

CORPORIAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN IN ETHIOPIA

Desk Review
(Final Draft)



Save the Children

Sweden

Save the Children Sweden Ethiopia Program

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Vision

- To see the wellbeing and protection needs of children fulfilled

Mission

- We are a child protection organization striving for sustainable protection, growth and development of vulnerable children

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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Save the Children Sweden – Ethiopia is committed to the Protection of Children’s Rights. One of the main forms of Children’s Rights violations in Ethiopia and throughout the world is the physical and psychological punishment in the aim of disciplining children.

Various studies have established that physical and humiliating punishments are highly prevalent in Ethiopia with a long and deep-rooted historical background and have a wide social acceptance as a means of disciplining. Ethiopia is party to both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which consider the protection of children from physical and humiliating punishments as one of their basic rights. The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia clearly states that the child should be free from physical punishment in schools and child care institutions. The school discipline directives of the Ministry of Education also clearly prohibit the use of physical punishment in the schools. In spite of all these, physical and humiliating punishment of children is still prevalent not only in homes and communities but also in schools.

Physical and humiliating punishment of children is not only a violation the rights of children as enshrined in the international conventions and the Ethiopian constitution, but it has also been found to be harmful to the growth and development of the child. Its effects as a means of disciplining children have also been found to be negative.

Thus, Save the Children Sweden-Ethiopia has made the protection of children from physical and humiliating punishment one of its top priority areas of involvement. It supports partners in their work towards the banning of physical and humiliating punishments. In the last two years, it has been giving emphasis to the promotion of positive child disciplining at home, in schools and child care institutions as alternative form of disciplining. To this effect, it has, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs and ANPPCAN Ethiopia, developed a manual on positive child disciplining and is working on the dissemination and creating awareness of the manual.

To facilitate work towards the banning of physical and humiliating punishment and popularization of positive disciplining as well as make use of available resources, it is found necessary to review all existing studies on physical and psychological punishment in Ethiopia that show the magnitude of the problem. The commissioned consultant has thus compiled this document based on desk research.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of reviewing existing research studies on physical and humiliating punishment of children in Ethiopia and preparing this document is to have a well compiled and comprehensive source of information that reflects the magnitude of corporal punishment and its effects on

children. Such a compilation of materials is expected to be a useful resource that can indicate knowledge gaps and future potential areas of interventions.

1.3 Methodology

The preparation of this document is primarily based on desk work, i.e., review of existing research study papers pertinent to physical and humiliating punishment of children. The documents have been collected through internet search and from SCS country office and other relevant offices. A total of 20 documents were initially identified, of which nine were selected as most relevant and included in this review report. In few cases, although some of the documents reported on studies carried out over fifteen years ago, they are included as they were considered relevant in providing background information and show the progress and changes since then. Others covered more diverse issues while still others reported on studies carried out in more than one country. The review of such documents focused only on those parts that were pertinent to physical and psychological punishment of children in Ethiopia.

1.4 Organization of the Report

This report is prepared in three sections. The first section includes this introductory part. The second section presents the review of nine documents in descending order of year of publication starting with the most recent one. The third and last section covers the conclusions and recommendations of the consultant, addressing among others knowledge gaps, strategic research areas, networking potentials and strategies for involving government bodies for total ban of corporal punishment.

II REVIEW OF EXISTING RESEARCH STUDIES

2.1 *Child Protection in the Somali Region of Ethiopia*, by Marlijn Lelieveld, BRIDGES Project funded by DFID, April 2011

2.1.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of the Study is stated as “to provide information on the child protection situation in the Somali Region of Ethiopia with particular reference to the education system in order to inform possible future projects that aim to develop child protection mechanisms in schools and communities”.

2.1.2 Methodology and Coverage

The study involved methods consisting of desk review of documents related to child protection in the Somali Region and qualitative data collection through, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The study was carried out in 1 – 4 selected schools in each of the six *woredas* where the DFID funded BRIDGES project¹ operates in the Shinile, Jigjiga, Gode and Afder zones of the region. A total of 47 focus group discussions were held in which 40 parents and school/center staff members, 55 women and 26 elderly men, 75 girls and 69 boys randomly selected from each school participated. In addition, a total of 26 key informant interviews were held with representatives from local government offices, the police, religious leaders, medical professionals and staff of NGOs and UN agencies. .

The main limitation of the study is stated as its dependence only on qualitative methods, as a result of which, it focuses on perceptions of the respondents rather than on facts. Other limitations include lack of openness of the respondents, cultural considerations and use of interpreters.

The study covered a number of child protection issues and mechanisms, out of which only corporal and mental punishment are considered for the purpose of the present review.

2.1.3 Findings of the Study

The study reveals that corporal punishment, mainly in the form of beating with the hand or stick, is frequently used by both parents at home and teachers in schools, to discipline children. In the groups where forms of discipline by parents were discussed, 68% of the 41 discussion groups reported beating to be common, 15% to be rare and 17% not to be used at all. 17% of the groups reported the use of shouting as psychological punishment. 10% (4 focus groups), in one *woreda*, reported the practice of a traditional form of severe punishment in which boys are tied to a tree either upright or hanging down and beaten.

In the groups where disciplining methods of teachers in schools were discussed, 63% of the 32 focus groups reported beating to be common, 6% to be rare and 31% not to be practiced at all.

¹Piloting the Delivery of Quality Education Services in the Developing Regional States of Ethiopia.

Other types of punishment such as kneeling down, holding ears, twisting pens between fingers, beating while blindfolded or tied, locking up, etc. have been mentioned by fewer groups. The perpetrators are reported to be mainly parents and teachers and rarely older brothers, cousins and neighbors.

As to the effects of corporal punishment, the study addressed only its impact on education. In this regard, corporal punishment (beating by teachers) was mentioned only by two (out of 21 groups) as a reason for children not going to school.

2.2 *Study on Violence against Girls in Primary Schools and its Impacts on Girls' Education in Ethiopia, Save the Children Denmark, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2008*

2.2.1 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine the nature of violence and abuse against girls in schools. It primarily focused on the situation of violence against girls in primary schools.

2.2.2 Methodology and Coverage

The study employed quantitative and qualitative research methods including literature survey, structured interviews, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with selected resource persons. Data was collected from 116 primary schools, 11 secondary schools and 5 teacher training colleges in 41 *woredas* selected from all nine regional states and two city administrations of the country. A total of 1,268 students (761 girls and 507 boys), 342 teachers and 324 parents responded to the structured questionnaires and a total of 452 focused group discussions were conducted with groups of female students, male students, female teachers and parents separately. In addition, 318 in-depth interviews were conducted with school principals, *woreda* school experts, officials from Women's Affairs offices and the police, knowledgeable individuals and religious leaders and/or community elders. The *woredas* were selected purposefully to represent both urban and rural settings while the selection of schools, students, teachers and parents were made randomly in accordance with the planned sample sizes.

The study covered various types of violence and abuse against girls, out of which only those that are related to physical and humiliating punishment are considered under the present review.

2.2.3 Findings of the Study

The study reported that even though corporal punishment is prohibited in the schools by law and boldly written statements to that effect were posted in school compounds, corporal punishment was observed in almost every school visited during the survey. The questionnaire results revealed that 34% of the students and 25 % of the teachers responded that corporal punishment exists in their schools. The focus group discussions with students, teachers and parents reported that being forced to do physically demanding jobs, kneeling down, twisting fingers/arms with pencils in between, pinching ears, flogging with rubber strings are common in schools. The punishments are administered by teachers, school guards and principals. The common reasons

for punishment were reported to be being engaged in disruptive behaviors in class, failing to complete homework, breaking rules and regulations or being late for school. Corporal punishment of girls at home were reported as involving flogging, burning part of the body with fire, forcing to inhale pepper smoke, and causing injury to the genitals with hot metal objects, by parents and elder brothers.

With regard to psychological violence, 34% of the students, 57% of the teachers, and 41% of the parents reported its high prevalence in schools; 41% of the students, 77% of the teachers and 57% of the parents on the way to and from school; and 29% of the students, 56% of the teachers and 36% the parents at home. Verbal insult, degrading/humiliating, threatening and name calling are reported to be the four main types of psychological violence in all three settings. The main perpetrators were reported as teachers in the school, male students, out of school boys and other community members on the way to and from school and parents at home...

2.3 *Violence against Girls in Africa: A Retrospective Survey in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda*, by Stavropoulos J., African Child Policy Forum, Addis Ababa, 2006

2.3.1 Objectives of the Study

The reported objective of the study was to provide information on the type, prevalence, vulnerable age, perpetrators and reporting of physical, psychological and sexual abuses against girls. The study explored the experiences of young women in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda on young women's experiences of violence before they were 18 years old.

2.3.2 Methodology and Coverage

In Ethiopia, the survey included 485 young women aged 18 to 24 years. The women were randomly selected from various social classes with diverging backgrounds and different social groups in Addis Ababa. The questionnaire was designed to generate mainly quantitative and some qualitative data in the form of open ended questions about the young women retrospectively throughout their childhood, until they were 18 years old.

Although the study covered physical, psychological and sexual violence against girls in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, only physical and psychological violence against girls in Ethiopia are considered for the present review.

2.3.3 Findings of the Study

According to the survey in Ethiopia, 71.1% of the young women reported that they had been beaten with an object, 59.5% hit or punched with the hand and 43.3% kicked. Being forced to hard work (as an abuse than a punishment), being choked, burned or stabbed and putting spicy/bitter food in mouth are reported as less prevalent (11 – 29%). Being locked or tied up and being denied food are least prevalent (less than 10%). As to the frequency of recurrence, 73.3% reported to have been forced to hard work more than 10 times; 35.8% reported to have been beaten more than 10 times and 31.4% were hit or punched more than 10 times. Girls between the

ages of 10 and 13 have experienced being beaten (59.4%), being forced to hard work (58.5%) and being lock up or tied (50.0%) while girls between the ages of 14 and 17 have experienced to being choked/burned/stabbed (71.2%), being hit or punched (58.4%) and being kicked (54.0%).

The perpetrators are reported to be primarily mothers, fathers and brothers except in the cases of choking, burning or stabbing which are mostly committed by sexual partners, adult neighbors or strangers outside the home. Being beaten with an object by male teachers and female teachers has also been reported in 15.5% and 10.2% of the cases, respectively. In most cases, the girls were given by their perpetrators such reasons as doing something wrong, disrupting class or home, coming home late or going out without permission, failing to do assignments, refusing sexual proposals, replying confrontationally or going out with men. But in 50 – 85% of the cases, the girls did not feel that the reasons were valid.

The effects and reporting of the physical violence had also been covered by the survey. Over 50% of those reported to have been kicked, hit or punched had bruises or scratches, broken bones or teeth, or bleeding. As a result, a significant number had to seek medical treatment, miss school or stay at home. Most of the girls did report the violence they experienced to their girl friends and a significant number to their mothers, siblings or teachers, but rarely to the police, i.e. in less than 10% of the cases for all types of violence. In most of the reported cases (45-62%), nothing happened and only in less than 20% of the reported cases did the victims reported to have been satisfied with the resolution.

Psychological violence was also reported to have been pervasive throughout the girls' childhoods. 71.5% of the girls reported as having been insulted, 67.6% shouted at or glared at and 50.1% reported witnessing severe beating of a family member, friend or neighbor. The girls reported that they were exposed more than ten times to insults (63.8%), shouting or glaring (47.1%), and embarrassments in front of others (44.0%). As to vulnerable age groups, the girls were most frequently exposed to almost all types of psychological violence between the ages of 14 and 17 years, followed by those in the range of 10 and 13 years of age. Here again, the main perpetrators at insulting, shouting or glaring and ignoring, were reported as mothers, fathers and brothers in that order; while other female relatives, male teachers and brothers are the three main perpetrators in embarrassing in front of others.

In its conclusion, the study highlights, among others, three main issues that were revealed to be true in all the three surveyed African countries:

- Many of the girl victims consider both the physical and psychological abuse they suffered to be appropriate or “normal”.
- The fact that most of the violence on the girls are mainly perpetrated by other females, their mothers, sisters, female teachers, and female relatives, points to “a possible vicious perpetuating cycle in which the abused became the abuser”.

- Lack of comprehensive data on the perpetrators in general and the female abusers in particular is hindrance in the development of appropriate interventions and remedial programs.

2.4 *Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment against Children: Ethiopia, by Save the Children Sweden, 2005*

2.4.1 Objectives of the study

The objective of the study as stated in the report was “to generate information on the phenomenon of corporal and other inhumane and degrading punishments of children in Ethiopia, targeting Addis Ababa and the regional states of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS)”.

2.4.2 Methodology and Coverage

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data was collected by using literature survey, structured and unstructured interviews, self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions and storytelling (narrative research)..The main respondents were children, parents, teachers, community leaders, representatives of child focused organizations and judicial and law enforcement officials. The study claims to be unique in its use of participatory research with children as “the framework that guided the research structure”. Children were said to have participated at all stages of the study as advisers, respondents and co-researchers.

The study was conducted in Gulele, Arada and Bole sub-cities in Addis Ababa, Nazareth and Assella towns in Oromia, Bahirdar and Debrebirhan towns in Amhara, Mekele and Adigrat towns in Tigray and Awassa and Dilla towns in SNNPRS as well as the rural communities adjacent to these towns (except for Addis Ababa),.

A total of 2,321 persons participated in the study as respondents of whom 1,873 (82%) were children and the remaining 448 (18%) were teachers, parents, CBO leaders and representatives or officials of various organizations. The overall proportion of male and female respondents was 54% and 46%, respectively.

The main limitations of the study, as indicated by the authors include: limited sample size due to time constraint, inadequate pre-testing, wrong timing of data collection that happened to be during school examination period, and incomplete or delayed responses by some institutions to the self-administered questionnaires.

2.4.3 Findings of the Study

a) Policy and Legal Framework Review

The study reviewed the national policies, international instruments and domestic legislation pertinent to corporal and other forms of punishment and drew conclusions and recommendations. It commended the national policies prevalent at the time with reservations as to their implementation.

The domestic legislation was reviewed with respect to corporal punishment in families, schools care institutions, in prisons and judicial corporal punishment. It concluded that the laws and regulations prohibit corporal punishment in Ethiopia, with the exception of minor punishments by parents and guardians. Yet, children still experience corporal punishment at schools and severe punishments at home. The main factors for the poor implementation of the laws and regulations were identified as insufficient efforts and commitments from the concerned bodies and officials, and low rate of reporting illegal punishments to law enforcement bodies. Finally, the study identified areas that need legal reforms - being corporal punishment within the family, regulations in schools, and reporting of corporal punishment cases to the authorities.

b) Perceptions of Physical and Humiliating Punishments

Most adults considered light punishments as acceptable means of disciplining children and while they were against serious and excessive punishments that result in physical injury. Hence, they were skeptical towards official prohibitions and interference. Although most teachers and school staff in principle accepted the total abolition of corporal punishment in schools, they argue against such measures because the necessary conditions were not yet in place. Therefore, they admitted that minor forms of corporal punishment are being used in schools despite the official ban.

Alternative methods to discipline children were not clearly understood by the adults. On the other hand, most children did not accept corporal and other forms of punishment as effective means of disciplining. Of the 1,121 child respondents to the structured interview, 74.2% stated that they did not consider the punishment they received as educational and preventing them from repeating similar mistakes. In group discussions, most children rejected the use of even the mildest form of physical punishments and considered psychological punishments to be more damaging, while parents, community leaders and teachers considered psychological punishment to be less harmful to children.

c) Type, Prevalence and Magnitude of Corporal and Psychological Punishments in the Home

The study revealed that corporal punishment was prevalent at home as a means of disciplining. Out of the total 1,873 children who responded to the structured interview, only 17 (1.4%) stated that they had never experienced any type of corporal punishment. Beating with stick, belt, rope, plastic tube, electric wire, etc were the most common forms of punishment while physical assaults using hands and feet such as slapping, pinching, kicking the head or the back, etc. were also prevalent. Harsh forms of punishment such as tying and flogging, inhaling smoking pepper and burning which were generally less frequent were practiced mainly on children who were supposed to have committed serious wrongs such as theft

With regard to the prevalent forms of physical punishment, 74.1% of the children reported having been hit with a stick , 73.3% as having been hit on the head, 70.3% as having been slapped, 69.9% as having been pinched, 63.7% as having been beaten with a belt and 53.1% as

having been forced to kneel down, The reactions of parents, community leaders and teachers on physical punishment did reinforce the responses by children.

Psychological punishments were found to be more prevalent as compared to physical punishment. Children's responses confirmed that children had experienced various types of psychological punishment, the commonest ones being insulting 76.7%, shouting/glaring 71.8% and threats 65.5%. Ridiculing, inflicting embarrassment and isolation were also practiced, although less frequently. Here again, the responses of parents, community leaders and teachers reinforced that of the children.

d) Type, Prevalence and Magnitude of Corporal and Psychological Punishments in School

The study revealed that both physical and psychological punishments were practiced in schools, even though they were banned by the laws of the country and the regulations of the Ministry of Education. According to the responses of children regarding their experiences of physical punishment in schools, 81.3% of the children reported having experienced kneeling down, 77.8% being hit on the head, 74.4% being pinched, 72% being hit with stick, 63% being slapped, and 61.9 % having their fingers being twisted with a pencil in between. Other less frequent punishments included being forced to perform painful physical exercises, hitting with a plastic tube or electric wire, punching, being forced to perform manual work and being tied with rope or electric wire.

As regards psychological punishment in schools, children's responses further illustrated that 70.3% experienced insulting, 61.1% shouting/glaring, 54.3% threats, 46.6% ridiculing and embarrassment 46% suspension from class (and denial of being outside at break time.

e) Type, Prevalence and Magnitude of Corporal and Psychological Punishments in the Community

According to the study, both physical and psychological punishments prevailed at community level, although less prevalent as compared to in the home and in schools. Responses of children on their experiences of corporal punishment in the community indicated that 53.7% had experienced hitting on the head, 53.6% slapping, and 52% kicking. The other forms of physical punishments were also practiced but less frequently.

The most common forms of psychological punishment in the community as reported by children respondents included insults 64.9%, threats 57.2%, shouting and glaring 47.6% and ridicule and inflicting embarrassments 42.8%.

f) Variations in the Prevalence and Magnitude of Corporal and Psychological Punishments according to Gender, Region, and Vulnerability of the Children

According to the study, variations in the prevalence and magnitude of physical and psychological punishments by region, gender and vulnerability were slight. Physical punishment appeared to be

more prevalent in SNNPR and less prevalent in Tigray while psychological punishments seemed to be more prevalent in Amhara and less in Addis Ababa. Boys, children between the age of 16 – 18 and street children experienced corporal and humiliating punishments more frequently than girls, children between the age of 4 – 9 and school children, respectively.

g) Perpetrators of Physical and Humiliating Punishments against Children

The main perpetrators of physical and psychological punishments against children as identified by the study were parents, older siblings and stepparents in the home; teachers, guards, class monitors and other boys at school; and vagrant boys, police and other street children in the community.

h) Causes and Effects of Physical and humiliating Punishment against Children

The study identified the main causes of physical and psychological punishments as culture and attitude, lack of awareness about alternative forms of disciplining, large family and class sizes, poverty and unemployment, problems related to enforcing relevant legislation, and alcoholism.

The identified effects were bodily injury and death, emotional effects (unhappiness, humiliation, low self-esteem, depression, vindictiveness, development of self-destructive behaviors, etc), streetism and engaging in commercial sex work, school dropout, deterioration in school performance, and long term effects on the nation.

i) Program Interventions

Some of the significant programme interventions being carried out by governmental and non-governmental organizations to address the problems of physical and humiliating punishments against children were reported to include: awareness raising, conducting research and surveys, promoting child participation through initiating and supporting clubs in schools, protection programmes, and providing support to victims.

i) Good Practices

The good practices in addressing the problems of physical and humiliating punishments against children that have been identified by the study included child clubs in schools, welcome ceremony to a new born child by child rights club in Gonder, Digum Elementary school, and the banning of all forms physical punishment by Sweden in 1979 as the first nation in the world.

l) Study recommendations

The measures that were recommended to address the problem included: awareness creation, effective enforcement of existing laws, establishing mechanisms for effective reporting of violence, regular and systematic data collection and analysis, providing support to victims, enhancing child participation, and legal reform.

2.5 *Spare the Rod – Raise a Healthy Child*, by Save the Children Sweden – Ethiopia Programme, 2002, Addis Ababa

2.5.1 Objectives of the Study

This is a study conducted as a follow up of the study entitled “*Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child*” conducted by Save the Children Sweden - Ethiopia in 1998 (See 2.7 below) with a stated objective of assessing the impact of the awareness raising work done in Addis Ababa schools in the last three years.

2.5.2 Methodology and Coverage

A systematic sampling method was used to select forty government, public and private/religious primary and junior secondary schools proportionally from across Addis Ababa. A total of 907 teachers and 510 students (55% male and 45% female in both cases) were proportionally and randomly selected from the 40 schools and completed the same questionnaires. Among the respondents, 57% of the teachers and 53% of the students were from government schools, 35% of the teachers and 33% of the students were from public schools and 7% of the teachers and 13% of the students were from private/religious schools. In addition, interviews were conducted with people working in the Education Bureau.

A major limitation of this study was that its coverage was not as broad as the 1998 study to make direct comparison. The current study covered schools in Addis Ababa only.

2.5.3 Findings of the study

The responses of the participants to the question to list down all types of corporal punishments were found to be similar to the results of the 1998 study.

The results of the questionnaire with regard to the prevalence of corporal punishment over a period of one week were reported to have shown a sharp decline in comparison to the earlier study from 90% three years ago to less than 20%. The types of punishments reported were kneeling down (54% teachers, 57% students), hitting with a stick (27% teachers, 28% students), hitting on the head (19% teachers, 31% students), pinching the ear (21% teachers, 13% students), whipping (14% teachers, 21% students), slapping (7% teachers, 25% students), punching (3% teachers, 8% students), belting (5% teachers, 13% students), manual work (10% teachers, 6% students) and pencil between fingers (3% teachers, 12% students).

Kneeling down as a punishment which has to do more with embarrassing the child (psychological) was found to be applied more frequently than three years ago (by 54% of the teachers on 57% of the students). A comparison of the type and prevalence of punishments by types of schools showed that the private church schools used more hitting with stick and ear pinching while government schools increased applying kneeling down as punishment.

The reasons for punishment, which were found to confirm to the earlier study, were diverse, the prevalent ones being “not doing homework” (72% of teachers and 79% of students), “noisiness” (63% of teachers and 62% of students), “being late to class” (54% of teachers and 60% of students), “fighting in class” (49% of teachers and 81% of students), “disobeying (48% of teachers and 58% of students), “theft” (46% of teachers and 67% of students and “laughing in class 37% of teachers and 75% of students).

As to the attitude of teachers and students towards acceptability of corporal punishment, 22% of the teachers and 60% of the students reported that they believed kneeling down as permissible form of punishment. However 40% of teachers and 40% of students believed that teachers should not hit students.

With regard to being informed about the prohibition of corporal punishment, 75% of the teachers and only 26% of the students were knowledgeable.

2.6 *Family Violence against Children in Addis Ababa, Genet Tadele, Daniel Tefera and Elias Nasir, ANNPPCAN Ethiopia and Redd Barna Ethiopia, May 1999, Addis Ababa*

2.6.1 Objectives of the Study

The stated objectives of the study were to determine the prevalence and magnitude of family violence against children, examine its major causes and developmental consequences, and suggest possible solutions to the problem.

2.6.2 Methodology and Coverage

The study was carried out in Addis Ababa and used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A sample of 80 students from five schools (each selected to represent church, Muslim, government, public and private schools), 20 children working on the street, 35 parents, 13 police officers working at 4 of the 10 police stations in Addis Ababa that had child protection units, and 17 professionals in the field were interviewed for the study using questionnaires that contained both closed and open ended questions. In addition, focus group discussion was carried out with 19 (9 boys and 10 girls) 7th and 8th grade school children all from one public school that was not included in the interview. Case histories of 5 victims and 3 perpetrators were also constructed.

2.6.3 Findings of the Study

The questionnaire results indicated that physical punishments were prevalent at home. 85% of the respondents had experienced physical punishment by family members. Out of those, 50% reported that they experienced punishments occasionally, 21% so many times and 13% very rarely. Only 15% responded that they had never experienced physical punishment. The type of punishment that was considered to be the most common was beating (48%) followed by slapping (12%), beating and pinching (8%), battering (7%) and pinching (6%). Only 3% responded insulting and ridiculing to be the most common. The family member who perpetrated most often

was reported to be the mother (by 25% of the respondents), the father (by 16%), elder sister (13%) and older brother (7%).

The reasons for punishment were reported by children as bad behavior, committing mistakes, disobedience, not giving attention to education and parents' authoritarian tendency. Only 7% responded that they were punished for no adequate reason.

As to the effects of punishment, 11% of the children reported that they had injuries.

54% of the children responded that the punishment did not bring any change in their behavior while the remaining 46% admitted change. Of those who reported change, only 25% improved their behavior for the better while the remaining 75% developed negative behaviors such as being stubborn, running away from home and feeling depressed. None of the respondents reported the incidents to the police. The results of the focus group discussion as well as the interviews with parents, policemen and professionals confirmed the responses of the interviewed children. The majority of the parents reported to have passed over to their children what they had experienced during their childhood. The professionals indicated psychological and environmental stresses, ignorance of the existing laws and regulations and developmental histories of the parents to be the causes for adults' aggression against the children.

2.7 *“Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child”*: A Survey on Attitudes towards Physical Punishment among Ethiopian Students, Parents and Teachers, by Save the Children Sweden, 1998,

2.7.1 Objectives of the Study

The stated objectives of the study were to learn about the attitudes of adults and children towards the use of physical punishment including the types, prevalence, causes and perpetrators of physical punishment of children.

2.7.2 Methodology and Coverage

The study used questionnaires, focus group discussions and individual interviews with students, teachers and parents.

The study had two parts. The first part targeted selected primary and junior high school in Dire Dawa city, while the second part targeted a group of teachers and students in five regions: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region and Gambella. For the part of the study in Dire Dawa, 120 school children randomly selected from three schools (2 elementary and 1 junior high) were asked to write down all the punishments they were to receive in the next ten days. Then nine were randomly selected for the analysis and another 40 were also randomly selected and asked to write essay.

For the second part of the study in five regions, 1500 primary and secondary school students and 1500 teachers from 35 schools in the five regions completed the survey questionnaires.

2.7.3 Findings of the Study

Dire Dawa Survey

All types of physical and non-physical punishments were identified by the students. The punishments were inflicted at home, school and on the street. The students further illustrated the severity of the punishment in their essays and group discussions and the study report has presented some of these. The study further reported the respective views of students, parents and teachers on the reasons for bad behavior and punishment.

The Survey in Five regions

The study revealed the wide spread use of physical punishment and its socio-cultural acceptance as a means of disciplining children. 90% of the students and 86% of the teachers in the five regions reported that they had been slapped as a child. The majority of the students and children who had reported to have been slapped also reported that they had slapped their siblings, friends or children. The majority of the teachers were aware that the Ministry of Education's regulation prohibited physical punishment while only a small minority of the students knew about it.

As to the attitudes of the respondents towards physical punishment 79 - 88% of the students and the teachers believed that it was the best means of disciplining. 55-65% of the teachers and 53-63% of the students in the regions other than Gambella believed that students follow rules better when threatened with a stick, whereas only 39% and 38 % of the teachers and students respectively believed so in Gambella.

The study presented cases studies of three schools in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and two schools (Asfaw Yemeru and Africa Andinet Schools) in Ethiopia where physical punishment had been abandoned and positive discipline introduced.

2.8 Study on Child Abuse and Neglect in Addis Ababa Elementary Schools: Aetiology, Manifestation, Effect; by Daniel T. and Gobena D. for ANPPCAN Ethiopia and Red Barna Ethiopia, 1997.

2.8.1 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was "to explain the problem of child abuse and neglect so as to understand its root causes, its instances of manifestation and developmental effects that are related with it with special reference to Addis Ababa Elementary School students."

2.8.2 Methodology and Coverage

The study was carried out in Addis Ababa and used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. 356 students were selected from a total of 26 purposively selected primary schools which were selected from 244 schools in Addis Ababa. 181 teachers (70 female, 111 male), 6 relevant government and non-government organizations and 6 *woreda* police stations were also interviewed. In addition, focus group discussions were carried out at two randomly selected schools with 10 sixth and eighth grade students (5 girls and 5 boys) selected from each school

and with the teachers that instructed the selected students. Case studies of 5 children victimized in a school setting were also prepared.

2.8.3 Findings of the Study

a) *Prevalence and Manifestations:*

The study revealed that physical and emotional punishment of children was wide spread in the elementary schools of Addis Ababa. 94.7% of the sampled students indicated that at least one form of abuse is practiced in their schools. However, only 65.8% of the teachers indicated the existence of abuse. Emotional (psychological) abuse was found to be the most frequented form of abuse. The children indicated that they were insulted (87.3%), ridiculed (49%), nick named (47.1%), made to refrain from asking questions and participating in class for fear of making mistakes and triggering the teachers' wrath (35%), and subjected to educational abuses such as being expelled from class (12.8%) and deducting marks (32.8%) as punishment.

Physical punishment was the second most common form of abuse next to emotional abuse. 40.3% of the students indicated that they had witnessed overt physical injuries due to physical punishment. The forms of physical punishments included beating, whipping, squeezing fingers with pen and pencil in between, rapping on the head with knuckles, kneeling, pinching the ears, slapping, etc. The reported injuries included bleeding of the forehead, nasal fracture, swelling of different parts of the body and simple and compound fracture of the hands.

With regard to the perpetrators, 46.3 % of the students indicated that the teachers are the most common perpetrators of physical and emotional punishment on them, followed by school directors (15.8%), unit leaders (11.6%), school guards (23.2%) and even janitors (23.2%). On the other hand, 53.3% of the teachers indicated that guards (99.0%), deputy directors (98.0%), unit leaders (97%), and teachers (92%) were the major party in inflicting punishment on children in the schools.

b) *Etiological Factors*

With regard to psycho-pathological factors, the study indicated that abusive teachers are found to be more psychologically maladjusted when compared to non-abusers, which meant psychological adjustment had a causal link with child abuse. Erroneous religious, legal and socio-cultural styles held by teachers, lack of knowledge of the policies of the Ministry of Education regarding disciplining a student, lack of knowledge of about the alternate methods of maintaining or keeping class room discipline, and lack of institutional mechanism to make the necessary follow up had been identified as functional/cognitive factors that predisposed teachers to abuse children.

The study also found that children who came from large families and who were attending classes with large number of students were more susceptible to abuse than those who came from smaller family size and were attending smaller class rooms. The structural factor that was found to have direct link with physical neglect was lack of the required material and manpower inputs, i.e. poor

school compound and lack of facilities such as play grounds, libraries and well-furnished classrooms.

c) Effect

The study revealed that physical and emotional punishments of children did not have significant effect on the social adjustment of the children. However, it was found that physical and emotional punishment of school children had significant effect on their emotional adjustment.

d) Recommendations

The authors recommended a number of remedial measures to be taken with regard to manifestation, causal factors and effects, some of which still seemed to be valid. The major recommendations included: provision of professional assistance-counseling services to teachers; improved allocation of budget to education by the government so as to fulfill the necessary material, manpower and technical inputs; devising a mechanism of controlling compliance to school regulations; coordination of governmental, non-governmental and community efforts to come-up with multifaceted approach to tackle child abuses in school setting; introduction of properly staffed and equipped counseling centers in schools; lobbying for better policies; enhancing the awareness of school community members with regard to child development, individual differences, child disciplining, rights of the child and child learning processes; introduction of other constructive methods of disciplining a child; and creating a mechanism of reporting all forms child mistreatment to concerned law enforcement bodies.

2.9 School Discipline and Corporal Punishment in Ethiopian Schools, by Ayalew Shibeshi, In Proceeding of the Conference on the Situation of Children and Adolescents in Ethiopia, Held in Addis Ababa, 9 – 10 August 1996

2.9.1 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to raise critical areas of malpractice and generate discussion in the hope of popularizing the problem, bringing it to the attention of policy makers and stimulating further research.

2.9.2 Methodology and Coverage

A questionnaire was used for the survey. 425 randomly selected teachers in 15 junior and senior secondary schools in the Amhara, Oromia and Southern Nations, nationalities and Peoples Regions responded. Literature survey was also conducted to show the historical development of corporal punishment in Ethiopian schools and to assess the existing legal instruments.

2.9.3 Findings of the Study

52.5% of the respondents identified “corporal punishment” as the most frequently used disciplinary measure in schools whereas only 18.8% reported “advice and reprimand” as most

frequently used measures. Other common measures reported by the respondents were forced labour (12.7%), dismissal (8.2%) and suspension (7.8%),

The most common types of devices used for corporal punishment were indicated to be kneeling, sticks and canes, blows, slaps/smack, rulers, whips, pinches, belts and electric cord. Teachers, unit leaders, principals, assistant principals and guards were reported as inflicting corporal punishment on the students. 36.2% of the respondents admitted that they themselves had used corporal punishments on students, on the average, on 22 students per week per respondent. Most of the respondents (76%) admitted that they had the knowledge that the Ministry of Education's regulation prohibits corporal punishment, but they flouted them. The vast majority of the respondents also reported that no records of corporal punishments were maintained.

III CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

The various studies that have been reviewed generally indicate the following major points.

- A wide range of physical and psychological punishment prevail in Ethiopia. Both physical and psychological punishments are inflicted on children at home, school and community settings throughout the country, with insignificant regional variations. Psychological punishment is more prevalent when compared to physical punishment.
- Girls are more exposed to psychological punishment than boys and boys are more exposed to physical punishment than girls.
- The perpetrators of physical and psychological punishments include mothers, fathers, step parents and adoptive parents, older brothers and sisters at home; teachers, unit leaders, principals, guards, class monitors, school janitors, vagrant boys, police, street children and neighbors in the community. It is worth noting that the very people who are supposed to safeguard children are the ones inflicting physical and humiliating punishments on children.
- Most adults perceive that moderate physical and psychological punishments are acceptable means of disciplining children. Yet excessive punishments continue to be inflicted on children. Many children also tolerate physical punishments as appropriate or “normal”. These are deep rooted socio-cultural attitudes in the country even though many professionals express that physical and humiliating punishments have negative developmental impacts on children.
- The Ethiopian Constitution and school regulations explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in schools and other institutions. Yet the studies reveal that corporal and humiliating punishments are widespread in schools and institutions. These laws and regulations are ignored and there are no mechanisms for reporting punishments in the institutions.
- Contrary to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to which Ethiopia is party, the Ethiopian Penal Code, Civil Code and family Law allow parents to use corporal punishment on their children. The Constitution remains silent on punishments inflicted on children in home situations.
- Major reasons for inflicting punishment on children are reported by the perpetrators as bad behavior, disobedience, disrupting class or home, inattentiveness, coming late to school or home and failing to do assignments. However, further review of the documents reveals that the causes for physical and humiliating punishments, also include reasons such as culture and attitude of the society, poverty, unemployment, lack of awareness of alternative forms of disciplining, large family and class sizes, problems related to enforcing relevant legislations, absence of law prohibiting physical punishment in the family, alcoholism and emotional problems such as frustrations and poor anger management.

- The main effects of physical and psychological punishments are reported to be bodily injury and death; emotional effects such as low self-esteem, depression, hopelessness, anxiety, anger and vindictiveness; development of self-destructive behaviors such as smoking and substance abuse; engaging in street life and commercial sex work; school dropout; deterioration in school performances; perpetuation of a cycle of violence in the family and society; and long term effect on the nation as a result of physically affected and emotionally weak members.
- Physical and psychological punishments are rarely reported to law enforcement bodies, and even when they are reported only very low proportion of the cases are pursued. In general, lack of comprehensive data on the perpetrators is hindrance in the development of appropriate interventions and remedial measures.

Although most of the reviewed studies focus, for obvious reasons, more on punishment of children in school settings, the studies are adequate enough to give an overview of the general situation on the type and prevalence of PHP in Ethiopia. The focus of the studies is adequate to devise strategic directions for tackling the problem of physical and humiliating punishments in Ethiopia although it is important to note that detail assessments will be required to initiate specific projects.

Areas that seem to require further investigation include alternative approaches to child disciplining, ways of addressing the problem of socio-cultural attitudes and mapping our relevant interventions and mechanisms.

3.2 Recommendations

Resolving the problem of physical and humiliating punishments of children calls for tackling the root causes of the problem. Thus, as stated in many of the various studies undertaken so far, the main areas that need to be addressed include the following:

- There is a need to raise the awareness of parents, teachers, and the society at large aiming to change the deep rooted socio-cultural attitudes that considers PHP as acceptable means of disciplining children. At the same time it is necessary to introduce positive, participatory and non-violent forms of child disciplining. This is a task that needs to be carried out as a continuous long-term process. Awareness-raising is particularly important to change the deep rooted attitudes and in breaking the “vicious perpetuating cycle of violence in which the abused became abuser”. The studies mentioned that adults who hit their children in the name of discipline usually began doing so because they themselves were hit as children.
- Poverty and unemployment are considered to aggravate the application of children. Hence, efforts to abolish physical and humiliating punishments must be included in poverty reduction and employment generation as well as family planning activities. An integrated approach is of paramount importance in tackling such broad based interlinked problems.

- The government is duty bound to improve allocation of budget to the education sector so as to reduce class sizes and to fulfill the necessary educational materials, manpower and technical inputs; factors that have been found to have direct link with corporal punishment and child neglect in schools. It should also put in place mechanisms to enforce compliance to regulations that prohibit corporal punishments in schools and institutions.
- Some laws and regulations need to be reformed in order to make the legal system compatible with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to which Ethiopia is party. In particular, the provisions of article 576 of the Criminal Code and article 258 of the revised Family Code that allow corporal punishment in upbringing children need to be repealed and replaced with provisions that explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal and degrading punishments.
- Effective mechanisms of enforcing laws and regulations prohibiting all forms of corporal and humiliating punishments in all settings (homes, schools, communities and child care institutions) should be devised and put in place. This should be supported with efficient and responsive reporting system and comprehensive perpetrators' database.

Additional intervention areas are suggested as:

- Strengthening of counseling services for teachers, parents, and community members;
- Promoting and strengthening child participation in the protection of their rights;
- Conducting research studies particularly in the areas of non-violent positive child disciplining methods, socio-cultural attitudes, types and magnitude as well as causes and effects of physical and psychological punishment of children, and intervention mechanisms;
- Strengthening and promotion of protection programmes and services;
- Provision of support to victim children; and
- Coordination of efforts and resources and networking.

Government agencies, children, parents, child right organizations, civil societies and communities at large are the major stakeholders in the abolition of physical and humiliating punishments of children in the name of disciplining. Concerted efforts should be made to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of all these stakeholders.