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History

Introduction

Corporal punishment refers to the intentional infliction of physical pain with the aim of correcting or disciplining. Additionally, the corporal punishment can be administered. Many nations seem to be moving from this habit, however, some critics believe that corporal punishment should be embraced. For instance, in the United States there are 19 states, which are still practicing it, while 30, have banned it completely. This essay seeks to examine the corporal punishment in the 18th, 19th centuries, and in some abolitionist circles.

Corporal Punishment in 18th Century

As a point of departure, the history of the corporal punishment dates back as early as the 9th century BC, and what is practiced in the 18th century is just a replica. The 18th century is characterized by the acts of slavery, which was attributed to the corporal punishments. In essence, various kinds of punishments were administered to crime offenders such as the slaves who resisted the slavery activities. Some of the examples of corporal punishments during the 18th century are discussed below

Bastinado

This refers to the act of physically inflicting pain by whipping a person on the soles of the feet with a stick. This kind of corporal punishment was widespread in the numerous places in Asia. The sole beating was regarded as the most painful way to punish a crime offender.

Birching

This involves whipping a person across the flaps using birch twigs. This method was once very widespread in schools and courts for minor offence.

Branding

This punishment involved using a red-hot iron on the various parts of the human body. This type of punishment was abolished in 1829 in Britain and later dates in other nations.

Burning

This is one of the oldest techniques of corporal punishment where people were killed by being burned for crimes such as being staunch Protestants and practicing witchcraft.

Cane

This was among the methods of punishing children in the 16th century. The method has remained in use up to the late 20th century.

Other forms of corporal punishment included forcing of cactus needles, cold shower, and use of crank, spanking, hands up and strapping among many others.

In association with these forms of corporal punishment, the 18th century represents an era, which saw majority of people suffer by means of pain infliction on their bodies. Consider the following image, which indicates the Ducking chair, which the crime offenders were tied before being punished.

Courtesy of Morgan, Gwenda, and Peter Rushton. 2005. "Visible Bodies: Power, Subordination and Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World". *Journal of Social History*. 39 (1): 39-64.

The primary crimes that were punished were murder, theft, and rape among others. They all related to the slavery activities and the corporal punishment. This study reveals that the period of slavery saw slaves undergo a lot of agony resulting from the corporal punishment. Take an example of the Parchman Farm, which is known for brutal treatment of humanity that is likened as worse than slavery. The real sign of power in the Parchman farm was the leather strap; the measurements of this strap were 6 inches wide and 3 feet long. In this case whipping had a long history of racial discrimination. This was a tool of operation on the slaves, who worked in the white farms. The administrators believed that, the slaves would be efficient in work if fear was inflicted in them by way of several straps. In addition, this punishment, served as a deterrent mechanism of rebellious behavior, inculcating religious beliefs such as the Roman Catholic and help in controlling sexual engagements. To some extent, this approach worked and the administrators were able to reap from the energy and efforts of these slaves. It is imperative to note that, this kind of punishment was extended to the white colonies in Africa, India and the other areas in Asia.

It is worthy noting that, the slaves were punished right in their nations during the colonization era. This and other atrocities elicited the wide spread resistance experienced in the late 19th and 20th century. In quintessence, the corporal punishment was a punitive way of correcting, particularly, the techniques such branding using a red hot metal. Consider the following image indicating how the slaves were killed in a slow manner.

Courtesy of Morgan, Glenda, and Peter Ruston. 2005. " Visible Bodies: Power, Subordination and Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World". Journal

of Social History. 39 (1): 39-64.

This was one of the harshest ways of administering corporal punishment, which the slaves and other groups of people during the 18th century had to undergo. An estimated 72, 000 people died of corporal punishment in England in during the reign of Henry 111.

Corporal Punishment during the 19th Century

The 19th century, was not different from the 18th century. The century saw the spread of the ideology of capitalism an economic policy that was attached to the market revolution. Most European states including the USA and Britain witnessed massive shipments of the African slaves across the Atlantic, all the way to the American continent and other parts of the world to serve them in plantations, household chores, and other menial jobs that required physical labor. Thus, the situation culminated into slavery, which became an ideal picturesque upon which segregation according to race became evident.

A closer look at the market revolution saw the advancement in the economy in terms of infrastructural development, advancement of factories and increased agricultural production, especially on the larger plantations as of the Americas and other parts of the European continent.

Essentially, capitalism in the period of market revolution, created a culture of work. Capitalism envisaged the practices of individual benefits of all the profits made in the market. Thus, the proportion of contribution towards realizing the profits was not a factor considered by the gainers of the capitalist market, but it was based on the basis of win -take- all strategy. Due to this motive of self-interest and profit making, the aspect of slavery

came into existence. The resultant competition thereof, made the involvement of slaves in the active production in diverse fields of the market inevitable and as such, they were shipped from a far to serve in this agribusiness arena. Thus regarding this study, the increased number of the slave elements in the plantations of work, culminated into a situation of hard labor being provided under considerably low pay and pathetic working conditions. Therefore, to achieve the anticipated economic results, the masters segregated the slaves based on race and color and hence slavery took a different dimension of racial prejudice.

Moreover, market revolution and capitalism created a culture of desire. Since, human wants are insatiable, the merchants and landowners developed that urge of accumulating more wealth for them to fit into the social stratum of their choice. Therefore, slaves were expected to double their physical efforts as much as possible for these demands to be arrived at. However, as per the conditions of work provided for the slaves, these personal ambitions on the part of the masters became hard to achieve hence they began employing corporal punishment on those they considered were not working properly. Flogging of the slaves thus became a common phenomenon in the 19th century for the sole reason of the need to maximize profits thereof. In addition to this, the labor, which was offered by the slaves, was free of charge, and there were no protection laws in place to safeguard their wellbeing. Thus, the consequence of these realities was slave enlightenment by the advocates of free labor who considered it barbaric and a gross violation of human rights. For instance, the anti- slave series stood against all forms of slavery as they described it a scheme of inherent

brutality. These advocates (most of them from the northern part of the Americas), argued that slavery was not a human condition and that people with a right conscience, common intellect and human heart cannot subject others to such awful conditions of mistreatment based on simply color and race. Thus, the campaign against racial slavery became momentous to the extent of the civil wars witnessed.

Ultimately, the ideology of capitalism in relation to the advancement of the market revolution translated into yet another economic benefit of familial transformation. Notably, from simply staying at home to raise children, into commodity production and consequent measurement of the self worth of families. Thus, the more production per an individual translated into greater economic input and because of this, slaves were needed to actualize this.

However, the negative picture associated with it remained the corporal punishment, which facilitated into the perennial problem of racial apartheid in the respective regions in which such practices were prevalent.

Additionally, the continued use of flogging as a form of military retribution as well, turned out to be widely unacceptable across all quarters as it was really dehumanizing on the part of those who underwent the bitter experiences in this regard. Thus, the struggle to end these forms of barbaric actions was a justified cause considering the implications that were associated with it.

Abolitionist circles, slavery became synonymous with flogging, even though it clearly involved other forms of work discipline.

The issue of slavery and its attributed activities and punishment, particularly flogging continued to be the theme of discussion in and outside the British

legislative chamber in the period between 1787 and 1838. The aspect for the abolitionism and its supporters made immense contributions in indicating the essence to abolish slavery and consequent corporal punishments associated with it, such as flogging. It is imperative to note that, flogging formed the central point of abolitionist's argument on the immediate action on the slavery. This was motivated by the sight of the cruelty extended to the victims in public with the spectators fearing such situation, where people were inflicted with a lot of pain through various methods. The abolitionists took it serious to their side in a bid to seek protection of abolition of slavery. The abolitionist believed that cessation of the slavery activities will be the beginning of the abolition of the corporal punishments.

About John Parker Hale

He was an American politician a professional lawyer who hailed from New Hampshire. Hale served the US parliament for two years from 1843 to 1845, then in the senate for six years from 1847-1853. Additionally his tenure as a senator was from 1855 – 1865. This was a period of nine year as a senator and two yeas a member of the US legislature. Hale's win was immensely attributed to his cause against the slavery activities. He openly disputed and disagreed with those enhanced the slavery activities. Hale succeeded in creating a platform through which the abolitionists would air their views, and this made his political debut a success, firsts as a member of the US legislature and later as a senator for nine years.

Conclusion

This study reveals that, the both the 18th and 19th century represented the height of corporal punishment and this is regrettably associated with the slavery activities that were taking place across the globe, particularly in the US and the British colonies. These slaves suffered a great ordeal in the hands of their masters in the name of correcting and deterring them from rebellious behavior. At the height of industrialization and modernization characterized by agricultural activities, most slaves were captured and brought to the white settlements, where they were forced to work under worse conditions. The aspect of abolitionism began due to the worse conditions, which the slaves and the victims of corporal punishment underwent. The abolitionist groups and individuals agitated for freedom and stoppage of slavery. These groups believed that with the end of slavery, the atrocities afflicted on the slaves through the corporal punishment would automatically end. This period of abolitionism saw both politicians such as John Parker Hale campaign on the platform of anti-slavery and this necessitated the need for momentum towards the abolition of slavery and its associated atrocities.

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