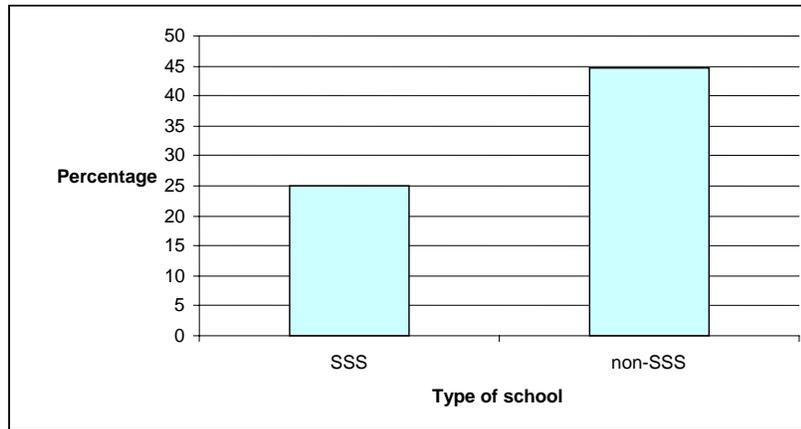
**Fig. 5.10 Individual and Group Indiscipline, Gender Differences**

We have also looked at the relationship between school type (i.e. either boys', girls' or mixed schools) and students' involvement in indiscipline. The results are shown in Table 5.13.

School Type	NA%	Yes%	No%	Total%
Boys	0.6	17.8	17.5	35.9
Girls	1.3	11.3	16.7	29.3
Mix	1.1	16.8	16.9	34.7
Total	3.0	45.9	51.1	100.0

**Table 5.13 Indiscipline in Single-sex and Mixed Schools**

Out of the 45.9 % of students who acknowledged having committed an act of indiscipline, an equal number are from boys' and mixed (approximately 17%) schools. Only 11% come from the girls' schools.



**Fig. 5.11 Indiscipline in SSS and non-SSS**

Fig. 5.11 shows that more students in non-SSS acknowledge having been involved in indiscipline as compared to SSS students.

We wanted to check whether students' academic performance is related to their perception of discipline.

Results	Strict %	Fair %	'Laisser-aller' attitude %	Non-existent %	Total %
Very good	10.5	48.4	39.7	1.3	32.7
Good	4.7	59.8	32.5	2.9	52.9
Satisfactory	4.1	49.5	42.3	4.1	8.3
Poor	8.6	41.4	44.3	5.7	6.0
Total	6.8	54.1	36.4	2.7	100.0

**Table 5.14 Students' Academic Performance and Perception of Discipline in Their Schools**

Whatever be the academic performance of the students, only a few perceive discipline to be strict while a majority of them feel that discipline is fairly applied. A high percentage of the students admit the 'laisser-aller' attitude in the school.

We have also matched students' self-description as detailed in Table 5.14 and their involvement in indiscipline. Table 5.15 shows that even those who describe themselves as

calm, docile, thoughtful, timid, responsible and studious have also committed an offence. However, those who describe themselves as impulsive, bossy, aggressive and lazy constitute a higher percentage of those who have been involved in offences.

Characteristics	% of Students in the Sample	% of Students Who Have Committed an Act of Indiscipline
Sociable	39.4	47.3
Calm	55.2	41.1
Docile	14.3	30.1
Impulsive	13.2	69.4
Bossy	20.1	54.9
Thoughtful	40.3	40.9
Shy	28.3	38.0
Aggressive	11.9	69.1
Responsible	63.4	40.6
Studious	61.8	38.3
Lazy	11.9	75.5

**Table 5.15 Characteristics of Students Who Get Involved in Acts of Indiscipline**

To gauge students' perception about the different types of indiscipline, they were asked to rate these acts on a four-level scale as either 'very serious', 'serious', 'not serious', 'not serious at all' as shown in Table 5.16.

Types of Offences	NA%	Very Serious%	Serious%	Not Serious%	Not Serious at All%
Showing no respect to teachers	3.8	34.9	34.4	18.2	8.7
Being insolent to teachers	8.2	24.5	39.5	18.9	8.9
Using/writing foul language in class	5.7	40.0	29.1	16.5	8.7
Lateness	4.8	8.7	20.1	45.8	20.5
Bunking classes	6.8	38.9	27.4	17.0	9.9
Unjustified absences	7.7	20.3	34.5	24.2	13.3
Exercises not done	6.5	20.6	33.6	29.0	10.3
Physical aggression of teachers	8.4	66.5	9.8	2.9	12.3
Harassing teachers	7.6	55.0	18.5	6.2	12.7
Vandalism	6.5	43.1	30.7	8.3	11.3
Smoking	6.5	60.5	14.1	8.2	10.7
Physical aggression of peers	4.1	42.3	30.1	12.8	10.6
Verbal aggression of peers	4.9	19.6	34.7	26.4	14.3
Stealing	6.9	34.5	33.2	16.2	9.2

**Table 5.16 Students' Perception of Indiscipline (Cont')**

Consumption of alcohol	6.9	64.7	13.7	4.9	9.8
Taking drugs	8.2	77.7	3.0	1.2	9.8
Bringing pornographic items at school	7.1	41.8	21.7	13.2	16.2
Using mobile phone	5.9	5.7	10.4	29.3	48.7
Making obscene gestures	8.2	34.2	31.7	13.4	12.5
Playing truant	6.1	45.9	28.5	11.0	8.4
Fighting among students	6.1	30.1	35.4	19.5	9.0
Class disruption	5.3	17.2	31.3	29.9	16.3

**Table 5.16 Students' Perception of Indiscipline**

To facilitate the interpretation of the data, we have categorized the responses according to the gravity of the offences as shown in Table 5.17.

Very Serious (> 50%)	Very Serious (40% – 50%)	Serious (> 30%)	Not Very Serious or Not Serious at All (> 20%)
physical aggression of teachers	playing truant	insolent with teachers	Lateness
Taking drugs	damage of school property	Absenteeism	Using a mobile phone
Consuming alcohol	bringing pornographic material	fighting with peers	
Smoking	physical aggression between peers	harming verbally their peers	
Harassing teachers	using or writing foul language	not doing the work given	
		stealing others' belongings	
		making obscene gestures	
		showing no respect to teachers	
		Disrupting classes	

**Table 5.17 Students' Perception of Offences**

We note that students know quite well what offences are generally considered as serious on the school compound. We observe that only 40 – 50% of the students consider playing truant, damaging school property, bringing pornographic material, indulging in physical aggression and using foul language as very serious offences. Lateness and the use of mobile phones on the school premises are not considered as serious offences.

We would like to draw attention to pornographic materials. Nowadays, these are being circulated through MMS. At the time of our survey, mobile phones with cameras were just on sale and were very expensive.

When we compare the perception of SSS students and non-SSS students of these acts of indiscipline and violence in Table 5.18, we note that both SSS students and non-SSS students have the same perception of these acts of indiscipline and violence.

Types of Offences	Types of School	Rating of Offences				
		N/A%	Very Serious%	Serious%	Not Serious%	Not Serious at All%
Showing no respect to teachers	Non-SSS	4.8	35.4	34.9	17.8	7.0
	SSS	1.7	33.2	33.9	19.4	11.8
Being insolent to teachers	Non-SSS	9.8	24.6	38.7	18.9	8.1
	SSS	4.9	23.8	41.5	19.2	10.6
Using/writing foul language in class	Non-SSS	6.7	39.6	28.3	17.2	8.1
	SSS	4.2	39.8	30.5	15.2	10.3
Lateness	Non-SSS	5.4	9.3	19.5	45.7	20.1
	SSS	3.7	8.1	21.1	46.2	20.9
Bunking classes	Non-SSS	7.6	38.8	28.3	16.9	8.4
	SSS	5.2	38.1	26.8	17.2	12.8
Unjustified absences	Non-SSS	8.0	19.9	34.5	24.5	13.3
	SSS	7.1	20.6	35.1	23.8	13.3
Exercises not done	Non-SSS	6.7	18.9	34.6	30.6	9.2
	SSS	6.1	23.3	31.4	26.8	12.3
Physical aggression of teachers	Non-SSS	9.3	67.2	10.1	3.1	10.2
	SSS	6.6	65.4	9.1	2.5	16.5
Harassing teachers	Non-SSS	7.6	56.0	19.4	6.0	11.0
	SSS	7.6	53.1	16.5	6.4	16.5
Vandalism	Non-SSS	6.9	42.0	31.7	8.8	10.6
	SSS	6.1	45.5	28.3	7.4	12.8

**Table 5.18 Rating of Offences in SSS and non-SSS (Cont')**

Smoking	Non-SSS	6.9	62.9	14.2	7.8	8.2
	SSS	5.9	56.3	13.5	8.8	15.5
Physical aggression of peers	Non-SSS	4.9	42.8	31.2	13.3	7.8
	SSS	2.7	42.3	27.0	11.5	16.5
Verbal aggression of peers	Non-SSS	5.4	19.9	36.0	26.9	11.8
	SSS	4.2	19.2	32.4	25.3	18.9
Stealing	Non-SSS	6.9	35.2	33.9	16.4	7.7
	SSS	7.1	33.7	31.9	15.5	11.8
Consumption of alcohol	Non-SSS	7.1	66.4	14.0	5.2	7.3
	SSS	6.9	61.2	13.0	4.2	14.7
Taking drugs	Non-SSS	8.4	79.4	3.1	1.3	7.7
	SSS	7.9	74.2	2.7	1.0	14.3
Bringing pornographic items at school	Non-SSS	6.5	41.7	23.4	13.4	15.1
	SSS	8.6	42.8	17.9	12.3	18.4
Using mobile phone	Non-SSS	6.4	5.8	11.7	29.8	46.4
	SSS	5.2	5.4	7.6	28.7	53.1
Making obscene gestures	Non-SSS	8.2	34.8	31.1	14.7	11.2
	SSS	8.4	33.7	32.2	10.6	15.2
Playing truant	Non-SSS	6.6	45.4	30.4	11.1	6.5
	SSS	5.4	47.2	24.3	11.1	12.0
Fighting among students	Non-SSS	6.0	30.7	37.2	18.1	8.0
	SSS	6.4	29.2	31.4	21.9	11.1
Class disruption	Non-SSS	5.3	17.1	30.7	32.4	14.5
	SSS	5.7	16.7	31.7	25.8	20.1

**Table 5.18 Rating of Offences in SSS and non-SSS**

Table 5.19 indicates that both boys and girls censure, to a great extent, the consumption of alcohol and drugs. Offences such as bunking classes, physical aggression of teachers, harassing teachers, smoking, peer aggression, verbal aggression, bringing pornographic items to school, and making obscene gestures are condemned more by girls than by boys.

Types of Offences	Gender					
		N/A%	Very Serious%	Serious%	Not Serious%	Not Serious at All%
Showing no respect to teachers	Boys	4.0	33.9	33.3	21.8	7.0
	Girls	3.5	36.0	35.5	14.6	10.4
Being insolent to teachers	Boys	10.1	21.8	37.1	21.8	9.3
	Girls	6.2	27.3	42.0	15.9	8.5
Using/writing foul language in class	Boys	6.6	37.3	30.1	17.3	8.8
	Girls	4.9	42.9	28.0	15.7	8.5
Lateness	Boys	6.1	9.1	15.4	45.1	24.3
	Girls	3.5	8.2	25.1	46.6	16.6
Bunking classes	Boys	9.3	34.6	26.7	17.9	11.5
	Girls	4.2	43.4	28.1	16.1	8.2
Unjustified absences	Boys	9.8	18.1	31.8	25.3	15.0
	Girls	5.5	22.6	37.4	23.1	11.4
Exercises not done	Boys	8.0	19.7	30.1	29.6	12.6
	Girls	5.0	21.6	37.2	28.3	7.9
Physical aggression of teachers	Boys	10.7	61.8	11.0	4.5	12.0
	Girls	6.0	71.5	8.5	1.3	12.6
Harassing teachers	Boys	8.8	50.2	20.2	7.5	13.3
	Girls	6.4	60.0	16.8	4.9	12.1
Vandalism	Boys	7.5	42.4	30.7	7.7	11.7
	Girls	5.5	43.9	30.7	9.0	10.9
Smoking	Boys	7.0	54.7	14.7	10.2	13.3
	Girls	6.0	66.5	13.4	6.0	8.0
Physical aggression of peers	Boys	3.7	36.8	32.5	17.4	9.6
	Girls	4.7	48.5	27.1	7.8	11.8
Verbal aggression of peers	Boys	5.1	15.7	31.0	30.7	17.4
	Girls	4.9	23.7	38.7	21.9	10.8
Stealing	Boys	7.8	32.0	33.4	17.0	9.8
	Girls	6.0	37.4	33.0	15.2	8.3
Consumption of alcohol	Boys	6.9	61.9	14.9	6.4	9.9
	Girls	7.2	67.5	12.4	3.3	9.6
Taking drugs	Boys	8.2	76.0	4.0	1.4	10.4
	Girls	8.3	79.4	2.0	1.0	9.3
Bringing pornographic items at school	Boys	6.7	33.3	24.5	15.0	20.5
	Girls	7.7	51.0	18.6	10.9	11.8
Using mobile phone	Boys	5.9	5.3	8.0	25.1	55.7
	Girls	6.0	6.0	12.7	33.8	41.3
Making obscene gestures	Boys	8.3	27.5	32.0	18.1	14.1
	Girls	8.2	41.5	30.9	8.5	10.9
Playing truant	Boys	5.8	40.0	30.4	14.1	9.8
	Girls	6.7	52.1	26.3	8.0	6.9
Fighting among students	Boys	6.7	34.2	29.3	19.5	10.2
	Girls	5.6	26.1	41.5	19.1	7.7
Class disruption	Boys	5.4	17.8	29.3	30.2	17.3
	Girls	5.4	16.2	32.8	30.2	15.4

**Table 5.19 Differences in Perception between Boys and Girls**

After the gravity of each act of indiscipline and violence, we have asked the students to rate the frequency of these acts on the school compound.

### 5.1.5 Indiscipline and Violence: their Frequency at Schools

The frequency of acts of indiscipline and violence has been rated on a four level scale. Table 5.20 gives an idea of the frequency of these acts.

Types of Offences	Frequency of Offences				
	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Showing no respect to teachers	2.4	19.9	34.3	28.5	15.0
Being insolent to teachers	8.3	19.8	28.3	28.5	15.1
Using/writing foul language in class	4.5	24.4	16.2	16.5	38.4
Lateness	2.5	11.9	25.3	25.0	35.3
Bunking classes	5.0	33.6	28.0	19.6	13.8
Unjustified absences	4.0	26.6	28.7	22.6	18.1
Exercises not done	4.4	10.1	30.8	29.3	25.4
Physical aggression of teachers	4.2	75.9	13.5	3.1	3.4
Harassing teachers	4.2	69.6	14.0	6.7	5.6
Vandalism	3.0	51.5	23.7	10.7	11.0
Smoking	2.3	53.7	9.9	8.9	25.2
Physical aggression of peers	3.5	44.0	29.9	13.5	7.5
Verbal aggression of peers	4.1	15.3	24.6	20.5	33.9
Stealing	4.8	39.0	22.4	18.0	14.2
Consumption of alcohol	4.2	64.5	14.3	8.9	6.5
Taking drugs	4.6	86.8	4.1	1.4	1.5
Bringing pornographic items at school	4.0	52.0	19.7	11.2	11.5
Using mobile phone	3.4	12.9	12.9	15.7	53.5
Making obscene gestures	6.2	56.2	19.1	9.6	7.3
Playing truant	4.4	50.5	23.0	12.6	7.9
Fighting among students	3.4	28.0	28.2	24.3	14.6
Class disruption	3.5	13.3	24.3	20.9	36.4

**Table 5.20 Types of Offences and Their Frequency**

We have separated these offences into minor and major ones. By minor offences, we understand offences that have a consequence only in the school and no legal consequences and,

by major offences, we mean offences that can have serious consequences and may entail legal action by the police.

Among the minor offences which occur frequently one can identify the following: use of mobile phones (69.2%), class disruption (57.3%), lateness (55.3%), foul language (54.9%), homework not done (54.7%), insolence (43.6%), lack of respect for teachers (43.5%), unjustified absences (40.7%), bunking classes (33.4%).

It is interesting to note that on school premises, more than 50% of respondents have never witnessed major cases of offences. 86.8% of respondents have never witnessed drug consumption, 75.9% physical assault, 69.6% teacher harassment, 64.5% alcohol consumption, 56.2% obscene gestures, 53.7% smoking on school premises, 52% the presence of pornographic material, 51.7% destruction of school property, and 50.5% have never seen their friends play truant.

We have also compared the occurrences of these offences in SSS and non-SSS. The results are highlighted in Table 5.21.

Types of Offences	Types of School	% Frequency of Offences					
		NA	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Total
Showing no respect to teachers	Non-SSS	2.8	18.3	36.5	29.5	12.9	100.0
	SSS	1.7	22.6	29.2	27.3	19.2	100.0
Being insolent to teachers	Non-SSS	9.3	21.2	28.6	27.7	13.3	100.0
	SSS	6.1	16.5	27.3	30.5	19.7	100.0
Using/writing foul language in class	Non-SSS	4.6	26.6	17.8	15.7	35.3	100.0
	SSS	4.4	19.7	13.5	19.2	43.2	100.0
Lateness	Non-SSS	2.9	12.4	26.4	23.6	34.7	100.0
	SSS	2.0	10.3	22.4	27.8	37.6	100.0
Bunking classes	Non-SSS	6.0	32.4	26.3	21.0	14.3	100.0
	SSS	2.9	34.9	31.2	17.9	13.0	100.0
Unjustified absences	Non-SSS	5.1	26.0	29.0	22.4	17.5	100.0
	SSS	2.0	26.8	27.5	23.1	20.6	100.0

**Table 5.21 Differences in Frequency of Offences between SSS and non-SSS (Cont')**

Exercises not done	Non-SSS	4.9	9.4	30.7	29.2	25.8	100.0
	SSS	3.4	11.3	30.2	30.2	24.8	100.0
Physical aggression of teachers	Non-SSS	4.7	74.5	14.2	3.4	3.3	100.0
	SSS	3.2	79.1	11.8	2.5	3.4	100.0
Harassing teachers	Non-SSS	4.5	68.3	14.9	7.3	4.9	100.0
	SSS	3.7	72.7	11.5	5.2	6.9	100.0
Vandalism	Non-SSS	3.3	50.8	26.5	10.0	9.4	100.0
	SSS	2.9	52.6	18.7	11.8	14.0	100.0
Smoking	Non-SSS	3.0	51.4	11.6	10.6	23.4	100.0
	SSS	1.0	56.8	7.6	6.6	28.0	100.0
Physical aggression of peers	Non-SSS	4.9	42.8	31.2	13.3	7.8	100.0
	SSS	2.7	42.3	27.0	11.5	16.5	100.0
Verbal aggression of peers	Non-SSS	5.4	19.9	36.0	26.9	11.8	100.0
	SSS	4.2	19.2	32.4	25.3	18.9	100.0
Stealing	Non-SSS	6.9	35.2	33.9	16.4	7.7	100.0
	SSS	7.1	33.7	31.9	15.5	11.8	100.0
Consumption of alcohol	Non-SSS	7.1	66.4	14.0	5.2	7.3	100.0
	SSS	6.9	61.2	13.0	4.2	14.7	100.0
Taking drugs	Non-SSS	8.4	79.4	3.1	1.3	7.7	100.0
	SSS	7.9	74.2	2.7	1.0	14.3	100.0
Bringing pornographic items at school	Non-SSS	6.5	41.7	23.4	13.4	15.1	100.0
	SSS	8.6	42.8	17.9	12.3	18.4	100.0
Using mobile phone	Non-SSS	6.4	5.8	11.7	29.8	46.4	100.0
	SSS	5.2	5.4	7.6	28.7	53.1	100.0
Making obscene gestures	Non-SSS	8.2	34.8	31.1	14.7	11.2	100.0
	SSS	8.4	33.7	32.2	10.6	15.2	100.0
Playing truant	Non-SSS	6.6	45.4	30.4	11.1	6.5	100.0
	SSS	5.4	47.2	24.3	11.1	12.0	100.0
Fighting among students	Non-SSS	6.0	30.7	37.2	18.1	8.0	100.0
	SSS	6.4	29.2	31.4	21.9	11.1	100.0
Class disruption	Non-SSS	5.3	17.1	30.7	32.4	14.5	100.0
	SSS	5.7	16.7	31.7	25.8	20.1	100.0

**Table 5.21 Differences in Frequency of Offences between SSS and non-SSS**

We observe that both SSS and non-SSS students have rated highly some of these offences in the category ‘frequently’ as summarised in Table 5.22. However, SSS students tend to give a higher rating to these offences.

Offences	Types of schools	
	SSS %	Non-SSS %
Using mobile phones	64.9	56.9
Using foul language	45.2	37.7
Verbal aggression	42.3	34.9
Disrupting classes	41.1	39.3
Lateness	38.3	35.1
Smoking	28.3	24.5

**Table 5.22 Most Frequent Offences**

Table 5.23 compares boys’ and girls’ ratings for the different types of offence. We note that some offences are more frequent among boys than among girls (Table 5.24). We also observe that using foul language, lateness and homework not done are rated slightly higher by the girls as summarised in Table 5.25.

Indiscipline	Gender	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Showing no respect to teachers	Boys	3.5	18.7	31	29.9	16.8
	Girls	1.2	21.1	37.7	27	13.1
Being insolent to teachers	Boys	10.4	18.4	23.5	29.1	18.6
	Girls	6	21.3	33.3	27.8	11.6
Using/writing foul language in class	Boys	5.3	23.2	17.9	14.4	39.2
	Girls	3.7	25.6	14.4	18.8	37.5
Lateness	Boys	3.7	12.8	26.2	23.8	33.4
	Girls	1.3	10.9	24.3	26.3	37.2
Bunking classes	Boys	6.4	30.2	24	21.9	17.4
	Girls	3.5	37.2	32.2	17.1	10.1
Unjustified absences	Boys	4.6	24.5	29.6	23.5	17.8
	Girls	3.4	28.8	27.8	21.6	18.4
Exercises not done	Boys	4.8	11.4	29.4	28.5	25.9
	Girls	4	8.9	32.2	30.2	24.8
Physical aggression of teachers	Boys	6.4	69.3	15.8	3.4	5.1
	Girls	1.8	82.7	11.1	2.8	1.5

**Table 5.23 Differences in Frequency of Offences Between Boys and Girls (Cont’)**

Harassing teachers	Boys	5.4	60.2	17	8.6	8.8
	Girls	2.8	79.4	10.9	4.7	2.2
Vandalism	Boys	4.6	39.8	26.6	13.4	15.5
	Girls	1.3	63.7	20.8	7.9	6.4
Smoking	Boys	3.2	41.1	7.8	10.9	37
	Girls	1.3	66.8	12.1	6.9	12.9
Physical aggression of peers	Boys	3.2	18.9	33.3	25.4	19.3
	Girls	1.5	54.1	26.5	12.9	5.1
Verbal aggression of peers	Boys	4.1	9.6	21.5	16.1	48.7
	Girls	2.4	16.7	24.5	26.3	30.1
Stealing	Boys	3.8	27.5	21.8	20.7	26.1
	Girls	2.4	35.8	24.5	21.4	15.8
Consumption of alcohol	Boys	2.5	42.6	22.8	17.1	15.0
	Girls	4.0	64.1	18.2	8.9	4.8
Taking drugs	Boys	4.1	75.6	11.1	5.7	3.5
	Girls	3.1	88.4	4.9	2.8	0.8
Bringing pornographic items at school	Boys	2.7	31.4	23.9	18.4	23.7
	Girls	3.4	56.4	21.9	12.4	5.9
Using mobile phone	Boys	2.3	6.7	10.7	13.0	67.3
	Girls	3.0	8.8	10.7	17.0	60.5
Making obscene gestures	Boys	5.2	33.9	27.1	19.3	14.4
	Girls	4.4	58.1	20.2	10.2	7.1
Playing truant	Boys	3.0	34.7	25.4	20.6	16.3
	Girls	3.3	50.1	25.7	15.5	5.5
Fighting among students	Boys	2.8	17.6	27.4	28.5	23.7
	Girls	2.8	28.7	27.9	27.2	13.4
Class disruption	Boys	3.0	6.8	23.3	23.9	43.0
	Girls	2.9	14.0	18.5	24.0	40.6

**Table 5.23 Differences in Frequency of Offences Between Boys and Girls**

Types of Offences	Frequency		Difference%
	Boys %	Girls %	
Smoking	47.9	19.8	28.1
Physical aggression of peers	44.7	18.0	26.7
Pornographic items	42.1	18.3	23.8
Alcohol consumption	32.1	13.7	18.4
Obscene gestures	33.7	17.3	16.4
Playing truant	36.9	21.0	15.9
Vandalism	28.9	14.3	14.6
Bunking classes	39.3	27.2	12.1
Fighting among students	52.2	40.6	11.6
Harassing teachers	17.4	6.9	10.5

**Table 5.24 Frequency of Offences Where Boys Give Higher Ratings**

Types of Offences	Frequency		Difference%
	Girls %	Boys %	
Using foul language	56.3	53.6	2.7
Lateness	63.5	57.3	6.2
Homework not done	55.0	54.4	0.6

**Table 5.25 Frequency of Offences Where Girls Give Higher Ratings**

Though the students recognize that some offences are very serious, yet they admit that their occurrence is rare on the school compound.

### 5.1.6 Students' Involvement in Indiscipline

The students were asked to rate a series of hypothetical statements to know the reasons why they did commit an act of indiscipline. The responses are presented in Table 5.26.

Reasons	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
To annoy the teacher	53.2	34.0	5.2	4.6	3.0
To challenge the teacher's authority	53.8	30.9	6.4	5.0	3.8
To challenge the rector's authority	53.9	35.6	2.9	3.8	3.8
To spend a good time at school	53.4	13.3	7.9	10.6	14.8
To draw attention on us	54.2	29.1	7.4	5.8	3.4
To put an end to the monotony of the class	54.3	22.7	6.8	8.0	8.2
To act under peer pressure	53.8	23.6	8.8	7.1	6.7
To express our frustration	53.8	19.6	7.9	8.4	10.1

**Table 5.26 Students' Reasons for Committing Offences**

More than 50% of respondents have not answered this question as they claim not to have been involved in any form of indiscipline. The 45.8% who have been involved in acts of indiscipline attribute their misbehaviour to the following: to enjoy themselves (25.4%), to express their frustration (18.5%), to break the monotony of the class (16.2%), to act under the pressure of their friends (13.8%), to draw attention to them (9.2%), to challenge the authority of the teacher (8.8%), to annoy the teacher (7.6%), to challenge the authority of the rector (7.6%).

Students were also asked to rate a number of statements as shown in Table 5.27 to have an idea about who are the victims of these acts of indiscipline. Often these are directed towards those who are physically young and weak (49.7%), those who are in lower classes (44.7%) and those who are shy (42.3%).

Victims of Acts of Indiscipline	N/A %	Never%	Rarely %	Sometimes%	Often%
Shy	1.2	32.1	24.4	26.9	15.4
Small	3.2	26.8	20.3	27.6	22.1
Ethnic belonging	4.0	52.1	23.3	11.4	9.2
No friends	3.5	42.9	29.3	17.2	7.1
Lower classes	3.1	29.8	22.4	24.4	20.3
Dressing habit	2.1	48.9	26.7	14.0	8.4
Good	2.6	45.0	30.0	11.5	10.9
Bad	9.8	39.5	21.0	17.1	12.7

**Table 5.27 The Victims of Indiscipline**

We wanted to know the reactions of the students when they were asked to participate in an act of indiscipline by their friends. Table 5.28 shows that a high percentage of respondents refuse to get involved (64.6%) and often try to persuade their friends not to engage in these actions (68.2%). More than 50% of the respondents would not report it to the teacher or rector (56.4%).

Reasons	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
You join them because the group has decided	4.0	71.4	13.0	6.0	4.0
You refuse to participate	3.7	13.1	17.0	15.1	49.5
You try to dissuade them	5.1	11.2	14.0	29.6	38.6
You inform a teacher or the rector	4.6	56.4	18.2	10.9	8.2

**Table 5.28 Students' Reactions to Peer Pressure**

Indiscipline affects both the learner and the teacher, and Table 5.29 indicates students' responses to a number of preset categories. Almost 50% of the students aver that they are affected when there is indiscipline. We can also observe that 42.2% of the respondents claim that they are not affected in their studies by indiscipline because they take private tuition.

Category	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
It prevents me from concentrating on my studies	3.3	21.0	19.0	31.7	23.4
It prevents us from completing the syllabus	3.4	16.7	17.2	28.4	32.7
Teachers are not motivated to work	3.3	15.0	19.5	31.7	28.9
It creates a bad atmosphere in the school	3.6	10.4	22.3	29.5	32.6
It discourages me	5.5	23.7	22.8	24.1	22.3
It does disturb me in my studies (I take private tuition)	5.4	32.4	18.4	19.3	22.9

**Table 5.29 Effect of Indiscipline on Teaching and Learning from Students' Perspective**

### 5.1.7 The Management of Indiscipline and Violence

The students have been asked to rate a number of statements in order to give us an idea of how the teacher deals with minor acts of indiscipline as shown in Table 5.30.

Teachers' Reaction	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Solve the problem through dialogue	2.9	11.2	14.7	28.4	41.2
Punish immediately	3.3	9.8	33.3	27.8	24.3
Ask the student to stay in the detention class	3.4	19.5	28.3	25.0	22.2
Call for the intervention of the rector/deputy rector	3.7	10.7	29.9	28.6	25.5
Inflict corporal punishment	5.1	42.1	26.3	15.2	9.6
Inform parents	4.0	15.5	29.5	26.5	22.9
Ignore the problem	3.5	47.7	24.3	14.2	8.8
Feel powerless	4.1	42.1	24.8	16.8	10.5

**Table 5.30 Teachers' Reaction to Minor Acts of Indiscipline**

From data collected, we note that a majority of teachers, as per Table 5.30, try to solve the problem through dialogue. Furthermore, a high percentage would report the problem to the rector (54.1%), would immediately punish the offender (52.1%), would call the parents at school (49.2%), give a detention class (47.2%) Though corporal punishment is banned in schools, we find that it is used even for minor acts of indiscipline (24.8%). It should also be noted that more than 20% of the students say that teachers feel helpless or prefer to ignore those who misbehave. We also wanted to see if boys' and girls' ratings differ. This is shown in

Table 5.31. We find that a higher percentage of the boys would say that the teacher never informs the parents (71.3%), never solves the problems through dialogue (68.9%), never gives a detention class (68.9%), never informs the rector (65.7%) or never gives an immediate punishment (62.2%). A higher percentage of the girls say that the teacher never inflicts corporal punishment (57.6%), that he/she ignores the problem (53.6%) or he/she feels helpless (53.2%).

Teachers' Reaction	Gender	NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Solve the problem through dialogue	Boys	2.4	15.0	16.8	29.4	36.4
	Girls	2.9	8.0	15.4	29.7	44.0
Punish immediately	Boys	3.8	9.9	31.3	24.9	30.0
	Girls	3.1	8.2	35.1	32.0	21.6
Ask the student to stay in detention classes	Boys	3.4	20.8	27.0	23.5	25.4
	Girls	2.9	15.8	29.6	28.1	23.5
Call for the intervention of the rector/deputy rector	Boys	4.8	8.8	28.1	29.2	29.1
	Girls	3.4	10.5	31.2	28.6	26.3
Inflict corporal punishment	Boys	6.1	28.4	30.4	21.9	13.3
	Girls	4.2	54.6	23.4	11.3	6.5
Inform parents	Boys	4.8	14.7	28.8	25.7	26.0
	Girls	3.3	15.0	32.8	27.6	21.2
Ignore the problem	Boys	3.5	41.4	27.0	16.8	11.3
	Girls	3.8	55.9	21.7	12.4	6.2
Feel powerless	Boys	4.6	36.6	26.7	16.8	15.3
	Girls	4.2	53.4	22.1	15.5	4.7

**Table 5.31 Comparison of Teachers' Reaction to Minor Acts of Indiscipline by Boys and Girls**

Similarly, we have checked whether there is any disparity in management of discipline by teachers in SSS and non-SSS from the students' point of view. From Table 5.32, we note that there is a marked difference in the management of discipline between SSS and non-SSS as far as detention classes are concerned. The latter are used as a deterrent more in non-SSS than in SSS. To a lesser extent, we can observe that either teachers working in SSS ask rectors/deputy rectors to intervene or they choose to ignore the problem.

Teachers' Reaction	School-type	NA %	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Solve the problem through dialogue	Non-SSS	2.7	12.5	16.9	28.2	39.8
	SSS	2.5	9.6	14.5	32.4	41.0
Punish immediately	Non-SSS	3.5	8.3	31.4	30.5	26.3
	SSS	3.2	10.6	36.9	24.3	25.1
Ask the student to stay in detention class	Non-SSS	3.5	11.6	27.7	28.0	29.3
	SSS	2.2	32.2	29.5	21.4	14.7
Call for the intervention of rector/deputy rector	Non-SSS	4.5	11.7	30.4	27.6	25.9
	SSS	3.2	5.4	28.3	31.7	31.4
Inflict corporal punishment	Non-SSS	5.1	41.8	26.7	15.7	10.7
	SSS	5.2	40.5	27.3	18.7	8.4
Inform parents	Non-SSS	4.1	16.0	29.3	27.7	22.9
	SSS	3.7	12.5	33.9	24.6	25.3
Ignore the problem	Non-SSS	4.1	48.3	25.4	15.2	7.0
	SSS	2.5	49.1	22.4	13.5	12.5
Feel powerless	Non-SSS	4.1	44.2	26.3	15.8	9.6
	SSS	4.9	46.4	20.6	17.0	11.1

**Table 5.32 Comparison of Teachers' Reaction to Minor Acts of Indiscipline in SSS and non-SSS**

The above analysis deals with minor acts on indiscipline. Now, we look into the major acts of indiscipline (Table 5.33). We note that the following measures are highly rated:

- a. the intervention of the rector (58.6%);
- b. parents are asked to come to school (57.9%);
- c. immediate sanction (50.8%);
- d. detention class (38.4%).

We can equally observe that 19.6% of the students claim that corporal punishment is used.

Teachers' Reaction	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Solve the problem through dialogue	10.7	32.7	20.2	17.6	18.8
Punish immediately	10.7	6.2	11.4	20.9	50.8
Ask the student to stay in detention class	12.4	15.9	12.4	20.9	38.4
Call for the intervention of the rector/deputy rector	11.8	6.3	7.9	15.4	58.6
Inflict corporal punishment	13.3	32.7	16.7	17.7	19.6
Inform parents	12.3	6.5	7.1	16.2	57.9
Ignore the problem	12.8	59.7	13.0	7.4	7.0
Feel powerless	12.2	47.1	16.0	14.1	10.6

**Table 5.33 Teachers' Reaction to Major Acts of Indiscipline**

As in the case of minor acts of indiscipline, we have split the data in terms of gender in Table 5.34 and in terms of SSS and non-SSS in Table 5.35.

Teachers' Reaction	Gender	NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Solve the problem through dialogue	Boys	2.4	15.0	16.8	29.4	36.4
	Girls	2.9	8.0	15.4	29.7	44.0
Punish immediately	Boys	3.8	9.9	31.3	24.9	30.0
	Girls	3.1	8.2	35.1	32.0	21.6
Ask the students to stay in detention class	Boys	3.4	20.8	27.0	23.5	25.4
	Girls	2.9	15.8	29.6	28.1	23.5
Call for the intervention of the rector/deputy rector	Boys	4.8	8.8	28.1	29.2	29.1
	Girls	3.4	10.5	31.2	28.6	26.3
Inflict corporal punishment	Boys	6.1	28.4	30.4	21.9	13.3
	Girls	4.2	54.6	23.4	11.3	6.5
Inform parents	Boys	4.8	14.7	28.8	25.7	26.0
	Girls	3.3	15.0	32.8	27.6	21.2
Ignore the problem	Boys	3.5	41.4	27.0	16.8	11.3
	Girls	3.8	55.9	21.7	12.4	6.2
Feel powerless	Boys	4.6	36.6	26.7	16.8	15.3
	Girls	4.2	53.4	22.1	15.5	4.7

**Table 5.34 Comparison of Teachers' Reactions on Major Acts of Indiscipline by Boys and Girls**

Table 5.34 indicates that immediate or corporal punishment and the feeling of powerlessness are felt more by teachers working in boys' schools than in girls' schools. Respondents admit that in girls' schools, teachers try to solve the problem of indiscipline through dialogue.

Teachers' Reaction	School-type	NA%	Never%	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Solve the problem through dialogue	Non-SSS	10.0	32.7	20.8	18.3	18.2
	SSS	11.8	31.7	19.2	15.7	21.6
Punish immediately	Non-SSS	9.9	5.7	10.4	21.9	52.2
	SSS	12.0	7.1	13.0	18.7	49.1
Ask the student to stay in detention class	Non-SSS	12.2	13.5	11.4	19.3	43.6
	SSS	12.5	20.4	13.8	23.6	29.7
Call for the intervention of the rector/deputy rector	Non-SSS	11.4	7.0	8.6	14.8	58.2
	SSS	12.0	4.7	6.4	16.5	60.4
Inflict corporal punishment	Non-SSS	13.0	33.3	15.3	17.2	21.2
	SSS	13.5	33.7	18.9	18.2	15.7
Inform parents	Non-SSS	11.9	7.0	6.7	15.2	59.2
	SSS	12.5	5.7	7.6	17.7	56.5
Ignore the problem	Non-SSS	12.0	61.2	12.2	8.1	6.5
	SSS	14.0	57.7	14.5	5.9	7.9
Feel powerless	Non-SSS	11.6	46.4	16.9	14.8	10.4
	SSS	13.0	49.6	14.5	12.3	10.6

**Table 5.35 Comparison of Teachers' Reactions to Major Acts of Indiscipline in SSS and non-SSS**

As far as serious offences are concerned in these schools, the data in Table 5.35 indicates a general agreement between SSS and non-SSS, except for detention classes and corporal punishment where non-SSS have higher ratings.

We have also probed into the reasons why teachers have trouble with students. As in the preceding questions, a set of hypothetical statements were presented to the students and they were asked to rate them as shown in Table 5.36. Students relate teachers who have problems in their classes to the following:

- a. class not interesting (77.3%)
- b. teacher-student relationship (74.0%);
- c. prejudice against students (69.6%)
- d. unfair (69.3%)
- e. teacher too authoritative (65.3%);
- f. classroom management (62.1%);
- g. teachers' 'laissez-aller' attitude (50%);

Teachers' Characteristics	N/A %	Completely Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Completely Agree %
Are too strict	2.9	16.3	15.5	32.6	32.7
Adopt 'laissez-aller' attitude	2.8	24.3	22.4	29.1	21.4
Cannot manage the class	3.3	17.4	17.2	28.8	33.3
Do not master the subject taught	3.2	35.9	28.7	20.2	11.9
Do not work fully in class	3.7	18.7	23.6	36.3	17.7
Are unjust towards the students	2.8	10.8	17.2	39.3	30.0
The class is not interesting	2.3	7.9	12.5	39.2	38.1
Difficult relationship with students	3.5	9.1	13.3	39.0	35.0
Cannot manage his/her relations with students	2.9	8.0	12.2	37.1	39.9
Are biased towards students	4.8	10.5	15.1	33.1	36.5

**Table 5.36 Characteristics of Teachers Who Cannot Manage Acts of Indiscipline**

The students have also been given the opportunity to spell out the reasons for the level of increase in indiscipline in schools. Students ascribe this increase to the following factors (Table 5.37): (a) students' lack of respect for the schools (75.8%), (b) social problems that come into the school environment (73.8%), (c) students who want to imitate what they see in films (70.3%), (d) parents are no longer responsible for the behaviour of their children (51%), (e) 'laissez-aller' attitude on the teacher's part (50.3%), (f) school management does not know how to maintain discipline (43.9%).

Reasons	N/A %	Completely Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Completely Agree %
School administration cannot maintain discipline	4.3	23.8	28.0	23.4	20.5
'Laissez-faire' attitude of teachers	5.0	19.2	25.5	32.9	17.4
Students show no respect for school	2.4	10.7	11.1	47.1	28.7
Parents' irresponsibility	2.8	23.8	22.2	32.5	18.6
Students want to imitate what they see in films	3.5	10.8	15.4	41.3	29.0
Too many social problems (poverty, violence, drug)	2.9	13.1	10.2	38.0	35.8

**Table 5.37 Reasons for an Increase in Acts of Indiscipline**

As key observers, students have first-hand experience of how the administration handles discipline at the level of the school. Table 5.38 shows what the students tend to witness.

Administrative Actions	N/A %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Rector/deputy rector regularly walks around	1.2	6.5	14.2	24.4	52.1
Teachers help to maintain discipline during recess and when school breaks	2.0	33.9	26.8	20.6	15.2
The caretaker helps to maintain discipline	3.0	29.9	21.5	18.4	25.6
Severe punishment is meted out to the offenders	2.6	6.0	17.0	33.4	39.4
Parents are called at school	2.2	3.8	16.6	35.0	40.8
During morning assembly, the rector speaks about the importance of maintaining discipline	2.3	5.0	6.6	13.9	70.6
Students who have 'psychological problems' are taken care of	3.9	14.2	21.1	32.2	27.0

**Table 5.38 Management of Indiscipline by the School Administration**

From students' answers, we can infer that they recognise that the morning assembly is often used as a platform to inculcate discipline at school. Only 52% of the students agree that the rector regularly walks around the school. The low involvement of teachers (15.2%) is also apparent in the table. We have split Table 5.38 in terms of types of school as shown below.

Administrative Actions	Type of school	NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Rector/deputy rector regularly walks around	SSS	1.4	6.9	15.3	28.0	48.4
	Non-SSS	0.5	6.1	13.5	17.2	62.7
Teachers help to maintain discipline during recess and when school breaks	SSS	2.2	27.6	28.9	23.0	18.3
	Non-SSS	1.5	45.0	26.8	16.7	10.1
The caretaker helps to maintain discipline	SSS	2.8	30.7	21.0	18.1	27.5
	Non-SSS	2.9	32.2	21.1	20.1	23.6
Severe punishment is meted out to the offenders	SSS	2.2	4.3	15.3	32.9	45.3
	Non-SSS	2.5	9.8	19.7	38.3	29.7
Parents are called at school	SSS	2.2	4.1	17.5	32.9	43.4
	Non-SSS	2.2	2.7	18.9	37.1	39.1
During the morning assembly, the rector speaks about the importance of maintaining discipline	SSS	2.0	3.9	6.5	16.4	71.2
	Non-SSS	1.7	8.1	9.3	10.6	70.3
Students who have 'psychological problems' are taken care of	SSS	3.1	13.6	21.0	31.9	30.4
	Non-SSS	3.9	16.0	20.6	30.2	29.2

**Table 5.39 Comparison of Teacher's Reactions by SSS and Non-SSS Students**

In most of the statements shown in Table 5.39, the non-SSS students give higher rating to actions taken by the school administration.

Having seen students' views about how teachers and rectors manage acts of indiscipline and violence, it is therefore important to know what the students themselves propose as solutions to control misbehaviour in schools.

### **5.1.8 Students' Proposals**

In this section, the students have been asked to give a series of suggestions as to how to tackle the problem of indiscipline in schools. They have made a series of proposals: appropriate teaching strategies, good teaching and learning environment, sports and extra-curricular activities, enforcement of rules and regulations, strict disciplinary measures and surveillance, strong leadership, measures to ban racism and favouritism, pastoral care and counselling, the presence of a psychologist in school, more dialogue among teachers, rectors, parents and students, initial and in-service training to teachers.

More boys are keen to have co-education, to have better teaching strategies from the teachers that would break the monotony in the class, and a good environment for teaching and learning to take place. They would also like to have more sports and extra-curricular activities. In order to maintain discipline at school, they propose to have regular 'surveillance' and to recruit a discipline master who would help in keeping an eye on the students. Finally, they are not against a strong leadership at the head of the school provided that he/she applies the rules and regulations to both students and teachers. Strict disciplinary measures are suggested by the boys and they seem to be less concerned by the element of racism and favouritism and pastoral care, counselling and the presence of a psychologist at school.

More girls suggest that pastoral care, counselling and the presence of a psychologist in the school would largely help the students. Furthermore, they are also concerned with racism and favouritism at schools and, according to them, this may lead others to rebel when they feel they

are being unjustly penalized. They also propose to have more meetings with teachers, parents and rectors, to have more encouragement on the part of teachers instead of the latter's gossiping about their private lives and that the latter be trained in their job. They think that there should be a good relationship between teachers and students. Finally they think that severe measures should be taken to curb indiscipline and violence in schools. They show as much concern for sports and other extra-curricular activities, for co-education, a good school environment and teaching strategies, for a good leadership at the head of the school and more control in the school by recruiting a discipline master. Among the girls, 15.6% would favour disciplinary measures. Girls propose to solve the problem through dialogue and training, and a minority suggest an increase in involvement in sports and other extra-curricular activities.

Data indicates that, among the boys, the reinforcement of disciplinary measures, the involvement in sports and extra-curricular activities and dialogue are proposals that are favoured most.

When we compare students' perception of teachers' management of minor and major acts of indiscipline, we find that, for minor offences, students rely on teachers to solve the problems while for major offences they want their responsible party to be present at school. The intervention of the rector comes as a second option for both minor and major offences. Almost the same order of priority is given to the other offences. Moreover, the morning assembly seems to have a double function: (1) to sensitize the students to the importance of discipline at schools and (2) to establish, in an indirect way, a dialogue with the students.

After having reviewed students' perception of different aspects of indiscipline and violence in schools, we now probe into teachers' perception.

## **5.2 Teachers' Perception of Indiscipline and Violence**

Owing to their direct involvement with students, teachers have first-hand experience of indiscipline. They are in contact most of the time with the students, and they are the ones who

can confirm or contradict what the students would say. Their views have been gathered through a teacher questionnaire.

### 5.2.1 Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 21 questions. Questions 1 to 7 are concerned with the background of teachers and the school (student population, facilities offered, etc.). Questions 8 - 21 gauge the perception of teachers about acts of indiscipline and violence in schools. Question 19 is an open-ended question where teachers have been asked to propose some solutions to the problem of indiscipline and violence in schools.

These questions can be grouped into four sections: (1) the teachers' profile and the school profile, (2) the seriousness of these acts and their frequency, (3) the source of the problems encountered at school and the characteristics of the trouble-makers (4) teacher-centred items.

### 5.2.2 Teachers' and School Profile

The data base covers questionnaires from 236 teachers out of 250 initially targeted. The proportion of male and female teachers is shown in Fig. 5.12 while the distribution of teachers by age group is presented in Fig. 5.13. Female teachers in the sample exceed male teachers by 10%.

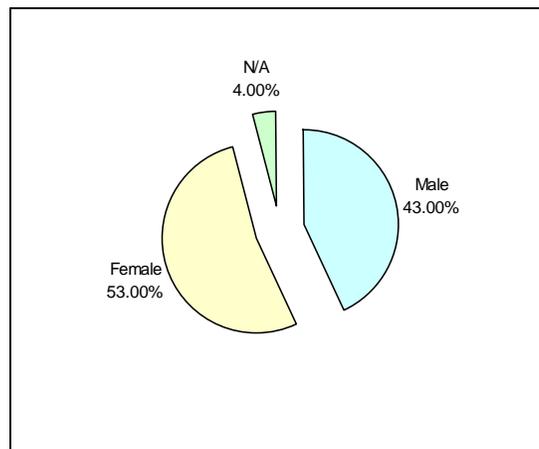
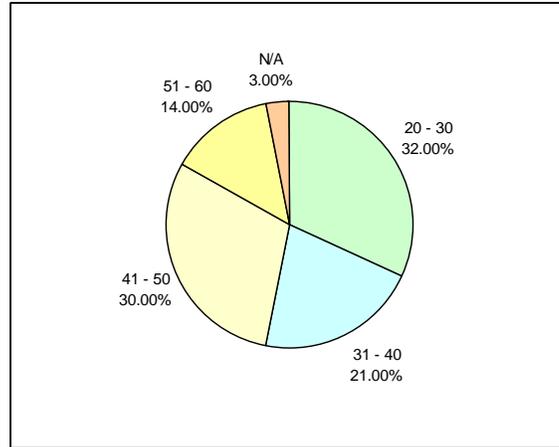


Fig. 5.12 Distribution of Teachers by Sex



**Fig. 5.13 Distribution of Teachers by Age Group**

Almost half of the number of teachers work in SSS while the remaining half work in non-SSS as illustrated in Table 5.40.

School Status	Number	Percentage
SSS	120	50.8
Non-SSS	116	49.2
Total	236	100.0

**Table 5.40 Distribution of Teachers in SSS and non-SSS**

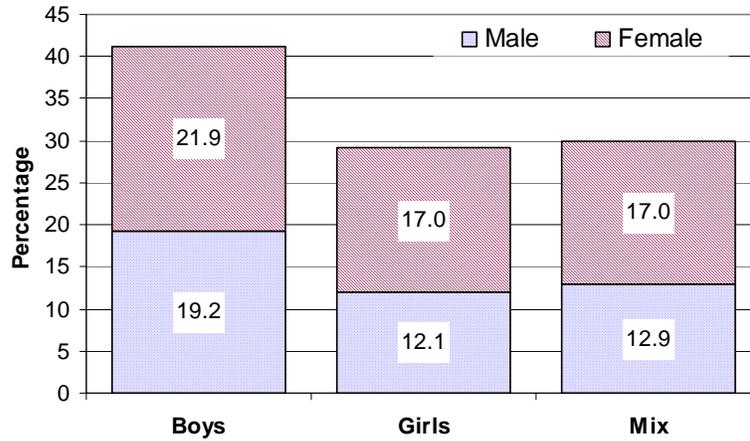
As far as the teaching experience of the teachers is concerned, we observe from Table 5.41 that 35.2% of the teachers have more than 20 years' experience while some 33.5% have more than 5 but less than 20 years' experience and 27.5% have less than 5 years' experience.

Years of Experience	Number	Percentage
NA	9	3.8
0 - 5	65	27.5
6 - 10	38	16.1
11 - 15	22	9.3
16 - 20	19	8.1
> 20	83	35.2
Total	236	100.0

**Table 5.41 Distribution of Teachers by Experience**

Fig. 5.14 shows that 40.1% of respondents work in a boys' school, while 29.1% and 29.9% work in a girls' and mixed school respectively. Whether the school is a boys', a girls' or a

mixed school, more female teachers have been involved in the survey in these different categories of schools.



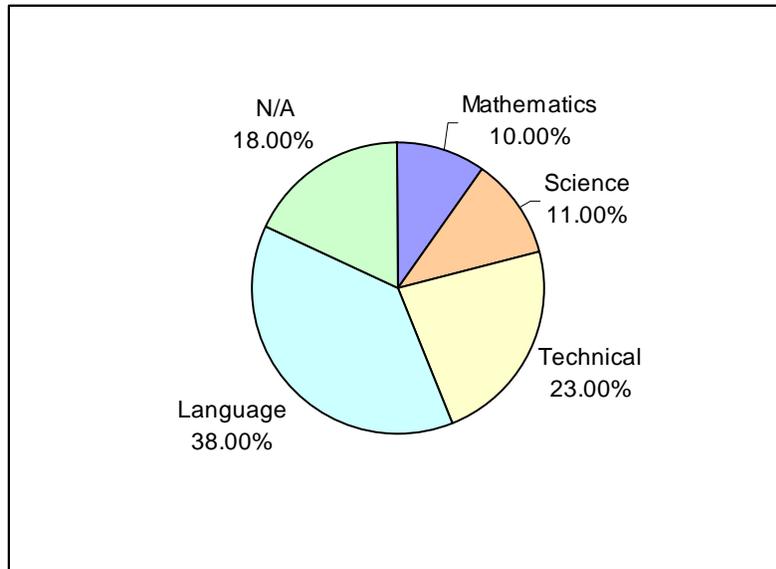
**Fig. 5.14 Distribution of Teachers by Gender and School Type**

The spread of teachers in rural and urban schools is shown in Table 5.42. Teachers from rural schools represent nearly 56% of the sample.

Region	Number	Percentage
Rural	132	55.9
Urban	104	44.1
Total	236	100.0

**Table 5.42 Distribution of Teachers by Region**

The distribution of teachers by subject taught is displayed in Fig. 5.15. We would like to specify that the category ‘technical subjects’ in Fig. 5.15 includes Business Studies, Design and Technology, Economics, Accounting and Social Studies. This category could be explained by the fact that teachers from non-SSS often teach two or three subjects at a time compared to SSS teachers who, in some ways, are specialist teachers.



**Fig. 5.15 Distribution of Teachers by Subject Category**

Teachers were asked to state the number of students that a class should hold so that it is manageable. A similar question was asked about the number of students constituting the whole school population. Table 5.43 and Table 5.44 show the response of the teachers. The majority of teachers (73.6%) feel that the maximum number of students in a class should be 30. Some 41.8% of the teachers feel that the student population should not exceed 700.

No. of Students	Rural%	Urban %	Total %
Max 25	7.0	9.1	7.9
Max 30	75.8	70.7	73.6
Max 35	16.4	19.2	17.6
Max 40	0.8	1.0	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.43 Ideal Number of Students in a Class**

No of Students	Rural%	Urban%	Total%
NA	30.5	28.3	29.5
< 500	9.4	11.1	10.1
500 – 700	28.9	35.4	31.7
701 – 900	14.8	15.2	15.0
901 – 1000	12.5	9.1	11.0
>1000	3.9	1.0	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.44 Ideal Number of Students in a School**

### 5.2.3 Teachers' Perception of Disruptive Behaviour

Teachers have been asked to give their impression on the nature of discipline in their schools (Table 5.45). Though a large proportion of teachers (56.6%) find discipline to be fair, yet about one third of the teachers admit the 'laisser-aller' attitude in school.

Nature of Discipline	Percentage
Strict	4.4
Fair	56.6
'Laisser-aller' attitude	34.5
Non-existent	4.4

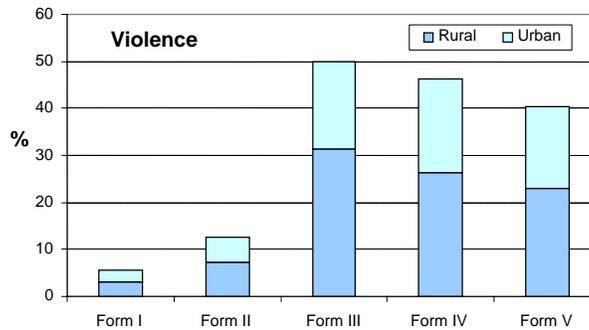
**Table 5.45 Teachers' Perception of Discipline**

Table 5.45 has been split in terms of urban and rural schools as shown in Table 5.46. We observe that the responses of teachers in urban and rural schools do not vary considerably.

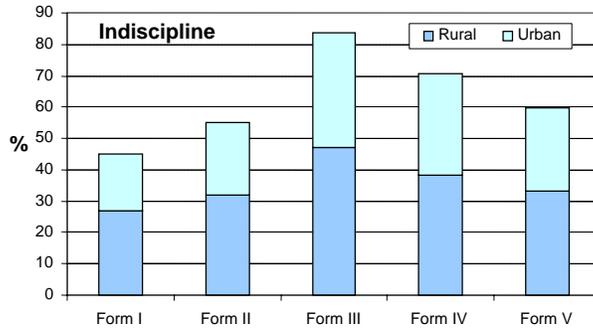
Nature of Discipline	Rural%	Urban%	Total%
Strict	3.1	6.2	4.4
Fair	57.4	55.7	56.6
'Laisser-aller' attitude	34.9	34.0	34.5
Non-existent	4.7	4.1	4.4

**Table 5.46 Teachers' Perception of Discipline in Urban and Rural Schools**

The level of indiscipline/violence also varies according to the age group (or Forms) of the students. Fig. 5.16 and Fig. 5.17 show teachers' ratings for violence and indiscipline as they experience them from Form I (11-12 years) to Form V (16-17 years).



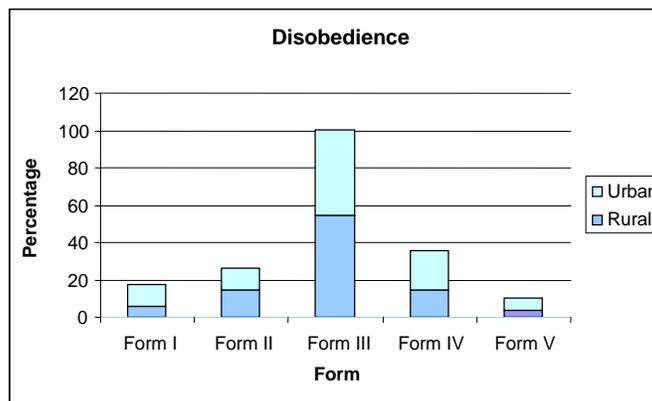
**Fig. 5.16 Teachers' Perception of Violence From Form I to V**



**Fig. 5.17 Teachers' Perception of Indiscipline From Form I to V**

The ratings for indiscipline are much higher than those of violence. In other words, there is more indiscipline than violence in schools. The data shows a similar pattern from Form I to Form V in both cases. No significant disparity can be observed between teachers' perception in the rural and urban schools.

For the sake of illustration, we present the data for one form of indiscipline, namely 'Disobedience' as perceived by teachers in Fig. 5.18. The data exhibits a bell-shaped normal structure. The problem of indiscipline becomes apparent as from Form II and attains a peak in Form III and gradually declines at the Form V level.



**Fig. 5.18 Disobedience among Form I to Form V Students**

Teachers have also been asked if their relationship with the Form V students is affected when they develop a friendly attitude towards them. As can be seen from Table 5.47, with students of upper classes, a too friendly attitude of teachers (53.8%) has no influence on the teacher/students relationship. However, some 46.2% think that such an attitude may lead the students not to obey the teachers.

Does teacher familiarity with students lead the latter to disobey the former?			Total%
	Rural%	Urban%	
Completely Disagree	15.2	14.4	14.8
Disagree	41.7	35.6	39.0
Agree	30.3	33.7	31.8
Completely Agree	12.9	16.3	14.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.47 Impact of Teachers' Familiarity with Students**

As in the case of students, we have assessed the perception of teachers with regard to different types of indiscipline. With the exception of a few items, all the different types of offences are considered significant by more than 50% of the teachers in Table 5.48. However, their perception towards each of these offences varies. We would also like to draw attention to some significant figures concerning offences which teachers do not consider serious such as:

- a. using mobile phone (40.6%);
- b. showing no respect to teachers (26.2%)
- c. using/writing foul language in class (23.3%)
- d. shirking classes (21.6%)
- e. disrupting classes (20.8%)

Types of Offences	Rating (Seriousness of Offences)				
	NA%	Very serious%	Serious%	Not Serious%	Not Serious at All%
Showing no respect to teachers	8.1	38.1	27.5	18.6	7.6
Being insolent to teachers	12.7	25.4	37.7	19.5	4.7
Using/writing foul language in class	11.4	33.5	31.8	16.1	7.2
Lateness	13.6	11.9	47.5	24.2	3.0
Bunking classes	13.6	28.8	36.0	16.1	5.5
Unjustified absences	12.7	22.5	48.3	14.4	2.1
Exercises not done	14.8	31.4	42.8	10.6	0.4
Physical aggression of teachers	15.7	58.1	5.9	3.8	16.5
Harassing teachers	15.3	54.7	11.9	3.4	14.8
Vandalism	12.7	49.2	22.5	7.2	8.5
Smoking	13.6	42.8	28.8	7.2	7.6
Physical aggression of peers	12.7	50.0	22.5	6.8	8.1
Verbal aggression of peers	11.9	29.2	43.2	11.0	4.7
Stealing	12.3	38.1	35.2	10.6	3.8
Consumption of alcohol	16.1	59.3	9.3	5.5	9.7
Taking drugs	16.9	61.4	3.4	5.9	12.3
Bringing pornographic items at school	14.4	50.8	18.6	7.2	8.9
Using mobile phone	13.6	13.6	32.2	29.2	11.4
Making obscene gestures	14.8	49.6	19.5	6.8	9.3
Playing truant	14.8	46.2	26.3	8.1	4.7
Fighting among students	14.0	38.1	31.4	10.2	6.4
Class disruption	14.0	25.8	39.4	17.8	3.0
Pornographic items via mms	18.2	47.5	17.8	7.6	8.9

**Table 5.48 Teachers' Rating of Indiscipline and Violence in Schools**

We have also compared teachers' perception with regard to the different types of offences in rural and urban schools. No significant differences have been observed. When we examine who, among male and female teachers, feel more concerned by these different acts of indiscipline and violence, we find that the attitude of female teachers differs from their male counterparts in the sense that they tend to consider all these actions to be serious as they give higher ratings to most of the offences (Table 5.49).

Types of Offences	Gender	Rating (Seriousness of Offences)				
		NA %	Very Serious %	Serious %	Not serious %	Not Serious at All %
Showing no respect to teachers	Male	2.6	16.7	10.6	10.6	4.0
	Female	5.3	22.5	15.9	8.4	3.5
Being insolent to teachers	Male	5.3	9.3	14.5	11.5	4.0
	Female	7.5	16.7	22.9	7.9	0.4
Using/writing foul language in class	Male	3.5	14.5	13.2	7.5	5.7
	Female	7.5	19.4	18.9	8.4	1.3
Lateness	Male	5.7	6.2	20.3	11.0	1.3
	Female	7.9	6.2	28.2	11.5	1.8
Bunking classes	Male	5.7	9.3	19.8	6.6	3.1
	Female	7.5	19.4	16.3	9.7	2.6
Unjustified absences	Male	4.4	10.1	21.6	6.6	1.8
	Female	7.9	12.8	26.0	8.4	0.4
Exercises not done	Male	5.3	13.2	20.3	5.3	0.4
	Female	9.3	18.5	22.5	5.3	0.0
Physical aggression of teachers	Male	5.3	26.4	1.8	2.2	8.8
	Female	10.1	31.3	4.4	1.8	7.9
Harassing teachers	Male	4.4	24.2	6.6	1.3	7.9
	Female	11.0	30.0	5.7	2.2	6.6
Vandalism	Male	4.0	19.4	11.0	4.0	6.2
	Female	8.8	29.5	11.5	3.5	2.2
Smoking	Male	4.8	15.9	15.0	3.5	5.3
	Female	7.9	26.9	14.1	4.0	2.6
Physical aggression of peers	Male	4.4	21.1	10.1	3.1	5.7
	Female	8.4	28.6	12.8	4.0	1.8
Verbal aggression of peers	Male	4.0	11.0	22.0	3.5	4.0
	Female	7.9	18.9	20.7	7.5	0.4
Stealing	Male	4.8	13.7	17.6	5.3	3.1
	Female	7.5	24.7	17.6	5.7	0.0
Consumption of alcohol	Male	4.8	24.7	5.7	2.6	6.6
	Female	10.6	34.8	4.0	3.1	3.1
Taking drugs	Male	5.7	26.0	2.2	3.5	7.0
	Female	11.0	35.7	0.9	2.6	5.3

**Table 5.49 Teachers' Perception of Indiscipline and Violence by Gender (Cont')**

Bringing pornographic items at school	Male	5.3	17.2	12.3	4.8	4.8
	Female	9.3	33.5	6.2	2.6	4.0
Using mobile phone	Male	4.0	5.7	14.1	16.3	4.4
	Female	9.7	7.9	18.1	13.7	6.2
Making obscene gestures	Male	4.0	20.3	11.5	4.0	4.8
	Female	10.6	29.1	8.4	3.1	4.4
Playing truant	Male	4.8	17.6	14.5	4.4	3.1
	Female	9.3	28.6	12.3	4.0	1.3
Fighting among students	Male	4.8	18.5	11.0	5.7	4.4
	Female	8.8	20.3	21.1	3.5	1.8
Class disruption	Male	4.8	9.3	19.8	9.3	1.3
	Female	9.3	17.2	19.8	7.9	1.3
Pornographic items via mms	Male	7.0	18.5	9.7	4.0	5.3
	Female	11.0	29.1	7.9	4.0	3.5

**Table 5.49 Teachers' Perception of Indiscipline and Violence by Gender**

Moreover, we have also looked into the relationship between teachers' perception of indiscipline/ violence and teachers' experience in Table 5.50.

Types of Offences	Years Of Exp.	NA%	V.S %	S %	NS%	NSAA %	Total%
Showing no respect to teachers	< 5	36.8	16.1	9.2	8.0	29.9	100.0
	> 5	23.0	19.7	10.7	8.2	38.5	100.0
Being insolent to teachers	< 5	42.4	13.6	10.2	10.2	23.7	100.0
	> 5	24.3	20.0	10.0	7.9	37.9	100.0
Using/writing foul language in class	< 5	33.8	18.2	6.5	6.5	35.1	100.0
	> 5	27.0	16.7	11.9	9.5	34.9	100.0
Lateness	< 5	25.0	25.0	10.7	14.3	25.0	100.0
	> 5	31.4	15.4	9.5	7.7	36.1	100.0
Bunking classes	< 5	30.9	17.6	11.8	10.3	29.4	100.0
	> 5	28.5	16.2	8.5	7.7	39.2	100.0
Unjustified absences	< 5	24.5	15.1	15.1	11.3	34.0	100.0
	> 5	31.3	17.7	7.5	7.5	36.1	100.0
Exercises not done	< 5	28.8	16.4	12.3	11.0	31.5	100.0
	> 5	30.1	18.7	8.1	7.3	35.8	100.0
Physical aggression of teachers	< 5	27.8	17.3	10.5	8.3	36.1	100.0
	> 5	35.0	18.3	6.7	10.0	30.0	100.0

**Table 5.50 Perception of Teachers with Less/ More than 5 Years' Experience (Cont')**

Harassing teachers	< 5	30.4	18.4	11.2	8.8	31.2	100.0
	> 5	29.4	17.6	7.4	8.8	36.8	100.0
Vandalism	< 5	32.1	15.2	8.9	8.9	34.8	100.0
	> 5	27.6	20.7	10.3	8.0	33.3	100.0
Smoking	< 5	36.4	13.1	10.1	8.1	32.3	100.0
	> 5	22.0	22.0	9.0	9.0	38.0	100.0
Physical aggression of peers	< 5	29.8	20.2	9.6	7.9	32.5	100.0
	> 5	28.2	14.1	9.4	9.4	38.8	100.0
Verbal aggression of peers	< 5	38.2	13.2	11.8	10.3	26.5	100.0
	> 5	25.6	19.5	8.3	7.5	39.1	100.0
Stealing	< 5	27.3	18.2	10.2	9.1	35.2	100.0
	> 5	32.1	17.0	8.9	8.0	33.9	100.0
Consumption of alcohol	< 5	28.5	17.5	9.5	9.5	35.0	100.0
	> 5	33.9	14.3	10.7	7.1	33.9	100.0
Taking drugs	< 5	28.9	16.2	9.9	8.5	36.6	100.0
	> 5	35.4	20.8	10.4	8.3	25.0	100.0
Bringing pornographic items at school	< 5	31.6	16.2	6.8	10.3	35.0	100.0
	> 5	26.9	17.9	14.1	6.4	34.6	100.0
Using mobile phone	< 5	37.5	12.5	9.4	12.5	28.1	100.0
	> 5	28.5	18.2	9.7	7.9	35.8	100.0
Making obscene gestures	< 5	31.9	14.2	8.8	8.8	36.3	100.0
	> 5	29.3	20.7	11.0	8.5	30.5	100.0
Playing truant	< 5	32.7	15.9	8.4	11.2	31.8	100.0
	> 5	28.1	19.1	11.2	4.5	37.1	100.0
Fighting among students	< 5	31.5	19.1	9.0	7.9	32.6	100.0
	> 5	27.8	16.7	9.3	9.3	37.0	100.0
Class disruption	< 5	40.0	11.7	15.0	10.0	23.3	100.0
	> 5	25.0	19.9	7.4	7.4	40.4	100.0
Pornographic items via mms	< 5	31.2	14.7	7.3	7.3	39.4	100.0
	> 5	29.5	16.7	14.1	9.0	30.8	100.0

**Table 5.50 Perception of Teachers with Less/ More than 5 Years' Experience**

When we compare the values in Table 5.50, it seems difficult to say that the less experienced teacher is more sensitive to these acts of indiscipline and the more experienced ones tend to give less importance to them. Irrespective of the years of experience, teachers have almost the same feeling towards these different types of offences.

#### **5.2.4 Frequency of Indiscipline and Violence: Teachers' Appraisal**

Teachers' ratings for the occurrences of the different acts of indiscipline and violence in schools are shown in Table 5.51. Acts of indiscipline that occur frequently are (1) homework

not done (51.7%), (2) using mobile phone (49.6%), disrupting the class (49.6%) and (4) aggressing verbally a friend (45.3%).

To a lesser extent, these are the following offences - unjustified absences (38.6%), stealing others' belongings (29.7%), using foul language (25.2%), being insolent to teachers (20%). Items that never occur according to the teachers are taking drugs (64.4%), threatening or assaulting teachers (55.9%), taking alcohol on school premises (40.7%) and making obscene gestures (33.5%).

Types of Offences	NA%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Showing no respect to teachers	5.1	8.9	28.4	40.3	17.4
Being insolent to teachers	7.2	7.2	21.2	43.2	21.2
Using/writing foul language in class	5.1	10.6	25.8	33.5	25.0
Lateness	8.5	18.2	41.1	30.5	1.7
Bunking classes	7.6	4.7	26.3	40.3	21.2
Unjustified absences	5.9	1.3	16.9	37.3	38.6
Exercises not done	8.5	0.0	5.9	33.9	51.7
Physical aggression of teachers	5.9	55.9	27.5	8.5	2.1
Harassing teachers	8.1	46.6	26.7	14.0	4.7
Vandalism	5.9	25.4	29.7	19.9	19.1
Smoking	6.4	26.3	21.2	23.3	22.9
Physical aggression of peers	6.4	16.9	25.0	33.1	18.6
Verbal aggression of peers	4.7	4.2	14.0	31.8	45.3
Stealing	6.8	4.2	20.3	39.0	29.7
Consumption of alcohol	6.8	40.7	26.3	20.8	5.5
Taking drugs	9.7	64.4	19.9	4.7	1.3
Bringing pornographic items at school	7.6	26.7	34.3	26.7	4.7
Using mobile phone	5.9	5.1	9.7	29.7	49.6
Making obscene gestures	5.1	33.5	28.4	23.3	9.7
Playing truant	7.6	7.2	30.9	38.6	15.7
Fighting among students	5.1	15.7	29.2	33.5	16.5
Class disruption	5.9	2.5	9.7	32.2	49.6
Pornographic items via mms	11.9	33.1	31.4	17.8	5.9

**Table 5.51 Frequency of Offences as Experienced by Teachers**

The analysis of the data also indicates that there is no significant disparity in the occurrence of these offences between rural and urban schools. In addition, there is no direct relationship between the size of the school and the frequency of these acts.

Table 5.52 points out that there is no significant disparity in teachers' response to the frequency of these offences.

Table 5.53 highlights again that there is not much difference between male and female teachers as far as the occurrence of these offences is concerned on school premises. A slight disparity appears only in cases of insolence, using foul language in class, lateness, exercises not done, stealing, use of mobile phone and class disruption where female teachers give a higher rating.

Types of Offences		Frequency				
		NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Showing no respect to teachers	SSS	3.0	4.3	16.6	18.7	8.5
	Non SSS	1.7	4.7	11.9	21.7	8.9
Being insolent to teachers	SSS	3.8	5.5	9.4	23.0	9.4
	Non SSS	3.0	1.7	11.9	20.4	11.9
Using/writing foul language in class	SSS	3.4	7.2	10.6	14.0	15.7
	Non SSS	1.3	3.4	15.3	19.6	9.4
Lateness	SSS	4.7	0.0	3.4	15.7	27.2
	Non SSS	2.1	0.0	3.4	17.0	26.4
Bunking classes	SSS	4.3	2.6	10.2	22.1	11.9
	Non SSS	3.0	2.1	16.2	18.3	9.4
Unjustified absences	SSS	3.4	0.0	8.5	17.0	22.1
	Non SSS	2.1	1.3	8.5	20.4	16.6
Exercises not done	SSS	4.7	0.0	3.0	20.4	23.0
	Non SSS	3.4	0.0	3.0	13.6	28.9
Physical aggression of teachers	SSS	3.4	31.5	10.2	6.0	0.0
	Non SSS	2.1	24.7	17.4	2.6	2.1

**Table 5.52: Frequency of Offences in SSS and in non-SSS (Cont')**

Harassing teachers	SSS	4.7	24.3	11.1	8.1	3.0
	Non SSS	3.0	22.6	15.7	6.0	1.7
Vandalism	SSS	3.8	16.2	8.5	8.5	14.0
	Non SSS	1.7	9.4	21.3	11.5	5.1
Smoking	SSS	3.4	16.2	6.0	7.2	18.3
	Non SSS	2.6	10.2	15.3	16.2	4.7
Physical aggression of peers	SSS	3.8	12.3	8.1	17.0	9.8
	Non SSS	2.1	4.7	17.0	16.2	8.9
Verbal aggression of peers	SSS	2.6	3.4	6.8	14.0	24.3
	Non SSS	1.7	0.9	7.2	17.9	21.3
Stealing	SSS	4.3	3.4	8.5	21.7	13.2
	Non SSS	2.1	0.9	11.9	17.4	16.6
Consumption of alcohol	SSS	3.4	21.7	8.9	11.9	5.1
	Non SSS	3.0	19.1	17.4	8.9	0.4
Taking drugs	SSS	5.5	30.6	11.9	2.6	0.4
	Non SSS	3.8	34.0	8.1	2.1	0.9
Bringing pornographic items at school	SSS	3.8	16.6	13.2	13.6	3.8
	Non SSS	3.4	10.2	21.3	13.2	0.9
Using mobile phone	SSS	3.0	2.6	5.1	10.2	30.2
	Non SSS	2.6	2.6	4.7	19.6	19.6
Making obscene gestures	SSS	3.4	21.3	9.8	10.6	6.0
	Non SSS	1.3	12.3	18.7	12.8	3.8
Playing truant	SSS	3.8	4.3	13.6	17.9	11.5
	Non SSS	3.4	3.0	17.4	20.9	4.3
Fighting among students	SSS	3.4	12.3	9.8	16.2	9.4
	Non SSS	1.3	3.4	19.6	17.4	7.2
Class disruption	SSS	3.0	2.1	6.0	15.7	24.3
	Non SSS	2.6	0.4	3.8	16.6	25.5
Pornographic items via mms	SSS	6.8	15.7	16.6	8.9	3.0
	Non SSS	4.7	17.4	14.9	8.9	3.0

**Table 5.52: Frequency of Offences in SSS and in non-SSS**

Types of Offences	Gender	NA	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Showing no respect to teachers	Male	2.2	4.9	12.4	16.8	8.4
	Female	2.2	4.0	15.0	24.3	9.7
Being insolent to teachers	Male	4.0	4.4	11.1	17.7	7.5
	Female	2.7	2.7	9.7	26.1	14.2
Using/writing foul language in class	Male	1.8	7.1	11.5	15.0	9.3
	Female	2.7	4.0	12.8	19.9	15.9
Lateness	Male	3.5	0.0	5.3	12.8	23.0
	Female	3.1	0.0	1.3	19.5	31.4
Bunking classes	Male	3.5	2.7	9.3	20.4	8.8
	Female	3.5	1.8	16.8	20.4	12.8
Unjustified absences	Male	2.7	0.4	9.3	14.2	18.1
	Female	2.7	0.9	7.1	23.5	21.2
Exercise not done	Male	3.5	0.0	4.0	15.5	21.7
	Female	4.0	0.0	1.8	18.6	31.0
Physical aggression of teachers	Male	2.7	24.3	11.5	4.4	1.8
	Female	2.7	32.3	15.5	4.4	0.4
Harassing teachers	Male	3.5	19.0	11.5	8.4	2.2
	Female	4.0	28.3	14.2	6.2	2.7
Vandalism	Male	2.7	11.9	12.4	9.3	8.4
	Female	2.7	13.7	16.8	11.1	11.1
Smoking	Male	2.2	14.6	7.5	8.4	11.9
	Female	3.5	11.5	13.3	15.5	11.5
Physical aggression of peers	Male	3.5	9.7	8.0	14.6	8.8
	Female	2.2	7.5	17.3	18.1	10.2
Verbal aggression of peers	Male	2.2	3.1	8.0	10.2	21.2
	Female	1.8	1.3	5.8	21.2	25.2
Stealing	Male	4.0	3.5	12.4	14.6	10.2
	Female	2.2	0.9	7.1	25.7	19.5
Consumption of alcohol	Male	2.2	20.4	11.9	8.4	1.8
	Female	3.5	19.9	15.0	13.3	3.5
Taking drugs	Male	4.0	30.1	7.5	1.8	1.3
	Female	4.9	35.0	12.4	3.1	0.0
Bringing pornographic items at school	Male	3.5	15.0	13.3	11.1	1.8
	Female	3.5	11.9	20.8	15.9	3.1
Using mobile phone	Male	2.7	3.1	6.6	10.6	21.7
	Female	1.8	2.2	2.7	19.0	29.6
Making obscene gestures	Male	2.7	15.5	9.7	11.1	5.8
	Female	1.8	18.1	18.1	12.8	4.4
Playing truant	Male	3.5	5.3	13.3	16.4	6.2
	Female	3.1	2.2	16.8	23.5	9.7
Fighting among students	Male	2.2	11.5	12.8	13.3	4.9
	Female	2.2	4.9	16.4	20.8	11.1
Class disruption	Male	3.5	2.2	6.6	14.6	17.7
	Female	1.8	0.4	3.1	18.1	31.9
Pornographic items via mms	Male	3.5	15.9	12.8	9.7	2.7
	Female	8.0	17.3	18.1	8.4	3.5

**Table 5.53: Frequency of Offences and Gender**

Types of Offences	Years	NA%	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Total %
Showing no respect to teachers	<5	1.5	4.6	16.9	52.3	24.6	100.0
	6 - 20	5.1	5.1	37.2	34.6	17.9	100.0
	>20	4.8	15.7	27.7	38.6	13.3	100.0
Being insolent to teachers	<5	3.1	1.5	15.4	49.2	30.8	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	10.3	15.4	44.9	21.8	100.0
	>20	7.2	8.4	30.1	39.8	14.5	100.0
Using/Writing foul language in class	<5	1.5	9.2	26.2	33.8	29.2	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	12.8	24.4	32.1	24.4	100.0
	>20	3.6	10.8	21.7	38.6	25.3	100.0
Lateness	<5	4.6	0.0	4.6	29.2	61.5	100.0
	6 - 20	9.0	0.0	6.4	30.8	53.8	100.0
	>20	4.8	0.0	8.4	36.1	50.6	100.0
Bunking classes	<5	6.2	4.6	33.8	30.8	24.6	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	6.4	24.4	43.6	17.9	100.0
	>20	6.0	2.4	21.7	47.0	22.9	100.0
Unjustified absences	<5	4.6	1.5	15.4	40.0	38.5	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	0.0	16.7	35.9	41.0	100.0
	>20	3.6	2.4	15.7	38.6	39.8	100.0
Not doing exercises	<5	3.1	0.0	3.1	36.9	56.9	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	0.0	7.7	34.6	50.0	100.0
	>20	9.6	0.0	6.0	31.3	53.0	100.0
Physical aggression of teachers	<5	6.2	46.2	35.4	10.8	1.5	100.0
	6 - 20	5.1	59.0	25.6	7.7	2.6	100.0
	>20	3.6	61.4	24.1	8.4	2.4	100.0
Harassing teachers	<5	9.2	43.1	29.2	13.8	4.6	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	41.0	30.8	19.2	2.6	100.0
	>20	6.0	55.4	20.5	10.8	7.2	100.0
Vandalism	<5	4.6	26.2	30.8	15.4	23.1	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	25.6	32.1	20.5	15.4	100.0
	>20	3.6	24.1	25.3	25.3	21.7	100.0
Smoking	<5	4.6	26.2	21.5	26.2	21.5	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	32.1	17.9	17.9	24.4	100.0
	>20	3.6	20.5	22.9	27.7	25.3	100.0
Physical aggression of peers	<5	4.6	13.8	23.1	36.9	21.5	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	16.7	26.9	26.9	23.1	100.0
	>20	4.8	20.5	24.1	36.1	14.5	100.0
Verbal aggression of peers	<5	1.5	1.5	10.8	30.8	55.4	100.0
	6 - 20	5.1	5.1	11.5	29.5	48.7	100.0
	>20	3.6	6.0	19.3	32.5	38.6	100.0

**Table 5.54. Frequency of Offences and Years of Experience (Cont')**

Stealing	<5	3.1	4.6	12.3	43.1	36.9	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	6.4	17.9	34.6	34.6	100.0
	>20	7.2	2.4	27.7	42.2	20.5	100.0
Consumption of alcohol	<5	3.1	41.5	30.8	18.5	6.2	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	38.5	23.1	25.6	6.4	100.0
	>20	6.0	41.0	27.7	20.5	4.8	100.0
Taking drugs	<5	9.2	66.2	21.5	3.1	0.0	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	61.5	20.5	9.0	1.3	100.0
	>20	8.4	67.5	19.3	2.4	2.4	100.0
Bringing pornographic items at school	<5	9.2	27.7	30.8	23.1	9.2	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	26.9	33.3	29.5	3.8	100.0
	>20	4.8	27.7	36.1	28.9	2.4	100.0
Using mobile phone	<5	3.1	3.1	9.2	29.2	55.4	100.0
	6 - 20	5.1	3.8	11.5	25.6	53.8	100.0
	>20	3.6	8.4	8.4	33.7	45.8	100.0
Making obscene gestures	<5	3.1	23.1	30.8	27.7	15.4	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	30.8	32.1	24.4	6.4	100.0
	>20	2.4	44.6	22.9	20.5	9.6	100.0
Playing truant	<5	4.6	9.2	32.3	33.8	20.0	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	7.7	29.5	41.0	14.1	100.0
	>20	6.0	6.0	31.3	41.0	15.7	100.0
Fighting among students	<5	3.1	12.3	33.8	32.3	18.5	100.0
	6 - 20	6.4	17.9	24.4	30.8	20.5	100.0
	>20	2.4	18.1	30.1	37.3	12.0	100.0
Disrupting classes	<5	3.1	0.0	4.6	24.6	67.7	100.0
	6 - 20	7.7	2.6	11.5	34.6	43.6	100.0
	>20	3.6	4.8	12.0	36.1	43.4	100.0
Pornographic items via mms	<5	10.8	40.0	29.2	12.3	7.7	100.0
	6 - 20	11.5	28.2	30.8	21.8	7.7	100.0
	>20	10.8	32.5	33.7	19.3	3.6	100.0

**Table 5.54. Frequency of Offences and Years of Experience**

Since those who have less than 5 years' experience represent only 27.5% compared to those who have between 6 to 20 years' experience (33.5%) and those who have more than 20 years' experience (35.2%), we have tried to compare the perception of these three categories of teachers grouped according to the percentage they represent in the sample. We note that those who have less than 5 years of experience feel that these acts occur often in schools and there is a large disparity in their rating and those who have more than 20 years' experience in cases such as showing no respect to teachers, being insolent to them, being late in class, verbal aggression of peers, stealing, using mobile phone and class disruption. Those who have

between 6 to 20 years' experience tend to associate themselves more with those who have more than 20 years' experience in their perception.

### 5.2.5 Causes of Indiscipline and Characteristics of Troublemakers

Teachers were asked to rate a set of hypothetical statements with regard to the causes of indiscipline. Table 5.55 highlights the response of teachers.

Reasons	Rating					Total %
	NA %	Completely Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Completely Agree %	
Adolescents with psychological problems	2.5	0.8	8.1	56.8	31.8	100
Bad company	1.7	2.1	22.5	39.4	34.3	100
Peer group influence	2.5	1.3	22.5	40.7	33.1	100
Bad environment	2.5	1.3	10.2	53.8	32.2	100
Lack of discipline at home	3.0	0.8	4.2	43.2	48.7	100
Irresponsible parents	3.8	1.3	8.1	42.4	44.5	100
Family problems	3.0	2.1	24.6	47.9	22.5	100
Domestic violence	3.8	3.4	28.4	45.8	18.6	100
Influence of tv/video	5.9	5.1	26.3	39.4	23.3	100
Physical aspect of the teacher (tall, small)	25.8	41.1	25.8	6.4	0.8	100
Teacher does not master the subject taught	1.7	18.2	27.5	44.9	7.6	100
A lady teacher working in a boys' school	3.8	22.5	45.8	24.2	3.8	100
Poor teacher-student relationship	4.2	6.8	19.9	60.6	8.5	100
Teachers' lack of experience	2.5	7.6	22.5	58.9	8.5	100
Lack of interest in school	3.0	2.5	6.4	49.2	39.0	100
Lack of discipline in school	1.7	3.8	11.0	35.2	48.3	100

**Table 5.55 Causes of Indiscipline: Teachers' Attribution**

The following significant reasons can be inferred from Table 5.55

- lack of discipline at home (91.9%);
- adolescents with psychological problems (88.6%);
- lack of interest in coming to school (88.2%);
- parents are not responsible (86.9%);
- unfavourable environment (86%);
- absence of discipline at school (83.5%);
- peer group influence (77.8%);
- family problems (70.4%);
- bad company (73.7%);
- TV programs and videos (62.7%);

However, teachers do not agree fully to the following factors

- a lady teacher working in a boys' school (68.3%)
- the physical aspect of the teacher (66.9%)
- teachers' lack of mastery of the subject (45.7%);
- domestic violence (31.8%);
- lack of experience of the teacher (30.1%)

Reasons	Type of School	NA %	Completely Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Completely Agree %
Adolescents with psychological problems	Rural	3.8	0.8	6.8	60.6	28.0
	Urban	1.0	1.0	9.6	51.9	36.5
Bad company	Rural	2.3	0.8	0.8	34.8	61.4
	Urban	1.0	3.8	50.0	45.2	0.0
Peer group influence	Rural	3.8	0.8	0.8	35.6	59.1
	Urban	1.0	1.9	50.0	47.1	0.0
Bad environment	Rural	3.8	0.8	12.1	50.0	33.3
	Urban	1.0	1.9	7.7	58.7	30.8
Lack of discipline in the home	Rural	3.8	0.8	5.3	38.6	51.5
	Urban	1.9	1.0	2.9	49.0	45.2
Irresponsible parents	Rural	4.5	0.8	10.6	40.2	43.9
	Urban	2.9	1.9	4.8	45.2	45.2
Family problems	Rural	3.8	0.8	7.6	47.7	40.2
	Urban	1.9	3.8	46.2	48.1	0.0
Domestic violence	Rural	4.5	1.5	9.1	51.5	33.3
	Urban	2.9	5.8	52.9	38.5	0.0
Influence of TV/video	Rural	7.6	0.8	7.6	42.4	41.7
	Urban	3.8	10.6	50.0	35.6	0.0
Physical aspect of the teacher (tall, small)	Rural	28.0	39.4	25.0	6.1	1.5
	Urban	23.1	43.3	26.9	6.7	0.0
Teacher does not master the subject taught	Rural	1.5	19.7	33.3	39.4	6.1
	Urban	1.9	16.3	20.2	51.9	9.6
A lady teacher working in a boys' school	Rural	1.5	20.5	43.2	29.5	5.3
	Urban	6.7	25.0	49.0	17.3	1.9
Poor teacher-student relationship	Rural	5.3	6.1	21.2	60.6	6.8
	Urban	2.9	7.7	18.3	60.6	10.6
Teachers' lack of experience	Rural	2.3	6.1	22.7	59.8	9.1
	Urban	2.9	9.6	22.1	57.7	7.7
Lack of interest in school	Rural	3.0	1.5	4.5	53.8	37.1
	Urban	2.9	3.8	8.7	43.3	41.3
Lack of discipline in school	Rural	2.3	4.5	10.6	37.1	45.5
	Urban	1.0	2.9	11.5	32.7	51.9

**Table 5.56 Causes of Indiscipline: Teachers' Attribution in Rural and Urban Schools**

A very high percentage of teachers in rural schools think that indiscipline and violence are often linked to bad company, influence of peer groups, family problems, domestic violence, influence of television, and sometimes lack of interest in schools. More teachers in rural schools think that indiscipline is also linked to adolescents with psychological problems. More teachers in urban schools think that indiscipline is sometimes linked to bad company, peer group influence, bad environment, lack of discipline in the house. Both in rural schools, lady teachers working in a boys' school are not a cause for concern. In both rural and urban schools,

teachers agree that the absence of a good working relation between teachers and students and the lack of experience on the part of the teacher could be a source of indiscipline. We note that in urban schools teachers are doubtful about the importance of bad company and peer group influence as a cause of indiscipline. 50% do not agree with these suggestions while some 47% do agree with them.

Furthermore, we have also looked into the relationship between teaching experience and teachers' explanation of indiscipline as well as gender and teachers' explanation for indiscipline. Whatever be their level of experience, both male and female teachers follow the same pattern in their answers when they agree or disagree with the different causes of acts of indiscipline in Table 5.56.

Teachers were asked to define the characteristics of indiscipline among students according to the statements provided in Table 5.57.

Characteristics	Rating					Total
	NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	
Come from a bad environment	0.4	0.8	7.6	59.3	31.8	100.0
Try to draw attention to themselves	3.4	2.1	20.8	48.3	25.4	100.0
Do not work well in class	2.1	1.3	4.7	43.2	48.7	100.0
Have not thought about their future	3.4	5.5	10.2	34.3	46.6	100.0
Are rather impulsive	5.9	0.4	5.5	37.3	50.8	100.0
Do not possess social skills	3.8	1.7	12.7	49.2	32.6	100.0
Bear peer group influence	1.7	2.5	17.8	47.9	30.1	100.0
Come from an influential family	5.1	2.1	16.9	50.8	25.0	100.0
Are not interested in school activities	5.5	2.5	21.6	41.5	28.8	100.0

**Table 5.57 Characteristics of Indisciplined Students: Teachers' Perspective**

At least 25% of the teachers agree that indiscipline or violent students may have the following traits:

- they are impulsive (50.8%);
- they do not work well at school (48.7%),

- they do not think about their future (46.6%);
- they do not have social skills (32.8%);
- they come from a deprived milieu (31.8%);
- they are easily influenced by their friends (30.1%);
- they are not interested in school activities (28.8%).
- they want to draw attention to them (25.4%);
- they come from an influential family (25%);

One question that cropped up in the design of the questionnaire is whether teachers are aware of the legal aspects of the different offences that they witness. Thus, teachers were asked to select from the list given in Table 5.50 those offences that are condemned by the law. From their answers, we can infer that many teachers are unaware of the offences committed by students that are condemned by law.

### **5.2.6 Teachers' Perception of their Ability to Handle Indiscipline**

The management of a class and the maintenance of a sound level of discipline are challenging tasks. Teachers have been asked to give examples of acts of indiscipline that they have trouble to handle. Their qualitative responses were grouped into 5 categories:

- a. physical and verbal aggression, harassment, fight among students;
- b. smoking on school premises, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, damaging school property, circulating pornographic materials at school;
- c. showing no respect for teachers, disrupting classes and not wearing uniforms;
- d. coming late to class, absences, missing classes and not doing their homework and class work;
- e. peer influence and family problems.

From the qualitative data obtained, we could observe a disparity between male and female teachers' responses. For instance, more male teachers think they can handle physical and verbal aggression, harassment against them, those acts that are condemned by the law, all sorts

of minor cases of indiscipline and peer influence and family problems of the students. More female teachers think that they would not be able to handle these different kinds of indiscipline and violence at school.

We wanted also to know how teachers react when they witness an act of indiscipline outside the class. As a particular case, they were asked to react when they see a student smoking. Once again, teachers were provided with a series of preset categories as indicated in Table 5.58. We see that the majority of teachers would take some action. However, we can also note that some 10% of teachers would ignore the act of indiscipline.

Teachers' Reaction	Total	%
You pretend not to have seen anything	24	10.2
You ask him/her to extinguish the cigarette	178	75.4
You report him to the rector	140	59.3
You punish him/her	61	25.8
You ask for a cigarette	3	1.3

**Table 5.58 Teachers' Reaction to Students' Smoking**

The last question in the teachers' questionnaire was meant to estimate teachers' involvement in pastoral care. A significant percentage of teachers are not called upon to give pastoral care to students (Table 5.59). Teachers' perception of the significance of pastoral care in coping with the problem of indiscipline also varies. For instance, only 25% think that it often helps to deal with indiscipline (Table 5.60).

Category	Rural%	Urban%	Total%
NA	4.5	5.8	5.1
Never	13.6	11.5	12.7
Rarely	14.4	15.4	14.8
Sometimes	38.6	41.3	39.8
Often	28.8	26.0	27.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.59 Teachers' Involvement in Pastoral Care at School**

Category	Rural%	Urban%	Total%
NA	6.1	9.6	7.6
Never	3.8	0.0	2.1
Rarely	13.6	11.5	12.7
Sometimes	53.0	51.9	52.5
Often	23.5	26.9	25.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5.60 Teachers' Perception of Pastoral Care**

## 5.2.7 Teachers' Suggestions

### At the level of the teacher

Teachers feel that they should be empowered to deal with these situations, and this can be done through regular training and workshops. They also want to be a model for the students by developing teaching strategies, and by improving their relationship with the students. They add that a close collaboration with other colleagues, with the administration and with parents will help them in their efforts to deal with the problem of indiscipline at school.

Teachers ask for more disciplinary measures, more empowerment and training, the introduction of pastoral care which would probably enable them to cope with the problem of indiscipline.

More female teachers would favourably endorse proposals like pastoral care, counselling and moral education and anti-bullying contract policies while male teachers favoured greater dependence on sanctions.

### At the school level

At the level of the school, teachers prefer meetings with parents, a diversified curriculum and lay emphasis on moral values, pastoral care and counselling.

More female teachers agree that there should be a dialogue with parents, that the administration has an important role to play in maintaining discipline at school, that a diversified curriculum could help, that moral values, pastoral care and counselling are important and above all the

number of students in a class and the general infrastructure of the school are very important. Teachers consider a diversified curriculum to be of utmost importance.

### **At the level of the ministry**

Teachers think that the Ministry of Education & Human Resources could intervene at different levels to help the school in coping with acts of indiscipline and violence. Teachers believe the ministry should encourage the enforcement of disciplinary measures and should not interfere with the school administration, should empower the rector and the school administration, give more training to teachers to help them to manage the situation and introduce a varied curriculum, and opt for more pastoral care, counselling, child psychology and moral education.

### **Training**

At the level of training, a high percentage of teachers surveyed believe that specific training is essential to be able to deal with cases of indiscipline and violence at school. Emphasis is placed on different aspects of training such as pastoral care, child psychology, class management and conflict resolution. This implies that only an academic qualification is no longer enough to work as teachers. While some request for initial training as a starting point before entering the teaching profession, others look for more training or refresher courses in specific areas for older teachers. They believe that training would help them handle the situation.

In a few cases, teachers would like to be further empowered in order to cope with cases of indiscipline and violence within the parameters of the law and the school rules and regulations.

## **5.3 A Brief Comparison of Some Data**

In this section, we analyse the perception of discipline at school, the perception of the seriousness and the frequency of the different types of acts of indiscipline and violence, and the proposals made by the students and the teachers concerning the management of this kind of misbehaviour.

### 5.3.1 Some Differences in the Perception of Indiscipline

While students feel that discipline is strict by 33%, only 4.4% of teachers have the impression that discipline is strict (Table 5.61). However, we note that both students and teachers are almost of the same opinion when it comes to the fairness of disciplinary actions and to the fact that discipline is non-existent in schools. We also observe an element of disagreement between teachers and students on the 'laissez-aller' attitude in schools. More teachers think that this attitude exists.

Nature of Discipline	Students %	Teachers %
Strict	32.7	4.4
Fair	52.0	56.6
<Laissez-aller> attitude	7.9	34.5
Non-existent	6.2	4.4

**Table 5.61 Perception of Discipline by Students and Teachers**

Table 5.62 compares striking difference in the perception of teachers and students. The higher the percentage, the greater is the gravity of the situation. However, the hierarchy of the offence may differ from students to teachers.

Types of Very Serious Offences	Teachers %	Students %	Difference%
Taking drugs	61.4	83.6	-22.2
Drinking alcohol on school premises	59.3	68.5	-9.2
Physical aggression of teachers	58.1	72	-13.9
Harassing teachers	54.7	59	-4.3
Bringing pornographic materials in schools	50.8	(45.5)	5.3
Physical aggression among students	50	(43.9)	6.1
Making obscene gestures in schools	49.6	(34.2)	15.4
Unjustified absences	(28.8)	41.3	-12.5
Using/writing foul language in class/school	(33.5)	42.2	- 8.7

**Table 5.62 A Comparison of Students' and Teachers' Perception of Some Very Serious Offences**

In this table, we note that the students are well aware of the fact that consuming alcohol and taking drugs on school premises are very serious offences. When it comes to attacking/harassing an adult, the students feel that the offence is very serious, as compared to the attitude of the teachers themselves. But when it comes to an incident which involves the students

themselves, the latter do not give the same magnitude to these acts. Teachers show their concern because these go against the rules and regulations of the school as well as against certain values that the school would like to inculcate. These acts could lead to physical harm and moral damage to a student and legal actions against the school.

However, it is quite surprising that teachers condemn less unjustified absences of students or using/writing foul language in class/school. The students, on the contrary, condemn these acts to a high degree.

### **5.3.2 An Analysis of the Proposals**

Going through the proposals made by the students and the teachers as to the management of the problem of indiscipline and violence in school, we have noticed a set of similar patterns.

Both teachers and students lay emphasis on teaching strategies. This would help to enhance the teaching and learning environment and probably acts of indiscipline and violence would subside. Just as the teachers want to be empowered in order to handle these situations with the appropriate legal framework, students also would like to have a strong leadership at the head of the school because they feel that the rules and regulations should apply to both teachers and students equally.

More female teachers and female students would welcome pastoral care, counselling and moral education at school. The girls ask for the presence of a psychologist at school. They are in favour of severe disciplinary measures and of training of teachers. In fact, they believe that these acts could have been handled if teachers had training before joining the teaching profession.

One of the important aspects that has emerged from the proposals of the students is the element of racism and favouritism in schools. Though teachers did not evoke this issue, a high percentage of students have laid emphasis on this aspect because they feel they are the victims

of this kind of behaviour on the part of teachers. Moreover, the girls would like the teachers to stop gossiping about their private lives, which is none of the concern of teachers.

The students have asked for a discipline master and regular 'surveillance' at school. The teachers do not seem to accept this idea of keeping an eye on the students. Not only have they not suggested any such measures but from data collected from the students' questionnaire, teachers never attempt to maintain discipline during recess or at any other time of the day.

Apart from teaching, teachers would like to know what their rights are in order to be able to handle cases of misbehaviour. They do not want to get involved in any disciplinary actions against them or have any problem with the law. This may explain their 'laissez-faire' attitude because they feel that they can become the victims of the law instead of being part of the solution to curb indiscipline and violence at schools.

From the students' and teachers' answers, it can be said that maintaining discipline in school is not an easy task. Looking at it from two points of view, we find that there is a difference in perception. However, while students lay emphasis on internal factors, teachers prefer to attribute these acts to external factors. It is nevertheless acknowledged by both parties that indiscipline and violence have become a real issue in the education sector.

# CHAPTER 6

## Analysis of Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

The interviews and focus group discussions aimed at collecting the views of different stakeholders, thus providing a multi-faceted perception of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools. In this context, we have carried out interviews with the rectors/deputy rectors and have conducted focus group discussions with teachers, students, caretakers and trade unionists in the education sector.

### 6.1. Interviews of Rectors and Deputy Rectors

Generally the management mentioned some types of indiscipline in its schools but the rectors have been very careful to say that the issue of indiscipline and violence involves a minority of students and that *‘dans l’ensemble tout se passe bien’* or *‘the situation is under control’* or *‘c’est une minorité d’élèves qui ne respectent pas la discipline.’* One feels that they are very cautious because they do not want to project a bad image of their school. As one rector puts it *‘ça n’a jamais été vraiment grave, ...les gens ont tendance à exagérer.’* However, the situation tends to become more and more difficult to handle: *‘cela devient de plus en plus difficile’* because girls have started to become as indisciplined as boys, especially in mixed schools.

#### 6.1.1. Forms of Indiscipline Prevalent at Schools

Most rectors agree that lateness is a problem in schools: *‘zelev an retar’*. It would seem that some students are regularly late (*‘ils choisissent d’arriver en retard’*) although the rules make it clear that they should be at school on time, and parents are sent a lateness form to sign concerning their child but no further action is taken. One rector, however, mentioned that it is difficult to control the situation because teachers themselves are late.

Some pupils are present at school but skip classes. They prefer to *‘sit with a friend somewhee’* just for the fun of it, or stay outside: *‘a longueur de journée zelev dan la kour pandan lézer de klas.’*

Another problem is that students attend school but leave early to attend tuition classes, according to one rector.

Truancy is also mentioned. Here, it seems that it is difficult to control it because of the practice of ‘tolerated truancy’. Since rectors are unable to fight truancy, they tend to accept it because they claim that parents do not collaborate with them to control the situation.

One rector explains it in terms of private tuition: ‘*Ene rézon se li pansé li pé gagne tou dan leson alor li pa neser alle asizé dan lekol 8h 30 ziska 2h30*’ or ‘*zot ena plis confiance dan zot prof leson*’, ‘*students stay at home to take tuition.*’ Does this infer that nothing is being done in classes by the teachers or does it mean that students do not take interest in what the teacher is explaining?

### **Homework**

‘*Des élèves qui ne font pas leurs devoirs*’ seems to be a recurrent problem. Usually a note is sent for parents to sign and, in some cases, students stay in detention classes to complete the work, according to some rectors.

### **Uniform**

Rectors mention that some students do not wear the proper uniform: ‘*zot prefer nek zot djin avek banne dekorasion*’. They also mention problems with hair style – dyeing of hair, use of gel and piercing.

### **Use of Mobile**

Although prohibited, the use of mobile phones in class seems an increasingly common practice according to the rectors: ‘*pé resevoir mesaz pendant que le prof explique*’.

The presence of mobile phones also means that there are cases of theft. In one school, the rector mentions that the students walk around with their bags on their back all the time for fear of theft. In another school, the rector does not hesitate to confiscate the mobile phone, gives it back at the end of the term or at the end of the year if the parents refuse to come to school to pick it up.

## **Bullying/Fighting**

Bullying younger students is a problem in some schools. Those who are physically well-built tend to bully weaker ones “for fun”. Others do it to snatch their money: *‘zelev fer marsandaz, zot pran kas avek zanfán’*.

Rectors are of the opinion that there are cases of fighting but they happen rarely: *‘la guerre kapav gagné, mé bien rare’*.

Only in one problematic school does the rector admit that everyday students report cases of being beaten up by others, and that sometimes the children have to be sent to the dispensary for treatment.

There are also fights among different gangs.

## **Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs**

Rectors are aware that some students smoke, some consume alcoholic drinks and drugs but they contend that these forms of indiscipline occur mainly outside school, in the bushes, at the bus stop and sometimes in the school bus, where rectors do not have any control. They admit that smoking sometimes occurs in the toilets and when the students get caught parents are subsequently informed and that’s all. In some mixed schools, girls tend to let themselves influenced by the boys and one rector was informed that *‘à telle heure, une fille fumait avec les garçons’*.

## **Vandalism, Graffiti, Pornographic Drawing**

In a few schools, vandalism seems to be a problem. Some students break furniture, window panes just *‘pour se défouler’*.

Graffiti-writing on the walls is also a recurrent practice, with pornographic drawings on the toilet walls.

## **Conduct in Class**

Rectors report that some students show disrespect towards teachers by using foul language: *‘Zot tenir ene lagaz terib a legar dé zanségnan’*.

Others disrupt classes (*‘zot fer dezord’*) while the teacher is explaining.

However, some rectors seem to attribute the cases partly to teachers as well. According to them, some teachers do not know how to control the class and students take advantage of it: *'profeser li mem pa kapave kontrol so klas'*. They also contend that those teachers who teach efficiently and *'keep the pupils busy'*, do not get discipline problems. It is when pupils are bored that they create problems: *'ils n'ont rien à faire, zot fer dézord'*.

### **6.1.2. Causes of Indiscipline**

According to the interview data, school leaders attribute indiscipline problems to external factors as well as to school-related factors.

External factors relate to family background and the physical and psychological development of the adolescents. School factors include teachers, teaching strategies and teacher-student relationship.

#### **Family Background**

There is unanimity among rectors and deputy rectors that the main causes of indiscipline problems lie within the family. *'La plipar ka deindisciplin, la sours pé montré dan milié familial, milié défavorizé.'*

When there are problems at home: *'pena lantant familial'*, children express their instability by reacting through misbehaviour at school.

There is also consensus to say that parents no longer assume their responsibility: *'Les parents ont démissionné devant leurs responsabilités.'*

It would seem that parents just send their kids to school without knowing of their whereabouts and without paying attention to their attendance and progress at school: *'lekol la ene garderi'*. Students lack parental control and guidance, therefore they indulge in acts of indiscipline: *'zanfan la trouve li sel, komsi ene bato ki nepli ena moter, li derive.'*

Moreover, parents do not accept that their children can misbehave in school because at home the latter obey their parents. Once they have adopted this attitude, they will accuse the teacher : *'s'ils (the parents) viennent à l'école, c'est pour incriminer les profs plutôt que d'essayer de trouver un consensus par rapport à leurs enfants.'*

## **Adolescence**

Rectors and deputy rectors relate discipline problems to the adolescents' physical and psychological development.

Adolescents are going through a phase where they do not have a sense of identity: *'zot pa sir kot zot été – zot pa ankor trouv zot lidantité.'*

According to them, indiscipline is an expression of that confusion. Part of that identity issue is to conform to group pressure. To be accepted by the group, they get involved in acts of indiscipline. They go along with the group.

They also argue that adolescents have different attitudes towards life (piercing, dyeing of hair, Marilyn Manson). They react against adult values by breaking the school rules.

## **Teachers**

According to rectors and deputy rectors, teachers at times contribute to indiscipline in school.

Some teachers are themselves wrong models of discipline. Some are late for school: *'profeser rantré avek dis minit de retar', 'zot banne fonksioner, zot vine kan zot anvi.'*

Some are frequently absent. One rector even mentions the case of a teacher who comes to school *'drunk'*.

Another mentions teachers who themselves do not inspire respect, *'dressing up like kids'*.

Rectors also mention that some teachers lack the skills to control their class: *'pa kapav tenir disiplin dan klas'*, and others who are too lenient and too friendly with the students.

Lack of commitment on the part of some teachers also leads to indiscipline problems: *'some students can behave well with some teachers and be more disruptive with others who are weak.'*

When teachers arouse students' interest, there are fewer discipline problems: *'profeser la bizin évey lintéré sé lanfan, mé zot pa fer li.'*

Rectors also note that some of the new teachers find it difficult to manage their class due to lack of training. One rector admits that *'beaucoup de nos profs, surtout les jeunes ne sont pas à la hauteur'* because they lack experience and maturity.

Some rectors would defend their teachers against parents because the latter have the bad habit *'de tout rabattre sur les profs, sur l'administration'* while others who seek the collaboration of the staff note a certain discouragement on its part and explain it by the fact that teachers are afraid of students: *'ils ont peur des élèves qui peuvent menacer.'*

### **6.1.3. Measures to Deal with Indiscipline and Violence**

Rectors exhibit a sense of powerlessness because existing rules and regulations are no longer effective: *'on ne peut pas renvoyer un élève de la Form I, II ou III, on ne peut pas leur donner des lignes à copier, on ne peut pas les frapper, on a absolument le droit de rien faire.'* Parents intervene when their child has to stay after school hours because he has to attend his tuition class: *'l'enfant a leçon aujourd'hui, donc on ne peut pas garder mon enfant'* would claim the parents. Moreover, with the existence of the Human Rights Commission and the Ombudsman for children, rectors feel that their hands are tied and at the same time they have to handle disruptive behaviour. Rectors complain that the students have too many rights and little or no sense of responsibility towards the school.

However, there exists a series of measures in each school to deal with indiscipline and violence. Rectors/deputy rectors take either preventive measures or react within legal parameters in order to avoid consequences which could backfire on them.

#### **Existing Measures**

##### *Disciplinary Committee*

Some schools have a disciplinary committee where teachers, deputy rectors and rectors meet to discuss problem cases and decide on measures to take on a case to case basis. Sometimes parents also are called in.

##### *Assemblies*

Some rectors mention that during morning assemblies, advice is given to students on how they should behave, emphasizing the rules and regulations of the school.

### *Journal*

In some schools, a journal is used to communicate with parents. The student has to enter all activities done in the journal and parents have to sign it.

In case of problems, parents are informed through the journal.

### *Detention Classes/Rustication/Expulsion*

Some schools use detention classes as a form of punishment. However, it is not easy to implement such a measure because the school is responsible for security and safety if students are kept after school hours or made to come on Saturdays. Parents can react negatively if something happens to their children outside school premises. When the act of indiscipline is serious, students can be rusticated for one week from schools and, when it is a case of violence against a teacher or against another student, the wrongdoer can be expelled from school.

### *Dialogue with Students*

Many rectors state that this is a frequently used measure in cases of indiscipline: '*méyer solision, se koz ek zanfán la.*'

But they do agree that it does not necessarily work all the time.

### *Call Parents at School*

Many rectors call parents to inform them of problems with their children. It seems that when parents collaborate and do some follow-up at home, there is a change in the pupil's behaviour. However, it would seem that many 'parents don't react' to the invitation of rectors and some even go to the extent of blaming the school on the grounds that the child behaves differently at home.

### **Proposed Measures**

There was a consensus among rectors and deputy rectors that they often feel powerless when faced with cases of indiscipline and violence in schools: '*nous avons les mains liées.*'

It seems that there are no clear-cut rules in terms of what measures could be taken in specific cases of indiscipline and violence. At times, decisions taken at school are overruled by the Ministry: *‘Il y a pression du ministère qui nous dit qu’on n’a pas le droit de faire ça.’*

Rectors and deputy rectors have made a plea for *‘clear-cut structure of what is to be done under what circumstances.’*

They are in favour of clear and standard measures to be implemented. They express their wish to be more empowered to take necessary actions when they are required.

They also feel powerless to deal with non-performing teachers.

Rectors have argued for more in-service training on classroom management and pastoral care for teachers, be it newly recruited or experienced teachers.

## **6.2. Teachers’ Focus Group Discussions**

Teachers’ focus group discussions have involved both male and female as well as experienced and newly recruited teachers. During the focus group discussions the following issues have been raised:

- Is indiscipline on the rise?
- What are the different forms of indiscipline?
- What actions do teachers take to deal with indiscipline and what are the problems they face to cope with it?
- What are their suggestions to cope with the problem?

### **6.2.1. Teachers’ Appraisal of the Problem of Indiscipline and Violence**

Teachers almost unanimously feel that that they are facing more and more trouble with students as compared to those of the past. Discipline is a problem in schools today. The following quotes give an idea of teachers’ reaction:

*C’est pas facile, c’est pas facile, ça devient plus difficile ;  
Auparavant c’était pas comme ça ;  
Almost everyday you have cases of indiscipline.*

Teachers find themselves confronted with students with a set of values quite different from the ones they used to abide by when they were themselves students. They feel that students

tend to defy their authority. The student-teacher relationship is changing. Though not explicitly spelt out, listening to teachers one can conclude that the teacher's status has also changed.

The majority of the teachers feel that the problem of indiscipline starts in lower forms. The troublesome students can be identified quite early, i.e. at Form II and Form III levels. Often, it is the same students who cause trouble as can be inferred from the following:

*Ce sont les mêmes élèves qui arrivent en retard ... ;  
Dan mo klas tou lé tan mem zenfants ki pou fer insinifian ...*

Some teachers have the feeling that they are 'insecure' when they have to work with certain category of students. A good number of the teachers have the impression that indiscipline is more prevalent in the second and third term.

### **6.2.2. Teachers' Comparison of Indiscipline and Violence in Boys' and Girls' Schools**

In girls' schools, teachers have relatively fewer problems of indiscipline as compared to boys' schools. In this category of school, lateness, talking, inappropriate uniforms and 'make up', stealing and truanting are considered as common forms of indiscipline. Teachers tend to argue that the problem of indiscipline starts at Form III level. The forms of indiscipline vary according to the age group. For instance, in lower forms, girls tend to be talkative while in upper forms it may be a problem of boyfriends. Girls are more aggressive verbally (in comparison to physical violence). There are also cases of truancy, especially in the third term, before the examinations with the change in the school routine. For Forms V and VI students, the school proposed an amended time-table with fewer classes as the level of absenteeism is high during the third term. It has also been observed that some students come to school in uniform and also bring casual clothes in their bags so that they can skip off the school easily. Flirting outside school, especially at bus stations, is also quite common. Some of the girls also misbehave in the school buses.

In contrast, in boys' schools teachers tend to face more trouble. The types of problem are also of a different order. A wide array of problems can be witnessed like writing on walls, fighting, rough language, misbehaviour in school bus, etc. Often, teachers know that boys

smoke. Boys may be more daring in the things that they do. Some of the boys tend to assert themselves as can be read from the following quote:

*... dan ene fason kouma dir zot santi zot gran kan zot fer sa, pircing, ene sigaret dan zot la mé, ene ti 35 ki zot pé mayé dan zot lebra sene koté zot pé marsé, sa ve dir zot fer pas zot pou banne gran dimoun, banne zom...*

It should be highlighted that it cannot be generalized that in all boys' schools discipline is a major problem. The problem seems to vary from school to school.

In mixed schools, apart from the routine type of indiscipline, there are cases of within-school flirting as pointed out by the teachers:

*...During the recess they will find an isolated place, where they can have a chat... Sirtou a laz de 13-14, letan banne tifi gagne zot liberté, zot influansé ek banne garson. E banne gran garson ki dan form V ki nou remarké, zot trouv fasil pou influans banne petites filles ...*

Several factors can therefore contribute to acts of indiscipline and violence and they are all related to the school environment.

### **6.2.3. Forms of Indiscipline**

The teachers interviewed have enumerated a wide range of acts of indiscipline that they witness both inside classrooms or on the school compound and outside school. Some of these are

- Homework not done
- Shouting in class
- Lack of courtesy
- Throwing litter everywhere
- Student does not wear the school uniform or badge
- Textbooks are left at home
- Copying homework from friends
- No physical education suits
- Disturbing friends e.g. pointing with compass
- Frenzies – tattoo, cap, piercing, Marilyn Manson, several earrings

- Use of gadgets – laser pointers on board while the teacher is writing, walkman
- Absenteeism
- Truancy
- Bunking classes
- Lateness (as far as lateness is concerned, one teacher has this to say: '*Lekol pé rentré 9h moins 15 zot enkor lor la gare, zot pran le tan zot marsé zot pou vin la*', '*C'est une culture de ponctualité qui n'existe pas.*')
  - Lack of respect for teachers ('... *les élèves ne respectent plus les professeurs*', '*Si ou trouv zelevs mank ou di respé an klas, dan la kour de lekol, an dehor li pir, kan ou get zot, ou bizin per zot.*')
    - Insolence – challenging teachers' authority
    - Mobile phones and SMS during classes
    - Scribbling on tables and walls
    - Indecent drawings on paper, blackboard, wall or furniture
    - Cheating in tests and examinations
    - Disturbing teachers
    - Stealing
    - Lying
    - Comments against lady teachers along the corridor ('... *kan banne profeser ou ene lady profeser pé passé ena zelev dir li ala seksi e kan madam ine bien habiyé ine met ene churidar ou pé gagne banne remark kouma ala li seksi le matin ...*', '*dessein ene tipe indesan lor banne lady teacher.*')
      - Gambling – '*They play cards, horseracing for money.*'
      - Misbehaving in bus
      - Falsifying signatures on documents
      - Hair dressing
      - Flirting with boyfriend or girlfriend outside school
      - Bullying and fighting (The elder students sometimes tend to bully the younger ones for money: '*sé ki moi mone deza trouvé sé ene gran zanfán fer ene ti zanfán asté ene gato, gran zanfán ine rasse gato la are li apré.*' But those who face these troubles do not always report the case to the administration.)
      - Conflict between groups

- Problems with the caretakers
- Receiving threats from students
- Smoking (at school, in school bus and outside school)
- Alcohol ('... zot melanz lalcol zot boir dan klas.')
- Drug
- Sexual matters through SMS
- In 'star' schools, students seem to have what teachers described as '*l'égo de supériorité.*'
- Rough language ('*sé lanvironman familial ki afekté zot langaz ... sé la fason ki paran kozé lakaz, sé sa mem manier ki zot pran zot amene dan lekol.*')
- Misbehaviour at bus stations or outside school

This list has been given by the teachers themselves and they tend to mix acts of indiscipline within the school premises and what students do outside the school.

#### **6.2.4. Acts of Indiscipline: Teachers' Explanations**

The teachers interviewed associate indiscipline in schools to the changing society. Many teachers feel that there is a lack of students' commitment towards their studies and also many students fail to value education. Some students seem to come to school just for the sake of coming to school. Further, teachers are of the opinion that too many facilities are provided to children. This may be why they don't put a high premium on education. They can easily get what they need. The interviewees have enumerated a whole set of factors which lead to indiscipline. The prominent ones are listed below:

##### **(1) Violence**

Teachers do recognise that physical violence against them is rare. Threats like '*ou pa pou sorti dan la kour lekol zordi*' come once in a while. However, everything is done to harass teachers. '*Reye loto profeser*' or '*dégonflé larou so motosiklet*' are some kind of harassment mentioned.

## (2) Lack of Parental Involvement

Teachers are very critical of parents because they feel that many parents are not taking their responsibilities concerning their wards' education. There is a lack of parent-school link. Teachers have the impression they are playing the role of a 'babysitter' as parents are resigning from their duties.

*It's as if parents come here just to drop their kids and we have to bear everything that they ...;*

*... ena paran karéman dir pa gagne letan... ;*

*... mo pansé, le fet ki banne paran pa telman impliké dan ledikasion zot banne zanfan... Banne paran tro materialis, tro apré larzan, neglig sa koté la ...*

Some teachers believe people tend to blame the school when, in fact, parents are not playing the game ('*on renvoie tout à l'école*'). Parents should be aware of their child's behaviour, whether he/she is wearing the school uniform or not. Otherwise they are not assuming their responsibility.

Sometimes, parents themselves cannot control their wards:

*ena banne ka kot paran li ine dir moi mone fini lav lamé are li moi, mo pa kapav.*

Parental attitudes towards their children are also seen as an important factor.

*The parents are too liberal towards their children.*

## (3) School Management

Teachers have laid strong emphasis on the correlation between good school management and discipline. The lack of management skills on the part of some rectors is, therefore, highlighted. The unwillingness of the administration to take appropriate measures is mentioned. Teachers point out the need for support from management. Some teachers are of opinion that in private schools rectors seem to have more authority to take action against students who misbehave.

Teachers feel that there are more problems of misbehaviour in state schools than in private schools. Teachers working in state schools have the impression that, in confessional schools,

teachers have more flexibility in taking disciplinary actions whereas in state schools, they are quite powerless. They admit that in private schools there may be a sense of belonging among teachers whereas in state schools, since teachers are regularly transferred, this sense of belonging does not exist.

#### **(4) Students' Appraisal of School Disciplinary Measures**

Indiscipline also exists because students know that the school will not take harsh measures against them. They are not 'afraid' of the rules. Hence they keep skipping classes and one teacher has this to say about one student who skipped classes and found himself in a police station:

*Ene zour troi zelev tipe sov . Zot ti bizin travers pardesi miray lekol, miray la ti ot. Alor ene zelev ine travers  e line les so sak avek so de kamarad. Kouma li tomb lot kot  miray, ene taksi tip   pas . Sofer la ar te, trop zelev la, met li dan loto e amen li station lapolis. So de kamarad, kan zot fine trouv se ki fin ariv zot lamarad, zot fine retourn dan klas trankil. Lapolis fine vine dan lekol e ler la fine dekouver tou. Fine bisin fer paran zelev la vini e eksplik komportman zanfan la.*

Lack of interest in school may lead a student to the nearby police station. Though this story looks funny, it could have had a disastrous consequence if somebody with bad intention was passing near the wall of the school at that moment.

#### **(5) Lack of Students' Interest in their Studies**

The behaviour of some of the students gives teachers the impression that they are not interested in the school or the entire process of learning.

#### **(6) Influence of the Media**

Teachers have pointed out the strong links that exist between the media and indiscipline at school. Students learn many things from television, magazines or the internet, and try to reproduce these at schools, especially at this stage of adolescence.

*... zot pa tro konsantré, zot prefer plito lir banne magazin avek banne artist ki ena, ena serie tatouaz lor le kor, avek tel tel pirsing ...*

To be able to achieve these things they can even sell their books or use other means.

### **(7) Outside Influences**

At this stage of immaturity, students are very much influenced by what they see in their environment. Students tend to bring these influences as well as things that they may have learnt from people not going to school, jobless or other uneducated people in the school and implicitly share these with their friends.

*kouma banne dimoun ki pa travay, sofer, banne ti marsan, ...zot influansé par sa banne dimoun la ... banne tifi zot tom dan banne petrin séta kose de sa ;*

*Moi mo trouv influans boukou sa. Banne kamarad ki zot zouene lor semin ....*

The school very often cannot control these types of influence.

### **(8) Private Tuition**

Private tuition also contributes to indiscipline. Some students tend to give more attention to tuition and do not follow the classes at school. Thus they do not value school experience and tend to cause trouble in class: *'leson partikilier anpes zanfan fer devoir.'*

Some teachers are in a haste to leave the school in the afternoon and are not willing to cooperate with the rector to maintain discipline, especially if they have to replace an absent teacher during the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> period.

### **(9) Family Problems**

At times, because of family problems children tend to misbehave at school. Family problems like divorced parents, step parents or alcoholic parents also impact on students' behaviour. It has also been observed that there is a category of students whose parents are very strict at home and yet they misbehave at school.

### **(10) Classroom Factors**

Sometimes classes are too big and it is difficult to know the problem of individual pupils. As such the individual pastoral care that may be needed is not given. It has also been observed that in mixed-ability classes, those who can't follow tend to misbehave. Some teachers feel

that at times pupils tend to do things out of norm willingly so as to draw attention to them. They disturb the class just by making nasty comments to get attention. There is also a category of students who are not good academically and they need a means to manifest their presence.

#### **(11) Inappropriate Diagnosis of Students' Problems**

Some teachers acknowledge that they may be wrong in making the right diagnosis. They have to find the true causes why a particular student is misbehaving otherwise the action taken might do more harm than good. Students' misbehaviour may be symptomatic of a problem that does not have as its origin the school only. Thus, the precise diagnosis of the problem is important.

#### **(12) The Influence of Peers**

One of the frequent responses that has cropped up in the interviews is the influence of peers. Students are influenced by their friends.

*... Donc les amis qui étaient supposément bon l'année dernière, zot gagne pié la zotsi, zot vine ansam ...*

#### **(13) Lateness and Absenteeism**

Explanations given by teachers concerning students' late arrival in school vary. They admit that sometimes it is the homework which has not been done for the first period which accounts for this lateness. They also add several other reasons amongst which we have noted:

- students from poor families who work after school hours till late at night are unable to do their homework;
- students loitering at the bus stops and choosing in which bus they would enter and not the first one that comes;
- the bus itself coming late in a particular area.

One reason given for absenteeism is the lack of financial resources of the family. The latter sends their children to schools once or twice a week.

### 6.2.5. Teachers' Perception of School Rules and Regulations

Teachers' opinions are also critical of school rules and regulations. Many of them are of opinion that rules and regulations are there but the actions to be taken are not well defined.

*Mé de lot koté, aksion ki nou sipozé pran li pa bien defini.  
Dan banne rules and regulations zis téori, noir sur blan mé pa pratik.*

The interviews have also shown that teachers' interpretation and application of school rules vary:

*I can tell them this is the rule but another teacher is going to say it's ok you can do it.*

Many teachers raised the issue that students know their rights but not their responsibilities. Teachers feel that not only students' rights should be underlined but also their obligations towards the school.

Detention classes no longer exist. It has become too easy for teachers who cannot control their class to give a detention class to students who are talking, making unnecessary noise or disturbing the class. On the other hand, detention class is no deterrent to indiscipline. It can be a hindrance to the school and to the teacher if something happens to the student: *'piti la fer ene aksidan, ki sannela responsab, profeser kin donne arres la, monsieur kin garde arres la ou bien minister.'* Rules and regulations are not explicit enough about the application of sanction. Moreover, rectors and teachers are helpless when *'piti la ena ene ares, lipa resté, imaziné ki ou fer ? Kom ladministrasion ki ou fer ? ou rod li, li pa vini mem, ou le trap li, li pa vini mem, ki ou fer are li ? ou trouvé pena ene la loi.'*

Some teachers feel that there is a form of hypocrisy concerning smoking and consuming alcohol on school premises. In some schools, teachers have witnessed their students smoking and consuming beer during fancy fairs organised by the school itself. Nobody dares say anything to them on that day as if on that special day smoking and drinking alcohol are allowed. Yet during school days, these same acts are considered as offences and are reprimanded and punished. Teachers have the impression that it becomes difficult to apply the rules and regulations of the school.

Finally, if things are going to the dogs, the ministry and at times the minister have to bear a large part of responsibility. On the one hand, too much or too little interference on the part

of officers of the ministry may give the wrong signals to teachers and students. On the other hand, the case of a minister who gave his mobile phone number to students after some bad incident had occurred in a school is cited as an example of wrong signals because the minister on that day had refused to listen to the teachers.

### **6.2.6. Some General Findings**

Some teachers have noted that students who do not attend their classes during the year do not show the same respect as those who are present in their classes. Teachers have also noticed that some students tend to show off, especially in their peer group. Sometimes repeaters also are quite troublesome.

#### **Teachers' Actions**

Teachers unanimously agree that the method of control varies in lower forms as compared to that in upper forms. Some of the techniques most commonly used are:

- Dialogue
- Shouting at students
- Writing a note in the student's diary
- Seeking parental collaboration (there are cases where parents tend to over-protect their wards).
- Pastoral care after having checked and registered students' presence in the class
- Sending out of class (however, too much repetition of this measure can reduce its effectiveness. It had been observed that students joined other friends and created more trouble).
- Kneeling down
- Sending students to the rector's office (teachers do admit that this action may have an adverse effect on them. It may mean that they are not able to control their class).

#### **Detention Classes**

Teachers contend that detention classes are not held properly at times. Those who are responsible for handling the detention class are not willing to stay after school hours. There have been cases where students have bribed the usher to avoid detention. Listening to teachers, one has the impression that the detention system is not functioning properly. It

seems that teachers are quite hesitant to give detention. Saturday arrest and rustication are very rarely given in most schools.

Some students are not afraid of detention or rustication. They may use it as an excuse for tuition or to stay at home. Measures taken by the school administration include the following:

- Lunch detention
- Special report
- Teachers walk around the school on a rotational basis during lunch time.
- Discipline committee

Most teachers are against corporal punishment but some of them argue that minor physical punishment must be allowed: *'non moi mo dir ene ti baté pa fer narié personne ...'*

Sometimes teachers do not know how to deal with the problem as underlined by the following quote:

*Disons, on leur dit de ne pas causer, d'arrêter, de faire leur travail, ben j'ai l'impression qu'on parle dans le vide. Comment sévir, c'est que finalement on sait pas trop quoi faire.*

When appropriate actions are not taken, students have a tendency to imitate their friends: *'ena tandans suive parey.'*

One lady teacher pointed out that boys are more ready to accept punishment when they know that they are guilty as compared to girls who deny their misbehaviour. In addition, girls tend to be quite spiteful.

- Teachers' 'marge de manoeuvre'

Teachers feel that they are quite limited in the actions to cope with indiscipline.

*On a les mains liées, ..., on n' a pas le droit.*

What is more important to note is that students know that teachers are powerless. The following observation illustrates this point of view:

*Ene zelev semaine derniere ine dir moi, miss ine deza ekspel ene zelev? Apré line rétonné. Ene zeleve qui dir moi amene li kot rekter. Be pou narié mo pou amene li. Nou, nou menas ine fini.*

Teachers also argue that nowadays students are very much aware of their rights as can be gleaned from the following remark:

*Maintenant les enfants savent trop leurs droits ... Ils vous disent ça en classe.  
Mo pa koné, mo pansé ki tou ine deterioré a partir sa moman kot banne zenfan ine komans pran konésans zot droit.*

Teachers think that the media have stressed too much on children's rights. Students know their rights but ignore their responsibilities.

Some teachers have pointed out the bureaucratic procedure that the school has to go through before actions can be taken against students. In state schools, the rector has to obtain the permission of the Ministry of Education to be able to take actions. Teachers argue that schools should be empowered so that they can take decisions on their own.

Teachers feel that their integrity is at stake when disciplinary measures are not taken against some students.

*E sé ki arivé, souvan dé fois, ou kapav pé pran ene aksion ou, apré ou trouv kouma dir e dan la hierarsi, ou aksion fine ranversé ...*

At times, though cases are rare, there are political interferences and teachers are transferred from one school to another. Teachers feel discouraged, helpless, unmotivated when actions are taken against them while the indisciplined students remain unpunished.

Teachers are not of the opinion that even serious cases of disruptive behaviour should be reported to the police. They argue that this will tarnish the image of the school and that the presence of police officers on the school premises is not well perceived in society. They believe that they should not contribute to allow the deterioration of the situation and that problems could be solved through dialogue. 'Régler les choses à l'amiable' as they say.

### **6.2.7. Teachers' Suggestions to Deal with the Issue**

First of all, teachers suggest that parents should be made more responsible; they need to be more severe towards their wards at home. Furthermore, the parent-school link should be strengthened. They add that it is important to know the indisciplined students individually. Then they can better know the real reasons why students are misbehaving and take precise

actions subsequently. Teachers should give consideration to or listen to and understand students' points of view. Another group of teachers suggest that the harshness of the disciplinary measures should be increased. The role of school administration is also highlighted. Schools should have more autonomy and rectors should be conferred with more powers.

Many teachers make a request for psychological services to schools and the introduction of moral education which should not be a subject in its own right but integrated with other subjects. They point out that there are not enough psychologists at the Ministry of Education.

They feel that, to cope with indiscipline at the upper secondary level, the work should start at Form I level itself. Teachers point out the need for finding ways to cope with peer pressure. In addition, they argue that the class size should be reduced.

*It's a problem to manage forty students, forty individuals.  
They have different character and individuality.*

Some of the teachers say that the Ministry of Education should review its disciplinary policy for schools. Training should be given at the beginning of the teachers' career. Furthermore, this training should be of an applied nature. One teacher also advocates the creation of a school police or the deployment of more policemen at bus stations. Some teachers also mention the importance of the school assembly. Another suggestion is to establish a code of conduct to know which actions to take under which circumstances, like in the legal profession.

### **6.3. Students' Focus Group Discussions**

The opinions of the students also have been sought in order to have a clearer view of the issue under study.

#### **6.3.1. Prevailing Forms of Indiscipline**

##### **Lateness/Absenteeism**

The issue of lateness is raised by students as being one of the most recurrent indiscipline problems. Students associate lateness with the transport problem although they admit that some students deliberately miss the class regularly. Lateness seems to be a chronic problem

in all schools and is attended to in various ways by administration although in some schools students claim that the mechanisms of control are almost non-existent.

It has been brought to our attention that some teachers encourage students to remain at home: *'nou vini gramatin, banne la dir nou alle lakaz. Ou alle lakaz, alle apranne lakaz. Bé ki nou pou fer, pou met présans la, pa pou mété.'* So, they leave school and go loitering at Caudan Waterfront.

### **Homework**

Students also claim that the majority of students attend to their homework on a regular basis although a few note that some students do not really have the means to buy books, whereas others pretend that they do not have books in order to avoid punishment. An honest appraisal of the situation by a few students also reveals that the combined volume of homework given by teachers at school and tuition makes it impossible to complete all the homework on time. They also acknowledge that their motivation to complete homework is seriously jeopardised because these are not corrected on a regular basis. It is also evident from the data that some students are generally not interested in their studies and, as such, it should not be surprising that the general indifference to the tasks given by teachers should be interpreted within the larger context of dispositions and expectations of school.

### **Conduct Towards Teachers**

Students agree that they owe respect to their teachers. Reference is also made to their relationship with teachers and the latter's attitudes as well as those of their peers. There is general agreement that a minimum code of conduct must be imposed on teachers because some of them lack manners and do not behave properly with students. They also admit that many students use foul language among themselves and sometimes against teachers though they are careful to do so behind teachers' back. There seems to be a small group of rowdy students, especially boys, who misbehave with teachers and this negatively affects other students who want to learn.

Some students feel that some teachers are biased in their attitude towards them because they do not take tuition from the teacher (*'li donne preferans foul zelev ki pran leson are li'*). Some teachers punish students who are physically small: *'ena ene garson, li in pé ti taille*

*...tou de suite li pou ena problem, alle get rekter, amene to paran ... tandi ki ena pa met iniform, li pa pou dir li narié, kouma dir li get figir.'*

Conduct towards teachers should also be understood in terms of factors extraneous to teachers' personality and pedagogy. Some students report that misbehaviour towards teachers reflect an attempt to 'act cool' in order to impress friends or girls in the case of a co-ed school. Contesting teachers' authority is sometimes often perceived as a means of asserting oneself.

However, there are a few cases which are caused by a marked dislike for teachers because of previous incidents in the past. Although students may disagree with their peers in case of disruptive behaviour against teachers, a few would voice their opinion. If they don't like a teacher, they would harass him/her by '*koup so sez, fer li tombé, banne méstansté koum sa*', or '*met ene sez kasé dan plas ene bon sez pou profeser la, soi kol chiwingom lor so sez.*'

### **Smoking/ Alcohol**

Some students from a few schools did not report great discipline problems basically on account of strict management: '*li (the manager) pas donne letan kozé.*' The worst problem that is highlighted is the consumption of alcoholic drinks in class and the students involved are rusticated. Data collected reveals that such a problem is also present in girls' schools though less frequently. Among the highest rated alcoholic drinks are Smirnoff, beer and whisky. Consumption of alcohol seems to be related to the notion of having a good time as illustrated by the following comment of a girl from a private secondary school:

*ti dernié zour lekol alor nou ine fer ene fet mo ine amene ene boutey King Robert.*

The incidence of smoking within school premises is quite high both among boys' and girls' schools. In one private girls' school, some girls were rusticated for one week because they had been caught drinking alcohol in the toilet. Students say that administration of this school should be more severe concerning consumption of alcohol instead of punishing students for petty cases such as wearing fancy jewellery.

In one particular boys' school, smoking is so common among students that they have created a 'smoking room' not only for students but also for teachers and caretakers. *'Banne profeser si vine fimé isi ...caretaker tou vine fimé lot foi la.'* It is to be noted, however, that the rector and the deputy rector of the school seem not to be aware of the existence of this 'smoking room': *'wi, banne la koné nou fimé, mé selman zot pa koné nou ena smoking room.'*

## **Truancy**

It is reported that truancy is frequent among both boys and girls. The reasons for bunking schools are often related to the activities of the peer group. Students who truant roam around trendy commercial centres and games parlour. The most common reason given is *'pou amisé ant kamarad'* or to celebrate a friend's birthday. An interesting aspect of truancy is that outsiders in the form of teenagers or even adults are also involved. As described by a girl student from a private secondary school:

*Ti mo kamarad so laniverser nou ine desid pa pou alle lekol pou alle Caudan. Ti ena kamarad depi lezot kolez osi, ek so kousin ...li pa travay apré ankor ene dé kamarad. Mo ti fini dir mo mama mo pa pe alle lekol... li pa ine dir nanié.*

One of the most common reactions of the parents when the school reports cases of truancy to them is to side with their children and claim to have knowledge that the latter are not at school so that the students are not suspended or expelled from schools. But in some cases, as illustrated above, parents condone absenteeism from schools. Additionally, the incidence of truancy is also related to the degree of control exerted by the school administration on attendance and absences. Some students report playing truant for part of the school day and slipping in or out of school unnoticed.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is also mentioned as a discipline issue although students confess that they do not witness it personally but have heard about it. The first instance of indiscipline mentioned is bullying followed by harassment. Girls refer to frequent cases of harassment from boys and discuss its impact on learning. Bullying seems to be a quite common phenomenon in secondary schools and, in some cases, it seems to be related to the age factor: *'dan toilet, ena*

*zelev osi ti kontan fer dominer avek séki pli tipti ki li, nek trapé baté.*’ In some cases bullying also takes the form of ragging both at school and in buses.

### **Use of Mobile Phones**

In many cases the mobile phones are not switched off in class. The mobile phones, they argue, are more a status symbol than anything else among young people. It is also reported that messages are sent in classes and that the rules are openly flouted as explained by the following comment from a student in a state secondary school:

*o debi banne la ti esay ampesé, aster personne pa kas la tet, banne la anvoye mesaz ene la zourné.*

Many students confess that the rules regarding mobile phones should also apply to teachers who use the mobile phone in classes. It seems that the use of mobile phones on the school premises is a widespread phenomenon and has become an important part of students’ culture. According to students, the phenomenon of theft at school is often associated with mobile phones. Girls think that mobile phones should not be interdicted because they feel more secure in case they have a problem in or out of school.

But then, should we be surprised when a newspaper reports that ‘*des clips pornos d’une collégienne*’ (5-Plus dimanche 26.02.06) are being circulated throughout the island via MMS?

### **Girls – a Particular Case**

Generally speaking, most girls accept the schools’ rules and regulations. However, they feel that at times the school administration goes to the extreme when it asks them not to come to school with dyed hair in striking colour, not to use make-up or wear jewellery. They think that the school is being too fussy about discipline. It has been brought to our knowledge that some male teachers send ‘sms’ such as ‘*hier soir mo ti rev toi*’ to female students with whom they would like to have sexual intercourse. When the girls refuse, they are sexually harassed by these male teachers who would invite them, through a variety of direct or indirect means, to have sexual intercourse with them (the teachers) or who would say ‘*nou bizin met ene serié ene zour*’ or ‘*tou tifi dan lekol allumeuse*’. Sexual ‘attouchements’ are also common in these circumstances: ‘*li vini li trappe mo fesse*’, ‘*li nek passe so lamé avek*

*mo fesse koum sala.* Such a case of sexual harassment has been reported to us in schools of a particular zone.

### **6.3.2. Prevailing Forms of Violence**

#### **Violence against Other Students**

Verbal aggression is perceived as being more prevalent among boys than girls. This includes the use of foul and indecent words often of a communal nature. Confrontation among students springs from a variety of reasons, ranging from personality clash to control of playgrounds. Students claim that they do not observe an increase or decline on the occurrence of verbal aggression.

Physical aggression, though less frequent in absolute terms, seems to be on the rise compared to verbal aggression and often involves students or people external to the school setting. These can be gangs or peer groups in which the students have membership after their school hours. Male students reveal that verbal aggression often degenerates into physical '*règlement de compte*' which more often than not takes place outside the school. Each of the aggrieved party calls for additional support from peers from other schools or neighbourhood or even from family members. When aggression happens on school premises, it is often reported by the class captain and, in most cases, the matter is dealt with by the administration as described by a class captain from a private secondary school:

*Tou lé dé kamarad ki are moi zot ine batté ziska disan koulé, apré zot dir moi pa alle raport dan biro mé mo pa kapav reste trankil, letan mo ine alle dir zotte amerd are moi.*

It seems that the reported incidents of physical aggression are only the tip of the iceberg and that the number of unreported cases is far greater.

#### **Violence against Teachers and Other Staff**

Though a rare occurrence, students from two schools have reported physical aggression against teachers. In both cases, physical aggression has been the outcome of a long-drawn confrontation between teachers and students. All students, however, condemn such acts claiming that no matter how badly a teacher behaves, resorting to violence cannot be condoned. Many students have, in the same breath, enumerated a litany of teachers' excesses

and implicitly sought to explain or show understanding of the reasons that may have driven students up the wall.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism can be explained in terms of violence against school property and against teachers' property, with the most common one being the former. Vandalism, in most cases, amounts to graffiti on the walls and desks, breaking of window panes and furniture and lastly toilet doors and seats. The latter involves the damaging of teachers' cars on or off school premises. According to some students, violence is a demonstration of students' frustration as indicated by the frequent '*zot gagne la raz*' and inability to make themselves heard by adults in the school environment and is thus closely associated with a lack of communication among the different stakeholders at school. However, students' frustration which is expressed in violence may emerge from diverse sources and not only from the school.

### **6.3.3. Causes Identified by Students**

#### **Parental Demise**

Some students believe that student behaviour is an outcome of upbringing and parenting styles. They seem to believe that family socialisation and values thus imbibed determine to a large extent the behaviour of students at school as illustrated by the following student's comment:

*Mo pansé fason so paran elevé li sa. Si dan so fami zot ena sa manier la li pou gagne li. Li pou fer parey dan lekol.*

Parental guidance also impinges on dispositions towards school and interactions towards others in the school milieu.

#### **Media**

Adolescents did not mention explicitly the role of the media but their reference to the use of mobile phones, and to a particular conception of schooling and the kind of lifestyle they seem to aspire to on school premises demonstrates the influences of the media.

## **Peer group**

Reference is also made to peer pressure and students reveal that most of the negative peer pressure is external to the school although the events that they describe often point out to the contrary. Students who infringe the school regulations blatantly have a 'support' also in the school. The network of peers, therefore, spreads both within and outside the school and is efficiently maintained through the use of mobile phones and SMS. The peer group also seems to be an essential determinant of outlook and perception of school life.

## **Rules and Regulations**

Students are generally satisfied with discipline at school although they uphold that some rules regarding their hairstyle do not make sense as it does not affect their learning. Some of these rules should be reviewed. One male student points out:

*Monsieur, eski longueur sevé ena ene relasion ek nou letid ?*

The absence of written rules often contributes to the '*multiplication*' of rules, they argue. Additionally, some students agree that sanctions are not applied fairly to all, and that a group of students seem to benefit from a special treatment. Students conclude that generally students respect the rules and regulations of the school and that only a minority are rebels. The rules are claimed to be strict but they find it unfair that some of the rules do not apply to teachers. Lastly, the role of the support staff in maintaining discipline is condemned. Students claim that some support staff have too much power and exercise it more than teachers. They seem to suggest that maintaining discipline is the responsibility of the teaching staff and management and not the prerogative of the support staff.

Paradoxically, one student has reported that there is a lack of control on students' attendance. He explains that once he goes out of school during school time, he comes back the next day without anyone noticing or reporting that he has been absent:

*Ou rantré ou sorti personne pa koné. komié foi mo ine rant lekol 10 zere 11 zere, personne pa remarké.*

They argue that while, on some issues, management is unnecessarily strict, there is clearly a lack of regulation and control on other aspects of school life. Smoking is reported as being one of the most serious discipline problems.

### **Teacher's Pedagogy and Relationship**

Teacher and student relationship is deemed to be good with the majority of teachers although a few of them are taxed as being overly authoritarian: '*montré zot ena bel bel power*' and old fashioned.

With respect to the cause of discipline problems, students explain that the behaviour of the teacher contributes to enhancing or reducing it insofar as teacher effectiveness is a key element. Discipline problems, according to them, are more likely to occur in a '*boring class*' when students do not understand what the teacher is explaining. One student reports that:

*Li pa konne ekspliké... banne la gagne somey zot pran nisa are li*

Additionally they draw attention to the fact that some teachers discriminate among students and favour those who take tuition from them. There also seems to be a correlation between teacher's effectiveness, teacher's approach and discipline problems. Students admit that teachers who explain well tend to have fewer discipline problems. It seems that a rigid and inflexible approach does not create a classroom climate where students feel free to communicate with teachers. Pedagogy and teaching style seem to be inextricably linked with the occurrence of discipline problems. Students also seem to believe that humour is an important part of classroom life.

### **Lack of Diversity of Curricular Activities**

They also strongly make the point that the curriculum needs to be diversified to take into account their varying interests and needs. They argue that one cannot expect them to be '*in their books*' from morning to evening and that facilities must be provided to cater for a diversity of learning opportunities. Some even discuss how they are more motivated to engage in sports activities in contrast with academic learning which is often perceived as being too abstract and difficult.

Another important aspect which has been highlighted relates to the nature of the curriculum and school activities. Here also students express their dissatisfaction about the heavy academic bias of the curriculum, arguing for the provision of sports facilities, music and theatre. Learning and school life generally are not as enjoyable as they should be. There is a pressing need for diversification of learning activities at school. They argue that:

*Bizin ena sorti, ekskirsion tou sa la, spor. Dezan nou pa ine gagne okene sorti. .. swa dizan nou fer tro desord...*

The need to diversify the curriculum to accommodate the variety of interests at school and to provide opportunities for social interaction is vital. It seems that in some schools participation in co-curricular activities does not exist.

### **Teacher's and Adult's Role Modelling**

However, some students also counter-argue that relationships are reciprocal and that a teacher *de facto* has the respect of students because of his position, he is also expected to display respect for his students and demonstrate fairness in his interaction with them. They often complain that some students suffer public humiliation from teachers and the rector because of misbehaviour. Though they are of the opinion that sanctions must apply they feel revolted when such problems are brought in the public sphere, either in the staff room and the assembly. One student reports an anecdote where students have been publicly humiliated:

*Dé garson ek dé tifi ti gagne ene problem, ine dir zot nom dan lasanblé devan tou dimoun. Dakor seki zot ti fer pa bon mé pa ti bizin dir zot nom.*

Students refuse to be humiliated since they take it as a blow to their self-esteem and have to make great efforts so as not to respond violently to teachers:

*zot, zamé zot pa pou koz bien avek ou ...zot pa pou zour ou mé zot pou dir nou banne mot blesan.  
parfois banne profeser zot dir gros gros zouré mama.*

They admit that not all teachers use this kind of language towards them.

### **Generation Gap**

Students also claim that it is normal for them to feel attracted to the opposite sex and that adults are not open-minded enough to accept it. While the boys advocate the necessity to enjoy school days and have fun, girls give more “mature” reasons for justifying free interactions with boys on account of the fact that the real world is mixed and that they need to learn to get along and to adapt.

Students argue that it is normal for boys and girls to date and that the attitude of adults is obsolete and outdated. The following is a frequent comment among both boys and girls in a co-ed school:

*nou pa gagne droit kozé, si ou pé kozé sa vé dir ou ine fer kiksoze de mal*

There is a feeling of mistrust between teachers and students. They, however, acknowledge that some teachers ask them to come to them whenever there is a problem so that a solution can be found. According to these students, some teachers adopt a friendly attitude towards them.

### **Family Background**

The family background is also perceived as having an effect on the discipline problems encountered at school. The socio-economic status of the family is cited as being one of the reasons for lateness or non-adherence to wearing of the school uniform although they also argue that it is often used by students as an excuse to explain disregard for the rules and regulations of the school.

### **Lack of Communication**

One important aspect that is frequently mentioned is communication at school between teachers and students and students and rectors. Many students feel that their voice is not sufficiently “heard” and they have no opportunities to express their opinions on issues that may be pertinent to them. Some teachers don’t know how to speak to students. In one particular girls’ school, a lady teacher who was not happy with a student, asked her to sit down in the following terms ‘*ou pa kapav plaké...*’ and when the girl retaliated by saying ‘*sil vou plé, sil vou plé, pa plaké mé asizé*’, the teacher retorted back ‘*non, toi pa dimoun toi, bizin dir plaké mem, parski kan koz are toi, to pa kompran.*’

Often their requests remain unattended to and this breeds frustration because they do not feel a sense of belonging to the school. One student declares

*nou ti anvè koz ene tigit ek ladministrasion pou reglé certaine kitsoz mé zamé noun gagne randévou ...*

They are threatened with expulsion and this generates a sense of fear in them. They are afraid of being interdicted from taking the exams

*Akoz nou pou alle dir ene zafer laba, nou perdi, nou pa pou kapav kompozé ... parski isi péna dialog, péna narié; zis sé ki zot fer, simpleman ranvoyé.*

The student council is also not perceived as being able to play its role fully. There is a general feeling that the management sides with teachers and that students' opinions are not taken into account at all. One student from a boys' State Secondary School comments that

*student council ekzist wi mé banne la pa fer nanié sé ladministrasion ki desid tou, seki nou nou dir pa ena limportans.*

The same feeling appears in private schools. Members of students' council are powerless.

*student council zot nek met li parski bizin met ene student council, sa eme tou.*

Class captains conceive their role as one of control and maintenance of discipline although some indicate that they also shoulder the responsibility of a leader. However, they also feel the need to use a more inclusive approach towards discipline by giving the responsibility to all students. If discipline becomes the specific responsibility of the class captains, other students will not feel committed to uphold the rules and regulations of the school.

### **6.3.4. Effects Identified by Students**

#### **Learning**

Indiscipline in the classroom definitely affects the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers spend precious time to maintain discipline in class while students who wish to study seriously lose motivation and interest if these discipline problems persist. Many students state that they feel disheartened by the disruptive classroom and school behaviours of rowdy students. They further claim that maintaining discipline by eliciting respect is one of the most important functions of teachers.

#### **School Reputation**

Students' unrest also stems from the fact that discipline problems convey a negative image of their school. For most of the students interviewed, especially for girls, the reputation of the school has a direct impact on their self concept and self esteem. They argue that once the news of indiscipline and violence go public, the school and its students get labelled by the public and students from other schools.

## **Teachers' Expectations**

Negative teacher expectations are an important consequence of indiscipline and violence, especially if they have been personally at the receiving end of such misbehaviour. Some students argue that they are labelled on the basis of a single misbehaviour and this predisposes the teacher to think negatively about the students for the rest of their school days and creates a number of negative expectations from the other teachers. Students also suspect that teachers discuss their behaviour in the staff room and, as such, negative expectations are reinforced and complemented with details about the student's personal life.

### **6.4. Focus Group Discussions with Caretakers**

Caretakers in a school are those agents who see and listen to many things that are done and said by students. They are one category of witnesses whose opinion is not often sought because they are not considered as important stakeholders in the field of education. However, we feel that they can contribute constructively to this debate on indiscipline and violence in secondary schools.

#### **6.4.1. Types of Indiscipline**

##### **Lateness**

Students coming late to school is a common feature nowadays. Even caretakers have noted that this lateness affects the good running of the school, the more so when students do not have to travel a long distance to come to school. According to some caretakers, '*nou banne zelev mem passe zot letan anba la gare, zot vine an retar.*' The regionalisation of intake does not seem to have an impact on punctuality at schools for many students.

##### **Smoking**

The caretakers lay emphasis on the issue of smoking. They very often see students with cigarettes in their hands but they are helpless. They feel that they do not have enough power or it is not within their attribution to ask students to stop smoking.

##### **Students' Mentality/Family Background**

Caretakers criticise students' mentality. In schools, they tend to do what at home they are not allowed to. That is why parents cannot believe that their child has misbehaved and defend

the latter: *'paran soutir zot, zot dir ou zot zanfan bon, kouma ou kapav pini zot. Bé zot pa pé realizé, lakaz zot mouton, bé isi zot gagne liberté, zot profité.'*

### **Mobile Phone**

According to caretakers, the use of a mobile phone is not allowed in the school. However, they know that students bring mobile phones, and in girls' schools, students go into the toilet to phone people outside so as not to be seen and not to be caught: *'portab li ene vré problem dan kolez'*. Though they have no proof, they have heard that *'zot avoye banne zafer pornografik, zot sms banne zafer pornografik.'*

### **Theft**

With the advent of the mobile phone, some caretakers have noted an increase in theft. Some students have in their possession very expensive mobile phones, and this can be a temptation.

### **Vandalism**

As far as vandalism is concerned, caretakers really feel that students are responsible for the breaking of chairs and tables. Though they can excuse a student for a broken chair, they cannot accept the fact that students are not responsible for a broken table.

*Mo pansé nou pa gagn kontrol direkteman lor sez, parski zot pé asizé, la li kapav kasé mem. Bé kouma latab koumsa ...*

Everybody feels powerless:

*Pa koné ki pinision kapav donne sa piti la kan li fer sa...*

Students should be sensitised to the fact that acts of vandalism could lead to police cases. Some caretakers believe that damaging school property is done more by boys than by girls and that co-education in that sense is bad, and schools should be separated into boys' and girls' schools so that the boys should not have a bad influence on the girls.

### **Piercing/Dyeing**

Caretakers working in boys' schools have observed that the administration is very strict concerning piercing, earrings and dyeing. According to the rules and regulations of some

schools, boys are not allowed to have piercing, to wear earrings or any kind of jewellery (a chain around the neck and falling outside the shirt) and, above all, the dyeing of hair or different kinds of hair styles:

*kom dan tou lekol, nou pa toléré sa banne zafer la, banne lasenne, banne koloran, banne bague... bé parfois an dehor trouv zot letan zot pé alé, zot met ene zanon, zot met ene zanon dan zot zorey, bé selman kan zot rant dan la kour lekol, kouma gagne devan la kour lekol, zot tiré.*

Youth culture seems to go against the rules of the schools and does twist teacher-student relationship.

#### **6.4.2. Causes of Indiscipline**

##### **School Environment and Intake**

Some caretakers opine that the school environment and the intake of students in Form I are at times responsible for indiscipline. Around one particular school, '*nou ena banne voyou, nou ena banne droger, nou ena banne voler*' and this tends to have an impact on school discipline. For example, in that school, detention has been abolished because anything can happen in the street when the student is returning home after a detention class or on a Saturday morning. Since the students have come to understand this constraint on the part of the school administration, they tend to misbehave and as one caretaker puts it '*mové pé vine pli mové.*'

From the intake in Form I, caretakers infer that students who do not have good results are indisciplined '*baz la eme pa bon*'. And parents are also responsible for this state of affairs because they can't accept that their ward can misbehave in schools; '*fer paran la kompran, letan rekte apel paran, paran pa kompran.*'

##### **Students' Lack of Interest**

Some caretakers complain about the lack of interest of students in their study. Some parents feel helpless : '*mo donne tou sé ki mo zanfan bizin, mé selman zanfan la pa apranne, pa pé apranne ditou, li pé fer tou sé ki li anvi...*' This explains in part absenteeism and truancy in some schools. At times, even teachers are fed up with these students and tend to leave them

on their own: *'profeser la, line plein are zelev la, séki to to anvi fer, to fer, to pa anvi to pa fer.'*

### **The Ministry's Responsibility**

In many schools, caretakers believe that the ministry has a lot of responsibility in the deterioration of the situation in schools. They declare that *'minister kine toler banne zanfan boukou, bien toléré fine toléré, asterla ou nepli kapav rusticate ene zanfan, ou na pa kapav expel, ou na pa kapav fer narien.'* Since no punitive action can be taken against students who misbehave, teachers are not keen to make enemies in school. They are afraid *'ena profeser per zelev isi.'* They further add that new recruits should not be sent in some schools which have a bad reputation in terms of discipline. Because rules and regulations are not explicit enough about detention classes *'nou pa gagne droit met ene zanfan dehor pou narien pou narien. Avan met ene zanfan dehor, bizin avoye let minister, bizin avoye let PSSA pou dimane si gagne droit...'* The absence of a legal framework appears to be a hindrance and is doing much damage to the reputation of some schools.

### **The Teachers' Responsibility**

They also consider that some teachers are very often responsible for indiscipline. These teachers are never on time in their classes. They spend five to ten minutes before entering their class and during that time students are left to themselves. According to these caretakers, *'profeser bizin devan zot sal de klas kouma la klos soné. Pa atanne la klos soné, lerla zot pou rod kayé, zot pou rod la kré, letan sa in ariv cinq-dis minit, letan sa boukou dezord ine arivé.'* Moreover, some add that those teachers who show a certain degree of irresponsibility are those who have joined the teaching profession because they have not obtained any other job: *'bane nouvo profeser kin vini, pou zot, lanseignman sétene bistop, zot pena okene job lor marsé, zot rant la touzour ... bé ki apel responsabilité klas la nil.'* Some teachers contribute to increase indiscipline in the school by their acts. They either come late to school or use their mobile phone in classes or absent themselves too much: *'ena fois profeser la eme li pa bon, li vine ler li anvi, ena fois profeser la, couma li rant dan klas, li pran so portab kouma zelev dire li, li nek fou zelev la dehor.'* According to caretakers, regular absence of teachers is another cause of indiscipline in school.

### **Parents' Responsibility**

They also stress the fact that some parents do not collaborate with the administration of the school to maintain discipline. They give too much pocket money to their children, they do not accept that their children stay in detention classes. They claim that their wards cannot miss tuition classes *'si ou fors met li ares sanne kout la dimé li amene so paran avek li, so paran la dir koum sa li ena lesou pou li alle pran, sa ve dir li bizin pa alle pran lesou, li bizin res ares?'*. They challenge the school authority and the school discipline. According to caretakers *'mama papa ki bizin dir zanfan la kan to rant dan klas obeir profeser la. Manier bizin apranne dépi lakaz.'*

### **School Compound and Population**

One aspect on which caretakers lay emphasis is space. The lack of space may surprisingly help in maintaining discipline because *'péna banne lespas ki on diré in pé lousse'*. The smaller the school compound is the better one can have control on students. Some caretakers add that the fact the school has a student population of 500 to 600, it is easy to keep a close watch on the students. In this sense, they say *'nou kapav kontrol nou banne zanfan.'* When the school premises are large enough, it is difficult to keep an eye on the students: *'li imposib sa, li inimazinab mem, nou pa kapav res sinkant plas a la fois e dayer dan lekol la, ena banne ti koin et rekoin. Li imposib pou nou trouvé.'*

### **Peer Influence**

Some caretakers believe that at times students get caught and are influenced by their friends: *'c'est sou presion so banne kamarad, li mem li pa dan so natir mé kan li dan ene group, li santi li for.'*

### **Prevocational classes**

Caretakers believe that the students in prevocational classes should be given training in specialised schools or training centres. Most of these students in state schools misbehave and do not want to study. The ministry has recruited them in order *'pou zot pa dan semin.'*

### 6.4.3. Action Taken or Those Which Should Be Taken

#### Surveillance

In some private schools, there is a close monitoring of students' behaviour and caretakers are involved in keeping an eye on the students: *'koté la kour, nou nou ena orderly isi ...kouma dir nou fer ene ti check up partou. Sak profeser, ki lezot banne staf ousi parey. Nou marse marsé nou geté, dan la kour si zot ok, zot pena okene problem.'*

#### Parents' Intervention

Though some caretakers aver that the problem of indiscipline is under control, they nevertheless admit that when students are regularly absent, the rector asks for explanations from the parents: *'zanfan ine absan lékol dé zour, trois zour, ler la nou fer apel so paran nou deman kifer lin absan lekol, sé koume sa.'*

#### Counselling

Though this may seem a bit strange, female caretakers of some mixed schools in a particular zone say that at times some boys and girls do tell them their problems, especially their family problems because they are rather close and friendly to these caretakers.

*Ena foi zot nek vini, zot ploré ... nou alle geté ki so problem, parfois rakont nou, ena foi nou konsey zot... nou konsey zot pa get zot problem, get zot ledikation. Mo dir kontinié avansé...*

Others would try to intervene and advise the students not to misbehave:

*nou pa koné, bé si zot get banne fason osi, nou coriz zot. Nou dir zot kouma dir ki arivé, ki sa fason to pé allé la ... nou met zot dan le droit semin.*

Some caretakers who have a long experience in their job and who have witnessed a regular deterioration of discipline in schools recommend expulsion to deal with severe cases of indiscipline: *'par examp, en piti ine fer dezord, ine fer boukou dezord dan nou lekol, si minister donne droit, dir ok met piti la dehor, si mo met ene dé zanfán dehor, mo geté sipa troisiem la pou aksepté fer sa, zamé li pa pou fer li.'* This is the only way to avoid an increase in acts of indiscipline. It would serve as a lesson to the students and parents as well.

## 6.5. Focus Group Discussion with Trade Unionists

The insights generated by trade unionists reveal that the nature and gravity of acts of indiscipline and violence in Mauritian secondary schools have significantly changed over the past decade. A number of causal factors have been identified by this category of stakeholders namely:

- (i) the role of the media
- (ii) the demise of parents
- (iii) changes in the perception of the value of education
- (iv) the role of the administration and management
- (v) teacher effectiveness and professionalism + role of teacher training
- (vi) changes in culture and society
- (vii) legal aspects of discipline in schools
- (viii) the phenomenon of private tuition
- (ix) nature of the curriculum and our education system

### 6.5.1. The Role of the Media

Participants' understanding of the role of the media in relation to the issue under study focuses on the more negative effects of the media on our adolescents. In the first instance, the media glorify acts of violence and indiscipline by providing a forum to those who perpetrate such acts. They argue that many adolescents who flout the rules and even laws get media attention and are considered as heroes. One trade-unionist illustrates this by the following words:

*Pli nou donne limportans sa banne eveneman la, pli banne zen gagne du galon lezot gagne lidé... le matin zot lor zournal*

According to them, the media report more the shortcomings of teachers and other professionals in the field of education than the examples of students' or parents' gross misbehaviour. This reinforces the negative public perception of the 'unprofessionalism' of teachers and helps to further erode teacher authority.

In addition to this, the media do not provide the relevant role models for adolescents to emulate. They strongly emphasize that the media should provide support in helping schools address the problem of indiscipline and violence.

### **6.5.2. The Demise of Parents**

The role of parents has been identified as one of the key factors in helping to address discipline issues at school. The participants argue that generally parents are not playing their roles as partners in the education of their children insofar as they do not provide the required support to the school. Instead they describe the situation to be one where the parents and their children are at loggerheads with the teachers and administrators as illustrated by this comment:

*Ladministrasion la impuisan kan paran la ine ekrir. Paran met an kestion pinision. Li met an kestion lotorit  profeser, paran la kouver so zenfan dan tou l  ka.*

The authority of both the administration and the teachers is seriously undermined when students know that their parents will defend them whatever they do. Some teachers also comment on the parents' changing expectations of education and schooling. They claim that, since education is free and compulsory, many parents either do not value education as they should and understand its benefits or others measure education only in terms of grades and certificates notwithstanding the fact that the concept of an educated person is not restricted to the quality of her/his certificate.

Moreover, participants also claim that parents are not shouldering their responsibilities at home because of the changing family structure and the evolving values that are seen to permeate the society at large. Many families can no longer provide for safe homes for their children because of the prevalence of divorce and domestic violence. Such circumstances aggravate the problem of violence and indiscipline in our schools.

### **6.5.3. Changing Perception and Value of Education**

In the course of the focus group discussion with the participants, it became clear that one of the most important issues that have been so far underscored is that of the general perception of the social and economic worth of education. According to them, education has no opportunity cost for many parents because it is given free of charge and now being made

compulsory till the age of 16. Because of this, many parents, though not convinced of the value of education, are compelled to send their children to school although they are well aware that the formal education received till 'O' level may not be useful later on. As such, school life is not taken seriously and every opportunity to create trouble for their friends, teachers and even administration is seized. As pointed out by one trade unionist:

*Zot pa bizin pas lekzamá, parfoi zenfan dir ou monsieur mo pou badiné mo pa bizin pas lekzamá mo pou badiné, kouma moi komié ena pé atanne. Apranne, passé ki pou fer. Mo papa vanne lartik lor simé, li gagne pli boukou kas ki ou.*

Education is perceived as having for purpose only facilitating access to a job. The representatives of the trade unions argue that historically education was the 'passport' to a job in the civil service but since the link between educational achievement and life success is no longer as strong as it used to be, what happens both formally and informally at school is of little importance to some parents and students. The repercussion of this perception on students' expectations and behaviour at school impinges heavily on the problem of indiscipline.

#### **6.5.4. The Role of the School Administration**

At the root of participants' unrest is the inefficiency of the management and administration when it comes to handling acts of indiscipline at school. There seems to be a general agreement that teachers feel increasingly disempowered because, more often than not, the management cannot or would not take the appropriate measures. A trade-unionist has the following to say:

*Ti ena ene lady teacher ine rant dan klas ti ena ene zelev karéman sou. Alor kan li alle kot rekteur, rekteur la dir li be ou koné madam so papa ene avoka sa pa pou kapav fer nanié. karéman sété la repons. E ou imaziné ou, zelev la re rant dan klas devan so banne kamarad li kontinié e dan klas la profeser la ine alle raport li avek ene rekteur, rekteur pa ine fer nanié. Bé ki respé banne zelev pou ena pou banne profeser. Kan nou pa pran okene sanksion.*

The impact of parental and often political interference on teacher authority is perceived by participants as being disastrous and they argue that, for the sake of their own security and self respect, many teachers ignore indiscipline and violence because the administration and management fail to give them the required support. In state secondary schools, there is also

the management's and the ministry's added fear of unwanted publicity that students and parents may attract by going to the media. The case of private schools is different. As one trade unionist reports:

*Zot pa pou oze met zelev dehor....Manager la li dir ou fodé pa so skoul popilesion bessé.*

Pupil retention is a matter of economic survival for many small private secondary schools and as such teachers are not able to deal with indiscipline and violence. The nature of their clientele determines the actions of the rectors in some private secondary schools.

The situation in confessional schools is also understood to be better than in both state and private schools because the management and the teachers have a degree of autonomy in terms of decision taking.

### **6.5.5. Teacher Effectiveness and Professionalism**

One interesting issue is the link between teacher's effectiveness and indiscipline. Participants argue that the only way teachers can earn the respect of their students is through their professionalism and commitment. A representative from a state school comments that:

*si ene profeser li vréman konne so sizé, line preparé li vini, li mean bizness...li kommans so klas li ekspliké, pa pou ena problem indisciplin, parski sa zenfan la konné.. li pe travay. Zenfan pe gagne devoir, li pe fer ene suivi.*

In addition to this, the participants also underline that the teacher's personality has an important impact on students' behaviour. They deplore the fact that some teachers neither display the knowledge nor the charisma necessary to instil respect and lead their class:

*Mé malerezeman ena banne profeser ki pou ene raison ou ene lot, zot fason travay, zot personality mem, bon zot pa pou fer plis ki sa.*

The implications of teachers' professional competence for teacher training have also been discussed in the same line of thought. The role of the teacher in the classroom has to be re-defined.

The problems encountered by newcomers to the teaching profession have also been strongly highlighted as well as the specific difficulties met by lady teachers who are often easy victims in boys' secondary schools. Conversely, the issue of professional ethics among teachers has been also hinted at. It is argued that the new generation of teachers have to be equipped with the relevant skills, attitudes and commitment as exemplified by the comment of a representative from state secondary schools:

*mé mo trouvé banne mantalite ine sanzé vizavi ansien profeser...zot pe vini avek zot sakado anfin mo pa pé dir mo pé kritik zot labiman...mo pa pé zeneralizé...par examp kan mo ti rant dan gouvènmàn kan nou ine pran zis 3 zour konzé nou vini nou tap lestoma.. Aster mantalite ine sanzé, ena dire 'to konné, mo ine gratte tou mo konzé.*

Teacher motivation and teacher commitment are intricately linked to the professional status and satisfaction of teachers as well as the teachers' own personal disposition.

#### **6.5.6. Cultural Evolution and Changes in Society**

Participants also reveal that the school is at the receiving end of the changes occurring in the society. Much of this change is at the level of the values upheld by society and impacts on adolescents' perception of right and wrong and ultimately on their behaviour and attitude towards adults. One of the core preoccupations of the discussants is the collapse of the family as the basic unit of society. Such a phenomenon, they argue, has an impact on the availability of role models.

Additionally they also discuss the characteristics of the modern industrialised society which permeate the school setting and serve as basis for the pattern of interaction among different stakeholders on the school premises. Violence, drugs and alcohol seem to be widely accepted features of our culture. Conflicts today are resolved nationally and worldwide not through dialogue and negotiation but through the exercise of power. Human pursuits, the participants affirm, centre basically around material wealth creating frustration and revolt which manifest themselves on the school premises in diverse ways, as illustrated by the following comment:

*lekol pe suive le ritm de la sosisié par examp le to de violans domestik pé monté de zour en zour. Alor ki nou zenfan pé temoin, li vine violan a son tour. Deziemman dan la sosisié la kominikasyon, le dialog nepli ena plas dan la sosisié.*

Expressing one's disagreement in a violent manner has become an acceptable norm both in society and at school. Interestingly, one participant reports the prevalence of communal based conflicts in some schools.

### **6.5.7. The Legal Aspects of Discipline in Schools**

The need to establish clear parameters in terms of teachers' and administrators' legal and procedural 'marge de manoeuvre' has also been dealt with. They argue that the absence of both is a serious impediment to the process of establishing or restoring workable conditions in schools. There need to be referential documents that are legally sound to enable managers and administrators to take sanctions and other disciplinary measures. Both teachers and administrators cannot take appropriate measures because they can be officially queried and suspended if ever they take the responsibility of rustivating a student. With interferences if the children's rights are violated and there is pressure from parents, and the added possibility of teachers losing their jobs if they try to discipline their students, as one trade unionist reflects:

*Fodé pa ki dimé ler mo pé vine travay, mo alle pini ene zenfan, mo trouv moi lor bord disiplinier et mo riské pa ena travay ...Alor sé le gouvernman ki bizin pran banne desizion e bizin pran desizion vite. Redonne pouvoir banne profeser, redonne pouvoir management pou kapav pran desizion.*

The issue of teacher empowerment and revitalising teacher authority has been strongly emphasized in the discussion. The participants believe that until and unless serious and concrete actions are taken to achieve this, there will not be a permanent solution to the problem.

### **6.5.8. The Phenomenon of Private Tuition**

Frequent references have been made to the fact that discipline problems also issue from the idea that students do not take their studies at school seriously. There is a widespread belief that the real business of learning occurs after school hours and that the outcome of schooling, as absurd as it may sound, depends on what happens outside school in tuition classes, as illustrated by this comment:

*kouma dir profeser lekol la li ene zero, profeser leson la ki bon.....depi ledikasion ine vine gratis kouma zot ti pe dir taler la, le fet ki zot payé, kan mem la pli,kan mem konzé piblik, ena sa mantalité ki zot pou alle pran leson.*

Participants' belief that private tuition is linked to the issue of indiscipline is grounded in the logic that if students perceived school work to be important and crucial for their achievement they would not have adopted such a negative attitude towards school and questioned the authority of teachers both in terms of their status and professional stand.

### **6.5.9. Nature of the Curriculum and the Education System**

Reference is also frequently made to the highly academic nature of the curriculum and the lack of opportunities for students to find ways and means to express themselves. The following remark by one representative of the trade unions is evocative of the need to diversify the curriculum:

*Moi mo kroir sé le mank de klas dedikasion fisik, le mank dekstra curricular aktivitez...nou banne zenfan nepli konne zoué. Dan troi kar kolez nepli ena plas pou spor...*

Teachers' concern for the inclusion of more activities at school emanates from the belief that co- curricular activities provide not only an outlet to the energy and frustration of adolescents, but also a means of providing socialising opportunities within the school. The current curriculum, they claim, does not take into account the needs and interests of adolescents, and the acts of indiscipline and violence may be an outcome of a rather narrow and highly academic curriculum. The participants subscribe to the idea that the very nature of school life has been altered and is now perceived in a broader perspective.

Coupled with the above is the realisation that an important constraining factor is the school infrastructure. The non existence of sports grounds and other accessory facilities in many schools accounts for increasing discipline problems.

## **6.6. Discussion**

Each school has its own culture and disciplinary problems tend to vary from school to school with many common elements. The findings from the interviews tend to lead to the conclusion that indiscipline is on the rise. However, there are fewer discipline problems in girls' schools than in boys' schools. This may be due to the biological differences. However, even in some boys' schools the problem is under control. Since the disruptive students can be identified quite early, this means that school authorities should have much more targeted actions which start right from the lower forms. Early sensitization of students may also mean that they will pay more attention to school rules and regulations. This may limit the development of negative role models, thereby reducing the intensity of the problem.

As far as the type of indiscipline is concerned, many of these have always been part of the school culture. An interesting observation is the parallel between these forms of indiscipline and the school rules. The school rules mention almost all of these problems. Therefore, the mismatch is in the observation of these rules by students. It should also be mentioned that now there are new forms of indiscipline, especially with new technologies, like multi-functional mobile phones.

### **Teachers' Conception of Discipline**

Teachers may have different views regarding the notion of discipline. Though all of them share the common core construct of indiscipline, yet variations in their interpretations can be observed. One teacher may not accept what another teacher can tolerate. This, therefore, depends on the beliefs, values or attitudes of the teachers. Some teachers are quite lenient; others are very strict.

Teachers' pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of the learner and content knowledge are other important factors to be considered. Are teachers conversant with the theories of adolescence so that they can better understand students at the Form IV and Form V levels? Do they have a good command of classroom management techniques? Newly recruited teachers, especially lady teachers, are more prone to have troubles and have more problems because very often they join the world of teaching directly from the university without any pedagogical training.

Teachers attribute the causes of indiscipline to a whole range of factors. They unanimously condemn the lack of responsibility on the part of parents. As pointed out by one teacher, parents are too liberal towards their children and this lack of authority or strictness and control over their children seems to be an obvious factor explaining indiscipline.

As discussed in the conceptual framework, the family structure itself has changed with both mother and father working in a fast-moving, materialistic world in contrast to the previous extended family structure where family responsibilities were also being shared by elders. Many teachers have pointed out in the interview that that they are being called upon to play a multidimensional role – not only as a teacher but they should also be a psychologist able to provide pastoral care, etc. They may be right as the informal education that the children used to have from elders may no longer be available. Some teachers have the impression that they have too many responsibilities to shoulder.

In this changing social set-up, teachers are being called upon to cater for pastoral care equally besides their pedagogical function. Are all teachers prepared, ready, willing or motivated to do this job? Pastoral classes are limited to only some schools. In most schools, this may be dispensed with during the form period which lasts only a few minutes. To what extent do teachers feel that they are part of the school where their contribution is valued? In state schools, teachers are regularly transferred from one institution to another, and this by all means prevents teachers from developing a sense of belonging to their school.

### **The Nature of Learners**

Has the nature of learners changed? Do students show the same respect for their teachers as it was in the past? Many teachers have been referring to their own school days to show that students are quite different today.

*Moi ce que je voulais dire, c'est que les élèves d'aujourd'hui sont vraiment différents de ce que nous, on était quand on était à l'école. On vénérât les profs, on les respectait, on les adorait mais maintenant c'est plus le cas.*

Teachers feel that their 'teacher-status' is no longer the same in comparison to that of their own teachers when they were themselves students. Many teachers feel that students do not show the expected behaviour and values. They tend to argue with teachers and challenge

their authority. Teachers assume the highest authority in the classroom by virtue of their job and knowledge, and this is what ensures their ‘security’ in the class in terms of giving instructions. When students show lack of respect towards them, they feel that their status of teachers or dignity are at stake in front of other students, and this may prompt them to use whatever means they have, conscious or unconscious, to restore the class equilibrium. Another situation where teachers are very much disturbed inside the classroom is when they are trying to explain something and students are misbehaving at the same time.

Moreover, the commitment of students to their studies is also changing. Teachers attribute this to the better economic situation which ensures that they can easily get the things that they want.

### **The Nature of Teacher/ Teacher Characteristics**

If teachers’ status seems to have changed, does this mean that teachers have also changed? Are teachers less strict today? Do they show the same wisdom as their teachers? Research has shown that teachers who master well their subject command more students’ respect as compared to those who are less conversant with their subjects. Do teachers show the required commitment and dedication to their job?

A teacher is a role model and the first example of discipline starts with him. Teachers are aware that they should project an image which commands the respect of students: *‘moi mo kroir ki nou bizin fer nou respekte...’*

The language used by teachers also matters just like the way they dress up or the way they relate to students.

Good instructional, management and relationship skills on the part of the teacher ensure the smooth running of classes. The same class may behave differently with different teachers. Knowledge of and skills in classroom management are essential attributes that should be mastered by teachers. Classroom management involves several issues like content management, conduct management, covenant management (Froyen and Iverson, 1999) and teachers should be aware of these requirements to successfully manage their classrooms. Are teachers reflective practitioners (self-examination of their professional behaviour) and do

they acknowledge when they are wrong or do they use their superior authority to always get the upper hand on students?

According to Tanner and Jones (2000), there are three main causes of misbehaviour in class: inappropriate teaching, low attainment, and threats to pupils' self-esteem and these causes are often interrelated. Pupils may also misbehave to gain increased attention, increased excitement or for the pleasure of teasing the teacher. Students tend to test up to what level the teacher can tolerate their level of indiscipline, as pointed out by one teacher:

*They want to test to what extent we are going to let them go or if we are going to be strict. They test us to know our weaknesses.*

Sometimes teachers talk about those students in the staff room and as such this results in stigmatizing students. Consequently, teachers tend to be biased towards these students.

Teachers vary in their attitudes towards discipline. There seem to be two main categories of teachers. The first category will report any act of indiscipline that he or she witnesses, whether he or she works with these students or not. The second category of teachers is quite lenient and may not bother much about these students. Teachers tend to avoid complaining to rectors to maintain a 'good image' in front of the latter. Sometimes they know that the measures they are taking to correct the students are not sufficient but this is a path of least resistance for them. Others prefer not to report certain students for fear of retaliation.

Undeniably, indiscipline affects the learning environment. Hardworking students are annoyed and frustrated when other students misbehave. The behaviour of the indisciplined students gives teachers the impression that their efforts are being wasted. Sometimes teachers find it easier to avoid this category of students. This is a smooth as well as a safe way to be out of trouble. Indiscipline also disrupts the relationship between students and teachers. *'Ils deviennent nos ennemis finalement'* some teachers have said.

Some teachers tend to be absent on days when they have to work with the indisciplined class. Indiscipline affects their mood and motivation to work:

*perdi motivation;  
...un peu frustré parce que we give the best of ourselves.*

One may ponder why teachers do not have so many problems of misbehaviour in private tuition. In this form of parallel schooling, which is not free unlike normal schools, students tend to show more commitment to their studies. Further, teachers have more power to control the students and they are more accountable. There may be more parental involvement. In private tuition there are students from different schools, both boys and girls – all of whom are quite different in their normal routine behaviour. Thus, the learning environment is quite different in these two forms of schooling. Then one may ask: How effective is teaching in Mauritian secondary schools?

How many teachers have a real commitment for the welfare of the students? On the other hand, do teachers have enough recognition for the job that they are doing? The rector considers the school as ‘his’ or ‘her’ school as he or she is the main authority in the school but this sense of belonging and concern may not be the same for teachers.

### **Empowering Schools**

All state schools are controlled by the Ministry of Education. Teachers’ request for more autonomy and power at school with respect to disciplinary actions suggests that they are not enough empowered not only in terms of authority but also in terms of the implementation of regulatory mechanisms. The forms of indiscipline enumerated by the teachers have been addressed to a large extent in the rules and regulations of the school but the mismatch seems to be due to the application of the rules. The lack of a well-defined policy concerning actions to be taken against the different types of indiscipline also needs to be looked into.

Teachers may be frustrated at times due to lack of power, especially when the administration does not support them or when there is external influence. Sometimes the school tends to minimize the problems so that they are not in trouble with parents.

The suggestions given by teachers to cope with indiscipline suggest areas of weaknesses that have to be looked into. There is also a need to identify strategies to motivate teachers to play a more active role in school discipline as a whole. If, for instance, a school has 800 students and 40 teachers, then each teacher may be given the responsibility of 20 students, a number which is not so hard to manage. It may be a good idea to allocate each teacher a certain number of students. In this way the teachers can have a closer look at them. There is the need for prompting teachers to take a more participatory role in the welfare of the school rather

than sticking to their subject areas only. One way of achieving this objective is by recognizing individual teacher's contribution.

### **Indiscipline and the Classroom Atmosphere**

Problems of indiscipline may set up a tug of war between teachers and students. This affects the teaching and learning process. An indisciplined class is like a society where law and order are not present. This type of situation affects each and every student in the class. Further, in an indisciplined learning environment, there is reduced motivation to work. To establish the classroom equilibrium, we need the effort of both students and teachers. Teachers should understand the power relationship that exists between them and the students. Since students have less authority as compared to teachers, they try to find ways to retaliate like writing damning things about teachers, scratching their cars and all sorts of things to harass teachers when they feel that there is injustice, whether it is justified or not. If teachers could only know what students think of them!

There is always a reason why a student misbehaves. This may be a good starting point for reflection on indiscipline.

### **School Management**

Managing discipline inside the school requires the concerted efforts of the teacher, rector, usher and support staff. If the discipline system does not work then one or more of the stakeholders may not be playing the game. According to teachers, there tends to be more indiscipline when there are activities at school or in the pre-examination period. This may be a point of concern for the management – how to make the students more responsible.

The regulatory framework to manage discipline does not seem to be well-defined. Though rules and regulations exist, there is still a lack of precision in the actions to be taken. A point worth noting is the value that students attach to these rules.

Indiscipline may even lead to conflict between teachers or between teachers and administrators. Neither teachers nor students should feel that one is being favoured at the expense of others.

A school is an institution which deals with human beings who have different values, attitudes, knowledge and skills, all of which keep on changing with the daily circumstances of social interaction unlike a manufacturing industry where raw materials are almost always the same and the end product is moulded in a uniform way. Despite these variations in values, both students and teachers are expected to interact according to the school norms. Clashes or indiscipline occur because the players of this social system do not abide by the expected norms.

### **Adolescence**

Adolescence is no doubt a period of turbulence and stress and from the reading of the data it seems clear that our schools do not provide the optimum conditions to help adolescents deal with some of the problems that they may face. The discussion is organised around three key aspects based on the findings of the study: firstly, the school factors are considered. These can be further categorised into teacher factors and the curriculum factors. Secondly, factors external to the school also affect adolescents' perception and expectations of schools and colour their behaviour towards adults within the school setting. Thirdly, there are also factors which pertain to the adolescents themselves.

### **School Factors**

One of the major issues that have been raised by the students concerns the curriculum. The data clearly supports the view that the current one is not tailored to suit the diverse needs of adolescent learners, their learning styles and the multidimensional aspects of learning. The findings reinforce the theoretical position adopted in the context of this study (Ballion, 2000). The heavy academic bias exhibited by the curriculum "antiseptises" learning from any enjoyment. Students' recurrent plea for the introduction of music, drama and other creative arts as well as for the introduction of field trips and opportunities for social interaction is indicative of the need to revisit the model of education adopted. Our system is still heavily anchored in the transmission model even though the profile of our learners and our expectations of schooling and education have been radically altered.

In addition to this, the way school management is organised does not favour dialogue. Most schools are still run in a highly bureaucratised manner where a rigid hierarchy assigns a fixed role to all agents. Students' discourse is still revealing of their conviction that they are at the lowest rung of the hierarchy and that teachers "*possess an unequal and greater share of*

*power*” (Pomeroy: 1999: 475). Not only must the organisation of learning activities be fundamentally altered, but it is also crucial for the management to be seen as regulating discipline and take prompt action against those who infringe the rules and regulations. Differential treatment of students by the school administration weakens the trust and faith of students in the impartiality and commitment of the management in maintaining discipline. Students expect fairness and justice in the application of sanctions. This is a sure sign that many of them expect schools to function on democratic lines rather than the behaviourist perspective currently prevalent. The blunt refusal to be controlled and conditioned is observed in many western societies and is reflective of the cultural changes happening in our own country. In Mauritius colonial remnants in the form of acceptance of authority, compliance and subordination coupled with a strong Asian deference to authority is seriously getting eroded by the media assaults of western ideals centred on the individual’s rights and privileges. Additionally, society seems to believe that emancipation of children, through the development of a critical mind, cannot be limited only to academic and intellectual activities but must take into consideration other spheres of the adolescents’ lives which will colour ultimately their own perceptions of authority.

The data supports very clearly the position that fairness and justice are the cornerstones of effective discipline. If adolescents are to respect teachers and non-teaching staff, there is a need for the latter to demonstrate and model out the qualities that they wish learners to develop. Sending mixed messages through an inability to resolve conflicts and humiliating students can be counterproductive because they indicate an inability to cater for the psycho-social and psycho-emotional wellbeing of students.

The relevance of creating a positive school ethos that will transmit and model out the relevant values and skills in participating fruitfully to the community life of the school is a must if discipline problems are to be reduced. Such a goal requires strong leadership combined with strictness, firmness and fairness in the administration and running of the school.

### **Teacher Factors**

Students reported that discipline problems are by-products of teachers’ personality and pedagogy. This is in line with the theoretical position expounded in this study. Discipline issues are not to be considered as peripheral concerns to teaching and learning. Discipline

problems exist in all classrooms but, as revealed by the data, they tend to be less in those classrooms where teachers have been able to meet more adequately both the socio-emotional needs and learning needs of the adolescent. The former refer to the creation of a psychologically safe climate where students' self esteem is not threatened by public humiliation. Corrective measures and sanctions are also applied but they aim at the behaviour and not the person. The latter concerns teacher's mastery of their subject as well the use of methodologies that take into account the varying needs of the learners and display a genuine interest in helping them learn. Perception of students of the self efficacy of teachers and their management of discipline is also an important determinant of classroom interactions.

Teacher personality also affects the relationship teachers will develop with their students and the occurrence of discipline problems in their classrooms. The data confirms that charismatic teachers are those who are open enough to accept dialogue, use humour and show understanding of students' problems.

Teachers' beliefs and expectations also have an impact on the frequency of discipline problems. The data seems to mirror an understanding that the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecies is also highly prevalent in the case of discipline problems. Teachers tend to label students with one of two records of discipline problems and this negatively predisposes teachers to overreact to the behaviour of those very students. The vicious circle thus created worsens the lack of understanding.

### **Control Mechanism**

Detention class is outdated, according to students. It serves no purpose. Students go to the detention class to have fun. One girl describes what she saw and felt when she was once sent to the detention class.

*nou alle laba pou amizé. Nou alle laba ziska 3 zere e demi... Banne la zoué, manzé. Zot tout ine fer ene group pé kozé. Pé blagué, pé riyé. o fet, népli ene klas daré. Népli ene pinision, mé kouma dir ene ene lot klas rekreasion.*

It seems that there is no teacher to look after the students in the detention class.

*la plipar di tan, lé profeser zot donne banne klas daré, mé zot, zot pé alle kot zot, zot...zot pa res la, zot pa koné ki banne zélev la pé fer ... zot pa kas la tet apré ki banne la pe fer.*

Detention class as an act of punishment has no ‘raison d’être’ nowadays because it does not give the impression that it is linked with discipline. No mechanism of control exists after school hours since everybody in the school is in a haste to leave the school compound.

### **External Factors**

Apart from these arguments, students also discussed the need for them to juggle with different roles at the same time and it seems that there is some degree of role confusion among a number of students who cannot distinguish among the different contexts and different expectations placed on them in their enactment of different roles.

Much of this role confusion is in the normal course of things because, as expounded by Erikson (1968), one of the major conflicts that need to be resolved in adolescence is that of identity formation. However, increasingly nowadays, school-going students seem to aspire to a school life that resembles much campus life at the university. Their expectations and aspirations from school are fuelled by the media and the Indian and European soap operas and American/European/Indian movies. While, on the one hand, there is strong evidence that school life has to be diversified and incorporate the recreational and “learning while having fun”, there is an equal need for the re-affirmation that school is serious business and that parameters that guide school life be clearly defined and agreed upon.

In order to achieve the above and to provide adolescents with strong ‘roots’, dialogue at all levels, be it teachers - students, administration - students, parents - administration, parents - teachers has to be substantially reinforced, if not established, in some cases. Concurrently with these concerns, the influence of peers should not be underestimated. Peers develop a common perception and outlook of school life and shape student behaviour to a large extent. Educational and school policies regarding school discipline have to take into account the relevance of group dynamics, especially when dealing with adolescents.

### **Self Management Skills**

The data also seems to gesture towards an understanding that students are not adequately equipped with self-management skills necessary to reconcile the complex demand of pre-

adulthood. While there is clear support from the data that the discipline problems are, to a certain extent, the manifestations of the stress and strains experienced by adolescents struggling to come to terms with the increasingly complex demands of adult life, students' discourse also reveals that the way school life is organised, the curriculum at large and the nature of interactions within the school and the home do not offer the required opportunities for adults and peers to teach those self-management skills. Because of the highly competitive nature of the system, students and probably teachers find themselves trapped in a vicious circle of content coverage rather than focusing on skills that may not be directly related to the examinations. If adolescents do not have the required scaffolding to successfully negotiate the transition to pre-adulthood emotionally and socially, there is a heightened likelihood that their distress will take the form of what adults usually perceive as behaviour problems. They also need to develop emotional literacy.

### **Media**

The influence of the media on adolescents cannot be overlooked. New technologies and improved access to diverse forms of communication have contributed to the emergence of a youth culture that is intimately tied to the developments and innovations taking place in the developed countries. The influence can be experienced not only at the superficial level of dress, music and food habits but also at the expectations, dispositions and aspirations of school going children.

Indeed with the rise of nuclear families, the media can be construed as one of the most potent factors colouring youth behaviour. The phenomenon of Marilyn Manson is widespread in secondary schools in Mauritius; dating and sex have come to be perceived by adolescents as the hallmark of successful adolescent life and entry into adulthood. In the span of two decades the culture of adolescents has so radically been altered and moulded by the media that it has exacerbated the problem of generation gap.

The absence of critical literacy and media literacy in our school curriculum is a serious weakness that has to be addressed. Many of the behaviour problems observed in schools are part of the "normal" process of growing up but unlimited and uncontrolled access to the media has intensified the problem.

# CHAPTER 7

## Document Analysis

In addition to the survey and interviews, we have also analysed the rules and regulations of the schools which define the parameters of acceptable behaviour within a school. However, what was deemed to be equally crucial was the stakeholders' perception of the application and use of the rules and regulations. Data about this particular aspect was collected through a free-writing exercise. Students of Form V from our sample were requested to express their views on the issue of discipline in their school through an essay and its content has been analysed. Moreover, we thought it of interest to bring to the fore the content of press articles as regards the acts of indiscipline and violence committed by secondary school students over the past ten years (from 1995 to 2005). The analysis developed is based on an extensive coverage of articles published in the major local newspapers which provide a sound empirical back-up.

### **7.1. Rules and Regulations of Schools**

Central to the maintenance of school discipline is the establishment of control mechanisms, which are embedded in the school rules and regulations. The underlying philosophy of school discipline is made explicit through these rules and regulations. At the very beginning of our study, a letter was sent to some secondary school rectors and principals informing them about the objectives of the study and requesting their collaboration in the form of giving us access to their school rules and regulations, and any code of conduct relating to teachers. Fifty six secondary schools responded positively to our request. These documents provided us with an understanding of the spectrum of measures and disciplinary actions taken by the school.

This section starts by charting out the range of available disciplinary rules and regulations in Mauritian secondary schools. Then, it points out the similarities and differences between the rules among the different types of school. A comparison of the rules between boys' and girls' schools follows. The analysis is based on a sample of 56 schools as shown in Table 7.1.

Type of school	Boys	Girls	Mixed	Total
Government	5	14	–	19
Private – confessional	2	6	1	9
Private – non-confessional	10	10	8	28
Total	17	30	9	56

**Table 7.1 Types of School and Gender Distribution**

### **7.1.1. General Observation**

Since there is no national policy on the issue of discipline, each school has to devise its own rules and regulations. In some schools, rules and regulations are detailed since they appear in the form of a booklet and both students and responsible parties are requested to sign in the page of the booklet in order to show that they have taken cognizance of the code of conduct of the school. In some rules and regulations, it is clearly spelt out that morning assembly should be held regularly. They have also written some sanctions to be taken in case of misbehaviour. Most of them seem to be centred around the following aspects which are elaborated below:

Discipline (on and outside school premises)

- School uniform
- Punctuality
- Absences
- Attendance
- Truancy

#### **School Uniform**

The first important aspect of discipline is the school uniform. Emphasis is laid on wearing proper school uniform and, ‘proper’ being defined as the right colour and length in a girls’ school.

## **Punctuality is given central consideration in all schools**

The rules and regulations point out clearly the school's starting and ending time. Lateness is considered as a serious violation of the rules and there seems close monitoring of lateness since schools insist on an explanatory note and even have recourse to detention for repetitive lateness. A lateness book or lateness form is used to keep track of latecomers in the usher's office. No student is allowed, except in special cases, to leave the school premises before the end of the classes.

## **Absences**

Absentees are required to produce a letter of apology on the very day of resumption of attendance. Just as in the case of lateness, failure to produce a note may entail punitive measures. Absences of more than three consecutive days require a medical certificate as explanatory note. One school has also mentioned that the medical certificate should reach the rector before 10 00 am on the fourth day. For extreme cases of absences and lateness, some schools also specify that students may be placed on 'special reports' or even expelled. The repercussion on the school leaving certificate is also mentioned.

Moreover, some schools also state clearly that a student in an HSC class who is absent for more than ten unexplained occasions is not eligible to compete for the State of Mauritius Secondary School Scholarship. From the regular reports of high absenteeism in the third term at HSC level, it is evident that such sanctions are not evenly applied.

The following two points mentioned in a school disciplinary rule in connection with absenteeism are noteworthy:

- 'No provision is made in the Education Act for absences on grounds of revision work or pending SC or HSC results.'
- 'A student who is officially absent on the school register does not have the right to be on the school premises or attend classes.'

## **Early Departure**

To have a better control of the students' movement, either the latter are asked to bring a letter written by their responsible party for an early departure or the students themselves should write a letter to request for early departure. It is a way for the administration to protect itself from all sorts of accusations if anything happens to the students outside the school compound.

## **Truancy**

Truancy has become a major problem these days. Very often, students are seen loitering in commercial centres during school hours. The school is helpless to control those who are absent from school.

### **7.1.2. The Disciplinary System**

The disciplinary system in secondary schools is stratified along the school hierarchy. At the level of students, the class captain, prefects and student council members help in maintaining the disciplinary policies. At a higher level, the form teacher in charge of a given class is responsible for coping with problematic behaviours at the level of his/her class. Ultimately, the disciplinary committee involving the rector/ principal, usher/ matron and some teachers, is the main authority to cope with indiscipline.

## **Control Mechanisms**

Schools have developed a number of mechanisms to be able to have control over students. For example, attendance card, lateness card, morning and afternoon registers have been devised to control punctuality and attendance which are important aspects of discipline.

## **Hierarchy of Disciplinary Measures**

The disciplinary measures taken against students vary according to the types of offence committed. The following hierarchy of measures can be gleaned from the rules and regulations:

- Reprimand by teacher

- Reprimand by form teacher
- Loss of privileges
- Assigning additional work
- Detention during lunch-time and after school hours
- Saturday detention
- Warning by rector
- Special reports
- Communication with responsible parties
- Rustication - temporary suspension
- Expulsion

Whether these measures are implemented successfully is an issue that will have to be looked into.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Occasionally, parents are summoned to schools when serious offences occur. The aim is to make parents aware of the gravity and consequences of the offence and to solicit their collaboration to make their wards adhere to the rules and regulations of the school.

### **7.1.3. Types of Offences**

Teenagers/ adolescents have been found committing a wide range of offences in secondary schools. These vary from simple misbehaviour to gross misconduct like drug trafficking. Some schools seem to have reinforced their rules on the basis of past events. However, not all schools point out the different types of offences in their rules and regulations. The following offences have been gathered after examining school rules.

#### **Minor offences**

- Not wearing school uniform/ or the right uniform and improper dressing
- Truancy – shirking classes
- Leaving school without permission
- Prolonged periods of unexplained absences

- Lateness
- Playing cards
- Speaking at the top of one's voice – making excessive noise
- Spoiling school books and magazines
- Smoking
- Loitering in the school yard during school hours
- Playing catapult
- Scribbling on desks, chairs and walls

### **Physical Violence**

- Misbehaviour in school – fighting
- Insulting members of staff – teaching and non-teaching, using abusive language
- Threats of violence
- Hooliganism
- Bullying and harassing students
- Possession of harmful objects like knives, penknives, cutter

### **Reports/Exams**

- Cheating in tests and examinations
- Falsifying signature of responsible party
- Forging documents
- Tampering with grades and marks in report book

### **Pornographic Materials**

- Reading or being in possession of pornographic books and magazines/CDS
- Obscenity

### **Smoking/Drug**

- Smoking
- Drug addiction or trafficking

## **Illegal Financial Transactions**

- Stealing (under any form)
- Unauthorized financial transactions
- Betting (Turf betting)

## **Vandalism**

- Damage to school furniture and school property

## **Moral Violence**

- Intimidation
- Insubordination

## **Use of New Technology**

- Use of walkman and mobile
- Visiting unauthorized websites

## **Misbehaviour Outside School**

- Misbehaviour in buses and at bus stations or in the public or in stadiums
- Indiscipline when attending inter-college debates and meetings

One aspect which does not appear in these rules and regulations concerns the hair, dress and jewellery despite the fact that other data collection tools reveal that teachers find shocking the way students dress themselves to attend school. For Raj Paneken (*L'Express-Outlook*, 17 August 2004), it is inconceivable that boys come to school with their ears lined with earrings with two or three necklaces around their necks along with a mop of dyed hair.

### **7.1.4. Commonalities and Differences between Boys' and Girls' Schools**

There is not much difference between the disciplinary rules in boys' and girls' schools. Each of these categories of schools specifies almost the same aspects of discipline like attendance, uniform, punishment, etc. Even the sanctions or punishment seem to be quite similar. However, girls' schools seem to be more cautious. Also because of the specificity of girls' schools, certain features of their rules and regulations differ from those of boys' schools. For

example, the length of girls' uniform should be a minimum of five centimeters below the knees; make-up and jewellery are prohibited or long hair must be tied. Another example is:

*Students (girls) are advised not to speak at the top of their voices in public places.*

Early leaving seems to be more flexible in boys' schools.

### **7.1.5. Disciplinary Measures in Mixed Schools**

In mixed schools, the rules and regulations are quite similar to those in single-sex schools. Most of the mixed schools do not have special provisions in their rules and regulations with regard to the fact they have both boy and girl teenagers. However, some schools do specify a certain number of rules. For example, the following were noted:

- *Only verbal greetings are allowed between boys and girls;*
- *Boys and girls should NOT always walk around together on/off school premises;*
- *Physical appearance, dress, grooming, posture, presence and poise either underscore credibility or damage it. Students should exercise caution with regard to the part they want to play at ... school so that both their classmates and their teachers would not be distracted by their appearance and would instead enjoy working with them;*
- *Les élèves doivent respecter la mixité de l'établissement et ne pas se laisser aller à des comportements ambigus ;*

### **7.1.6. Differences between SSS and non-SSS Disciplinary Rules**

A comparison of the rules and regulations in state, confessional and private schools shows that each school has its own set of rules, independent of whether it belongs to any category. In other words, it cannot be generalized that all confessional schools have similar rules or the rules in all government schools are consistent. Thus, no general pattern can be discerned within one category of schools.

Confessional schools have the advantage of having a school culture. The daily morning assembly probably gives the administration the opportunity to emphasize the rules and regulations of the school. Even in many private schools there is a morning assembly. Such a practice is not common in state schools. Rectors do not care about having an assembly everyday, considering it a waste of time. Some may call for an assembly once a week or when the need is felt. One rector even wrote that he could not organize regular assemblies to discuss daily problems with students and impart values because the hall of the school was

placed at the disposal of the MES for examinations (RCC Newsletter in *L'Express*, 23 August, 1998)

In some confessional schools, discipline is viewed from a wider perspective. The concept of 'Code of Behaviour' is preferred to 'Rules and Regulations'. The code of discipline starts by recalling Gospel values. A detailed code of discipline includes several features - the philosophy, aims, role of parents, academic requirements, rewards, sanctions and steps in the disciplinary process, among others. It also has a code of discipline contract which both students and parents have to approve of and sign. One striking feature of the Code of Behaviour is the 'sanctions and steps in the disciplinary process'. This section points out the step by step action that the school envisages when confronted with indisciplined students. It should, however, be mentioned that some private schools also have such detailed disciplinary procedures.

#### **7.1.7. Some Aspects to be Further Considered**

A number of interesting features appearing in the rules and regulations are outlined below. These features may be helpful in reshaping disciplinary policies or in the development of guidelines. The following points deserve attention:

- codes of behaviour
- class rules
- school rules
- rights and responsibilities of students
- system of reward – for example, recognizing regular attendance and rewarding exceptional behaviour.
- hierarchy of sanctions
- role of each stakeholder; for example, the role and authority of the class captain, role of teachers and responsible parties
- approval of disciplinary agreements by both responsible party and students
- the student's journal – signed every week by the responsible party
- discipline in buses

### **7.1.8. Legal framework**

Some of the school rules point out the existing legal measures. For example, rustication is a constituted law of Mauritius (Regulation 13 – (1) of the Education Ordinance

Whenever it shall appear to the Principal of a government ... Secondary School ... that the conduct, work or progress of any pupil is unsatisfactory, he may temporarily suspend a pupil, or require the Responsible Party of the pupil, by notice in writing, to withdraw him from school within such a period as may be specified in the notice. If the Responsible Party fails to withdraw the pupil within that period, the pupil shall, with the approval of the Director, be expelled from the school.

### **7.1.9. Authoritative Nature of the Disciplinary Rules**

The rules and regulations very often show that discipline in Mauritian schools is viewed from an authoritarian perspective as can be seen from the following quotes and phrases:

- the authority of teachers should, in no way and at no time, be challenged and bypassed;
- failure to do a class work or homework will not be tolerated;
- very severely punished;
- repercussion on the leaving certificate;

The language used to formulate the rules and regulations is quite harsh at times. For example:

- leave (the school) if found pregnant because this institution is not made to cater for such cases or will be expelled;
- truancy will not be tolerated.

Paneken (*L'Express-Outlook*, 17 August, 2004) argues that the success of secondary education depends on rigorous discipline. He further adds that to-day the survival of our education depends on an iron discipline, especially where boys are concerned. Such a rigorous discipline will also help to preserve these brand new secondary schools in which billions have been invested.

### **7.1.10. Lack of Precision**

We have also noted some vague sentences like

- frequent lateness will be viewed with great concern;
- missing from classroom and/ or running away from school is a very serious offence;
- students guilty of such offences shall be very severely punished.

Such warnings could give rise to different interpretations since expressions such as ‘frequent lateness’, ‘with great concern’ and ‘very severely punished’ could entail a punishment which is not in proportion to the offence.

However, one should realise that rules and regulations are not just ends in themselves but form part of strategies aiming at developing a school ethos conducive to teaching and learning.

## **7.2. Students’ Essay: Content Analysis**

One of the objectives of this study is to listen to the pupils’ voice on the issue of indiscipline/violence in secondary schools. Data was therefore collected by asking students to write freely about ‘Indiscipline and Violence’ in their schools. To ensure content validity, assurance of anonymity and confidentiality was given to them, i.e they were asked not to write their name and that of the school.

### **7.2.1. Forms of Indiscipline in Secondary Schools**

Some common types of indiscipline seem to persist in boys’ and girls’ schools. However, there are schools which tend to have specific problems which will be analysed under ‘problematic schools’, i.e. schools having very serious problems to cope with.

#### **Uniform**

Non-conformity to school uniform is perceived as a major type of indiscipline in girls’ schools. ‘Students don’t wear proper uniform’ was repeatedly mentioned.

Girls do find different means of making the school uniform more attractive, like wearing it shorter than required by the school rules. Others would add jewelry or use make-up to be more in line with fashion. Some would carry trendy clothes in their bags which they would swap after school is over.

For boys, non-conformity to school rules is related mainly to hair style. It would take such forms as hair-dyeing, hair shaving or growing long hair and these are normally not acceptable to schools.

Generally students would be in favour of some flexibility concerning school uniform. This can be related to adolescent culture. As part of adolescent development, students are very much concerned about their looks, their body image, girls wishing to appear attractive and boys wanting to have an 'in' look.

"Physical attractiveness and body image have an important relationship to the adolescent's positive self-evaluation, popularity, and peer acceptance".  
(Koff, Rierdan & Stubbs (1990), cited in P.Rice, 1996: 119)

This could explain why students make attempts to transgress the rules concerning uniform.

### **Lateness, Skipping Classes, Truancy**

Lateness seems to be a main indiscipline problem in many schools. Skipping classes also seems to be a common trend: "*se sauver des classes pour aller faire une promenade.*"

It seems that students do it just for fun; however, they also argue that this happens more in classes which are considered boring.

Truancy is mentioned, but to a lesser extent, and seems to be specific to problem schools which will be discussed later.

### **Disruption of Classes / Talking in Class, Use of Mobile Phones**

In girls' schools, disrupting the class through talking while the teacher is explaining is considered a form of indiscipline. "*When a teacher is explaining in the class, some students are either chatting among themselves, and some are using their mobiles to sms their boyfriends.*"

Use of mobile in class is also common in boys' schools. It would appear that mobile phones are a common feature among students as they have a status symbol.

Students, however, complained that use of mobile phone in class is prohibited for them but not for teachers who use it frequently. They feel that the same rule should apply to teachers and students alike.

## **Home-Work**

'Home-work not done' is a common indiscipline problem in schools. In both boys' and girls' schools, this is a major area of conflict with teachers.

### **7.2.2. Forms of Violence**

#### **Use of Coarse Language**

Both boys and girls report using coarse language as a major discipline problem in schools: '*zot dir bane gro mo*', « *zot servi langaz mové.*' This is practised among students and at times towards teachers.

For some students, swearing gives them the feeling of being an adult in front of class-mates and towards teachers.

#### **Vandalism**

In a few schools, students claim that this is a problem. It appears that one way of expressing frustration is by breaking school furniture and window panes. Feelings of rejection, exclusion and repression cause students to react violently. One student writes: '*The punishment at school aggravates the state of mind of the students. They are frustrated and more and more hate school.*'

Other students relate it to the identity issue : '*Ces jeunes se sentent forts et autoritaires en faisant la violence.*' For students one way of affirming oneself is through acts of violence.

The influence of media and role models is also reported: '*on regarde les films d'actions où la violence est présente,*' '*c'est pour imiter les acteurs.*'

#### **Fighting, Bullying**

Girls mention fighting because of boy-friends as a form of indiscipline. This includes verbal abuse and physical abuse such as pulling hair and beating.

Bullying is more common in boys' schools. Big boys bully small ones during recess and in the school bus. Again it seems that they do so to affirm their superiority. '*Zot mem mari*' writes a student.

Fighting among rival groups also occurs in some boys' schools. It seems to be the result of strong peer pressure, with some individuals influencing others.

### **Flirting and Its Consequences**

According to girls, flirting is related to two accompanying discipline problems: lateness and violence. Lateness at school is explained by the fact that boys and girls either do not pay attention to time or one of them would ask to prolong the meeting by another ten or fifteen minutes. Violence occurs when boys fight to have the same girl: '*les collegiens se battent à cause des filles*' or '*si deux garçons veulent avoir la même fille, ils vont se battre.*' It is worth mentioning that in one co-educational school, problems related to sexual behaviours and attitudes seem widespread: '*souvent les filles sont agressées sexuellement par les garçons par des attouchements.*' Some even mention: '*échange de coups entre un garçon et sa copine.*'

### **7.2.3. Teacher-Student Relationship**

Many students reported that there is a lack of respect towards teachers nowadays: '*Zenfan pena respé pou zot profeser*', '*koz brite ar profeser.*'

Students tend to answer back, use harsh words and do not listen to teachers. While some attribute this to the desire to 'act big', 'assume an identity', others argue that some teachers do not respect pupils in the first place: '*Péna maniere koz ar zelev.*'

They claim that students are verbally abused, humiliated by teachers. In some boys' schools, it has been reported that teachers even use corporal punishment. They also complain of ill-treatment from administrative staff. '*Le personnel et les professeurs ne respectent pas les élèves.*' In the presence of inappropriate models from the authorities themselves, students retaliate.

In a few schools, students attribute poor teacher-pupil relationship to favouritism and racism on the part of teachers. Those students who feel unfairly treated and excluded create trouble in the class: *'Ils veulent montrer qu'ils existent.'*

It seems that at the root of indiscipline/violence problems is misunderstanding between teachers and students. As one student writes : *'il y a un manque de dialogue entre les professeurs et les élèves et ils n'ont même pas le temps de connaître notre nom et sont parfois même irrespectueux. Pensez-vous que nous, les élèves, nous allons coopérer ?'*

#### **7.2.4. Problem Schools**

One school seems to be experiencing acute discipline and violence problems including major ones. Students unanimously reported the seriousness of the problem : *'le collège est devenu une table ronde pour les bandits' 'le collège est une usine pour produire les voyous.'*

It would seem that the reputation of the school is having a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' effect. Everybody seems to know that there are serious problems in this school and students act accordingly. Students have reported widespread problems of *'bullying, truancy, drugs and alcohol consumption, smoking, racketing, vandalism, fights with cutters', 'attouchements sexuels among boys.'*

Students in that particular school attribute the cause of violence and indiscipline to: *'family background, lack of proper control, bad relationships with teachers and rector, reputation of school, peer pressure, exposure to models of violence.'*

It seems that all stakeholders are aware of these problems in many secondary schools but they tacitly downplay their importance while such schools would require urgent attention to prevent the situation from deteriorating.

### **7.3. Press Articles**

Indiscipline and violence have been viewed from the inside (rules and regulations and essays). The issue has also often made the headlines of local newspapers. How the outside world perceives students' acts of indiscipline and violence? What are the frequency and the gravity of these acts? What are the repercussions that these acts can have on the school and

the students when they are reported in the press? These issues are analysed in the third part of this chapter.

### **7.3.1. Scholarship and Violence**

Very often the press has reported acts of indiscipline and violence when students are involved in situations that should not form part of the school culture.

An act of violence that hit the headlines of the newspapers in 2005 was the way some students of the Royal College of Curepipe expressed their joy after the Higher School Certificate results were published. Once the names of the scholarship winners were made public, students started expressing their joy. But this was not limited to the four walls of the schools; students went out of the school for a manifestation. They ignored the warning of the head of school because, at that particular moment, nobody could stop them from expressing their joy with a lot of fanfare.

So, in 2005, many students of the Royal College of Curepipe hired a bus and went to Quatre Bornes to express their joy in front of a girls' school, the Loreto Convent. They behaved so badly that there was unanimous condemnation of their behaviour in the press. It was reported that girls from that school were physically and verbally assaulted, bottles of urine were thrown on them and foul language written on the walls. Four boys were arrested by the police. In another girls' school in Curepipe, students threw down the dustbin, used foul language again, drank alcohol and smoked on the school premises. Police was called to restore law and order.

It has been argued in the press at that time

- there was a link between what happened at Quatre Bornes and the introduction of Form VI schools, introduced in 2003. It was said those who were involved in physical and verbal assault were those students who do have the "Royal College culture", especially those admitted to Form VI and who have suddenly become 'plus royalistes que le roi';
- the product of a star school should be 'violent free'. Since the students at the Royal College, Curepipe, are perceived as 'la crème de la crème', they should

not have such violent conduct. So, it is no longer true to say that the Royal College is a star school. It is only a myth;

- the use of bawdy language and the fact that physical violence has been used on girls show that our students have internalised the patriarchal model where men think that they are the ‘masters’ and the women, the ‘servants’. The issue of gender equality was put to question with the behaviour of these students;
- moral values and civic education in schools have been raised in relation to the misbehaviour of the students;
- the authority of rectors in public secondary schools has also become an issue through this act of violence;
- issues such as the emotional and psychological development of students, violence in society and in the media and the materialistic way of life that has invaded the country were raised.

This act of violence was unanimously condemned by various stakeholders but at the same time some serious issues were raised. And one of them was the Form VI schools. The management of some 1000 students of 17/18 years old in relation to discipline was raised but not much attention was paid to this issue. Moreover, one should ask oneself whether the curriculum in secondary schools should not address the gender issue!

### **7.3.2. Jump Around Youth Concert**

Another instance of gross violation of school rules and regulations as well as gross misconduct in the absence of teachers and administrators concerns the Jump Around Youth Concert which had been organised just before the National day. In 2004 and 2005 some students misbehaved, giving food for thought to the organisers. The concert is meant for secondary school students, and it is an opportunity for some of them to display their talent as singer or musician. But, at the same time, some students among the spectators take advantage of this ‘freedom’ to drink alcohol, to fight with others and to use foul language. During the 2004 concert, students were found drunk, a bus was damaged by inebriated students and a 16 year old student was wounded with a knife and had to be transported to the hospital. In 2004, the national flag was torn apart, a photo of which was found in the local papers.

The same situation was reported in the press in 2005. «*Un adolescent s'est blessé au poignet en cassant une vitre d'un autobus au moment où il essayait de l'arrêter.*» Police officers say that many students were found drunk and in Flacq “*des jeunes filles ayant consommé de l'alcool ont reçu des soins.*»

The only reaction that was noted was that of one of the organisers: “*il ne faut pas s'attaquer aux symptômes, mais au fond du problème. Pour cela, il faut l'aide de la famille, des écoles et des medias.*» Reference to blatant misbehaviour by students during Jump Around Youth Concert should not justify the abolition of such events. On the contrary, we subscribe to the idea that had these concerts been organised more frequently, students over time would learn to behave in a responsible manner.

### **7.3.3. Internal Factors**

Press reports showed the outbreak of violence as an expression of frustration, of disapproval and of anger, on the part of the students. Very often such incidents have also constituted the headlines of local newspapers.

In several state secondary schools, students have demonstrated because of lack of teachers, for teachers of a particular subject and teaching facilities (no science laboratories), sports facilities (no gymnasium, no playground at times), and library facilities. In one case, the students manifested their anger because the building was so old that it demanded immediate repairs, which the Ministry would not approve of. The idea of equality as promoted by the Ministry is not respected by the Ministry itself in its treatment of different state schools. Difference in treatment may increase the chance that acts of indiscipline and violence will occur in the school. When the students feel dissatisfied with the school administration or the Ministry's vain promises to improve the situation they tend to develop an aggressive attitude towards the school.

At the Ministry's level, these expressions of discontent were considered as an act of indiscipline by the students and a lack of leadership on the part of some rectors. Officers disapproved the fact that the Ministry was doing nothing but the students had a feeling of

injustice because while money had been earmarked for the construction of new state schools, students were not given the same facilities everywhere.

Another cause for demonstration was the absence of dialogue between administration and students. Since the rector would not listen to the students' complaint in a private school in the north of the island, they decided to destroy school property. Tables, chairs, blackboard, window panes and partitioning were destroyed because the rector did not take any action against a teacher who used foul language or who was responsible for sexual harassment.

The adverse effect also had repercussions sometimes. When a teacher was suspended because he used foul language and made obscene gestures towards girls, some students disagreed with the decision of the administration and expressed their disapproval by not entering the class.

So when students did not agree with the decision of the rector, they did not hesitate to show their disapproval. Students in a secondary school in the north expressed their discontent when the rector did not allow a girl to enter the class because she was not wearing the uniform prescribed by the rules and regulations of the school. Officers of the ministry had to intervene since this event took a dangerous turn.

The above cases point to the fact that indiscipline is also caused by factors inherent to the system. But whatever be the root cause of the disease, indiscipline does have very serious consequences for the school and for the students.

#### **7.3.4. Dangerous Acts of Indiscipline**

The data shows that truancy is a very current aspect of indiscipline, and to play truant can at times be very dangerous. A student from a secondary school in the south and another one from a school in the lower Plaine Wilhems got drowned. Instead of going to school, they went to a nearby pond ('bassin') where swimming is dangerous because it could have fatal consequences. This may relate to what Elkind (1976) calls the 'Personal fable', that is the feeling of invulnerability which encourages adolescents in risk-taking behaviours.

One important aspect of truancy as far as girls are concerned is prostitution. Some girls claim they get involved in prostitution in order to be 'in', as they said: '*j'aime la belle vie, les parents ne peuvent pas nous l'offrir, alors on se prostitue pour croquer la vie à belle dent*' (*Cinq-plus dimanche*, 3 mars 2003). Cases of pregnant girls attending schools have also been reported. Such cases naturally transcend the boundaries of indiscipline and violence.

Vandalism in school is seen as a regular feature according to some teachers. However, as long as it has been within limits or accepted misbehaviour by the school administration, no legal action has been taken. The destruction of one item was not reported to the police. But when it comes to several tables, chairs and window panes and more seriously to putting fire to the toilet, it becomes a cause for concern, and a police case needs to be filed because vandalism is no longer linked with misbehaviour but with very dangerous acts such as destroying public property. In 1999, two students from a well-off family and attending a state school in the south of the island, sprinkled two toilets of the school with petrol and set them on fire. They were arrested. When students could go so far in their attempt to destroy school property, one is bound to ask oneself whether school is a safe place for students and teachers. Controlling violence in schools is seen as an extension of public safety. At the same time such acts could be seen as a manifestation of school inadequacy to respond to students' needs to carry out its real educative mandate.

### **7.3.5. Very Dangerous Acts of Indiscipline**

Some very dangerous acts of indiscipline were also reported in the press. Drug trafficking seems to gather momentum on school premises. One student was expelled from a confessional school because he was found in possession of cannabis (*gandia*). Two other students were arrested by the police for drug trafficking on school premises in the south. These are rare cases which have been reported in the press. Very often these cases are not reported to protect the reputation of the school. Students are expelled (at times, this also is impossible) if found guilty of drug trafficking. Those who have been found drunk are just rusticated.

Nowadays, students are ready to settle account, with peers or with teachers. They or their parents can physically harm teachers. Cases of such violence happened in schools in lower

Plaine Wilhems and in Rodrigues in 2005. More serious are fights among students using cutters, knives or other dangerous weapons. This can happen on or outside the school compound or in the school bus. Such cases, though rare, create an atmosphere of insecurity both for the students and for teachers. One student in a school found in the north of the island was stabbed with a knife in his belly while trying to interfere in a fight between two other students on the school premises. Another one was beaten in the school bus in the south. In another school, teachers did not interfere while two students were fighting with a knife in their hand.

The press has repeatedly reported all these cases – from expression of discontent to fight with sharp weapons, from truancy with all its negative consequences to drug trafficking. It is understood that these cases are rare; nevertheless, one can ask whether the school compound is a safe place for teaching and learning to take place. One may as well ask: what are students learning?

One thing is certain: these dangerous and very dangerous acts of indiscipline must be seriously addressed so that a strong signal may be given that they will not be tolerated. At the same time, officers from the ministry should look into the various causes of indiscipline and provide support to students.

#### **7.4. Discussion**

Most of the schools emphasize similar aspects. The adequacy and precision of the rules vary from school to school. Some schools just provide one sheet containing rules while others have a whole booklet, specifying quite extensively and clearly the different rules and regulations. The rules are directed towards the problems of behaviour that have always been associated with adolescence. Moreover, the rules show that administrators are very much conscious of the image of the school, especially in the public, and when the students are wearing the school uniform.

Interestingly, though all the government schools work under the aegis of the government yet they have varied disciplinary rules. A similar observation holds for confessional schools. Is there a need for uniformity? Some schools do not seem to update their disciplinary policies frequently. Often disciplinary rules are given but detailed sanctions are not always explicit.

Lateness and attendance seem to be an important concern for schools, taking into consideration the attention given to the precise rules which govern punctuality. The school rules cater for discipline both inside and outside schools. As indiscipline tends to be highly prevalent in buses, some schools have also found it important to include in their rules a code which specifies how students should address the bus conductor. Another noticeable point is that as Mauritius is a multicultural and multiethnic country, some schools have pointed out that there should be no cultural touch to school uniform.

### **Power Relationship**

According to Slee (1995), in order to cope with indiscipline not only are punishment regimes and decision-making structures important but also decision-making should be participatory. Teachers should have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with troublesome young people.

In a classroom, there is a power relationship between students and teachers (Slee, 1995). In most cases teachers have the upper hand in this power relationship with adolescents or teenagers.

School rules should ensure that teachers are democratic. Decision-making processes should be based on participatory rather than authoritarian models (Slee, 1995). Administrators, teachers and students should negotiate to reach an agreed set of resolutions to resolve conflicts. Are administrators and teachers willing to involve students?

One of the characteristics of school discipline is that students should feel comfortable and free from threat. Rigorousness of rules should not be resorted to at the expense of social justice and democratic principles.

As far as students are concerned, though they acknowledge that there are problems related to indiscipline and violence in their schools, they do not condone such acts. On the contrary, they have expressed concern over this state of affairs and would wish to see actions taken.

From the data obtained from students' written expressions, four major themes seem to emerge related to indiscipline and violence in secondary schools: adolescent culture, teacher-student relationship, curriculum, school management.

### **Adolescent Culture**

In the conceptual framework, adolescent "identity crisis" (Erikson, 1968, Marcia 1994) is discussed, where the moratorium period is seen as a time where adolescents wish to show that they are grown-up and experiment with adult-like behaviours. From what the students write, it would seem that many acts of indiscipline become a way to assert oneself as a grown-up : *"By being undisciplined they want to show that they are right, they are more powerful."*

This situation begs the following questions: Why do the young assert themselves through acts of indiscipline and violence, and what are the opportunities provided to the young at school to assert themselves as grown-ups?

This study pinpoints the need to provide positive outlets for the young to indulge in adult-like behaviours. These could be in the form of community-oriented activities where they could assume responsibilities and act 'big'. They could also be in the form of student-initiated projects within the school itself where opportunities to behave as grown-ups could be encouraged.

Adolescence is also that period where the individual looks for freedom and autonomy. They discard their childhood inferiority and subordination to adults and consider themselves as equals. They wish to express their ideas and opinions and have a say in what concerns them. One question we may ask here is : how far do our schools allow adolescents to express their ideas and views about school ? How far do they participate in decision-making?

Could it be that adolescents express themselves through indiscipline and violence in quest of autonomy and freedom?

This study highlights the importance of including adolescents in decision-making concerning the school. One possibility may be to involve students in formulating rules and regulations about the school. Forums within the school could be explored for allowing students to

discuss issues of concern, express their views and come up with solutions. This would provide positive channels of expression, and autonomy.

Conformity to peer pressure is a major issue during adolescence. It can be positive or negative (Santrock 2004). Adolescents in this study have reported how very often acts of discipline and violence result from peer pressure. Using peer conformity positively in prosocial activities may be perceived as an adequate channel to cater for students' need for self-assertion. This would take the form of clubs, social activities within the school. Students would be engaging in peer activities productively.

Adolescence is a period where students are influenced by role models. Students have mentioned the influence of the media in the use of violence and adolescents tend to imitate their idols. What positive role models are we providing in the Mauritian context? There is a need to promote positive role models in different spheres of life for adolescents in schools.

### **Teacher-Student Relationship**

From the data gathered, it seems that a number of indiscipline problems arise from poor teacher-pupil relationship. Students seem to say that teachers do not understand them, do not respect them, do not take time to listen to them and do not communicate with them.

Kaplan, Gheen and Midgley (2002) view disruptive behaviour as an aspect of classroom culture. They claim that when values emphasized are of learning, understanding social and personal development, the level of disruption is low. This seems to concur with what students are looking for. One student mentions : *'il y a un manque de dialogue entre les professeurs et les élèves'* ; another one adds : *'nous voulons des profs qui écoutent.'*

This study sees the need for better communication, discussion, negotiation between teachers and pupils. For example, the problem of 'home-work not done' seems to occur in most schools. It could be resolved through discussion and negotiation. Maybe if teachers and students take time to open communication lines, relate better with each other, problems of indiscipline might lessen. Such an issue is also related to the pedagogical skills of the teacher.

## **Curriculum**

Research on effective secondary schools (Lipsitz, 1984) shows that effective schools contribute not only to academic excellence, but also give much value to social and emotional development of adolescents. It would seem that our schools tend to emphasize academic performance at the expense of the social and emotional development of adolescents. Students have expressed the wish to have more extra-curricular activities which would make school life more interesting. These activities could at the same time be initiated by students who would be assuming responsibilities, 'acting big' and be connected to peers.

Time should also be allocated for enabling discussions on issues of concern to adolescents – respect, sexual behaviour, conflict resolution, peer pressure, critical thinking, decision-making. These would empower adolescents to assume responsibility for their actions. Whether in the form of pastoral care, values education, citizenship education, what is important is to address the issues of concern and use an appropriate methodology such as values clarification.

## **School Management**

Students in the study have expressed the need for an effective administration. They are not against rules and regulations, but for flexibility in their application. They also express the need for rules and regulations to be clearly explained.

The analysis of documents (namely school rules and regulations, students' essay and press reports) reveals that though the nature and the magnitude of discipline problems vary from school to school, there does seem to be a common core across all school types. Three basic theoretical standpoints are supported by the data. Firstly, discipline problems at school are intimately connected with the general societal 'ethos' because they are reflective of the changing values of society. In this line of thought, it is interesting to note that schools may be fulfilling their mandate of 'educating values' and discipline in varying levels of success. Our educational institutions are helplessly witnessing the influence of the negative social values on students. Secondly, discipline problems originate from the fact that schools are not also fulfilling their pedagogical functions. The data strongly reinforces the idea that teachers' skills determine to a large extent the nature of relationship between teachers and students and the students' perceptions and expectations of schooling. Thirdly, the nature of the school curriculum itself may contribute to an intensification of discipline problems

because it does not attend to the needs of our adolescents in terms of recognition, self-expression and self-assertion. Fourthly and most importantly, current conceptions of school discipline grounded in unconditional obedience to authority and coercion are not accepted by adolescents who claim that dialogue and discussion should be the cornerstones of school discipline. This has serious implications for school management policy.

# CHAPTER 8

## Interpretation and Analysis

In the light of the quantitative and qualitative data and the feedback and the confirmation received regarding indiscipline and violence within school premises and outside, we can conclude that indiscipline and violence are on the rise and have become real headaches for stakeholders. Some aspects of this issue (such as defiance, disobedience, disrespect, indifference to school, absenteeism, abuse in the use of mobile phones, lateness, use of foul language and aggressive attitudes) are gaining momentum with the connivance of the authorities who are unable to grapple with the situation and bring solutions.

### 8.1 From Indiscipline to Violence

A wide spectrum of students' behaviour starts at the lower end with acts of indiscipline and culminates into acts of violence. Indiscipline is, therefore, not only seen in terms of infringement of school rules and regulations, which pertain to dress code, punctuality, truancy and smoking, but also in terms of defiance of the rector's and teachers' authority and verbal aggression. Many mentioned disobedience and lack of respect for teachers as the most current forms of indiscipline. The issue of violence is rarely accepted to have taken place in a school because no one would report the case to officers of the ministry or to the police. It has been under-reported and whenever it has been reported to the rector, the latter have always tried to settle the matter, unless it concerns wounds and blows with bad consequences, within the four walls of the school. According to a police officer, such cases are rarely reported to a police station.

The participants also distinguish between what can be called 'traditional' indiscipline (meaning those acts that have always existed in a school and which they consider as being a matter of fact, such as non-compliance with school uniform, lateness and smoking) as opposed to the more 'recent' trends (referring to acts which are characteristic of this particular generation or even the traditional acts of indiscipline which have assumed new and more violent proportions).

Several trends seem to emerge from the data:

- (i) students admit more easily cases of indiscipline and less easily cases of violence;
- (ii) students feel that adults do not understand them because of an absence of communication;
- (iii) teachers feel indiscipline and violence are on the rise across all school types;
- (iv) teachers feel that the nature of acts of indiscipline and violence has significantly changed over the recent decade in all school types;
- (v) parents have a large responsibility in what is happening in schools;
- (vi) school administration as well as officers of the ministry have their share of responsibility in indiscipline and violence in schools.

From data collected, the following is reported as being the most common forms of indiscipline and violence in our secondary schools:

- (i) lateness
- (ii) non-compliance with the dress code
- (iii) using the mobile phone in class
- (iv) non-obedience to adults
- (v) stealing
- (vi) bunking classes
- (vii) smoking
- (viii) consuming alcohol
- (ix) truancy
- (x) bringing pornographic items at school
- (xi) verbal and physical aggression
- (xii) threatening others
- (xiii) bullying
- (xiv) acts of vandalism

Both students and teachers consider physical aggression and harassment of teachers, smoking and alcohol consumption as very serious offences. However, none of these offences is common on the school premises according to the students (Table 5.20). But they do recognise the occurrence of verbal aggression of peers to a great extent.

Teachers comment at length on the various types of violence prevailing in secondary schools of Mauritius but what they report as being most disturbing to them are those that evidence the rising aggressivity in our adolescents towards both peers and adults. Students operate in total disregard of the moral code that is binding upon them as students. They also feel that there is no need to comply with the rules and regulations stipulated by the administration.

Conflict on the school premises is invariably solved by using violence, both verbal and physical. The use of bawdy words against peers and teachers is very common. Students, especially boys, admit that they write insulting words directed at teachers on desks, in library books, in the toilet and on the walls. Physical aggression is most often directed at peers although cases against teachers have been reported. What does alarm teachers, however, is the fact that now in a few 'problem' schools students form gangs, along ethnic lines very often, whose members are recruited both within and outside the school. Whenever a gang member has a problem with another student, the other gang members (in many cases adults) are often informed via mobile phones to wait at strategic locations such as bus stops and shopping malls where scores are settled with the 'offenders'. Many of the conflicts, ignited within school premises, end outside the schools, using violence.

Many teachers are aware of the risks involved in being too strict with particular students and, therefore, they prefer to forestall such situations by simply ignoring their misbehaviour. Those who have not done so have been the targets of veiled threats or have had their car damaged. This gives the students the impression that teachers have adopted a 'laissez-aller' attitude as far as school discipline is concerned.

The activities of the gangs are not limited to the display of muscle power but may also serve as a source of income. Apart from money, thefts occurring on school premises often involve cellular phones and books. The stolen items are sold in other schools through a network established by the gang.

Teachers perceive these gangs as being akin to a 'mafia' with their own parallel hierarchy and power which disregard the authority wielded by the school. The power of these gangs is far-reaching in view of the fact that weaker students 'buy' the services of these gangs to protect themselves against bullying. Such an attitude has also an impact on teachers' relationship with students. One teacher reported that she had to learn to be on good terms

with them so as to avoid trouble from others. This is an alarming phenomenon as both students and teachers have recognised that the school is powerless in providing for their safety.

All participants do recognize that students consume alcohol and drugs during school hours. Some students have admitted consuming alcohol in their classes either behind the back of the teachers or in the absence of the latter. What concerns teachers more than the acts themselves are the open defiance with which those acts are carried out and their powerlessness. They do not know what actions are to be taken on such occasions.

### **8.1.1. Students' Background and Violence**

Though teachers identify three types of background of students who are most likely to exhibit violent behaviour, they, however, contend that one cannot really predict:

- (i) Those who come from a troubled family background;
- (ii) Students who come from deprived areas;
- (iii) Students whose parents are economically well-off and who have political influence.

Data collected proves that socio-economic background and place of residence have no link with disruptive behaviour. We note a certain bias on behalf of the teachers who tend to explain that, in many cases, the students who come from broken homes, for example, are mostly those who live in deprived areas. They argue that the social and family background is inextricably linked to the problem of behaviour at school. Teachers from one school, where indiscipline and violence are very common, have, however, reported that one cannot really predict which students are more likely to become violent until it happens.

There seems to be quite a few students falling into the last category mentioned above. Many students defy school rules and regulations knowing that no measures will be taken against them because of the influence of their parents. There seems to be a general condemnation of parents who do not shoulder their responsibility towards their child and tolerate all his/her whims and caprices.

However, it must be noted that the majority of students endorse a ‘fair punishment’, that they tend to accept sanctions that are applied when boundaries of clearly laid down rules and regulations are overstepped.

### **8.1.2. Parents’ Abdication**

Most rectors, teachers and caretakers are of the opinion that parents are no longer shouldering their responsibilities both towards their children and towards the school. They distinguish among four types of parents:

- those who take at heart the education of their children and who monitor the activities of their children. They regularly attend the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and open days and make it a point to meet teachers at least once or twice a year;
- those who take at heart the academic achievement of their wards without paying much attention to what else the child is doing. As long as the children have good grades, they see no cause for alarm.
- those who neither care for the grades nor the behaviour. Teachers argue that many parents perceive the school as a ‘kindergarten’ whose primary purpose is to keep their children off the streets while they are busy earning a living. Teachers reported that such is often the case in deprived areas where both parents and children have poor expectations of school and where academic achievement is low.
- lastly, there exists what can be termed as ‘absentee’ parents who are not necessarily of middle-class origin but mostly well-off parents jetting off their business trips and giving excessive freedom and money to their children.

Such behaviour and attitudes of parents place an additional burden on the school and teachers. Teachers argue that they are neither willing nor capable to substitute themselves for parents. The behaviour exhibited by children at school reflects the ‘quality’ of parenting in terms of monitoring, values transmitted, and dispositions and attitudes towards school, developed by the child. A related issue raised by teachers is the breakdown of communication between the school and the family.

Some rectors, teachers and caretakers stigmatize those parents who are not only willing to admit that their child is no angel in school but they will also do everything to defend the child. If a student has truanted, some parents would say that they were informed about the absence by their child; if a girl is wearing a uniform too short and the mother is called at the school, she would say “*kot ou problem la dan, mwa mo pena okene problem*”. This kind of attitude does not help to maintain discipline in schools because there is a lack of collaboration on the part of parents to help the school administration to maintain discipline.

### **8.1.3. Violence and Gender Issue**

Acts of indiscipline and violence seem to have become as prevalent among girls as among boys. Instances of physical aggression among girls are very common. Some lady teachers perceive girls’ behaviour as outrageous and argue that they have become as unmanageable as that of boys or even more unmanageable in some cases.

The other gender aspect of indiscipline and violence relates to misbehaviour towards lady teachers. While male teachers perceive lady teachers to be more at risk in a boys’ school because of incidents of molestation and aggression, they argue that male teachers are also persecuted and false allegations are often made against them. In one case, students refused to allow a lady teacher out of the class and locked the door. In another case, girl students cooked up a fake molestation case against a male teacher who the students of that class believed was too strict. However, we believe that it is more important to educate the students so that they stop having such attitudes towards teachers.

Many rectors and experienced teachers declare that newly recruited female teachers should not be sent to work in some boys’ schools and with Form VI students belonging to the State, because of the bad reputation of the latter.

### **8.1.4. Media and the Changing Youth Culture**

Among the factors which teachers perceive as encouraging violence and indiscipline is the influence of the media on adolescents. Teachers perceive that the change in youth culture has been brought about by the media which not only provide role models but which legitimize certain sets of values and behaviours. Not to be underestimated also, they contend, is the

easy access to internet which has democratized the availability of pornographic materials. Filming sexual intercourse of friends through mobile phone should now be added to the changing life pattern of these youngsters.

Through the media, an imported lifestyle is adopted. One teacher comments that many adolescents fail to distinguish between films and reality. He adds:

Many adolescents confuse the school with the university campus set-up that is projected in the films.... The school has become a campus for our adolescents...

Romance, dating and having a good time are high on the priority list of the students. Teachers also saw in the media a catalyst for the changing sexual norms of students.

### **8.1.5. Identity Crisis**

Some teachers also refer to psychological change as one major cause of indiscipline and misbehaviour. The stress, they argue, is more for adolescents today than it was years ago as the latter find themselves squeezed between home, school and tuition. The only time when they can 'live' is during the school hours.

Others also discuss the importance of peer pressure as having a significant impact on adolescents insofar as many of the acts of indiscipline and violence are perpetrated by groups rather than individuals.

However, students have a different opinion. Not only do they claim that peer pressure has no influence on them but also that they would try to dissuade their friends from indulging in an act of indiscipline and violence (Table 5.28). As far as acts of indiscipline and violence carried out individually or in group are concerned, once again, we find that students make no difference . Whether committed in group or alone, these acts are given the same rating (Table 5.10).

Some teachers argue that boys commonly take physical power as a sign of maturity, even of manhood, and violence is often perceived as a manly way of resolving conflicts.

## 8.2. Rules and Regulations and Inertia of School Administration

One of the major causes that students and teachers identify is the inability of the school administration to take sanctions against students when they are found guilty.

Schools fail to respond effectively to these situations for different reasons. For private schools, it is a matter of safeguarding the school reputation so as not to lose the clientèle. It is to be noted that private schools in Mauritius function on the basis of grants allocated per student. This, teachers argue, seriously constrains the power of schools and teachers over students. One teacher reports:

*In my school, the principal was reprimanding a few girls when they got out of their class and they demanded their transfer papers (i.e. letters). The manager had to appease them and told them to get back to their class. Otherwise he would lose twenty students and the grants also...*

The issue of school reputation is related to indiscipline in another way. Many of the private non-confessional schools perform well in sports and this serves to counterbalance their relatively lower levels of educational achievement. The students who perform well in sports tend to have a privileged status and sanctions are not applied even if they infringe school rules and regulations. Teachers reported being instructed to ignore their misbehaviour in class because they are the school sports stars.

For state schools, the reasons for the inertness of the administration are different. Teachers are of the opinion that the imminence of transfers goes a long way into explaining the lack of commitment on the part of the staff in general and of administrators in particular. Coupled with this, some rectors are unwilling to take 'risky measures' because it may reflect adversely on their management. Those who dare take sanctions may find their decisions overturned by higher authorities or, at times, are sued by parents, who, teachers maintain, seem to have more power at the level of the Ministry. One rector, in a recent past, was sued by a parent who advocated that his son was humiliated in front of an assembly while the rector honestly thought he was trying to maintain discipline in the school by revealing to the assembly how the student had tarnished the image of the school. Would rectors take action against any student if parents start dragging them to court?

In confessional schools, the situation is slightly different when it comes to autonomy of the administration in these matters. The principal does take sanctions against acts of violence but he is also constrained by the pressure exerted by influential figures within the administration of confessional schools. One of the teachers of a confessional school commented that:

*There is always someone who has to pay a price ....if the rector supports the teachers, he is the one to pay a price...somewhere, somehow, somebody pays a price...*

Teachers also discuss the implications of taking sanctions. Some point out that sanctions are often taken and not applied because it means more work for everybody. Others are of the opinion that the types of sanctions which teachers can take are not at all effective and do not serve any purpose (for example, detention classes). Students have the impression that there is a 'laissez-aller' attitude which prevails in most secondary schools.

### **8.2.1. The Learning Experiences Offered by the School**

An unappealing curriculum can be potentially one of the root causes of indiscipline problems. Comparison was made with other education systems which provide for a wide range of needs and interests rather than the purely academic aspect of education. Two related phenomena were described as having an impact on indiscipline and violence: private tuition (which is seen as a necessary evil in our educational system) and poor school expectations.

As far as the former is concerned, teachers contend that students feel that they can safely do without the classes at school since they can catch up in their private tuition sessions. In the second case, some students, especially the low achievers, have already accepted the idea that they will have to embrace a career that will not require further or even secondary school level qualifications. Teachers claim that they come to school to have fun and to attract attention by playing the fool in school. Students would prefer a curriculum which includes more sports and cultural activities. They feel that the curriculum is too academic and does not cater for those who are gifted otherwise.

### **8.2.2. Children's Rights**

Many teachers complain that an excessive emphasis on children's rights has empowered students and has adversely disempowered teachers. Some express the view that we are living

in a society where priority is given to the child whenever there is conflict of interest. They further argue that students are being taught their rights without being taught their duties towards their family, their school and society. Whenever students have problems at school, it is likely that they would report the case to the police station before informing their parents. Many threaten to report the case to higher authorities or to the press. Teachers do not disagree to the teaching of rights but do perceive the use to which this knowledge is being put as negatively affecting the power of teachers to maintain discipline. They believe that equal emphasis should be placed on teaching the responsibilities of students towards the school which go hand in hand with children's rights.

### **8.3. Teachers' Attitudes**

A few teachers also add that the attitude that the teacher adopts is a key factor in determining students' misbehaviour. They argue that students observe the behaviour of the teacher and know the limits they can cross. Others are of the opinion that younger teachers have fewer problems because they are more 'in' and that children can relate more easily to them. Others, however, emphasize the fact that newly appointed teachers have a lot of problems of class management because students tend to defy their authority.

However, students have a different view and think that, because of their attitude and behaviour, most teachers are responsible for acts of indiscipline and violence (Table 5.36). This is why a high percentage of students show no respect for school (Table 5.37).

#### **8.3.1. Teachers' Reactions**

Two aspects of teacher reactions that have been recurrent in all focus groups are helplessness, powerlessness and hopelessness. Many feel completely overpowered by the administration whose inertness, they claim, erode their authority. Apart from silent condemnation, many simply ignore these acts and, in the long run, become completely indifferent to such matters. Teachers report being afraid of taking sanctions because of the fear of repercussions on either their cars or themselves. One teacher comments: '*I prefer my car....*' (adopting thus an attitude of live and let live).

Others believe that teachers will remain helpless as long as the administrative structure does not support teachers and strict measures are not taken against those who contravene school rules and regulations. Some argue that the school rules and regulations should be made more stringent, framed more explicitly and applied more rigorously.

However, teachers from confessional schools feel that they receive more support from administration in taking action against students who commit acts of indiscipline. Serious cases are considered by a disciplinary committee consisting of members of the administration and teachers.

### **8.3.2 .Teachers' Perception of Students' Reactions**

Teachers distinguish broadly three types of students' reactions although reactions may vary depending upon the individual cases. The first pertains to those who try to resist but are pressurized not to express their disagreement for fear of bullying and aggression. These students may report acts of indiscipline and violence anonymously. Others silently put up with it but criticize, often privately, teachers and administrators as being incompetent or silent accomplices. The last majority, however, get swayed by the current and join in since they realize that no sanction is being taken. Some teachers reported that a few students also request for transfers. Many feel that many students simply do not bother since they can catch up at tuition.

### **8.3.3. Teachers' Perception of the Administration**

Many teachers explain that the administration also feels powerless when confronted with problems of violence and indiscipline because of the fear of negative publicity which may reflect badly on their managerial skills, mar the reputation of the school and shrink the size of their clientèle and their grants. As a consequence, sanctions are never taken or applied. The administration may also wish to hush up matters, especially if the child's parents are influential. Sometimes, the administration exerts pressure on teachers who want to take up matters to higher authorities as this reflects badly on their administrative skills.

However, students believe that the school administration is not totally responsible for indiscipline and violence in schools. Other factors which are beyond the control of the

administration can contribute to indiscipline and violence (Table 5.37). It is, therefore, necessary to have a holistic approach to tackle the issue.

## **8.4. Discussion**

It would appear that the problem of indiscipline and violence in Mauritian secondary schools is a symptom of a more deep-seated dis-ease. First, it challenges the traditional idea that indiscipline and violence are basically an urban phenomenon. It cannot, therefore, be overcome by avoiding it or simply by condemning these acts. It can be managed only by discussing it openly and without fear, unless we want the situation to slip out of control.

### **8.4.1. Social Problems and the School Environment**

Data collected shows that factors responsible for indiscipline and violence in secondary schools are both exogenous and endogenous. The findings of this study reveal that teachers perceive an increase in the occurrence of acts of indiscipline and violence in schools. A shift has also been noted in the nature of these acts, moving to more explicit forms of violence. Teachers pinpoint the rapid development of the country in the 1980s and 1990s, the social and economic inequality that it has entailed - increase in level of unemployment, poverty and breakdown of law and order in society. All this has modified the school environment.

One could link this state of affairs to the changes in the socio-economic development of Mauritius in terms of social equity and social justice. This has resulted in increasing gaps between the haves and the have-nots in the Mauritian society, resulting in social and economic exclusion for a component of the population (Asgarally, 1997). These exclusion zones are generally located in the suburbs of the main towns where the poverty cycle prevails with high rates of unemployment, unstable families, delinquency, drug trafficking and related social problems. This is where 'problem' schools are generally found.

Too much importance is given to violence in the media and parents' lack of authority towards their children has contributed to the problem of indiscipline and violence among secondary school students.

While those responsible for the education sector are more than willing to endorse the exogenous factors; on the contrary, they are ready to deny the link that exists between indiscipline and violence and the endogenous factors such as the infrastructure of the school

(lack of science laboratories, of a gymnasium, of a playground), the inequality of treatment among the secondary schools by the Ministry of Education (sporadic lack of teachers in certain public schools, absence of a library, no computer facilities, a high rate of failures, drop-outs, teachers' absenteeism and a feeling of exclusion by the ministry).

#### **8.4.2 Clash of Values between Adolescents and Teachers**

More importantly, the findings also indicate that there may exist a clash of values between the new youth culture in Mauritius and teachers' culture. Teachers have generally been brought up with a set of values where adult authority was not challenged. Their experience of school was one where teachers and administrators were looked upon as being 'an authority' and 'in authority'. Students at that time were expected to respect and obey teachers without question. The situation was one where access to secondary school was limited and therefore highly valued. Most of the teachers viewed schooling and teaching with this mind-set.

Today Mauritian adolescents are the products of globalization. Their world is the global village and they have easy access to it through films, the internet and all forms of media. They identify with students worldwide (from the U.S., Europe, India). Their role models come from other parts of the world. Their view of schooling is one where teachers and students are at par. They do not see the school as functioning under an authoritarian model which would define its *modus operandi*. Could it be that our schools have remained static in time and are not responding to the needs, interests and aspirations of our youths today? The conservative attitudes of teachers and administrators expecting obedience do not match the new culture of Mauritian adolescents who may be looking for a more participatory model of discipline.

Not only discipline-wise but the curriculum offered by our schools has remained almost the same for the past twenty years. Emphasis is placed on traditional subjects with very little co-curricular activities where students might pursue their interests and concerns. Teaching is very much teacher-centred with little student participation. Despite the knowledge explosion, the transmission model of teaching is favoured to the detriment of more constructivist approaches. Given this context, acts of indiscipline and violence may be the expression of students' dissatisfaction with the school system. We have the impression that it is their way

of rebelling against a system which no longer responds to their needs and expectations. There is a need to review not only the curriculum but also the teaching and learning process.

Many students have proposed a curriculum which should integrate activities in their academic training. Besides sports, they would like to get more involved in drama, in music, in dancing. Outings with a pedagogical aim are also looked forward to.

Moreover, a new style of behaviour is emerging (blackmail, early sex, alcohol and drug consumption). Could this be a form of rebellion against mainstream parental expectations to which they do not adhere? This could also explain why students are very keen on claiming their rights which paradoxically is perceived by teachers as confrontation and provocation. By making sure that their rights are respected, students have found a means of voicing out their views, making sure they have a say in the running of the school and not just accepting whatever is being imposed. According to teachers, while claiming their rights, students should not also forget their duties towards the school.

### **8.4.3. Disempowerment of Teachers**

Our teachers are facing a new and difficult situation. While being the victims of violence from students, they feel at the same time completely disempowered, helpless, witnessing a gradual erosion of their status. Teachers are sandwiched between students and administrators. The latter urge them to take action against students who commit acts of indiscipline and violence. However, when they do so, they find their decisions being reversed by administration and decision-makers. No support is provided to teachers to help them cope with problems of indiscipline and violence. This leads to a lowering of their status vis-à-vis their students. This feeling of disempowerment leads to discouragement, frustration and sometimes depression among teachers. Consequently the teaching profession is becoming increasingly a low-status job. The teaching profession seems to be at stake. The study shows that Mauritius will have to seriously face the issue of how to maintain a teaching workforce which will be capable of meeting the challenges of the new youth culture.

The phenomenon of private tuition also serves to undermine the authority of teachers in two ways. On the one hand, students are of opinion that they can dispense with school teachers. For them, real learning occurs after school hours in private tuition. They feel they do not

need the school teachers who would do the strict minimum in class and would often absent themselves from school. On the other hand, school provides recreational time for them and they feel free to do as they like since learning is no longer perceived as being the responsibility of the school. One may argue that this dysfunctioning of the school contributes to magnify the problem of indiscipline and violence.

#### **8.4.4. Absence of Updated Rules and Regulations**

The findings of the study underline the existence of an administrative framework which has to be updated. The rules and regulations state what is expected of secondary school students in terms of appropriate behaviour. Where rules are explicit, they tend to focus on acts of indiscipline pertaining to the lower end of the spectrum rather than those which are in fact more damaging to the stakeholders. We have noted that no rules and regulations for teachers exist. Given the absence of such a reference, the school administrators find themselves powerless. The authorities tend to urge them to assume their responsibility when faced with acts of indiscipline and violence in their schools. But student threats, parental interference, political influence limit possibilities of any action being taken. Not only are administrators themselves victims of violence, but their own self-worth may suffer as well.

In state schools, in some cases of misbehaviour, students are transferred to another state school. This is seen neither as a punishment nor as a preventive measure. Some teachers feel that a student who has brought the image of the school into disrepute is rewarded. There is also another way of looking at the problem of indiscipline and violence in SSS. The authorities may interpret problems at school as a reflection of managerial incompetence. Mauritius being a small island, any adverse report very quickly becomes public knowledge and jeopardizes the reputation of the school and the administrator.

The case of non-SSS is different. In confessional schools, since they have already established a reputation of being 'good' schools (as far as discipline is concerned) and are more autonomous, they sanction behaviour which is deemed unfit in a school more easily. In private schools, the problem of indiscipline and violence turns out to be an economic one because if a student is expelled or is transferred to another school, government grants may decrease.

We seem to be in a situation where everyone tacitly tries to cope with limited means but refuses to openly admit and discuss problems of indiscipline and violence. Teachers do so because they are powerless, administrators because it might lead to adverse reports on themselves and their schools, the authorities because it might expose social problems linked to exclusion.

#### **8.4.5. Moral Issues**

Wilson (in Jan Steutel & Ben Spieker, 2000) argues that education has to do with the planning of serious and sustained learning, and exercising practical authority is necessary to ensure that learning can, in fact, take place. Practical authority is needed to maintain a sufficiently high degree of order and obedience, in particular, by enforcing a framework of rules which should guarantee that students do their homework, pay attention to the teacher, do not bully each other, do not play truant, or whatever disciplined behaviour is required for the purpose of serious learning (p.325).

Practical authority implies ascribing to the person a *right to rule*. This right can be the right to issue commands, to make decisions and give orders, or to lay down what the rules are, to apply those rules to particular cases, as well to enforce them (p.326).

The right to rule implies a right to receive *obedience*, a claim towards other people that they are obliged to obey one's commands or to follow one's prescription (p.326).

##### **8.4.5.1. Teachers' Authority**

According to Steutel and Spieker (2000), teachers feel that they do not have a *de facto* authority in the class or in the school, that is, they should have a certain authority and that authority is accepted or acknowledged by those to whom it is directed. They do not have either a *de jure* authority, that is, have a certain right which is legitimate or justified by their superior skills, knowledge and understanding. These qualities would help them to assert their authority.

Teachers are looking for students who are well-disciplined because the latter have the tendency not just to observe the rules laid down by the school administration but also to comply with those rules for the simple reason that they take them as authoritative.

Students do not make their obedience or assent dependent on their own assessment of the merits of the things prescribed or the validity of the beliefs advanced. Rather they abdicate their own judgement and follow a prescription or accept a belief merely because of the fact that it is prescribed or uttered by someone acknowledged by them to have authority.

Teachers threatening students with sanctions to secure compliance will cease to be seen as people being in authority.

Teachers are expected to be authorities on the content and form of different subjects or disciplines. They are supposed to know what is the right or wrong way of doing things in a particular field, to be capable of explaining the views and approaches defended in a certain domain, or to function as a model of the virtues and ways of thinking internal to a particular discipline.

The practical authority of the teacher is almost standardly explained in terms of the right to preserve the conditions of order in the classroom or, more broadly, the right to enforce rules and regulations deemed to be necessary for creating stability, peace and safety in the school at large. Thus conceived, exercising practical authority is not an intrinsic part of but an extrinsic aid of teaching. The teachers' commands and prescriptions should be obeyed in order to create the conditions which facilitate or enable the performance of the task of introducing the pupil to subjects or disciplines. Teachers have the dual role of keeping order and teaching.

Teachers need to possess particular mental qualities for exercising their authority in a proper way. All kinds of measures are taken to make sure that teachers do indeed have the required qualities. Before being allowed to perform the professional role of a teacher, one has to attend a teacher training institution, obtain relevant qualifications and submit oneself to selection procedures. Meeting such requirements is a prerequisite of gaining the rights involved in the authority of the teacher. This is not the case for the parents.

Weak teachers resort to the use of threats and sanctions precisely because they lack this personal element of authority. Without having some degree of 'presence' teachers will have difficulties in keeping order in the classroom.

Other qualities of teachers may be helpful, in particular their care and respect for their students. Without being treated kindly and fairly, students will be reluctant to put their trust in the teacher.

Teachers will have difficulties with inspiring trust if their students belong to communities that devalue the life of the mind and that are suspicious of secular knowledge.

#### **8.4.5.2. Parental Authority**

Rectors, teachers and caretakers have condemned parents' lack of responsibility in maintaining discipline at home.

Steutel and Spieker (2000) advocate that parents are non-professional in the sense that they have not received any training to become parents or on the different aspects of raising or bringing up their children. In this context, parents cannot know how to exercise their authority on their children.

The practical authority of parents is predominantly and most clearly expressed in disciplining their children. In discipline encounters the parent stimulates the child to do or to refrain from doing certain things by performing all kinds of activities, such as prescribing and forbidding, warning and reprimanding, urging and exhorting, making demands and giving orders. Such disciplinary activities are not extrinsic aids but intrinsic parts of upbringing. In exercising their authority in such a way, parents have the intention of inculcating prudential and moral values into their children. By indicating or explaining to the child which actions are just, kind, prudent or sensible under the circumstances, they are making practical judgements and thus showing their practical wisdom.

The parents' authority needs to show that bringing up of children requires having and exercising both the right to discipline them and the right to be believed by them in prudential and moral affairs. Do all parents have the mental qualities or are in the right position to exercise the rights indicated in a proper way?

From data collected, some rectors and teachers, faced with extreme cases of disruptive behaviour, have asked themselves why parents are not more responsible (in the sense that they should show more authority towards their child). It is a fact that some students in some specific schools are beyond control not only at school but also in their houses. In such cases,

a social worker and a psychologist or a counsellor, teachers argue, would be of much help both to the school and to the parents.

# CHAPTER 9

## Conclusions and Recommendations

A study on indiscipline and violence in secondary schools in Mauritius and their occurrence have neither been assessed nor evaluated on a national basis in the past. Hence, no database on acts of indiscipline and violence in school is available. The present study, therefore, seems to support the view that the problem, especially major acts of indiscipline, has intensified over the past few years and will, in time, become one of the major problems in our secondary schools. The occurrence of disruptive behaviour could be much higher and some figures given in chapter 5 could be regarded as a conservative estimate of the situation.

### 9.1. General Observations

Our country is engaging at the moment in structural reforms at various levels and education stands amongst the top state priorities. Indeed the concept of world class quality education as understood by all stakeholders in education necessarily involves preparing the individual to become responsible and law-abiding citizens. The school, in so far as it socialises the individual into patterns of behaviour that mirrors effectively the expectations of adult life, becomes a key agent in ensuring that children are ready and willing to embrace their roles.

The twin problems of indiscipline and violence, however, indicate that schools are not able to fulfill this important mandate. The present study has demonstrated that the form, magnitude and impact of both problems have substantially changed. The findings generated clearly show that:

- (i) there is no set 'profile' of the indisciplined student either psychological, pedagogical, economic or social. Though an reasonable percentage may share a common set of characteristics, there are no defining variables that could 'predict' whether a student will indulge in acts of indiscipline. Sometimes students coming from well-to-do background and having high academic achievement may indulge in serious acts of indiscipline as has been repeatedly observed.

- (ii) the problem of indiscipline affects all schools, irrespective of gender and school type, though the degree and magnitude vary from school to school. Cases of violence, though less common, occur more often outside than on school premises.
- (iii) the measures taken to deal with both indiscipline and violence are barely adequate given the fact that there exist no administrative or legal guidelines which could be referred to in such cases. Actions taken are often ad-hoc and uncoordinated both within and across schools of the same type.
- (iv) teachers, most prominently, feel disempowered to deal with cases of indiscipline and violence because of lack of support from the relevant authorities, political interference and an incapacitated school administration.
- (v) it is perceived that confessional and private schools have a greater 'marge de manoeuvre' in taking sanctions and measures because the management and administration have a degree of autonomy in taking decisions.
- (vi) the factors enhancing school and classroom discipline is a complex matrix of both internal and external variables involving, on the one hand, pedagogical efficiency, teacher personality, leadership and management style, parental collaboration, students' expectations of school and education, teacher-pupils relationship and school culture. On the other hand, the school is also at the receiving end of a number of societal problems such as the collapse of the family, an increasingly economic conception of education and the frustrations and delusions of too large a section of the population.
- (vii) teacher's professional status has seriously declined in the past few years leading to an erosion of teacher's authority in classrooms.
- (viii) there is a differential perception as regards the causes of indiscipline and violence in our schools. Students point out to the obsolescence of the curriculum with heavy academic bias, the inability of schools to respond effectively to their legitimate expectations and aspirations, the lack of professional commitment on the part of a large number of teachers and a 'laissez faire' attitude on the part of school management and administration that engenders an unfair, sporadic and often biased application of sanctions.
- (ix) adults within the school set-up attribute the increasing occurrence of discipline problems, inter-alia, to the changing social mores, demise of parents and authorities from their responsibilities as well as the all pervading influence of the media.

- (x) each school has developed its own set of rules and regulations and the provisions for some vary across schools. In some they are elaborately framed with the focus on a code of conduct that is expected of students, in others, a large majority, they are only very superficially framed and focus on punctuality, school uniform and attendance. However, what is also blatantly missing from these documents is an explicit procedure that defines the application of sanctions and the role of various stakeholders in the enforcement of those rules or code. Since such a procedure is very rarely defined, it almost inevitably follows that clear-cut and coherent measures cannot be taken.

## **9.2. The Psychological Perspective**

From the point of view of developmental and educational psychology, the study clearly reinforces the position that adolescents nowadays require extra help to deal with the problems of growing up. Their apparent misbehaviour seems to be symptomatic of a certain degree of role confusion created by a society that still expects some degree of deference and conformity in certain spheres while encouraging some form of challenge and resistance in others. The problem becomes more complicated by what is commonly represented in the media as the western model of relationships with adults. The cultural gap between adults and adolescence is thus a serious hindrance when it comes to defining an acceptable pattern of interaction.

The unavailability or lack of visibility of suitable models and lack of coherence among adults themselves also add to role confusion of adolescents. It is clear that when adolescents receive mixed signals from adults in their environment, they are unlikely to believe or respond to the moral code embedded in the functioning of any social set-up. The moratorium period will not only be longer, but also more ridden with conflicts, confrontation and a larger degree of experimentation, often nearing the limits of what is generally deemed to be acceptable to adults. Adolescents are often engaged in exploring the peripheries of what is allowed and it is clear from the findings of this study that both parents and schools have failed in setting up clear parameters and fair practices which would have provided the required scaffolding necessary for our adolescents to successfully negotiate the process of growing up. What is

even more unfortunate is that continued role confusion can lead to problems of maladjustment and ‘mal-être’ in later stages of life.

Teachers are also very poorly equipped to deal with the problems encountered by adolescents. Notwithstanding the fact that they need to develop psychological insight to handle and appropriately guide students, they also require the psycho-emotional support to carry out their functions effectively. Erosion of teacher authority and continuous assaults on their self-esteem can, in the long run, create frustration, increase ‘burnt out’ and generally undermine teachers’ motivation. The school has to remain a psychologically safe haven for both teachers and learners in order to maximize the gains from education.

### **9.3. The Pedagogical Perspective**

As expounded in the theoretical framework, the pedagogical aspect of indiscipline cannot be underestimated. The present study shows that schools are fulfilling to a limited extent their pedagogical functions because of a number of interrelated factors. First and foremost, the curriculum, often limited to a syllabus, does not offer learning opportunities that could sustain the interest and motivation of students with such a diverse set of expectations and learning styles. Secondly, many teachers are not able to translate, for a number of reasons ranging from lack of professional commitment to lack of training in the necessary skills, the learning opportunities offered by an albeit restricted curriculum into pedagogically sound learning activities. The study has established in a scientific way that the increasing incidence of indiscipline is not unrelated to our inability as stakeholders to address in an intellectually honest way the long overdue pedagogical and systemic reform of education. It is indeed difficult in an exam-driven system to convince teachers that their priority should be learning and not syllabus coverage. Most previous policies have turned a deaf ear to adolescents’ claim for more flexible and open-ended curriculum which will treat them as valuable contributors to the process of learning.

At the same time, adolescents seem to beg to have their voice heard at school. If schools were to give them more ‘responsibilities’ and provide a forum for ‘negotiations’ on various issues related to school life, this might help them to behave in a more responsible way. At the same time, this could help them in the process of identity formation.

#### **9.4. The Sociological Perspective**

The findings of the study have pointed out that the school has been at the receiving end of societal changes which have happened over the last few decades in Mauritius. When primary agents of socialization are no longer able to carry out their mandate, the prerogative inevitably falls on secondary agents of socialization. However, the extent to which schools as secondary agents of socialization are able to handle the multiple responsibilities attributed to them or to counterbalance the changes sweeping over our society is a matter of both serious concern and conjecture for all stakeholders.

While the school is expected to equip students with all the necessary social skills, it does not, in many instances, itself operate with the organic unity expected of a social institution but rather functions along bureaucratic and economic lines with rigidly defined parameters. It is no surprise, therefore, that, if measures are not promptly taken to bring about the required changes, it will continue in a vexingly large majority of schools, to maintain a façade of operational credibility despite the fact that private tuition continues to supersede its core pedagogical function.

#### **9.5. Recommendations**

It is true that the problems of indiscipline and violence are getting more and more complex and elusive. Solutions to these problems do exist, if they are properly planned and engineered. Perhaps we would not be able to cure the disease but we can prevent the situation from degenerating. The best ways to prevent the school from becoming a battlefield require the adoption of a series of firm measures. If the school is a microcosm of society, it must therefore follow the *modus operandi* of society, with its sets of rules and regulations and laws which prevent it from becoming a lawless society. Indifference and passivity should give way to a more caring attitude for the benefit of the students and society at large.

Our country is, at the moment, engaging in major educational reforms. This study shows that indiscipline and violence impinges greatly on the power of our schools to fulfill their objectives of preparing our children to integrate and contribute to the progress of our society.

A holistic, and not a piecemeal, approach should be adopted to deal with the issue of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools.

We therefore recommend the following:

(a) *on a national basis*

- the creation of an 'Observatoire de la violence scolaire' to monitor the situation and to make a regular audit of safety and security in schools;
- the problem of indiscipline and violence be openly discussed by all parties concerned;
- a common list of rules and regulations be proposed to all schools by the ministry or a safety and security policy framework be developed for schools providing clear guidelines on how teachers/rectors should deal with violence, disruptive and antisocial behaviour; a legal framework which allows teachers/rectors to intervene within legal parameters;
- a close collaboration between officers of the ministry, teachers, and students to tackle the issue of indiscipline and violence be established;
- the role of parents (through PTAs) in helping to maintain discipline in schools be redefined;
- the concept of punishment be reviewed (detention class and Saturday arrest, etc. are of no use);
- the issue of private tuition be addressed for this parallel system of education is encouraging more acts of indiscipline among students;
- the ratio teacher-students be considered;
- the role of the usher be redefined;
- the overall student population in each school be looked into;
- a national policy on the presence/absence of students and teachers be considered;

- the infrastructure of some schools be reviewed or the concept of Form I to VI be reviewed in some schools;
- the collaboration of police officers be sought in sensitizing students to the legal aspects of some issues related to indiscipline and violence;
- the problem of exclusion and poverty be tackled at national level;
- more social workers and psychologists be attached to the ministry or to the schools;
- political intervention in the school's management be condemned openly;
- political will to deal with indiscipline and violence at national level be manifest.
- the school calendar be reviewed (2 semesters instead of 3 terms)

**(b) *on a school wise basis***

- learning aims and objectives be laid down for everybody;
- citizenship education be introduced;
- remedial education be an important element in teaching and learning;
- more formative evaluation (students should not get the idea that they are good at nothing);
- more co and extra-curricular activities be organised;
- more community work for students (with the help of their teachers);
- teachers' overall responsibility within the school be clearly spelt out.
- case studies be carried out in problematic schools

**(c) *training for teachers***

- workshops be organised on a regular basis on
  - adolescents' changing culture;
  - moral values

- pastoral care
- conflict resolution
- child psychology
- teaching and learning strategies;
- classroom management;
- educational law.

(d) *workshops*

- on mediation be carried out with parents;
- with PTAs
- with teachers, rectors, police officers and lawyers

## 9.6. Further Studies

From what we have listened and witnessed, we further recommend that studies be carried out in the following areas because we feel that, in one way or another, they have a relation to the issue of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools:

- an indepth study of truancy and absenteeism;
- leadership and management style in secondary schools ;
- classroom management;
- teacher-student relations;
- school ethos;
- the link between truancy, smoking, alcohol consumption and using illegal drugs;
- raising school standards.
- the effectiveness (and ineffectiveness) of detention classes;

- the role of student council in maintaining discipline in schools.

If the future of the country is founded on the classroom, then indiscipline and violence on the school premises cannot guarantee the economic development of the country and the well-being of the population. The solutions are multi-levelled and, unless a holistic approach is adopted, no solution would be effective.

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Le Mauricien 02.06: Collège Bhujoharry: Bataille rangée entre deux groupes d'élèves hier.  
L'express 03.06 : Reconstitution des faits allégués à la SSS de R. Belle.  
Le Mauricien 05.06 : Le racisme, une violence ordinaire au collège.  
L'Express-dimanche 06.06: Après les incidents du 31 mai : un nouveau recteur lundi au SSS de Rose Belle.  
Week-End 06.06 : Violence en milieu scolaire : l'école est malade ... à l'image du pays.  
L'Express-dimanche 06.06: Les turbulences du système scolaire.  
Le Mauricien 09.06 : Pillay : l'école est un reflet des problèmes de société.  
Le Mauricien 11.06 : SSS Rose Belle : des voitures de profs endommagés.

Le Mauricien 11.06 : Violence dans les collèges d'Etat : poignard lancé au tableau, masturbation en classe, voitures de profs rayées, etc...

Le Mauricien 11.06 : Et chez les filles ?

Le Mauricien 11.06 : Santosh Mahadeo : le cas de Rose Belle démontre un manque d'amour.

Mautritius Times 11-17.06 : What's wrong with our State Schools ?

L'Express-dimanche 13.06 : Violence dans les collèges : le ministre Pillay égratigne recteurs et enseignants.

Le Mauricien 14.06 : Indiscipline scolaire : Pillay : 'pas d'école sans leadership'.

L'Express 19.06: Educational Crisis: Teacher Training: a priority.

Le Mauricien 26.07 : Growing indiscipline in State colleges.

L'Express 01.08 : Discipline estudiantine : rotin bazar et bonnet d'ânes.

Wek-End 15.08 : Enseignants, éducation et discipline : la mauvaise équation.

Le Mauricien 04.09 : Violence à l'école : armes en plastique sur des collégiens.

Le défi-plus 04 – 10.09 : Situation critique dans de nombreux collèges : le laxisme des enseignants et de la violence sont déplorés par de nombreux parents.

Week-End 26.12 : Violence en milieu scolaire : pas moi sa, li sa ...

2000

Le Mauricien 03.02 : Violence à l'école : Marcel Cabon SSS : enseignants insécurisés

Le Mauricien 03.02 : Sit-in des élèves mécontents de leurs enseignants.

Week-End 06.02 : Protestations et contestations.

L'Express 17.02 : Unrest in schools : discipline alternatives.

2001

L'Express-dimanche 11.02 : Elèves du collège Saint Mary's suspendus : quatre mineurs faisaient le mur pour aller fumer du gandia.

Le Mauricien 14.02 : Manque de profs : manif des élèves ce matin.

Le Mauricien 15.02 : Le manque d'enseignants réglé à la fin de la semaine.

Le Mauricien 15.03: Northern College hier: six salles de classe saccagées par des élèves furieux.

L'Express dimanche 18.03 : Northern college : allegations d'attouchements sexuels contre un enseignant.

Le défi-plus 17-23.03: Au collège Northern, mercredi : un cas allégué d'attouchements mène au saccage de 8 salles de classe.

Week-end 15.04: Montée de la consommation de drogue dans les collèges : 'fumer du gandia est désormais dans nos mœurs'.

Week-end 15.04: Les collegiens dealers.

Week-end 22.04: Consommation et trafic de drogue dans les collèges : la drogue touche beaucoup plus d'élèves qu'on ne l'imagine.

Le Mauricien : Un jeune sur quatre déjà alcoolique chronique et 13% de gros fumeurs.

L'Express 15.05 : Exclusion : violence as a form of protest against school 'snobbism'.

Le Mauricien 02.06: Discipline

Le Mauricien 23.06: Après une semaine de grève des collégiens, le PSSA instituera un Fact Finding Committee sur le collège Stratford.

Le Mauricien 23.06 : Le manager du collège Stratford au 'Mauricien' : Balcarun Bundhoo : Les élèves ont été manipulés.

Le Mauricien 16.07: The situation in certain private secondary schools and the role of the PSSA.

Week-End 01.07: L'Affaire du collège Stratford.

Le Mauricien 03.07 : L'école de la colère.

L'Express-dimanche 08.07 : Lutte dans les classes.

Le Mauricien 18.07: Abus dans les collèges privés.

Le Mauricien 18.07 : Commission d'enquête.

Week-End 05.08 : Fact-Finding Committee sur le collège Stratford : accablant.

News on Sunday 06.12: Education powder keg.

2002

L'Express 14.03: Collège Emmanuel anquetil, Mahébourg. Incidents entre étudiants, renvoi du principal suspect.

Le Mauricien 29.03: Agression dans un collège : un jeune de 17 ans hospitalisé suite à un tabassage allégué.

Week-end 14.04 : Secoandaire privé: situation 'explosive' au collège Byron, selon l'UPSEE.

L'Express 22.04 : L'école et la société, quels liens ?

L'Express 27.05 : Collèges privés : neuf enseignants suspendus.

Le Mauricien 17.06 : A la suite de la manif de vendredi, le collège Byron ferme jusqu'à nouvel ordre.

L'Express 18.06 : Education secondaire : les 425 étudiants de Byron en congé forcé d'une semaine.

Week-End Scope 10.09 : Prostitution Squad : les étudiantes, proies faciles des proxénètes.

Le défi-plus 5-11.10 : A la SSS Régis Chaperon : la conduite d'un enseignant de français déplaît fort.

Cinq-plus dimanche 06.10 : Les raisons derrière l'école buissonnière.

Cinq-plus dimanche 06.10 : Y a-t-il un recteur au collège Saint Mary's ?

Le dimanche 06.10 : Discipline dans les écoles : mesures strictes à la rentrée 2003.

2003

Le Mauricien 05.02 : Une trentaine d'élèves interdites d'accès en classe.

Le Mauricien 06.02 : Show some respect.

Week-end 09.02 : Port du hijab à l'école : le ministère de l'éducation appelle les recteurs à se montrer flexibles.

Week-End 09.02: Le port de l'hijab au collège Droopnath Ramphul : La GUTU envisage un prochain sit-in.

L'Hebdo 09.02 : Tchador-polémique au collège Droopnath Ramphul : La PTA soutient le recteur contre le ministre.

Cinq-plus dimanche 09.02 : Les étudiantes retournent à l'école avec le hijab.

L'Express 13.03 : Agression : un enseignant blessé.

Cinq-plus dimanche 30.03 : Collégiens et prostituées : un moyen pour se faire du fric.

Le Mauricien 06.05 : Manif de l'exécutif de la GUTU devant le collège ce matin.

Cinq-plus Dimanche 11.05: Mardi dernier dans un collège du Sud : deux étudiants arrêtés pour trafic de gandia.

Cinq-plusdimanche 25.05 : Du rififi dans un collège de l'Est.

Le Mauricien 13.06 : La drogue en milieu scolaire : Jennifer en form Vi : 'J'avais 15 ans, j'ai essayé, c'était bon ...'

Le Mauricien 13.06 : Selon un enseignant : le prof préfère se taire craignant pour sa sécurité.

Le Mauricien 13.06 : Dans un collège urbain, un jeune sur quatre a accès au gandia.  
 Le défi-plus 14 –20.06 : 2 collégiens arrêtés pour délit de drogue.  
 Week-End 15.06 : Grossesse juvénile au collège: les bancs interdits ...  
 L'Express-Dimanche 22.06: Phénomène de société : faut-il garder une élève enceinte au collège ?  
 L'Express 04.07 : Bagarre au cutter à Friendship College.  
 La Gazette de Maurice 04 – 10.07 : Agressé par un de ses amis de classe, Revinash, 14 ans, a failli trouver la mort.  
 Week-End 06.07 : Agressé à l'arme blanche, mardi dernier, Revinash, 14 ans : 'Je n'ai même pas réalisé ce qui s'est passé quand il s'est rué sur moi.'  
 Week-End 06.07 : Mesures disciplinaires par la PSSA : les règlements n'en font pas mention.  
 Week-End 06.07 : Steve Obeegadoo : l'enseignant désormais responsable du développement moral de l'élève.  
 Le Mauricien 21.07 : Allégations de harcèlement sexuel  
 Le Mauricien 28.08 : Hier après-midi : une enseignante agressée dans l'enceinte de Rodrigues College.  
 Le défi-plus 30.08 - 05.09 : Le recteur de la SSS La Tour Koenig essaient d'intimider profs et élèves.  
 Le défi-plus 30.08 – 05.09 : Des élèves du Piton Form VI State College protestent contre le manque d'équipements.  
 Le défi-plus 27.09 – 03.10 : Au collège d'Etat de Terre Rouge : un élève expulsé de sa classe emmené au poste de police.  
 Le Mauricien 16.10 : Sans passion  
 L'Express-dimanche 01.11: Des cadeaux 'exotiques'.

2004

Le Mauricien 28.01 : Après la manifestation d'hier à la SSS de Terre Rouge, Obeegadoo : La frustration des élèves est bien compréhensible.  
 Le Mauricien 29.01: Cosmopolitan College : Accès refusé à une quarantaine d'élèves pour indiscipline.  
 Le Défi-plus 7-13.02 : Un an de prison pour un étudiant du Keats college.  
 Le Défi-plus 14 – 20.02 : Les étudiants dénoncent le manque d'enseignants à la SSS La Tour Koenig.  
 Le Mauricien 23.03 : Manif des collégiennes de colline-Monneron SSS.  
 La Gazette de Maurice 02 – 08. 04 : Malaise au collège Universal : Y-aurait-il eu menaces de suspension ?  
 L'Express 12.03 : Concert au Plaza. Le 'Jump Around' casse la baraque.  
 L'Express 13.03: Concert à Rose: Dérapage à la fin du Jump Around.  
 Le Mauricien 13.03 : Jeudi dernier au Plaza, Rose hill : Jump for Mauritius.  
 Week-End 14.03 : Jump Around Youth Concert au Plaza jeudi après-midi. Ciel ouvert, public chaud mais...  
 Le Mauricien 22.03 : Manque d'enseignants. Manif d'élèves au collège Bradley ce matin.  
 Le dimanche 02.05 : Dans un collège privé, un enseignant fracture le bras d'un étudiant de 13 ans.  
 Week-End scope 5-11.05 : La violence dans les collèges.  
 Le Mauricien 22.07 : Ce matin : grève des élèves de la SSS de Pailles.  
 Week-end 15.08: Enseignants, éducation et discipline: la mauvaise équation(!).  
 L'Express-Outlook 17.08 : The need for tighter discipline in State colleges.

2005

Le Mauricien 10.02: Incident post-lauréat. Le collège Lorette De Quatre Bornes consigne une déposition à la police.  
Le Matinal 10.02: Lauréats mais sauvages.  
Le Mauricien 11.02 : Manifs post-lauréats : colère et indignation également au Hindu Girls College.  
Week-end 13.02: La generation voyou.  
Week-end 13.02: Violences.  
Week-end 13.02: Faits et effets, c'est ça l'élite.  
Cinq-plus dimanche 13.02 : Déroutant.  
Le Mauricien 15.02 : Quel avenir pour l'homme.  
Le Mauricien 15.02 : Incidents au LCQB : Grandeur et Décadence.  
Le Mauricien 15.02 : Morveux ou 'modèles' ?  
Le Mauricien 15.02 : Shame ! Shame ! Shame !  
Le Matinal 17.02: Education.  
Le Mauricien 18.02 : Collège d'Etat : les recteurs réclament un plus grand marge de manœuvre.  
Le Mauricien 18.02 : Incidents RCC : vive l'école de la République.  
Le Mauricien 18.02 : Parental values and scholarships.  
Le Mauricien 18.02 : Bannissez ces exubérences annuelles.  
Le Mauricien 19.02 : RCC rebirth from ashes.  
Cinq-plus dimanche 20.02 : Acte de vandalisme : Incident post-lauréat : Steve Obeegadoo répond à Mgr. Piat.  
Week-End 20.02: Le silence imposé.  
Week-End 20.02: Actes de vandalisme au LCQB  
Week-end 20.02 : Le RCC déplore et veut refaire son image.  
Week-End 20.02 : Maurice Piat critique le silence des autorités.  
Week-end 20.02: Faits et effets. Malades.  
Week-end 20.02: RCC: redorer quelle image?  
L'Express Dimanche 20.02: La discipline ne doit pas être négociable.  
L'Hebdo 20.02 : Les exités du RCC.  
Le Mauricien 22.02 : Ce matin au LCQB. Des élèves présentent leurs excuses.  
Le Mauricien 22.02 : Témoignage d'un ex-Royaliste.  
Le Mauricien 22.02 : Pardonnez-leur car ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils font.  
Le Mauricien 22.02 : What we can't afford.  
Le Mauricien 23.02: Pretence of knowledge.  
Le Matinal 28.02: La discipline à l'école.  
L'Express 02.03 : Sit-in at Maurice Curé SSS; an outburst of frustration for unfulfilled demands.  
Le Mauricien 12.03: Après le concert : un adolescent se blesse.  
L'Express 12.03 : JAYC ensam zot bouzé.  
Week-End 13.03: Le talent au rendez-vous ... et pourtant.  
Week-End scope 16 – 22.03 : Concert : Fanta Jump Around Youth Concert 2005 : Accords parfaits et imparfaits.  
Le Mauricien 17.03: Un élève de 14 ans malmène une enseignante en classe.  
Week-end 10.04 : Elèves indisciplinés. Jeu de nerfs.  
L'Express 10.05 : Un étudiant arrêté pour trafic de drogue.  
Le Mauricien 06.06 : Un collégien 'malmené' par un policier.

## *Appendices*

## **Appendix I**

### **Dangerous Drugs Act 1986**

#### **Section 28. Unlawful dealing with dangerous drugs**

(1) Subject to section 38, every person who unlawfully -

(a) (i) has in his possession, smokes, consumes or administers to himself or to any other person any drug specified in subsection (2);

shall commit an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine which shall not exceed 5,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term which shall not exceed 8 years;

(b) sells, supplies, procures, distributes, transports or offers to buy, supply, distribute or transport any drug specified in subsection (2) shall commit an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine which shall not exceed 50,000 rupees and to penal servitude for a term which shall not exceed 12 years;

(Amended 1/92; 29/94)

## **Appendix II**

### **Child Protection Act 1995**

#### **Section 14 Sexual offences**

(1) Any person who causes, incites or allows any child –

- (a) to be sexually abused by him or by another person;
- (b) to have access to a brothel;
- (c) to engage in prostitution,

shall commit an offence.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) (a), a child shall be deemed to be sexually abused where he has taken part whether as a willing or unwilling participant or observer in any act which is sexual in nature for the purposes of –

- (a) another person's gratification;
- (b) any activity of pornographic, obscene or indecent nature;
- (c) any other kind of exploitation by any person.

## **Appendix III**

### **The Information and Communication Technologies Act 2001**

#### **Section 18. Functions of the Authority**

(1) The Authority shall –

- (m) take steps to regulate or curtail the harmful and illegal content on the Internet and other information and communication services.

#### **Section 46. Offences**

Any person who –

(h) uses an information and communication service, including telecommunication service, -

- (i) for the transmission or reception of a message which is grossly offensive, or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character;

shall commit an offence.

#### **Section 47. Penalties**

(1) Any person who commit an offence under this Act shall, o conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 1,000,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

## **Appendix IV**

### **Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act 2003**

#### **Section 15. Indecent photographs of children**

(1) Any person who –

- (a) takes or permits to be taken or to make, any indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child;
- (b) distributes or shows such indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph;
- (c) has in his possession such indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph, with a view to it being distributed or shown by himself or any other person; or
- (d) publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that the advertiser distributes or shows such indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph, or intends to do so,

shall commit an offence.

## **Appendix V**

### **Criminal Code and Criminal Code Supplementary Act**

#### **Section 65. Setting fire to or destroying State Property**

Any person who sets fire to, or destroys in any way, any building, storehouse, arsenal, ship or vessel or any other property belonging to the State, or being for the use of the State shall be punished by penal servitude for life  
(Amended 31/95)

#### **Section 226. Threatening verbally**

Where the threat, so accompanied by an order or condition, has been made verbally, the offender shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

#### **Section 228. Assault with aggravating circumstance**

(2) Where as a result of any act of violence specified in subsection (1) the person injured or assaulted has had an arm, a leg or a thigh broken, or has lost the use of both eyes or of one eye only, the offender shall be punished by penal servitude not exceeding 10 years and to a fine not exceeding 3,000 rupees.

#### **Section 233. Dealing with offensive weapon**

(2) The bearer of any arms specified in subsection (1), may be punished by a fine not exceeding 2,000 rupees.

#### **Section 249. Rape, attempt upon chastity and illegal sexual intercourse**

(4) Any person who has sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 16, even with consent, shall commit an offence and shall on conviction, be liable to penal servitude

#### **Section 251. Debauching youth**

(1) Any person who offends against morality, by habitually exciting, encouraging, or facilitation the debauchery or corruption of youth of either sex under the age of 18 shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year and by a fine not exceeding 2,000 rupees.

#### **Section 346. Arson**

(6) any person who by setting fire to anything, whether it belongs to him or not, willfully sets fire to any property or thing specified in subsections (1) to (5), shall be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 10 years.

#### **Section 349. Damaging public property, private enterprise or vehicle**

- (1) any person who willfully destroys, reaks down, damages, or renders useless, by any means, in whole or in part, any building, bridge, ship, vessel, boat, dike, causeway or other erection, any public property, any engine, utensil, or any article used in the business of a country estate, or a manufacture belonging to another person or any vehicle belonging to another person

shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 25,000 rupees and to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 10 years.