A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM OF MAURITIUS AND THE LEARNER DISCIPLINE PROBLEM IN MAURITIAN STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Learner discipline is a major public health issue in state secondary schools in Mauritius. Over the past ten years, it is reaching an alarming state among students, and the education authorities seem not to be effective in proposing effective disciplinary strategies or interventions to deal with it. This study was carried out in an attempt to make a critical review of the Mauritian education system so as to examine its flaws that may be influencing learner behaviour. Qualitative research approach was used to gather information about how the characteristics of the education system contribute to learners' lack of discipline. Focus group interviews were carried out with 24 parents, 24 educators and 24 students, and face-to-face interviews were done with 2 superintendents and 4 principals. The research also used non-participant observation in schools. Purposive sampling was used for data collection. By using content analysis, it was found that institutionalised private tuition, automatic promotion, the centralisation of decision-making about school policies, practices and procedures, the lack of extra-curricular activities and the employment of supply educators on a temporary basis are aspects of the education system that negatively influence learner discipline. The study recommends that educational reforms must be initiated to restore learner discipline. The findings of this paper enlighten all stakeholders on the current flaws of the education system. By considering these flaws, the Ministry of Education may take the appropriate measures to address the problem of learner discipline in the state secondary schools in the country.

Keywords: learner discipline, critical review, education system, educational reforms

INTRODUCTION

Learner discipline is a difficult concept to define as it is multifaceted and may be viewed from different perspectives. Traditionally, it is defined as the degree of order and structure that is required to maintain socially acceptable behaviour among students (Ugboko & Adediwura, 2012). This is the custodial view of discipline. In this study, learner discipline is viewed from the humanistic perspective: "*the process of helping the students to assume personal responsibility for their behaviour and to judge between right and wrong*" (Fields & Fields, 2006), or "*the process of helping the students to learn more effectively and to develop positive social-emotional-behaviour*" (Olley, Cohn & Cowan, 2010). So, discipline means the absence of misbehaviour and the student's responsibility to make the difference between right and wrong, and between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour at school and in the society.

The education system plays a fundamental role in ensuring that there is learner discipline in schools. However, internal factors of the state secondary schools as well as the way the education system is structured have significant impact on learner behaviour. A newspaper survey on learners' lack of discipline from 2008 to 2016 revealed the following causes of this phenomenon: the centralisation of authority, parents' irresponsibility and disengagement in the children's attitudes to learning, insufficient authority of educators to maintain discipline, a heavy time-table which is examination-oriented and content-based, an exaggerated concern for children's rights neglecting their responsibilities, educators' lack of discipline, the absence of extra-curricular activities and of a framework for counselling learners, social interactions between educators, learners and the principal, private tuition, the absence of communication between parents and children on school matters; the emergence of more nuclear families with working parents, the role of social media, the incapacity of the school to enforce positive discipline among students, the *laissez-aller* attitude of responsible authorities at school with reference to learner discipline, peer group pressure, parents over pamper their children, and a lack of good adult models for adolescents (Panchoo, 2016, Le Defi Quotidien 2015; Ramjanally 2015; Saminaden 2008; Hilbert 2008; Mahadeo 2008; Quirin 2009). It should be noted that this study limits itself to the impact of the current education system on learner discipline.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of Ramahrai, Curpen, Mariaye & Ramful (2006), the researcher found a research gap on learner discipline where the impact of the education system may be examined with reference to secondary school students. No critical analysis has yet been done about the system to determine the extent to which it impacts on learner discipline. It is obvious that the specificity of the state secondary schools compels principals to abide by it in their actions. Many reforms have been discussed but only a few have been implemented over the past years since the independence of Mauritius (Mariaye, 2005). As a matter of this lack of political will of politicians, though they have power and authority to address issues of national concern, the Minister of Education has taken only a few sporadic discipline measures like suspension and expulsion, as well as the e-register (SMS) system and camera surveillance on the state secondary school premises introduced in 2011(Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, 2014). Yet, the problem of learners' lack of discipline is attaining an unacceptable chaotic school situation (Beebeejaun-Muslum, 2014).
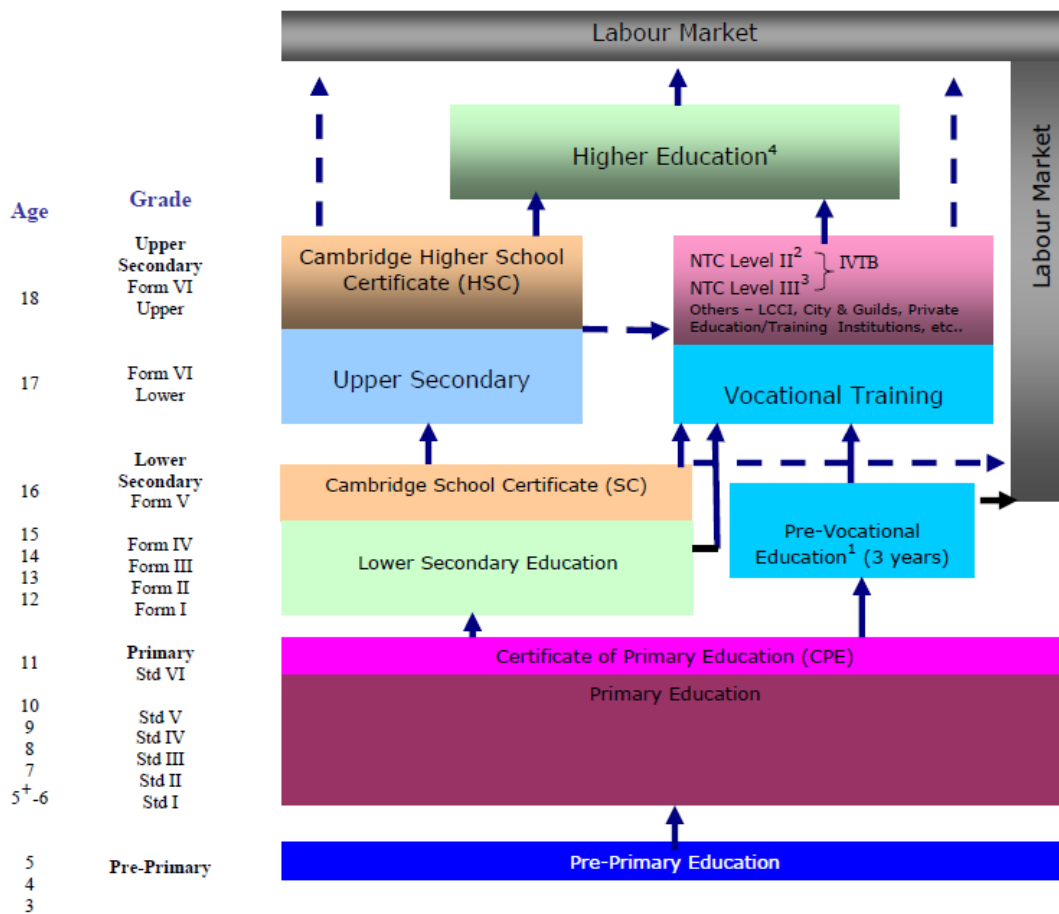
The aim of this study is to critically analyse the current education system by laying emphasis on its main aspects that may be influencing the learner behaviour in state secondary schools of Mauritius. The researcher wanted to get insights into the flaws of the system. The findings may provide possible answers to the worsening state of learner discipline at schools and eventually bring forward some recommendations about possible educational reforms that may be studied in order to restore effective and positive discipline among students.

THE CURRENT MAURITIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The current education system in Mauritius is an appendage of the British education system inherited since its independence in 1968. Education at all levels is governed by the Education Regulations (1957) and the Education [Amendment] Act (2006). These Regulations were amended in 2005 to make education free and compulsory up to the age of 16 for all children (The Education [Amendment] Act 2004).

The current education system is depicted in the following diagram:

Pathways of the Education and Training System in Mauritius

1. The prevocational curriculum.
2. Equivalent to education between the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate.
3. Equivalent to education between Form 3 to School Certificate.
4. Refers to post Higher School Certificate.

<div align="center">(Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2008)</div>

The education structure has four cycles, namely the early childhood development and education (0-5 years); the primary schooling (5-11 years), leading to the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE); the secondary education (11-20 years) and the postsecondary or tertiary education provided by the public and private universities as well as polytechnics (UNESCO-IBE, 2007).

The secondary education is categorised into two streams: the normal mainstream, in which learners who succeed their Certificate of Primary Education are admitted, and the prevocational stream, in which learners who fail the CPE twice and who are over 12 years old are admitted. Both streams are found on the same school premises.

There are two types of secondary schools in the country, namely state secondary schools and private secondary schools. The latter type constitutes of private aided schools and private non-aided or fee-paying schools (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2014). There are 119 secondary schools and 10660 students in these schools (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, 2015).

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE MAURITIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM
Elitism

There is a 'rat race' competition from the primary years of schooling to the end of the secondary education that exerts much psychological pressure on students and parents; this rude competition perverts the core mission of school: effective teaching and learning (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, 2001). Bissoondoyal (2008) concurs that it is a cut-throat competition that is plaguing the system. This system creates a bottleneck situation in the sense that it constrains access of students who successfully pass the CPE but have the difficulty to get admission in secondary schools on account of the limited seats available in the so called 'star' secondary schools or colleges. The Ministry itself officially branded these schools as 'star' since only 1000 places are available for the first year of secondary education (Education [Amendment] Act, 2006). 'Star' schools are schools which have achieved the highest pass rate at Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations (Mariaye, 2005). Only the first 1000 students who have obtained the best grades (5 A+) in the CPE who are admitted in them. So, all students struggle to get these "highly rated secondary schools" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2008).

The main problem of the Mauritian education system is elitism (Ducasse, 2009). It promotes competition rather than cooperation. At the end of secondary education, the government awards students with the best academic performance in the Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations at the national level by giving them full scholarships for tertiary education in the best universities in England and Australia. This award of laureates is inherited from the British colonisers. The government also introduced a second award to socially disadvantaged students who perform very well at national level by giving them partial scholarships for their tertiary education in local universities. So, there is fierce competition among the secondary school students who have recourse to private tuition in order to increase their chance to become laureates (elites) (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2008).

Elitism has a significant influence on learner discipline. Blending and tracking are two characteristics of the education system. Arum (2005) postulates that they lead to variations in the curriculum which may negatively impact on the self-esteem of students. Blending is an instructional approach which educators adopt for the creation of instructional activities and tasks that give opportunities to students to work in a collaborative manner (Poon, 2013). According to Temitayo, Nayaya and Lukman (2013), students manifest a lack of discipline when the instructional approaches of educators do not meet their needs. Tracking is the practice when the school selects students to participate in either academic enrichment programmes or in skills improvement programmes (Ogbu, 2003). In Mauritius, students with poor CPE performance are selected to be admitted in the prevocational classes of secondary schools, whereas those who pass the CPE are admitted in the mainstreams of the same school (Education [Amendment] Act, 2004).

Private tuition
In 2006, the Association for the Department of Education in Africa stated that private tuition is one of the major flaws of the Mauritian education system (Lam Hung, 2008). Besides, this phenomenon has been institutionalised (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, 1997). Private tuition has become a necessary evil since schools do not provide the student with the learning skills to become excellent in the Cambridge School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate examinations and therefore there is no acquisition of the required academic knowledge (Mahadeo, 2013). Consequently, students have a preference for private tuition to learning in the formal classes (Dindyal & Besoondyal, 2007). Schools have turned into "indoctrination centres" and educators are "vendors of merchandise", after the normal school hours, as educators and students meet for private tuition in the same school setting in exchange of high honoraria from parents (Mahadeo, 2008).

Private tuition gained its importance with the existence of the national state scholarship system for laureates at the end of the secondary education (Mariaye, 2005) and competition for quality results instead of quality education (Rivet, 2008). Besides, Bissoondoyal (2009) points out that this "shadow system of education" (Hollup, 2004) will remain widespread as long as the education system favours knowledge acquisition.

With the prevalence of private tuition, students disengage in the teaching and learning process and manifest a lack of discipline at schools (Ramharai et al, 2006). They become "unwilling learners" as they lose their interest in learning at schools. Indeed, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (2009) found that students misbehave when they find no connectedness to their school.

A knowledge-based education
The Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate programmes dictate the teaching and learning content of knowledge in secondary schools; the student is left with little time to satisfy his/her needs or to learn practical skills (Atchia, 2008). So, the education system is mostly knowledge-oriented with no or less emphasis on the teaching and learning of values (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, 1998). These values are not sufficiently present and there are no opportunities for students to be involved in activities that promote human, social and spiritual values (Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, 2003).

Moreover, in the Strategic Plan 2008-2020, it is evident that the government is not emphasising the teaching and learning of values as Ministry lays more emphasis on, inter alia, "the improvement and successful competitive rates in secondary schools; and embedding a culture of scientific thinking." (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2008). In the vision of the government, personality and character education is absent. However, according to Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014), when values are not taught, there is the manifestation of learners' lack of discipline. In the same vein, Gitome, Katola & Nyabwari (2013) argue that when parents, students, educators and even the Ministry of Education give more importance to a knowledge-oriented curriculum and less importance to the teaching of values, guidance and counselling at schools, students misbehave in secondary schools.

Centralisation

The education system of Mauritius is mostly centralised. All decisions concerning the national education and reforms are taken and implemented by the Minister of education. It is obvious in the Education Regulations (1957) and the Education [Amendment] Act (2002), that the Minister of education is solely responsible and have the power and authority for policy decisions regarding education and educational reforms: "The Minister shall have control of the educational system of Mauritius and shall be responsible for the general progress and development of such system."

Moreover, there is the politicisation of the education system in the country. Like the Baker's Act (1988) in UK, which encouraged an education system controlled by national politicians, civil servants and quasi-civil servants (Fisher, 2008), the Mauritian education system is managed by politicians. Educational policies taken by a former Minister of Education and in the process of implementation are dismantled or rejected when a new Minister introduces new policies (Chumun, 2007). A former Minister of Education, Kadress Pillay, confirmed that he could not implement his proposed educational reforms because of lobbying against the reforms from among his colleagues in the government (Essoo, 2008). This state of affairs is explained by the different amendments made to the original main Education Regulations (1957). The regulations remain the main policy documents for the education system over the years. So, the education system functions as per the decisions that are taken by the Minister of Education and imposed on all the other stakeholders in the system.

Automatic promotion

Automatic promotion is a practice which allows students to be promoted from grade to grade until they complete their primary education (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 1990). Secondary school students are also automatically promoted during the first three years. It implies that even students who fail to achieve the learning outcomes of a specific grade are promoted to the following grade or class. The Ministry of Education, culture and Human Resources avers that automatic promotion is a perverse practice since it has found that only 20% of the student cohort of the first grade of the primary education in 1994 was able to complete the last grade of secondary education (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2008).

On account of automatic promotion, the education system is rather exclusive as slow students are ignored by the educator when they have not acquired the academic competencies to follow the class (Mahadeo, 2008; Hilbert, 2008). Sukon (2008) proposes that the education system should get rid of this practice to ensure there is a remediation process to allow all students achieve the required skills and knowledge before moving up the educational ladder.

Lack of learner discipline

A lack of learner discipline is the actual number one school problem in both secondary schools and primary schools in Mauritius (Varma, 2008). It is one of the main factors that hamper the effective running of schools (Belle, 2007). It is a debated issue by parents, educators, sociologists and the media (Ramjanally 2015). Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014) maintains that there has been a worsening of learner discipline among secondary school students during the last ten years. Ramrahai et al (2006) explain that this degradation is the result of the fact that since the Education Regulations (1957), all the educational reforms or plans rarely mention discipline as a school problem.

In 2006, the Mauritius Research Council conducted a research on the lack of learner discipline and confirmed that indiscipline is reaching an unprecedentedly alarming level. The 2007 and 2011 reports of the Global School-based Student Health Survey revealed that an average of 34 % of students in the country are involved in physical aggression at least once annually (Jeannot 2015). The situation is such a matter of concern that an inter-ministerial committee, including officials from the Ministry of Gender and Equality, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth, and the Ministry of Social Integration was set up to discuss about the way forward to restore discipline in secondary schools (Le Defi Quotidien, 2015).

The Education Regulations (1957) mentions only two disciplinary measures that the school principal may take to maintain learner discipline, namely suspension and expulsion. These are reactive and punitive measures that are ineffective (Le Defi-Quotidien, 2015). These measures, however, are inadequate since the school leader has only a few or no legal or administrative guidelines for the implementation of effective discipline measures. The lack of a legal framework for learner discipline management by the school head, the absence of decentralisation of school management and the lack of political decisions about the phenomenon by the Ministry of Education explain the alarming situation in Mauritian secondary schools (Lam Hung, 2008). There is therefore an absence of a discipline plan to address the problem of indiscipline among students.

THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the research was to understand how the current education system influences learner behaviour in state secondary schools in Mauritius. The two objectives of the study were:

- To critically analyse the current education system of Mauritius with reference to learner discipline

- To determine the extent to which the current education system affects learner discipline among students in state secondary schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The researcher uses a purely qualitative approach for the purpose of collecting information from the selected 24 secondary school students, 24 educators, 24 parents, 2 superintendents and 4 principals. The students formed part of the Student Council, the parents were members of the School Governing Body, the educators had all at least five years teaching experience having worked in more than one school, the superintendents had worked for at least ten years in schools, and the principals were experienced participants who had more than five years of school headship. The purposive sampling was therefore used as the researcher considered the selected participants to be representative of the population (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2011). The researcher aimed at gaining in-depth insights into the participants' view, opinions, perspectives and daily experience about the manifestations of learner discipline on account of the flaws of the current education system.

The qualitative research approach is dynamic and interactive in nature (Davies & Hughes, 2014), and this helped the researcher to collect information about the influence of the current education system on learner discipline in secondary schools. Indeed, Marshall and Rossman (2011) argue that human actions are greatly influenced by the natural setting in which they take place and so the researcher should study the learner discipline problem in the real-life setting, which is the secondary school. Focus group interviews were carried with the learners, parents and educators, and individual face-to-face interviews with the superintendents and principals. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the problem of learner discipline as they allow the participants to discuss their own interpretations of their perspectives of the problem under study (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). The researcher was also a non-participant observer in two secondary schools for sixty hours in each one. All observations were noted in an observation log. Content analysis was used for data analysis and interpretations.

PROCEDURES

Permission was sought and obtained from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to collect the data from the participants. The researcher obtained prior consent from the adult participants and the assent of the students before the interview, by ensuring them complete confidentiality of the collected information and anonymity of their participation. They were also ensured that the collected data would be used only for the purpose of this study and that it would be kept in the researcher's custody until completely destroyed. The participants were also informed that they were free to participate and may cease their participation at any time of the interview as they were the moderators of the interview process. There were six participants in each interview with one being the moderator. A tape-recorder was used; one principal refused to have the interview taped and he was allowed to write his response on paper. Once the data was collected the six steps of Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) was used for data analysis process, namely preparing and organising the gathered information; reviewing and exploring them; coding the information into categories; constructing thick descriptions of participants, schools and activities; building themes; and reporting and interpreting the gathered information. The transcribed data and the observation log were analysed by using the content analysis approach.

FINDINGS
Private tuition

This necessary evil of the education system negatively influences learner behaviour at school. Learners come to school to have fun among their friends and they show little interest in their learning as they are already taught the knowledge content in private tuition. All the four principals agreed that private tuition contributes to learners' lack of discipline in classes. The principal of School B stated: "*Learners know already what the class educator teaches; they just do not care about the class lesson as they consider it a waste of time to follow the class lesson. They free themselves from learning and disturb the whole class by misbehaving.*"

Parents are more interested in the academic performance of their children than in monitoring their behaviour and attitudes at school. The students even use the money for buying alcoholic drinks. A parent from School D critically argued: "*The parents' attitudes are to be blamed: they do not bother about whether their children are self-disciplined at school or not as they send them to private tuition.*" Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014) ascertains that private tuition makes it difficult for the principal to restore learner discipline.

The employment of supply educators in state secondary schools

Supply educators are recruited and employed on a temporary basis to replace permanently employed educators who are on maternity leave or education leave or on an annual contract basis (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2013). The field notes of observation revealed that there were around 20% supply educators working in state secondary schools. The researcher observed that they are mostly young female undergraduates who do not have a dress code, who lack school connectedness and who travel for hours to reach their school.

The lack of initial teacher training and school teaching experience of the supply educators contribute to a lack of learner discipline among students. The school superintendent of School D lamented about the inability of supply educators to ensure learner discipline: "*Supply educators come to replace educators on leave for a month or two; they do not have any teacher training at the Mauritius Institute of Education. These young ladies do not know how to deal with this problem; they lack classroom management skills.*" Learners do not respect the legitimacy of supply educators' authority (May, 2011), who lack experience and do not deal with students with fairness and equity when dealing with learner misbehaviour (Mutemeri & Gudyanga, 2008).

Highly examination-oriented curriculum

The academia and certification of education are more important for all stakeholders in education. The aim of every parent is to obtain the best examination results for their children. This research revealed that students feel too much pressurised and therefore they find ways to get rid of their frustrations. One of the ways is the manifestation of a lack of discipline. A student of School C averred: *"Some students cannot bear the parental pressure to pass the examinations with outstanding performance; they come to school to express their frustration by being aggressive with other students and educators."* When education is too examination-oriented, it does not consider the holistic development of the student (Panchoo, 2016) and when parents lay too much emphasis on the curriculum, students tend to manifest socially unacceptable behaviour (Atchia, 2008).

A lack of extra-curriculum activities

Extra-curricular activities are provided to students in order to help them develop mental and physical abilities and cultivate good habits (Muthike, Mwaruvie & Mbugua, 2017). There are two activity periods that are scheduled in the weekly time-table of state secondary school students. However, the field notes revealed that educators do not organise any leisure activity for the class. They do exercise book marking or their own reading. Students are given the freedom to do anything they wish in the periods.

The Ministry concerned acknowledges the absence of activities: "*We have stressed on the formal curriculum, while leaving extra and co-curricular activities to the choice of schools, usually the more gifted ones in each school.*" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2009). As a matter of fact, many students use this opportunity to misbehave. This is confirmed by a student in School A: "*Educators are supposed to involve us in leisure or extra-curricular activities, but we are left on our own, we chat or watch films on mobile phones; some students even leave the class to go to drink alcoholic drinks, break the school alarm or even smoke in toilets.*" The field notes showed that students in School A excessively used their mobile phones under the desk during the activity periods. Dupper (2010) stresses that when students are given the opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, they feel connected to the school and they do not misbehave.

The constitutional rights of students

The rights of children are legally protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Child Protection Act (1994), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child (1990) and the Ombudsperson for Children Act (2003). Based on these Acts, the government has given to itself the mandate to:

"*(a) ensure that the rights, needs and interests of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and associations of individuals;(b) promote the rights and best interests of children; and (c) promote the compliance with the Convention of Rights of the Child." (*The Ombudsperson for the Children Act 2003)

Moreover, corporal punishment is prohibited in all schools: "*No corporal punishment is inflicted on any learner in any school, the principal may suspend or withdraw a learner from the school with the approval of the Minister in the case of a lack of discipline, and rules for the administration and discipline of the school are made by the school principal but with approval of the Minister of Education* (Education Regulations (1957); Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, 2015). Consequently, this emphasis on the constitutional rights of the student has empowered students to misbehave and disempowered the educators, principals and the superintendent to take disciplinary measures. This is because they may be prosecuted by law if they do not respect the student's constitutional rights to protection. A student of School B confirmed this disempowerment of the school stakeholders with regard to learner discipline management: "*We know our rights are protected by law. Our parents, educators and the principal must respect our rights as children and they cannot violate them. We do not abide by the school rules since they can do nothing against us when we manifest undesirable behaviour.*"

Besides, the authority of the principal as school head has been reduced in dealing with discipline problems. His/her authority is undermined by the Article 37(a) of the Convention of the Rights of the Child: "*State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or moral violence, injury or abuse…*". In fact, the thrust on children's rights and the abolishment of corporal punishment create a situation in which students manifest no respect for the principal and educators (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that the flaws of the current education system of Mauritius, namely elitism, private tuition, knowledge-orientation, centralisation of decision-making about educational policies, policies and practices and automatic promotion negatively contribute to the emergence and rapid worsening of the learner discipline problem over the past decade.

Secondary education has become an economic transaction between educators and parents with the students as clients through the practice of private tuition with the ultimate aim of education to obtain the best academic performance at the Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations.; this is the result of the institutionalised private tuition in the education system that permits the most successful students to obtain the state scholarship awards for tertiary education abroad. The state secondary schools are no more a learning place, but rather a place for fun and manifestations of a lack of discipline among the learners. The private tuition has taken precedence over the formal learning at school.

Besides, the centralisation of the education system has brought about the disempowerment of the educators, superintendents and principals as disciplinary measures and policies are taken by the Minister of Education and prescribed onto the school to use them. Because of this politicisation of the education system, the school heads and collaborators are not in the position to intervene effectively when there is a lack of discipline at school. Besides, the constitutional rights of the child which are protected by many legal national and international acts and conventions hamper the principal's ability to manage learner

discipline as the students are educated about their rights but not about their responsibilities and duties as a responsible student at school. Joubert and Bray (2007) emphasised that the legal framework about child's rights have empowered the students to manifest unacceptable behaviour and disempowered the principal to effectively deal with this problem.

Automatic promotion is another aspect of the education system that promotes the emergence of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools. Students who are academically unsuccessful or inadequate to follow higher classes are likely to be frustrated and demotivated, and look for a way to give themselves a better self-esteem and social status among the school student population. The best way to do so is by manifesting socially unacceptable behaviour. Based on the Glasser's model of non-coercive discipline, Kianipour and Hoseini (2012: 118) point out that when students are intrinsically demotivated, they manifest a lack of discipline.

Moreover, the recruitment of supply educators in state secondary schools is an embedded factor of the recruitment system of the Ministry of Education that gives space for the occurrence of a lack of learner discipline. They are not professionally prepared for teaching as they lack classroom management and learner management techniques. Ozben (2010) and Manguvo, Whitney and Chareka (2011) remarked that educators who are professionally uncertified have difficulties to maintain discipline among their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mauritian education system should be reformed in order to achieve the aims of education and not the aims of schooling. The findings of this study revealed the importance of promoting the following aims of education: "*Develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent; prepare the child for an active adult life in a society; and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values and for the cultural identity and values of others*" (Bureau of Catholic Education 2002: 60). This will promote positive attitudes from the students and thus restore discipline in state secondary schools. To achieve this, the following recommendations are made:

- There should be a policy of decentralisation of power and authority from the Ministry of Education to the school principal so as to empower him/her about the designing and implementation of an institutional learner discipline plan which takes into consideration the characteristics of each school with reference to the problem of learner discipline.
- The practice of private tuition should be abolished. The Ministry of Education should review the secondary school curriculum by integrating the teaching and practice of human, social and spiritual values, and promoting and monitoring of the organisation of extracurricular and leisure activities in the daily time-table.
- The Ministry of Education should review the recruitment exercise of professionally uncertified educators by considering the criteria of initial teacher training or years of teaching experience in a secondary school.
- The practice of automatic promotion should be banned.
- The government should either increase the number of educational psychologists or counsellors at the Ministry should set up a counselling unit in each state secondary school to ensure that students who are at risks of manifesting a lack of discipline may receive the necessary guidance.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

It is evident from this study that the students, educators, superintendents, parents and principals are school agents who are contributing to the problem of learner discipline. This is mainly because of the various flaws of the current education system that either prevent the school authorities to restore discipline or encourage the occurrence of the problem. The findings explained the actual worsening of the learner discipline phenomenon in Mauritius and they contribute to the findings of Beebeejun-Muslum 2014), the most recent study on the impact of stakeholders' lack of decision to address the discipline problem. So, there is an urgency for a general reform of the education system to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning in a school environment that promotes positive learner behaviour.

Further research may be carried out to determine the other factors that are external to the education system that cause a lack of learner discipline among secondary school learners. This is because discipline is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that urges researchers to look into all the factors in and outside the school.

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