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PREFACE

The *Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile*, a visionary framework for the education of Tibetan children in exile, was formally implemented by the Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society (STSS) in 2005, beginning with Mewoen Tsuglag Petoen School. Subsequently, the policy was extended to other schools under the administration of STSS. Furthermore, STSS ensured its implementation in schools transferred from the erstwhile Central Tibetan Schools Administration as the phase-wise transition progressed.

In alignment with the guiding principles of the Basic Education Policy (BEP), it has become imperative to critically examine the long-term implications of the traditional pedagogical approaches presently prevalent in the school system. Furthermore, the *National Curriculum Framework for Pre-Primary, Primary and Middle School Education 2010*, published by the Department of Education, CTA, clearly mandates, under *Chapter VI (Sections 6.5 and 6.6)* of the Middle School Curriculum, the renunciation of the systems of Rewards & Punishments and Competition & Comparison. Although such practices may yield short-term compliance, their continued use necessitates careful review in the context of fulfilling the “Aim of Giving Education” as articulated in Chapter V of the Basic Education Policy document.

The inconsistency and lack of uniformity observed within the STSS schools in implementing the principles of BEP, specifically with regard to the system of rewards and punishments, led to a detailed discussion during the 17th Annual Heads’ Meeting.

Recognising this need, STSS has initiated the development of a guideline aimed at minimising reliance on reward and punishment-based approaches. This document seeks to ensure a uniform approach across all schools under its administration.

The initiative of framing the guideline draws its mandate from the 17th Annual Heads’ Meeting held from 10th to 12th January 2025, under *Agenda Item No. 2, Resolution No. 2.4*, which resolved as follows:

“For the effective implementation of school activities beyond the traditional practice of competition and reward–punishment model, the Head Office is required to provide structured guidelines outlining their implications.”

In pursuance of the above resolution, and at the request of STSS, Dr Kalsang Wangdu developed the guideline based on extensive research and study. An informal committee was thereafter constituted to review Draft-I and to provide inputs based on professional experience and insights.

Incorporating these inputs, Draft-II was later submitted by Dr Kalsang Wangdu to STSS. To facilitate comprehensive understanding, an online orientation programme was conducted for all the STSS School Heads led by Dr. Kalsang Wangdu. Thereafter, schools were directed to circulate the draft among teaching and non-teaching staff and to provide structured feedback.

The feedback received from schools was compiled and deliberated upon during the 18th Annual Heads' Meeting held in January 2026, wherein an in-person orientation session was facilitated by the resource person. Based on the constructive inputs received, necessary revisions were incorporated to finalise the document. Consequently, the Final Draft was prepared.

It is indeed a stepping stone for a school system to initiate such work to guide schools in adopting progressive, student-centred practices aligned with the relevant educational principles and Policies.

Therefore, STSS expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr Kalsang Wangdu for his valuable contribution in drafting this document. The Society also acknowledges the constructive inputs received from the committee members and schools. This guideline is the outcome of a systematic, consultative, and participatory process. Without the time, effort and valuable contribution of all the concerns, it would not have been possible.

This guideline shall be implemented in all schools under the administration of STSS in letter and spirit. STSS may undertake a timely review and revision of the document as and when required.

Dated: 30.04.2026



Director
STSS

The Impacts of Rewards and Punishments in School System

A Guideline for Sambhota Tibetan Schools

Introduction

The reward and punishment system is widely used in schools and other institutions to motivate children towards desirable behaviors and to demotivate them towards undesirable ones, respectively. Research findings on the impacts of reward and punishment are complex and nuanced, and there is no straightforward explanation. Teachers and educators need to understand various dimensions of rewards and punishments. Firstly, there is a huge difference in the short-term and long-term consequences of using reward and punishment interventions. Oftentimes, rewards and punishments may seem effective in changing behavior in the short run, but they come with many unintended long-term negative consequences. They treat the symptoms, not the underlying causes. For example, rewards may temporarily attract a child to reading, but in the long run, they reduce the child's intrinsic motivation to read independently when there is no longer a reward. Similarly, punishments may deter a child from engaging in an undesirable behavior like smoking, but they cannot root out the behavior in the long run. Secondly, not all types of rewards and punishments have the same consequences – some are way more harmful than others. The effects of rewards are also determined by when or in what form a reward is given – whether it is expected or unexpected – and how the person receiving it interprets it in terms of how it affects his/her sense of autonomy and competence. These factors should be taken into account when discussing the effects of rewards and punishments on children.

This guideline document has three major segments. Firstly, it elaborates on different types of rewards and punishments, and what research tells us about their short and long-term impacts. Secondly, it offers suggestions on alternative approaches to promoting intrinsic motivation towards learning, particularly in the context of classroom teaching, and promoting positive discipline. Thirdly, the document also offers recommendations on school programs addressing issues of rewards, punishments, comparison, and competition.

Motivation

The use of rewards and punishments is intimately linked to the concept of motivation. Hence, it is helpful to identify different types of motivation and clarify their meaning.

- **Intrinsic motivation** is something within that drives us to engage in an activity for the simple joy of it. It refers to people's spontaneous tendencies to be curious and interested, to seek out challenges, and to exercise and develop their skills and knowledge, even in the absence of external rewards or consequences. It's the motivation that comes from within that drives us to accomplish certain goals, to be competent, to feel a sense of freedom and autonomy. Intrinsic motivation is associated with a range of positive outcomes

such as enhanced learning, performance, creativity, optimal development, and psychological wellness.

- **Extrinsic motivation** is when the motivation to engage in a behavior or action to achieve a goal is driven by external rewards or the avoidance of punishment, rather than the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself. In the context of school education, there are many things that children are not intrinsically motivated to do. Hence, we tend to introduce a range of external consequences, such as rewards and punishments, threats and promises, ranks and failure, recognition and shame, to make children do what we want them to. Extrinsic motivation is not only inferior, but research has shown that it is also likely to erode intrinsic motivation.
- **Internally-regulated extrinsic motivation** is when you internalize an extrinsic motivation, meaning you understand the reasons for and the importance of an activity, even if the activity is not intrinsically enjoyable. It is a process where external regulations and values become internalized, meaning they are adopted and become a part of one's self-concept, leading to an increased sense of ownership and purpose in their actions. For children, this internalization of extrinsic motivation is acquired through reasoning and guidance from the more knowledgeable others (teachers or parents). Internally-regulated extrinsic motivation encompasses the stages of internalization, leading to more autonomous and self-determined behavior.
 1. I will do it to get a reward or avoid a blame (extrinsic motivation)
 2. I will do it so that my teacher will have a good image of me (extrinsic motivation)
 3. I will do it because it's necessary and important (internalized extrinsic motivation)
 4. I will do it because I enjoy it (intrinsic motivation)

This highlights the importance of explaining why a certain topic or activity is important and worthy of pursuit, instead of simply imposing it on the children because it is there in the curriculum or the syllabus. Likewise, teachers can make their lessons interesting and meaningful to the children by contextualizing/relating the teaching content to child's life, giving opportunities for practical application, using hands-on experiential learning approach, using multimedia and other teaching aids, etc. All these helps in the processes of internalization. For example, a child may initially study for a good grade (external reward). Through internalization, they may gradually come to value the pursuit of knowledge and the process of learning itself, leading to a more intrinsically motivated approach. Therefore, internally-regulated extrinsic motivation represents a powerful tool for fostering intrinsic motivation by shifting from external to internal drivers, promoting autonomy and self-determination.

Types of rewards

Rewards can be categorized into different types. Based on whether the children have prior knowledge of its availability, rewards can be divided into two.

1. **Contingent/expected reward** is where the reward is made explicit to the children from the start. It is also called “if then reward” (if you do this, then you will get this). Some examples of contingent rewards in school and classroom contexts are:

“If you secure 75% and above in the exam, then you will get a prize”

“If you finish reading a book, then you will get a gold star”

“If you complete the activity, then you will get a candy”

2. **Unexpected reward** or surprise reward is when children come to know about the reward at the end. They didn't expect the reward when they began their engagement with a task.

Likewise, based on the materiality or forms in which a reward is given, it can be divided into three main types.

1. **Tangible reward** is a reward which is given in physical forms like gifts, sweets, money, etc.
2. **Symbolic reward** is a reward which is given in symbolic forms like certificates, ceremonial scarves, gold stars, stickers, etc.
3. **Verbal reward** is a reward which is offered in the form of words like informational feedback, praise, etc. It is also often called positive reinforcement.

Impacts of rewards

Research findings suggest that the impacts differ based on the types of rewards given; whether the recipients have prior knowledge of its availability; and how the intention of giving a reward is interpreted or perceived by the recipients.

- Generally, rewards may increase temporary engagement in a task, but they can never help someone develop a commitment to a task or a reason to keep doing it when there's no longer a payoff. On the contrary, rewards are often counterproductive. Researchers have found that children who are rewarded for doing something nice are less likely to think of themselves as nice people. Instead, they tend to attribute their behavior to the reward. Then, when there is no longer a reward to be gained, they are less likely to help compared to kids who weren't given a reward in the first place.
- For children who are intrinsically motivated to engage in an activity (like reading), rewards in all forms can have negative impacts, leading to the reduction of intrinsic motivation. This is because the recipient perceives that the reward was controlling his/her behavior, leading to the erosion of

autonomy. For these children, the activity/task is already rewarding in and of itself. When children get rewarded for something they already enjoy, they begin to feel that they did the activity for the reward instead of for itself. This is called 'over justification effect'.

In 1973, Mark Lepper and others conducted research titled "*Undermining children's intrinsic interest with extrinsic reward: A test of the 'over justification' hypothesis*". They examined over justification effect on 3 to 5-year-old children's desire to draw, which is considered an enjoyable activity. Three groups of children were assigned to three different conditions. Children in the first group were told they would receive a special ribbon for drawing. Children in the second group were not told about the reward they would receive after they had completed the activity. Children in the third group were not told about or given any reward for drawing.

Afterward, all of the children were observed in a "free-play" setting after the experiment to see if this impacted how much they would later choose to draw. They found that the children who had been promised a reward for drawing during the study drew significantly less during free play. However, the children who were surprised with a reward still showed interest in drawing afterwards. The psychologists concluded that knowing about a reward causes children to believe they enjoy drawing only because of the reward instead of the activity itself, and that intrinsic enjoyment for an activity does not return after the reward is no longer an option. They also concluded that the over justification effect only occurs if the reward is expected.

- Tangible rewards, especially those given as contingent rewards, decrease intrinsic motivation, and school children are more vulnerable to this effect than college children.
- For children who are not intrinsically motivated to perform a task (like reading), rewards may increase extrinsic motivation in a short run. But as soon as the reward is removed, the extrinsic motivation dies out, and the child stops engaging in the task.
- Verbal rewards, given in the form of informational/positive feedback, can increase intrinsic motivation when the intention is not to control the child's behavior and when it is given in the right form.

How to Praise

Praise is defined as a positive evaluation of someone's work by a person who knows the standards of the evaluation. Praise offered in the right form and content can increase intrinsic motivation. The following points need to be taken into account when praising a child:

- Praise the *process* of an activity the child is engaged in, such as the strategies, ideas, and effort the child is using, regardless of the end *product*
- Do not praise the child's ability or intelligence. Carol Dweck's research shows that intelligence praise puts children in a fixed mindset and makes them avoid challenges. Therefore, shift from *intelligence praise* (Wow, you got eight, that's a really good score. You must be smart at this!) to *effort praise* (Wow, you got eight, that's a really good score. You must have tried really hard!)
- Make your praise descriptive and specific, related to the child's work, such that it serves as useful informational feedback. Just saying "very good" means nothing. Identify what is very good and verbalize that in your praise
- Praise without comparing with other children. Comparison can be made with the individual child's previous work or the previous self
- Praise should be timely, meaning it should be given at an opportune time so that it serves as valuable informational feedback
- Avoid overpraising: Overpraising for small things can make children doubt they can do big things. It sends a message that the teacher/parent has low expectations for the child, and it can make them doubt their capability

Types of punishments

Punishment can be defined as forcing children to undergo something unpleasant, and it comes in various forms such as physical assault, verbal abuse, deprivation of affection or attention, humiliation, isolation, sanction, etc. Broadly, we can divide punishments into three types based on the forms in which it is given:

- **Physical punishment:** also known as corporal punishment, it includes spanking, slapping, pushing, pinching or otherwise causing physical pain. It also includes making the child assume uncomfortable positions such as kneeling, standing on bench/chair, holding ears through legs, carrying school bag on head, etc.
- **Verbal punishment:** punishment using words, and it comes in the form of shouting, scolding, shaming, belittling, ridiculing, name-calling, threatening, comparing, making sarcastic comments or derogatory remarks, etc., that hurt the child mentally and emotionally.

- **Emotional punishment:** includes sanctions, withdrawals, isolation, etc. Sanctions include forfeiting things children like to do. For example, teachers and parents often say, “If you do not complete your class work, you cannot play after the class”. Withdrawal comes in the form of teachers deliberately withdrawing their attention and love towards a child they believe is misbehaving, sending a message saying ‘I don’t care!’. Isolation includes banishing a child to an uncomfortable space or making the child stand outside the class, etc.

Impacts of punishment

Punishment assumes that children need to pay for what they have done or failed to do. In other words, the fundamental belief behind punishment is that “in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse”. Such an argument defies logic. Research evidences against the use of punishment are well-documented. Punishment treats the symptoms, not the cause of the behavior. Often times, it creates an artificial sense of orderliness and does not foster the development of genuine self-discipline. Punishments are also mostly counter-productive, and are ineffectual over the long term as a technique for eliminating the kind of behavior toward which it is directed.

- Research links physical punishment to risks of harm to children’s cognitive, behavioral, social and emotional development. Studies have found that physical punishments can have a range of negative outcomes for children. It makes children more aggressive. It may result in temporary compliance, but it doesn’t promote long-term positive behavior.

Adverse Effects of Corporal Punishment

- It causes the child to experience physical pain, anxiety, fear, humiliation, etc
 - It reinforces low self-esteem by not treating the child with respect and dignity
 - It teaches children that using force/violence is a way to solve problems/conflicts
 - It diminishes their ability for problem-solving and conflict resolution
 - It increases aggressive and destructive behavior
- Similarly, the long-term impacts of verbal punishment are also severe. A meta-analysis of the available research shows that verbal abuse can have long-lasting negative consequences such as delinquent behavior, depression, aggression, substance use, anger, and poor physical health outcomes. Children who have been subjected to constant verbal punishment are shown to have low self-esteem and low confidence.

- Emotional punishments also subject the child to psychological trauma and suffering, and result in several life-long negative outcomes, including low self-esteem, low confidence, anxiety, depression, etc. Sometimes, love and attention withdrawal might even be worse than other forms of punishment. Psychologist Martin Hoffman wrote; “although it [love/attention withdrawal] poses no immediate physical or material threat to the child, it may be more devastating emotionally... because it poses the ultimate threat of abandonment or separation”.
- All three forms of punishment described above may seem effective for securing immediate compliance and obedience, but they are ineffective in transforming the child’s behavior in the long run. On the contrary, they bring forth unintended long-term negative consequences for the child.

Alternatives to rewards and punishments

Fortunately, the field of education and pedagogy is abounded with alternative approaches that promote intrinsic motivation to learning and foster positive discipline. Teachers must believe that all children have the capacity to be intrinsically motivated. With this mindset, they can work on the classroom environment and instructional strategies that promote intrinsic motivation towards learning and engagement.

- **Physical and emotional needs:** One basic element to note is that the children’s motivation to learn will suffer if their physical or emotional needs are unmet. For example, if a child is hungry, anxious or unloved, he will not be motivated to learn at school. Therefore, teachers and educators must make sure that the child’s basic physical and emotional needs are met so that they are ready for more intellectually challenging pursuits.
- **Relationship:** The most powerful tool teachers and educators have for influencing children’s behavior and motivation is the RELATIONSHIP they build with them. No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship. Education is relationship-centered. When people feel connected and valued, they give or invest more. Strategies for fostering close rapport with children include active and deep listening; engaging in small talks; knowing every child’s name, interests and background; valuing their inputs, etc.
- **Positive classroom culture:** Positive classroom culture influences children’s motivation to learn and manage their behavior well. Therefore, it is absolutely important that the teacher focuses on building a positive classroom culture right from the start of the academic year. It involves creating student-directed classroom norms/values and implementing them consistently, building team spirit and friendly atmosphere, and building rapport with and amongst students. Once the classroom has a well-established norms and values,

academic content teaching will be much easier with enhanced student motivation and self-discipline.

- **Pedagogy:** The teaching strategies employed by the teacher also affects children' motivation to learn and manage their behavior positively. Teachers who treat learners as the first frame of reference and employ differentiated and child-centered teaching pedagogies alongside the use of multimedia tools generally have higher student motivation. The prevalence of unmotivated children and classroom behavioral and management issues indicate problems with the teachers' pedagogical approach.
- Julianne C. Turner and her colleagues have highlighted four key principles of motivation in their research on student engagement in learning.
 - 1) **Belongingness** is the need to establish close relationships with others. Children' perceptions of belonging arise from frequent pleasant interactions with others in a stable framework of concern for one another's welfare. A sense of belongingness arises when a child feels accepted, included, valued, respected, and connected. When a child is happy and feels a sense of belongingness to the teacher and the class, his/her motivation to learn will be higher. Teachers can enhance children' sense of belongingness by building a positive and caring classroom culture; building close rapport with the children, organizing cooperative group work, etc. More importantly, focus on creating a cooperative classroom rather than a competitive classroom.
 - 2) **Competence:** Children who report higher self-efficacy and competency are more likely to have higher motivation to learn, set learning goals, use effective learning strategies, monitor comprehension, and evaluate goal progress. Instructional practices that offer opportunities to increase competence include assigning appropriately challenging tasks based on children's zone of proximal development; providing necessary scaffolding and informational feedback; differentiating teaching based on child's interest, readiness, and learning profile, etc.
 - 3) **Autonomy** is the psychological need to behave according to one's interests and values. When classroom teaching gives children the freedom to pursue things that interest them, make decisions for themselves, and gives some degree of control over the learning process, their motivation and level of engagement increase exponentially. Strategies supporting child's autonomy include the use of differentiated teaching; incorporation of children' perspectives in the lesson; the use of non-controlling language, etc.
 - 4) **Meaningfulness:** When children see meaning in what they are learning, their motivation to learn increases manifold. Therefore, teachers need to explain why the content is important and worth learning. Additionally, they

can use instructional strategies such as contextualizing teaching content to the child’s life; creating opportunities for application/transfer of learning to real-life situations; valuing children’ interests, etc.

- **Teacher behavior:** Another important factor to take into consideration is the teacher’s behaviors – whether the teacher is a controller or autonomy-supporter. Edward Deci and other psychologists have found that autonomy-supportive teachers have children who are more intrinsically motivated. Autonomy-supportive teacher behaviors, such as active listening and discussion, encourage children to feel they are in control of their actions and choices, aligning with their values and interests.
- **Positive discipline:** Similarly, the positive discipline approach is a powerful alternative to punitive punishment. Moving away from power-based discipline, the positive discipline approach promotes a love-based discipline that is focused on solutions rather than on punishment. It involves attempts to understand the underlying factors beneath a child’s behavior and address the root cause. As Jane Nelsen beautifully summarizes: “Children learn what they live. If we want our children to grow up learning to be KIND, FIRM and RESPECTFUL, we must make sure that that is what they live.”

	Traditional practices	Positive discipline
What motivates children behavior?	Children respond to rewards and punishments in their environment	Children seek a sense of belonging (connection) and significance (meaning)
What are the most powerful tools for teachers?	Rewards and punishments	Empathy, understanding the beliefs behind the behavior, collaborative problem-solving, kind and firm follow through
What is the response to inappropriate behavior?	Punishment, isolation, dressing down, shaming	Connecting before correcting, focusing on solutions, follow through

Positive discipline approach can be divided into two primary strands:

- **Preventive measures:** Positive discipline approach is proactive and lays a great deal of emphasis on preventive measures. This includes strategies like creating positive classroom culture, building close relationships with students, improving one’s own pedagogical/teaching practices by adopting learner-centered approaches, etc. All these practices help in increasing

students' intrinsic motivation to learn, building internal self-control, and reducing behavioral and disciplinary problems.

b) *Corrective measures:* Despite the preventive measures, disciplinary and behavioral problems do happen. In such circumstances, positive discipline approach advocate for corrective and restorative measures in the place of punitive punishments. Corrective approach focuses on healing and responsibility whereas punitive approach focuses on blame and pain. Corrective approach promotes strategies like:

- Connecting before correcting (for a child who uses abusive language because he/she is angry/hurt, we can connect by empathizing and validating his/her feeling of hurt. This will help in calming the situation. Once we achieve this, corrective measures can follow)
- Attempting to understand the reasons behind a child's misbehavior or the root causes. This involves creating safe space, digging deeper, understanding family situation and local factors, etc.
- Involving the child in finding helpful solutions (how can we help you improve?)
- Engaging the child in reflective exercises to help them discover the negative consequences of their misbehavior and alternatives to it (a child who is caught smoking cigarettes do a research/reading on ill of smoking and write a reflective essay)
- Making the child experience meaningful natural consequences (if they didn't do homework on time, they lose their free time)
- Adopting dialogue, which by its nature is non-confrontational, as the way forward. As educators and teachers, we must firmly believe that all issues with children can be resolved through talking
- Giving counseling to the child using non-judgmental genuine encounter moments
- Making the child engage in restorative practices and community works (a student who damages school property helps repair it or participates in a cleanliness drive instead of being hit or shamed publicly)
- Referring to the school's guidance counselor if necessary
- Having consistent compassionate follow-through

Guidelines for schools

- **Reward:** Gradually reduce the practice of offering contingent and tangible rewards to children. Unexpected rewards, if needed, can be offered in the form of symbolic rewards like ceremonial scarves, certificates, or hand claps.

Verbal rewards can be offered based on the guidelines mentioned in this document.

- **Punishment:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), to which all Tibetan schools in India are affiliated to, calls for the elimination of corporal punishment via its circular 716587 issued on 23 May 2014. The CBSE has defined corporal punishment as physical punishment, mental harassment via verbal and emotional abuses, and discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, region, etc. As such, the practices of subjecting children to corporal punishment in schools should be banned and eliminated.
- **Professional development:** Moving away from a predominantly reward & punishment system is a major shift for many teachers, educators, and school leaders. Therefore, sustained and concerted efforts should be put in place to raise awareness and provide support to them through this journey of unlearning and relearning. Training and other professional development programs should be organized to raise awareness amongst teachers, educators, and child caretakers on child-centered teaching, motivation, and positive discipline strategies.
- **Parental awareness:** Alongside teachers and educators, awareness raising programs should be organized for parents and caretakers to move away from reward and punishment system. All the stakeholders of child's education should move in similar direction – both at home and school.
- **Exam result:** The confidentiality of a child's exam result should be upheld strictly. Only the concerned teachers, school leaders, parents, and the child himself/herself should have access to the exam result. The practice of declaring results during school assembly or other gatherings where high and low scorers are named, identified, rewarded or shamed, should be stopped. Similarly, do not put up exam results showing individual children's marks on bulletin boards in the classroom or other areas in the school. Teachers and school heads can offer verbal praise and encouragement to children who have secured high marks. Similarly, they can meet with low performers individually and chalk out plans for supporting the child to improve his/her academic performance.
- **Co-curricular programs:** School programs, especially co-curricular activities (literary, cultural, games & sports) that happen between classes or houses, should move away from obvious forms of competition where winners are recognized and rewarded. For example, in the case of literary and cultural programs, focus should be on participation and learning rather than on performance. As for games and sports, result or outcomes become obvious by the end of the match. However, shift can be achieved by how outcomes of games and sports are recognized or celebrated.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Without using punishments, are we not implying that it is okay to misbehave and that children can do whatever they want without consequences?

Not at all. Avoiding punishment doesn't mean avoiding consequences or boundaries. There's an important distinction between punishment (which aims to make children suffer for wrongdoing) and natural or logical consequences that help children learn. Children absolutely need clear boundaries and consistent responses to their behavior. The love-based positive discipline approach does not condone wrongdoings by children. It is not focused on punishing the wrongdoer (child), but on the understanding the causes of the misbehaviors and finding collaborative solutions to address it. It separates the wrongdoer (person) and the wrongdoing (act). It says we have to be kind but firm. The goal isn't permissiveness - it's helping children develop internal motivation to behave well because they understand why it matters, not just because they fear punishment. Children with clear, consistent boundaries who experience meaningful/natural consequences actually tend to have better self-regulation than those who are primarily controlled through punishment.

2) If we do not give rewards to children doing well (say getting first position in exams), won't they get discouraged?

It may temporarily affect children who are currently over dependent on rewards. But in the long run, the removal of contingent/tangible rewards will increase their intrinsic motivation to perform a task. As teachers and parents, we have to make children understand the worthiness each task/behavior on its own merit than on an external reward. We can recognize their achievements through meaningful acknowledgment of their effort, growth, and learning process rather than by rewards tied to rankings or comparisons with others.

3) Children will not work hard if there are no competitions or prizes, and therefore, the quality of work will suffer. Isn't it so?

Well, not quite so. It is important to focus on learning and development as the intrinsic motivation to perform a task rather than on external motivators such as competition or prizes. Given proper guidance and support, children will do their best even when there is no competition or prizes to win. Children naturally work hard when they find the activities meaningful, when they have some choice in their learning, and when they feel competent and supported. On the contrary, competition and prizes will bring many unintended far-reaching negative consequences. When children become focused on winning or earning rewards, they often choose easier tasks to ensure success, take fewer creative risks, and may even cheat to achieve the desired outcome.

4) When children graduate from school, the world outside is full of competition. Therefore, isn't shielding children from competition a futile exercise?

It is true that we cannot shield children from competition altogether. The best we can do is reducing competition and promote collaboration when they are in school. This will provide them with a positive environment for healthy development during their formative years. By the time they finish their schooling, they will be matured enough to face the world on their own.

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