Violent Child Disciplining Practices at Home in Mekelle, Ethiopia: A Child Rights-Based Perspective

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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This Study is Dedicated to Children in

Adi-Shumdihun

"Children are tired of being told they are the future. They want to see us fulfil our promises in the present, and enjoy their right to be protected from violence today."

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro,
Independent Expert for the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on
Violence against Children.

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List of Acronyms

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
Art.	Article
CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCC	Child Care Coalitions
CCE	Criminal Code of the Ethiopia
CP	Child Participant
CRBA	Child Rights-Based Approach
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HRF	Human Rights Forum
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
MAO	Mekelle Administration Office

NBA	Needs-Based Approach
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Para.	Paragraph
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
RFC	Revised Family Code
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN CAT	United Nations Committee Against Torture
UN-OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Violence Against Children

Abstract

Violent disciplining is one of the most common forms of violence experienced by children in Ethiopia. These practices are threatening the very survival and healthy development of the children involved. This study explores the experiences of children in Adi-Shumdihun with violent disciplining at home and in the family. The local discourses used to legitimize the practices, and the responses of relevant actors to the problem of violent disciplining are also discussed from a Child Rights-Based Approach (CRBA). In doing so, this study follows a qualitative research approach. While children in Adi-Shumdihun are passing through bitter experiences of violent disciplining, such practices are culturally encouraged and legally overlooked at the national and local levels. A CRBA is yet to be introduced to the work of relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun. The first thing that a CRBA requires is recognizing children as rights-holders. Besides, a CRBA entails the full protection of children from violent disciplining practices. It also requires the establishment of enduring structures that enable the children to equally and actively participate in the decision-making process of the relevant actors.

Relevance to Development Studies

The contemporary concept of development goes beyond economic growth and wealth accumulation. It extends to human development and building capabilities. A rights-based approach to development entails the elimination of all sources of abuse, poverty and discrimination/marginalization, which constrain human survival and development. Violent disciplining practices are recognised as one of the most common forms of violence against children. Violent disciplining practices have offered a darkened future and hopelessness to many children in Ethiopia and are seriously threatening their right to life, survival and development. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate violent disciplining practices in Ethiopia from a Child Rights-Based perspective. It is timely and important to see how a CRBA can contribute to the efforts of protecting children from violent disciplining practices in Ethiopia.

Keywords

Violent Disciplining, Child Rights-Based Approach, Ethiopia, Child Participation, Non-Discrimination, Best Interests of the Child, Survival and Development, Private Sphere, Violence Against Children.

Chapter One: Introducing the Research Idea and Rationale

1.1. Statement of the Research Problem

Children are not always able to defend themselves and stand up for their rights. This puts them in a vulnerable position in relation to violence (Save the Children 2005b:8). Violence Against Children (VAC) is a sensitive and under reported problem threatening the survival and development of children throughout the world (Child et al. 2014:1648; Rahman and Tareque 2013:1). The non-governmental organization (NGO) Save the Children has reported that violent child disciplining (which includes physical, verbally humiliating and psychological punishments) by parents, guardians and other adult family members is the "most common form of violence against children" (Save the Children 2013:18).

Violent disciplining of children is one of the commonly exercised forms of violence against children in Ethiopia (Save the Children 2011a:20; 2005a:21 and 28). A countrywide study was conducted by Save the Children in 2005 involving more than 1,800 children from selected cities from four regional states and one city administration in the country. The Save the Children study indicated that 98.6% of Ethiopia's children had experienced violent punishments at home and in the family, as it is the dominant form of child disciplining and upbringing measures (Save the Children 2005a:21). The study showed that only 1.4% of the child participants replied that they had never experienced such violent punishment practices at home (ibid). The scarce data available indicate that the magnitude of the problem is wide-ranging.

Physically and psychologically violent punitive measures are practiced in both public and private spheres. However, nationwide studies conducted by international NGOs such as Save the Children and the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), and the 2006 and 2015 Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child have indicated that these violent disciplinary measures have been reducing in schools, justice institutions and communities – i.e. public spheres – in Ethiopia (Save the Children 2011a:20; ACPF 2006; CRC Committee 2006a:para.33; CRC Committee 2015:para.41-42). However, insignificant improvement continues to show in the home and family context – that is, in the private sphere (ibid).

The types of physical punishments that are commonly practiced at home and in the family in Ethiopia include (but are not limited to): "slapping, pinching, hitting with a stick, beating, whipping with belt, twisting fingers with a pencil in between, hitting the hand and kneeling down" (ibid:21-22). Besides, there are infrequent but severe types of physical punishments levied on children for committing what are labeled as serious wrongs such as: "tying and flogging, inhaling smoking pepper, burning and denial of food" (ibid:22). In addition, the Save the Children study revealed that the most common disciplinary measure imposed against children at home is beating using "instruments including sticks, belts, plastic hose, rope, electric wire, etc." (ibid:21). Moreover, children in Ethiopia have also experienced psychologically humiliating punishments, either unconnectedly or accompanied by physical forms of punishments, at their home and family (ibid:28).

Children who are exposed to these violent practices are compelled to pass through hostile experiences of physical and psychological harm at early ages. Evidently, these violent practices have various serious consequences on their lives and development such as: "bodily injury and death, emotional effects: such as lack of self-confidence and fear, mental problems, streetism and vagrancy, child prostitution, truancy and school dropout" (Save the Children 2005a:35-36). The violence may even lead them to commit suicide or turn them into a persistent mood of hopelessness. Besides, it may result in other enduring problems for the children concerned including "poor physical and cognitive development and mental health, substance abuse, suicidal behavior, and reproductive and sexual ill-health" (UN General Assembly 2006:para.36; see also Norman et al. 2012:2; Felitti et al. 1998: 245-258; Child et al. 2014:1648).

Ethiopia is a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) since 1991. The country also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) in 2002. However, in the domestic laws the issue of violent punishment of children at home is nevertheless addressed in a general and ambiguous manner. The Ethiopian Revised Family Code (RFC) and the Criminal Code of Ethiopia (CCE) allow parents to impose light punishments upon children, but do not clearly set the boundary between light and serious punishments (Tadele 2005:116). Moreover, violent punishment of children is prohibited in public spheres like schools, but still legal at home and in the family context. Thus, it is a crime for a teacher or school administrator to physically punish or verbally insult a child at school for disciplinary reasons, but a right (and even sometimes considered

to be an obligation) for parents/guardians and some senior family members to punish a child at home in the same way; for maybe similar 'wrongdoings'.

1.2. Defining Violent Disciplining

Different names and definitions are available for violent child disciplinary or punitive practices. In the first place, punishment has been defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics (American Academy of Pediatrics 1997:725) as "the application of a negative stimulus to reduce or eliminate a behavior". The organization divided child punishments into two categories. Corporal punishment "involves the application of some form of physical pain in response to undesirable behavior". Verbal punishment "involves verbal reprimands and disapproval" (American Academy of Pediatrics 1997:725).

The Save the Children Alliance classified violent child punitive practices as physical and humiliating punishment and defined this as follows: "[…] the use of physical force or humiliating/degrading treatment causing some degree of pain or discomfort, in order to discipline, correct, control, change behavior or in the belief of educating/bringing up the child" (Save the Children 2003:1).

The United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child uses the terms corporal punishment and physical punishment synonymously to mean:

> […] any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting ("smacking", "slapping", "spanking") children, with the hand or with an implement - a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children's mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices) (CRC Committee 2006, General Comment No. 8:para.11).

The Committee also recognized the incompatibility of non-physical, but cruel and degrading, forms of punishments with the CRC provisions (CRC Committee 2006, General Comment No. 8:para.11). According to the Committee, non-physical or humiliating punishment includes

"punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child" (ibid).

The study will use the definition of violent disciplining or punishment espoused by the Committee on the Rights of the Child because it is most comprehensive and self-explanatory. The definition includes all the forms and features of the violent disciplining practices that I intend to investigate in my study. Besides, the Committee's definition exactly fits with the framing of the provisions of relevant child rights instruments that deal with violent, degrading and inhuman punishment of children such as the CRC, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the ACRWC and the FRDE Constitution.

1.3. Justification of the Study

I decided to conduct this study because of the seriousness of the problem and its effects on the life and development of children in Ethiopia. I was born and raised in a town near to the study area. So, as any Ethiopian child, I passed through the experiences of violent disciplining that most of Ethiopian parents apply against their children as part of the common upbringing practice. Hence, I am doing this study for both personal and academic reasons. However, my ultimate purpose in conducting this study is to uncover the problems that Ethiopian children are experiencing today at their own home and to make a contribution to the start of a process of rethinking and reform of the violent child disciplining practices in Ethiopia.

I belong to a poor and uneducated Ethiopian family; whose life was dependent on the labor of the father (driver), mother (house wife) and senior family members (engaged in various informal businesses). It was almost impossible for all five children in our family, at their early age, to pass even a day without committing some 'wrongdoings' in the eyes of their parents. The norm was to receive some punishment, either from our mother or father, sometimes even from our older sister or sometimes from all. These practices occurred almost daily in my childhood period. Currently, I am a husband and a father of one child as well as a human rights practitioner, and I believe in the need to reform these institutionalized violent child disciplining practices in Ethiopia and particularly in Adi-Shumdihun, Mekelle. This study seeks to serve that long-lasting purpose by uncovering the violent

nature of these punitive practices to all concerned bodies, investigating the legitimizing discourses or institutions among the community and the responses relevant actors, all from a CRBA perspective.

Coming to the academic reasons for conducting this study, it is a fact that only a rather limited number of studies have been conducted on this problem in Ethiopia, and particularly in the study area. For instance, there is no organized data that shows the trends of these child disciplining practices over time, measures taken by the various relevant actors and their effects on the patterns of child rearing practices in Ethiopia. There is only one publicly available nationwide study, which was conducted by Save the Children as far back as the year 2005. And that study mainly aimed to show the magnitude of the problem in percentages or figures, and not the narratives, discourses and human rights concerns attached to it. Thus, the study by Save the Children did not sufficiently analyze issues related to the responses of the relevant actors, the cultural and gender discourses that the parents use to justify their actions, the involvement of the children in the decisions, policies and initiatives of relevant actors and the place of the CRC general principles in the work of the duty-bearers. These are some of the important issues that need further investigation in order to build up a fuller understanding of the problem and to contribute to addressing it.

Some particular studies were conducted in different parts of Ethiopia, but often from a different perspective than that of the rights of the concerned children. Some of these studies analyzed the legal controversies around the violent practices. Other studies assessed the sociological debates and dynamics on the necessity and implications of violent punishment of children. Yet others considered the resulting health risks and the psychological causes and implications of these violent punitive practices (see e.g. Admassu et al. 2006; Abebe 2011). I noted that the human rights part or perspective of the problem in Ethiopia has been less investigated. Moreover, most of the studies that addressed the violent punitive practices as a human/child rights violation focused on the public sphere – mainly schools – rather than on the home (see Ketsela and Kebede 1997; Tadele 2001; Seleshi 2001; Zelleke and Ababa 2001; Sewasew and Mengiste 2014). Thus, only a very limited number of studies has been conducted on violent punishment of children at home and in the family context in Ethiopia. This study seeks to help filling the knowledge gaps in relation to this particular problem that children in Ethiopia are facing on a daily basis.

My decision to address the study problem with a CRBA lens emanates from the child-centered approach of the latter. My intention, was to explore the violent disciplining practices in Adi-Shumdihun from the children's perspectives. I wanted to see the issues from where the children stand. And, I wanted to treat the problem as a human rights issue, not just as a social problem. Thus, I was looking for an approach that recognizes the children's right to be free from violence and argues for their active role and engagement in the responses of those who are responsible for protecting them from violence. A CRBA meets all the above foci. It entails that rights-holders (children in this case) be capacitated to claim their rights and duty-bearers (state and non-state actors) to respond and fulfil the claims by way of obligation. That creates a clear line of accountability, and a solid ground for me to argue for the respect of the rights of the children to be free from such violent practices.

1.4. Research Objectives and Questions

The research mainly aimed to examine the potential of a Child Rights-Based Approach for improving the responses of the duty-bearers to violent punishments at home in Adi-Shumdihun neighborhood, in Mekelle, in northern Ethiopia. More in particular, the objectives of the study have been to:

o   analyse violent disciplining practices and the discourses and other forces that help in maintaining these practices in Adi-Shumdihun.
o   document children's experiences in this realm and their views on these practices.
o   explore what a Child Rights-Based Approach to violent punishment of children entails, in general and in Adi-Shumdihun in particular.

The study pursued to scrutinize the following questions: What represents a Child Rights-Based Approach to child disciplining?; What would such a CRBA entail in terms of protecting children from violent punishments at home in Adi-Shumdihun?; And how could a Child Rights-Based Approach improve the responses of relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun? The study addresses the following sub-questions:

o   What are the experiences of children in Adi-Shumdihun with violent punishments at home?
o   How do parents, guardians or other relevant care-takers define and justify good and bad child disciplining manners in Adi-Shumdihun?

- What institutional structures are established to ensure the continuing participation of children at local level? And how effective and equally accessible these structures are?
- What measures are taken by the relevant organizations to examine and serve the best interests of the children in Adi-Shumdihun, and to protect them from violent disciplining practices exercised at home and in the family?

1.5. Study Area Description

Mekelle is the capital city of the Tigray National Regional State under the current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia state structure. The city is located in the Northern part of the Country, at about 783 kilometers distance from the Capital City of the Federal government: Addis Ababa. Mekelle is one among the seven Zones under the regional administrative structure of the State of Tigray. According to data from the Mekelle Administration Office (MAO) the City is divided into seven sub-cities, including Kedamay Weyane sub-city, Adi-haki sub-city, Hawelti sub-city, Ayder sub- city, Hadinet sub-city and its extension, and Semen sub-city and its extension (MAO 2010).[1] Adi-Shumdihun is one of the four neighborhoods found in Hawelti sub-city. The other three neighborhoods there are named Adi-Haa, Daero and Arbaete-Ensisat.

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[1] Map of Mekelle City is annexed in Map 1.

Chapter Two: A Child Rights-Based Perspective to Violent Child Disciplining

A CRBA is used as an expounding tool to examine the research problem. Like the other Human/Rights-Based Approaches (HRBA/RBA), a CRBA is an approach that is grounded in human rights principles and instruments. It is an approach established to enable relevant actors to work for the very survival and development of the child by "promoting and protecting" their human rights out of a sense of obligation (UNOHCHR 2006:15; Save the Children 2007:9-10).

RBAs are increasingly used by international organizations and State bodies that work with children (Craissati et al. 2007:9; Gready and Ensor 2005:24-25). In fact, many of the international human rights organizations and development agencies that work with or for children –such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), Save the Children and Plan International – have all introduced RBAs in their programs (UNOHCHR 2006; Save the Children 2007: Arts 2014; UNICEF 2007; Plan 2010). The need for establishing responses in line with RBAs is mainly justified with a reference to intrinsic and extrinsic/instrumental rationales (UNOHCHR 2006:16). The intrinsic rationale behind RBAs, which advocates for the creation of "systems of rights and corresponding obligations recognized by international law" is the idea that it is "morally and legally the right thing to do" (ibid). The instrumental rationale is argued to be that using an RBA is a worthwhile means to achieve human development in a more inclusive, improved and sustainable manner (ibid).

Survival and development of children and the respect and realization of their rights is the starting and end point of a CRBA. These are clearly recognized in the CRC as legal entitlements, corresponding with responsible actors with a clear obligation to respect, protect and provide these rights as a matter of obligation (CRC 1989, art. 6). Hence, working for the realization of the rights of the child is not just a matter of charity or benevolence, but a duty on the side of the relevant actors or duty-bearers – primarily the state, but also non-state actors.

It is an approach that puts the child at the center by transforming her/his status of being a powerless victim to that of a rights-holder or stakeholder in the decision making process (Save the Children 2007:9). Thus, a CRBA requires duty-bearers to treat children as rights-holders and to strive

for their survival and development. As rights-holders, children are to be allowed to operationalize their evolving potentials and have a say in decisions, programs and initiatives affecting their life.

As is mentioned above, the primary objective of a CRBA is the respect and realization of the rights of children. Accordingly, a CRBA is designed to enable the rights-holders (children) to claim their rights and the duty-bearers to meet their obligations by creating an effectively functioning duty-bearer and rights-holder relationship (Save the Children 2007:4-5). As figure 1 shows, a continuous relationship should be established among the rights-holders and the duty-bearers so that the rights-holders will be able to claim their rights and the duty-bearers will be able to fulfill their obligations. To make this approach work, it is very important that both parties (rights-holders and duty-bearers) know their roles and engage accordingly with the cyclic process involved.

Accountability

Participation

Duty-bearers
Enabled to respect, protect and fulfil rights

Human rights are
- universal (non-discrimination)
- inalienable (not taken/given away)
- indivisible
- interdependent (loss of one impacts on all)

Rights-holders
Enabled and empowered to hold duty-bearers to account

Duty-bearers
Fulfil *responsibility* towards rights-holders

Rights-holders
Claim *rights* from duty-bearers

Figure 1 Rights-holder-duty-bearer-relationship
Source: Save the Children (2007:9)

This means, on the one hand, that children (as rights-holders) have to learn about and be aware of their rights and be able to claim or to develop a capacity to claim these rights. On the other hand, as it is clearly stated in the CRC, the State and relevant non-State actors (duty-bearers) have to accept that the responsibility for the respect and realization of children's rights is on their shoulders, and that

many infringements on the enjoyment of children's rights are a failure of discharging their obligations (CRC 1989: arts. 2(1) and (4)). A child rights climate requires all the responses of the relevant actors to be guided by or established on the basis of the four general principles stated in the CRC: non-discrimination (art. 2), child participation (art. 12-15), the best interests of the child (art. 3) and survival and development (CRC 1989; Save the Children 2007:27; Arts 2014:154). According to Save the Children, these principles are not mutually exclusive, rather they support each other (Save the Children 2005b:28). These four general principles are the corner stone of the CRC, and also of the CRBA applied in this paper.
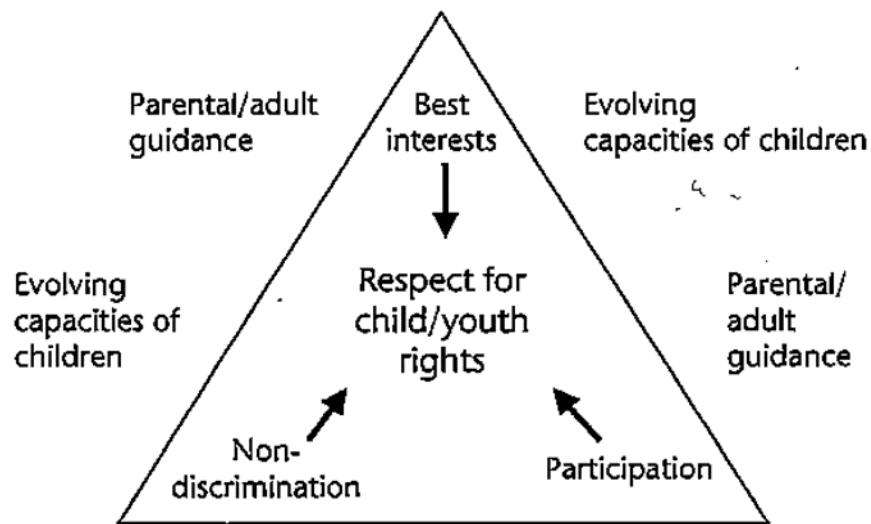
Figure 2 CRC General Principles
Source: Karin Arts (2014:154)

2.1. Child Participation

The principle of participation entails the active involvement of children in all matters affecting their life. The children's right to express views freely and to be heard in matters affecting their life is recognized in the CRC (CRC 1989, art. 12). It requires relevant actors to give space for the voices and views of children before, during and after the design and implementation process of the intervention measures intended to resolve the children's problems (Save the Children 2007:13). Children are

entitled to contribute to their own development by "active, free and meaningful participation" (Craissati et al. 2007:10).

In light of the principle of child participation, the research scrutinized the inclusiveness of the responses or measures of the relevant actors. The research tried to see if there is any point in the whole intervention process at which the children's views are heard, seriously considered and incorporated. In this regard, the model of child participation developed by Laura Lundy is a very practicable and useful tool for duty-bearers to shape up child participation in the decision making process. This model requires the consideration of four distinct factors that facilitate the successful implementation of article 12 of the CRC and ensure active engagement of children in the decision making process (Welty and Lundy 2013:2). These four factors are Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence (ibid). I employed this model to assess the participation of children in Adi-Shumdihun in the responses of the relevant actors.
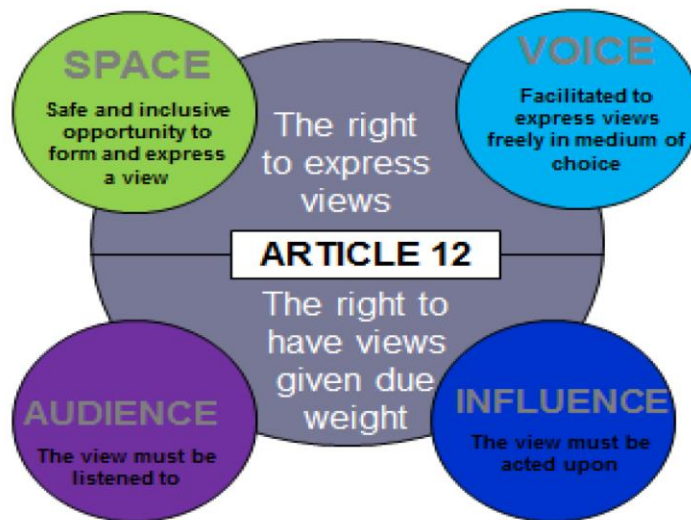
Figure 3 Child Participation Model
Source: Welty and Lundy (2013:2)

As the above diagram depicts, Lundy's child participation model requires duty-bearers to create a space in their responses which gives children an opportunity to make a statement about their views and interests. Besides, using the provided space, the children should be capacitated to speak out about the things they want or do not want to happen in their life. Moreover, the views and voices of the

children must reach to the ear of all concerned bodies or relevant actors before they make any decisions that may affect the life and development of the children. Finally, the statements that the children make have to get due weight and be carefully considered by these concerned bodies in order to ensure an effective child participation in the responses. Hence, it is determinant for the relevant actors to give due weight to all the four factors, to ensure a meaningful participation of the children in the responses. Lundy's child participation model provides some indicator questions that duty-bearers are required to answer.[2] The more these questions are addressed in the responses of the relevant actors, the better the level of participation of the children will be in the decision making process.

2.2. Non-discrimination

The principle of non-discrimination entails the equal respect and safeguard for all children's rights irrespective of the children's or their parent's or guardian's status. Non-discrimination is one of the prime principles of the CRC and is also recognized in the ACRWC (CRC 1989, art. 2(1); ACRWC 1990, art. 26).   Hence, the responsibility to respect and ensure the children's right of non-discrimination in all matters affecting the life and development of the child – including responses or intervention programs – is on the shoulders of the relevant actors, and primarily the State – as a chief duty-bearer.

The non-discrimination principle entails the application of all rights to all children without any exception (Save the Children 2005b:16). This also applies to the children's rights to be free from violent disciplining. Thus, it is an obligation for the State (primary duty-bearer) and non-State actors (secondary duty-bearers) in Adi-Shumdihun to ensure that their responses are not discriminatory. All children (without exception) have the right to be free from violence, and from violent disciplinary punishments in particular, and to be protected by the duty-bearers. The non-discrimination principle also requires relevant actors to make an extra effort to protect the rights and well-being of marginalized groups of children in Adi-Shumdihun (CRC Committee 2003, General Comment 5:para.12; Craissati et al. 2007:10).

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[2] Some of the questions are incorporated in to the interview guides attached in Annex 2.

2.3. The Best Interests of the Child

In the same way as the other CRBA principles, both the CRC and the ACRWC have recognized the principle of the best interests of the child. This principle dictates primary consideration of the children's interests in all matters/actions concerning them. Hence, it is a principle devised to enable all the relevant public and private actors to primarily ascertain the impact of their actions and interventions on the interests and rights of the children (Hodgkin and Newell in Alemu and Birmeta 2012:42).

Accordingly, priority and consideration should be given to the interests of the children before and during the enforcement of all projected or existing laws, policies, administrative measures and court decisions affecting the child (Zermatten 2010:498; Alemu and Birmeta 2012:43). The best interests of the child principle concerns "all decision making affecting boys and girls, including the mobilization and allocation of resources" (Save the Children 2005b:16). Thus, the principle requires all "decisions to be based on the needs and circumstances of the individual child" and on the "views and evolving capacities of the child" (Alemu and Birmeta 2012:43).

2.4. Survival and Development of the Child

In the same way, the CRC necessitates duty-bearers to "ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child" (CRC 1989, art. 6(2)). Besides, survival and development of the child is one of the principal objectives of the CRC. Even though survival of children is related with the children's right to life, child development has a broader application and "encompasses the physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual development of the child" (Save the Children 2007:11). Hence, all efforts made by the relevant actors should be devised in such a way that they positively contribute to these aspects of development and survival of the child. This principle should be established as the main objective of the responses and interventions of the duty-bearers.

Indisputably, violent punishments pose an imminent threat to the life and development of the children. It may threaten their right to life as well as hinders them from developing to their full potential. Hence, the first thing the duty-bearers in Adi-Shumdihun are obliged to do is to fully protect the children from all forms of violent punishments practiced in all spheres, including the home.

2.5. Concluding Remarks on CRBA

To sum up, the CRC (and other child rights instruments such as the ACRWC) have delivered a fertile ground for duty-bearers to practically operationalize their RBA ideas (Arts 2014:153-154). The CRC clearly frames detailed rights of children with the four general principles and a comprehensive list of child rights that duty bearers are required to consider and respect in making decisions. Hence, it is vital for the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun to use the four general principles provided by the CRC as a parameter to weigh the effectiveness of their responses to violent punishment of children at home and in the family. In view of that, this research also used these four general principles as a standard to see how the duty-bearer and rights-holder relationship has been operating in relation to violent punishment of children at home in Adi-Shumdihun.

Chapter Three: Applying a CRBA in a Context of Violent Cultural Environment and Contradictory Laws

3.1. Legitimizing Beliefs

Studies have shown that violent punishments of children at home are an extensively accepted traditional practice in Ethiopia (Tadele 2005:115). This concerns an institutionalized tradition in the Ethiopian community, and actually is backed and reinforced by the domestic laws of the country (Wonde and Baru 2014:18).

For most adults in Ethiopia, violent disciplining is a conventional way to discipline a child, as long as it is not excessive (Save the Children 2005a:18). Parents are generally considered as having the right to impose light punishments, including "caning, pinching, scolding, glaring and shouting, to ensure the upbringing of a child with good manners" (ibid). Some parents are against the more serious forms of punishments like burning and forcing to inhale the smoke of burning paper (ibid). For instance, a study involving 368 parents in Asendabo – a town located in Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia – revealed that 310 (87.6%) of the parents participating in the study employed violent punishment as a main strategy of child disciplining (Admassu et al. 2006). According to this study, only 12 (3.5%) of the parents believed that these violent practices may inflict harm or trauma on the children receiving the punishments (ibid). Moreover, the study indicated that the parents claimed to employ these violent punishments "for the ultimate benefit of their children" (ibid). Another study conducted in Jimma town revealed that most parents believed corporal punishment is part of their "cultural responsibility of child nurturing" and did not consider it as a violation of the children's rights (Wonde and Baru 2014:16). One of the prevailing explanations given by parents and adults, according to Save the Children (2001:6), is that "children need to learn from corporal punishment to respect their elders, learn right from wrong, obey rules and work hard; without it they would be undisciplined".

Studies conducted in different parts of the world have shown that violent punishment of children is also a gendered practice. From her ethnographic research conducted in Sub-Saharan countries, Sara Humphreys (2008:527) concluded that the way in which female and male students and teachers understand and experience "the 'giving' and 'receiving' of corporal punishment" is different. Humphreys also indicated that gender, age and authority are main factors that shape people's

understanding and experience (ibid). Other studies conducted in different parts of the world show parallel realities. For instance, Straus and Stewart revealed that in the US boys experienced violent punishments at home more frequently (14.3%), than girls (12.9%) (1999:63). This gendered pattern, that boys are chastised more than girls, was also reaffirmed by other studies (Beazley et al., 2006; Tang, 2006; Alyahri and Goodman, 2008 in Sanapo and Nakamura 2010:43). These studies also showed that the forms and seriousness of the punishments are different for boys and girls. For example, Beazley and Millichamp indicated that girls are given relatively lighter punishment than boys (Beazley et al., 2006; Millichamp et al., 2006).

Studies conducted in Ethiopia also show the gendered nature of violent punishments, but the other way around. Contrary to the findings of Sanapo and Nakamura's research, the results of some studies conducted in Ethiopia reveal that girls are chastised more than boys. For instance, a study conducted in Jimma reported that "male children are perceived as more knowledgeable and capable of controlling themselves than female ones, hence the later need closer supervision" (Wonde and Baru 2014:25-26). Wonde and Baru also mentioned that violent punitive practices are usually used by the community in Jimma as instruments of gender role socialization and social control (2014:26).

Thus, though there is a lack of segregated and representative data for Ethiopia, it is not difficult to imagine how such different institutionalized discourses could potentially play a significant role in legitimizing the violent child disciplining practices.

3.2. Domestic and International Legal Frameworks

Violent child disciplining is a form of violence against children that often amounts to a human rights violation. These violent punitive practices (potentially) threaten the children's rights to life (art. 6(1), survival and development (art. 6(2), physical integrity, to be free from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishments (art. 37), and the right to get State protection against maltreatment and abuse (art. 19) (CRC 1989). As will be further detailed below these children's rights are also reassured in the ACRWC and FDRE Constitution (ACRWC 1990: arts. 5(1) and (2), 14(1) and 16(1); FDRE Constitution 1994: art. 36(1)(a), (d) and (e)). Therefore, it is wide off the mark to hit or humiliate a child in the ways covered in this paper. The fact that this would be done within the family home and is a cultural practice or tradition does not make it right. On the former aspect, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

clearly stated that: "Children's rights to life, survival, development, dignity and physical integrity do not stop at the door of the family home, nor do States' obligations to ensure these rights for children" (Pinheiro 2006:12).

The Pinheiro World Report on Violence Against Children identified five spheres where violence against children, including violent disciplining or punishment of children, is committed. These five spheres include the home and family, schools, care and justice systems, workplaces and the community (Pinheiro 2006:7). Evidently, the home and family is one of the domains where children often experience violent punishments committed by parents, guardians and senior family members.

Violent disciplining of children is firmly proscribed in the CRC, ACRWC and other relevant international human rights frameworks (Waterhouse and Nagia-Luddy 2009:1; CRC 1989, art. 19; ACRWC 1990, art. 16). The CRC prohibits "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse […] while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other persons […]" and also from "torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" of children without any limitation (CRC 1989, arts. 19 (1) and 37 (1)). Other relevant international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention against Torture (CAT) have also proscribed inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

At the domestic level, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's (FDRE) Constitution also proclaims that "everyone has the right to protection against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (FDRE Constitution 1994, art. 18(1)). The Constitution also recognizes the children's right "to be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhumane treatment in schools and other institutions responsible for the care of children" (Ibid, art. 36(1)(e)). However, it fails to prohibit violent child disciplining practices committed at home and in the family as well as in other non-institutional arrangements of care. Nevertheless, the domestic proclamations have also put a limitation to the child right to be free from "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment": there is some space for parents, guardians and custodians in the private sphere (but not including the caretakers in the public sphere) to employ light physical punishments at home and in the family. The most relevant provisions in this regard are in the Ethiopian Revised Family Code (2000) and the Criminal Code of Ethiopia (2004). The Criminal Code (CCE), in its article 576 stipulates:

> Whoever, having the custody or charge of a minor, ill-treats, neglects, over tasks or beats
> him for any reason or in any manner, is punishable with simple imprisonment not
> exceeding three months. […] The taking, by parents or other persons having similar
> responsibilities, of a disciplinary measure that does not contravene the law, for purposes
> of proper upbringing, is not subject to this provision (CCE 2004, art. 576(1 and 3)).

In the same way, the Ethiopian Revised family Code (RFC) gives parents and guardians the freedom to take "necessary disciplinary measures" against their children, even without defining what a necessary measure constitutes. Article 258(2) of the RFC reads:

> The guardian may take the necessary disciplinary measures for the purpose of ensuring
> his upbringing (RFC 2000, art. 258(2)).

This noticeably shows the inconsistency between the domestic laws and the CRC, to which Ethiopia is a party since 1991 (Brems 2007:52). Besides, both the RFC and CCE are gender insensitive in naming/referring to children. All children (including girls) are referred to with masculine terms like "his/him/himself". The FDRE Constitution (1994, article 7) avoided this shortcoming by explicitly recognizing that the provisions of the Constitution that refer to the masculine gender are equally applicable to the feminine gender.

The status of international human rights instruments in the Ethiopian legal order is somehow debatable. Article 9(4) of the FDRE Constitution stipulates that "all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land". And, since the FDRE Constitution is declared as the supreme law of the land (FDRE Constitution 1994, art. 9(1)), this implies that all other laws, including the international human rights instruments ratified by Ethiopia, are invalid if they contravene with the Constitution. That obviously puts the ratified international human rights instruments in a subordinate position to the Constitution, and the other domestic proclamations too. And yet, the hierarchy between the ordinary domestic proclamations and the international human rights instruments ratified by Ethiopia is not clear. For instance, the Constitution does not clarify which will prevail if there is a clash between ordinary domestic laws and ratified international human rights instruments. However, the hierarchy becomes more blurred when Article 13(2) of the same Constitution announces that "fundamental rights and freedoms shall be interpreted in a manner

conforming to the principles of the UDHR, International Covenants on Human Rights and International instruments adopted by Ethiopia". This puts them in an upper or at least in a horizontal position with the Constitution (Ibrahim 2000:137-138; Alemu and Birmeta 2012:25-26).

The CRC Committee has recommended the State of Ethiopia to proscribe these violent disciplinary practices three times already, in its Concluding Observations in the year 1997, 2001 and 2006 (CRC Committee 1997, paras. 13 and 27; 2001, paras. 6, 38 and 39; 2006, paras. 33 and 34). Similarly, in the year 2006, the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT Committee) also recommend Ethiopia to completely ban corporal punishment of children in all settings including the home. In the year 2011, the CAT Committee requested Ethiopia to revise the revised Criminal and Family Codes (CAT Committee 2011:para.28). Once again, the most recent Concluding Observation of the CRC Committee (2015) confirmed the legal gap in the domestic laws: stating that "the law does not expressly prohibit corporal punishment in the home […]" (CRC Committee 2015:para.41). Regrettably, so far the State of Ethiopia failed to significantly reform its domestic laws. Accordingly, violent punishment of children is only prohibited in schools and other institutions, but still a legally acceptable practice at home and in non-institutional forms of care (Newell 2009:2).

By virtue of being a State party to the CRC, Ethiopia has an obligation to ensure the conformity of its domestic laws with the provisions of the CRC and also has a primary obligation to enforce the CRC at the domestic level. Thus, despite the failure of the State to ensure the conformity of the domestic laws with the CRC, children in Ethiopia have a right to be free from violent disciplining. In addition, parents and guardians are not immune from having child rights obligation or from being responsible for their actions if they violate the rights of the children. After all, the CRC clearly mentions parents and guardians among the duty-bearers for the respect and realization of child rights (CRC 1989, article 3 (2)). Thus, ideally, parents and guardians are not only expected to refrain from violating the rights of the children, they also have to protect and fulfill the rights of the children (ibid, article 6 (1)). They have a responsibility too to ensure the survival and healthy development of the children. In fact, all duty-bearers – including the State, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Civil Society Organizations and Communities, parents and other caretakers of children – share responsibility for ensuring the survival and development of the child. However, the CRC Committee repeatedly affirmed that the State has a primary obligation to protect children from violent disciplining at home and in the family context.

Chapter Four: Introducing the Research Methodology and Methods

4.1. Sources of Evidence

Relevant data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources include children, parents and guardians, police and court officials, relevant NGO officials and other concerned bodies. Secondary sources consist of relevant academic publications, previously conducted studies, records or archives of government offices (like the police and courts), media outputs, CRC Committee reports and concluding observations, and grey materials.

4.2. Research Techniques

The study is mainly conducted in line with a qualitative research approach, which essentially intends to build up an understating of a social phenomenon by using "methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis" (Patton and Cochran 2002:2). However, I produced some quantitative analysis as well to supplement the qualitative discussion about the forms of violent disciplining measures experienced by the child participants in particular. Qualitative research is an approach used to gain an in-depth understanding of peoples, communities or individual person's experiences by using research methods that are particularly appropriate to get access to such detailed experiences (Hennink et al. 2010:8-9). Besides, it is a useful approach to see things from the perspectives of the participants to depict their understandings of the studied phenomenon and the meanings they attach to it (ibid:9).

Accordingly, this study has chiefly employed qualitative research methods (data collection, sampling and data analysis procedures), which are complemented with some quantitative analysis. These are intended to generate more qualitative data and findings. This includes in-depth/key-informant interviews, observation, document analysis and qualitative content analysis methods (accompanied by tables, graphs and percentages). Thus, I used an exploratory research form which seeks to uncover the experiences of children with violent punishments at home in Adi-Shumdihun, the legitimizing tradition and parental views, vis-à-vis the gaps in the responses of the relevant actors using a CRBA lens. In my interviews I raised open-ended questions and secondary questions following up on the initial responses of the respondents. This gave the respondents an opportunity to freely

express their experiences and ideas in their own words, rather than feeling forced to reply to fixed questions as is often the case with quantitative techniques

Above and beyond, I attempted to conduct the research along the lines of a CRBA framework. Thus, I made an effort to ensure that most of the research process, mainly the data collection and data analysis stages, were guided by the four general principles of a CRBA and that all principles were carefully considered before taking any action or making any decision in these key research stages. For instance, the impacts of all the techniques used to collect and analyze the data, and also of the decisions made in the research process affecting the life and development of the child participants – and children in general – was carefully examined. Child participation and the active involvement of children in all matters affecting their life is one of the four prominent principles of the CRBA. Hence, collecting relevant data, in a way that allows some genuine space for the voices and views of the child participants was at the heart of the study. In addition, I made all possible efforts to reach out to the children that are most vulnerable to violent punitive practices in Adi-Shumdihun and to make sure that their voices are included.

Considering the ethical sensitivities in doing research with children, involving children directly in the research process was a last resort. I decided to directly involve children (as respondents) in the research due to the lack of recent data that shows their experiences with and views on violent disciplinary practices. Obviously, involving children in a research needs distinctive care and ethical procedure. Hence, I followed distinct ethical guidelines with the child participants. The detailed interview and ethical procedures are described in the sections that follow.

4.3. Data Collection Tools

I have employed a combination of different data collection tools. Accordingly, relevant data for the study were collected by using semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observation and analysis of relevant literature and documents.

4.3.1. In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are useful methods to intensively investigate person's/people's experiences and thoughts (Kothari 2004). In-depth interviews were used as a main data gathering tool. However, other

instruments were also employed to supplement and triangulate the data collected through in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews have been used to collect the needed empirical data from the child participants and other key informants who potentially have special acquaintance of the subject of the study. The interview questions were prepared in a semi-structured form, which entails a combination of both open-ended and closed questions. The interview guide is presented in an Annex to this paper.

As can be seen in the interview guide, the interviews with the child participants started from more general and introductory questions and then steadily dived into the questions specifically related with their experiences. This was helpful for creating familiarity between me and the child participants. For example, I raised questions related to the children's hobbies, their funny happenstances, what they usually play at their leisure time, their favorite subject at school and other issues related with daily life. Starting with more general and informal questions has made the interview process more relaxed. The intention was also to make the child participants feel comfortable about the forthcoming discussion. Content wise, the interviews with the child participants were aimed at collecting their reflections on four main issues: their experiences with violent punishments at home, their views on the necessity or implications of these punishments, their awareness about their rights to be free from such violent punishments and finally their views on the responses from the relevant actors in the area.

The interviews with the other key informants followed the same procedure as the interviews with the child participants. The interviews started with general and introductory questions and then proceeded to the questions specifically related with their views on the practices and responses. The interviews with parents and guardians focused on their views about the right/wrong way of child disciplining and the legitimizing discourses they employ to justify their practices. The interviews with the institutional relevant actors were focusing on the measures taken to alleviate the problem or protecting children in the area from violent disciplinary practices at home, from a CRBA.

4.3.2. Non-participant Observation

I made a brief note of all the events and circumstances observed during the data collection period in the study area. Personal observation has helped me more fully to understand the situation and context of the problem. I used some of the data collected through observation to supplement the other data collected.

4.3.3. Document Analysis

The first-hand data collected through interviews and observation have been backed by secondary data collected from relevant documents including academic literature, government records, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations working with children in the study area, previously conducted research, journal articles, media outputs and any other relevant documents.

4.4. Applying a CRBA to Violent Disciplining on the Ground

A CRBA requires relevant actors to design and implement their responses in light of the four general principles of the CRC: non-discrimination, child participation, the best interests of the child and survival and development. Hence, the interviews have raised questions seeking an explanation from the relevant actors on how they incorporate these four general principles into their responses to violent punishment of children at home in Adi-Shumdihun.

To start with, the application of the principle of non-discrimination was weighed in relation to the ability of the duty-bearers (concerned State and non-State actors) in Adi-Shumdihun to safeguard their responses (decisions, policies and programs) to violent disciplining practices from the three forms of discriminations recognized in the CRC. These are "discrimination against the individual child", "discrimination against a specific group of children" and "discrimination against the child population group as a whole" (Save the Children 2007:145). Thus, I examined whether the responses of the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun are free from these three forms of discrimination, and if any individual/category of children is excluded from the responses. Besides, I inspected if children in Adi-Shumdihun are enjoying equal opportunities to participate and benefit from the decisions, policies and initiatives of the relevant actors. The study also examined whether the responses of the institutional relevant actors identify and protect the more vulnerable children in Adi-Shumdihun from violent disciplining measures at home and in the family context. The degree of vulnerability of children in Adi-Shumdihun may vary in relation to factors relating to them or their families: such as age, education, economic background, culture, religion and gender.

In addition, as already mentioned in section 2.2 of this study, I have used Laura Lundy's Child Participation Model to measure the state of the principle of child participation in relation to violent disciplining practices in Adi-Shumdihun. Hence, I have incorporated questions that helped me to

investigate the four factors: i.e. space, voice, audience and influence, which can be used as indicators to measure the level of participation of the children in the responses.[3] Thus, firstly, I looked for the opportunities given to children by all the concerned bodies to express their views, ideas and grievances. Secondly, I considered the availability, accessibility and functionality of any institutional structures or channels established in the neighborhood to foster communication between the children (rights-holders) and the duty-bearers in the area. Moreover, I considered the availability of, and access to, institutional complaint mechanisms in Adi-Shumdihun, which could be used by children to report incidents of violent disciplining. The children's right to participation cannot be achieved in the absence of such opportunities. Thirdly, I was trying to see the capacity and awareness of the children to express their views and feelings about the problems they face in relation to violent disciplining and the responses thereto, by using the existing channels. Children need to be equipped with rights awareness and mental preparation to realize the importance and potential of their participation. That is what I call capacity to claim their rights. Fourthly, I tried to perceive the weight and consideration given to the views and opinions of the children by the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun. For example, I asked the question whether the relevant actors really consider what the children said as valuable or worth-considering. And finally, I tried to explore whether the children's participation had any impact on the responses by duty-bearers, or otherwise.

Besides, the research has investigated the decision making process of the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun on issues related to, or having a possible impact on, the life of the children living in the neighborhood. Thus, in relation to the best interests of the child, I was trying to scrutinize whether the relevant actors pre-considered the potential impacts of their actions and responses before deciding and implementing them, and whether they collected feedback after. What mechanism did they employ to study the impacts of their programs or actions before/after operation? Overall I attempted to grasp the priority given to the interests and benefits of the children in the decision making processes about the responses to violent disciplining practices at home by relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun.

Finally, I essentially associated the principle of the rights to life, survival and development of the child with the success and failure of the relevant actors to let the children in Adi-Shumdihun live a violence-free life at their home. Actually, the issue of survival and development is somehow subjected

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[3] The interview guides are attached in Annex 2.

to the aggregated state of the above three principles. The success or failure on the application of the above three general principles may influence or even determine the survival and development of children. Despite of that, the rights of the children to life, survival and development require immediate realization. Thus, it is only when violent disciplining is fully abolished in the home and in the family context that children's rights to life, survival and development can be ensured. Besides, I examined the children's access to the responses by relevant institutional actors in the area. Thus, I was interested to see if protecting the children from violent disciplining is considered as an obligation (and not as a charity work) by the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun. This extended also to the way in which the parents and other relevant actors justify good and bad child disciplining manners. To what extent do they feel responsible to protect the children from these violent practices?

4.5. The Process of Conducting the Interviews

Initially, I began the data gathering process by contacting key informants from the concerned government offices. This includes the Commander of Adi-Shumdihun neighborhood (i.e. Hawelti Sub-city) Police Office, the Commissioner of the Tigray Regional Office of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a Judge from the Hawelti Sub-city First Instance Court, and a child expert in the Sub-city Bureau of Social and Labor Affairs. Next to government actors, I contacted key informants from NGOs as well: the Tigray Field Office of Save the Children Ethiopia and the Tigray Field Office of UNICEF Ethiopia. The institutional informants were purposefully selected based on their position in their respective institutions and their experience in working with and for children in the study area.

The main difficulty in accomplishing the interviews with the key informants was their unavailability for the interviews. In some cases, for instance the interview with the official from UNICEF, it took me four days to have the conversation. The first day I met him we scheduled the interview time for the next day, after I had provided him the official letter for my study field work and had introduced myself and my study. He was really interested in the subject of my study. And then, he transferred our first two interview schedules because of workload. Similarly, some of the other officials cancelled the appointments for the interviews once or twice for different reasons. In one case, in the middle of conducting an interview with the judge from Hawelti Sub-city First Instance Court,

the time to hold a trial arrived. Thus, we had to pause the interview for hours. I continued conducting the interview, from where I stopped, after three hours of trial.

Next to the above key informants, I made contact with parents and guardians. I approached parents in Adi-Shumdihun who have one or more children using a purposive sampling technique. Accordingly, six parents (household heads) were contacted to gather the needed information for the study.[4] I secured the permission of five of the parent participants to contact their children, except for parent 1.[5] Actually, I contacted another additional six parents to get permission to interview their children. While four of them agreed to let their children participate in the research, two of them denied me permission to have contact with their children in relation to the study. In one case, the father even warned me to not appear near to his children for any reason and I respected his decision. The contact with the parents and guardians has served a couple of purposes: one was to conduct in-depth interviews with them and then to ask them permission to make contact with their children for in-depth interviews too. Hence, I used parents to get access to the child interviewees. When I had obtained parental permission I asked the children for their consent to participate in the interviews.

I used the help of a professional counselor to give a brief counseling to the child participants, before and after the interviews. The counselor was also available to provide psychological help during the interviews, in case the child participants became emotional and were in need of psychological support. Actually, this happened only once. In that case, I stopped the interview and invited the counselor to intervene. Finally, the counselor found out that the recorder was making one of the child participants uncomfortable (even though all were asked for their consent to use a recorder in the beginning and all initially agreed). I then stopped using recorder and restarted the interview without it. The counseling support was helpful to avoid harm and re-traumatization of the child participants at the time they share their experiences during their interview.

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[4] See further information about sampling procedures in section 4.7 of this study.
[5] For details, see table 5 produced at the end of this paper.

4.6. General Characteristics of the Research Participants

The research included child participants, parents and guardians and other officials from relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun. All of the child participants were students of the 3rd to 10th grades. All the students were living with their parents and guardians in Adi-Shumdihun neighborhood. The parents who participated in this study had one or more children in their custody. Most of the parents are biological mothers/fathers to the children, except one respondent who raised her grandson. As indicated before, the other key informants who participated in the study were authorities and experts from different governmental and non-governmental offices working with children in the area.[6]

4.7. Sampling Procedure

Making generalizations or producing representative findings is not always a goal for qualitative research projects. Qualitative research can be done among a small number of research participants with the aim of investigating and explaining their experiences and thoughts. Accordingly, this study only aimed to explore the experiences and views of the research participants with violent child disciplining practices in Adi-Shumdihun neighborhood, and is not meant to generate generally applicable insights about violent child disciplining in Ethiopia.

I employed a purposive sampling method to determine the sample of research participants from the total study population. Kothari (2004:59) has defined a non-probability sampling method as a "sampling procedure which does not afford any basis for estimating the probability that each item in the population has of being included in the sample". Hence, a purposive sampling technique involves picking particular units or samples of informants with some purpose rather than making a selection randomly (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003 in Teddlie and Yu 2007: 81). Accordingly, six parents and guardians, nine children and six officials from other relevant actors were contacted for the interviews. These were purposively selected based on criteria including their knowledge of and experience with the issue studied, their position in the concerned office, community or home and their availability for the interviews. Thus, the research included a total of twenty-one research participants.

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[6] See Annex 1 for detailed background information on the respondents.

4.8. Data Analysis

The relevant primary and secondary data has been analyzed by using a qualitative content analysis technique. Hsieh & Shannon defined qualitative content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (2005:1278). Hence, I organized, managed and coded the collected data by breaking it down into different coding themes. Finally, the retrieved data are presented under different themes. This helps the reader to understand the full picture of the situation more easily. Content analysis is a useful method to analyze qualitative data in a subjective but scientific way (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009:1).

4.9. Ethical Considerations

The safety of the research participants is the crown priority of the research and overrides the data gathering needs of a study. I treated participants with due respect in a way that does not affect their dignity and safety negatively. Besides, special attention was given to the child participants. I employed more comprehensive and appropriate ethical guidelines towards the child participants, which were particularly suited to their sensitive situation. Among others, I devised and followed separate ethical research procedures in relation to the safety and security of the child participants.

4.9.1. Potential Harms and Benefits

Potential harm for children participating in a research process may emanated from the research topic, the research methodology or else the local setting (Graham et al. 2013:31). I made all possible efforts to frame the research topic, the ideas discussed in the research paper and the research methodology in a manner that does not inflict harm on the children. I briefly explained the purposes and nature of the study to the parents of the child participants, and the children themselves, in a respectful and simple way. For example, terms like parenting and child rearing were used in the conversations with parents, rather than violent disciplinary practices or violent punishment. Then, after having the consent of both the children and their parents, a favorable time and place for the interviews were chosen by the children and me. The children's views and preferences for interview place and time were prioritized.

During the data collection period, the child participants were not asked questions mismatched with their capacities or questions containing sensitive contents which are inappropriate or unfamiliar for their age. The child participants were asked to reflect on their experiences in relation to parenting and disciplining practices employed at their home in simple language, appropriate for their age. The questions were very short, easy to answer and to understand by the child participants. I contacted two to three child participants together in places and at times at which no adults were available – for instance in schools and youth recreational centers. As explained earlier, brief professional psychological counseling was provided before starting, during and after the discussion.

4.9.2. Informed Consent

Gaining consent before starting any formal conversation/discussion with the research participants is a general principle that almost all researchers are expected to respect in data collection processes (Powel et al. 2011 in Graham et al. 2013:56). The whole research relationship depends on this principle. Besides, it is a way in which a researcher can show respect for the "dignity of the participants and their capability and right to make decisions about matters that affect them" (Graham et al. 2013:56). Accordingly, I verbally informed the child participants that they have the right not to participate in the research, to not answer questions they do not want to answer, and to withdraw from the interview at any time they feel discomfort, after having given them a brief explanation of the research problem and its purpose.

4.9.3. Privacy and Confidentiality

I respected the privacy and confidentiality of the child participants during and after the completion of the research. Thus, I made an ultimate effort to conduct the contacts and interviews with child participants in locations that are favorable to having a conversation in a private and confidential manner (ibid:74). Hence, no one, except me and the child participants (two or three children were interviewed together) and maybe the counselor (when it became necessary), was present during the interviews. I cautiously considered the potential risks and opportunities of interviewing the children in individual/private and group sessions. Then I decided to go with the least harmful approach which, I believe, is group interviews.

I was aware of the privacy concerns when I choose to interview the children in groups, instead of holding a private conversation with each of them. A main risk was the fact that the other children, listening to the stories of the speaking children in the group, may not keep the information confidential. I have tried to avoid that risk by grouping the children who know, play and/or study together in the same group. Most of the children categorized in the same group were intimate friends, playmates and/or classmates. They shared many issues, even beyond the issues raised in the discussions, together. Besides, I consulted them about the arrangement and asked them if conducting the interviews in such format made them uncomfortable. I and the counselor have also informed every child participant, during the counseling periods, to keep the information they believe is private and that they could mention an issues in this regard after the discussion to me or the counselor in private. At the conclusions of each interview sessions, I asked the children if there was anything they wanted to add or tell me in private. Actually, I decided to conduct the interviews in group format to avoid the confrontational atmosphere that may possibly occur if I contacted them individually. That is, I believe, more traumatic than having a discussion in front of their peers. Practically, doing the interviews in groups, has helped me a lot in creating a relaxed discussion setting. I also believe, that it gave the children more confidence and freedom to share their experiences.

Furthermore, I will keep the information about the profile of all respondents (including the child participants) private so as to protect them from potential risks to their safety. Besides, all my respondents are mentioned in the research findings anonymously only. As is pronounced in article 16 of the CRC, I have respected and ensured the child participant's right to keep the information that (s)he wishes not to reveal to me, no matter how important the information might be for my study. I fully respected the child participants "right to be free from intrusion or interference by others" in every contacts made with or involve the children (CRC 1989, art. 16).

4.9.4. Payment and Compensation

I did not make available any payment or incentive for the children who participated in the research. However, a reimbursement was made of the direct costs involved (like payment for a taxi service), if any, for all of my respondents (including the child participants). Besides, a refreshment and meal were served to the child participants (and also to the other key informants) to create a relaxed interview atmosphere.

Chapter Five: Engaging a CRBA to Violent Child Disciplining Practices and Responses in Adi-Shumdihun

5.1. Exploring the Experiences of Children

The Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee (2015:41) reported that "corporal punishment is still widely practiced and accepted [in Ethiopia] in schools, the home and other settings". In-depth interviews confirmed that children in Adi-Shumdihun are indeed exposed to violent punishments at home and in the family. The forms of punishments imposed upon children at home and in the family have comprised verbal, psychological and physical forms. The following table reports the regularity of violent (verbal/psychological and physical) disciplining measures experienced by the interviewed child participants:

No.	Child Participant (CP)	Frequency of Experiencing Violent Disciplining Measures					
		Verbal/Psychological Punishment			Physical Punishment		
		USU.	SMT.	NEV.	USU.	SMT.	NEV.
1	CP 01	✓				✓	
2	CP 02		✓			✓	
3	CP 03		✓			✓	
4	CP 04	✓				✓	
5	CP 05	✓				✓	
6	CP 06	✓				✓	
7	CP 07	✓				✓	
8	CP 08	✓				✓	

9	CP 09		✓		✓	

Table 1 Regularity of Experiencing Violent Disciplining[7]

The above table and the in-depth interviews established that parents, guardians and senior family members frequently use verbal and psychological forms of punishments (CP 1-9). Most of the parents of the child participants were unhesitant to move to physical punishments if they feel such measures are not making the children behave (ibid; Parents 2, 3, 4 and 6; Informants 2 and 5). In most of the cases, violent physical punishments were used by parents, guardians and senior family members as a last resort to make the children behave appropriately (Parents 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Verbal but humiliating and/or psychological forms of punishments are usually considered by adults in Adi-Shumdihun as harmless and rather constructive for the children (Informants 1, 3, 5 and 6; Parents 2, 3, 4 and 6). Actually it was not only the parents, but most of the representatives from relevant organizations too failed to sense the damaging consequences of violent non-physical (verbal and psychological) punishments. However, the fact that there are no physically visible effects of verbal and psychological punishments on the external body of the children does not mean that such punishments are not harmful at all. Sometimes, words can be more painful to the children than sticks or belts, and their effects are often inner and long-lasting. Thus, it is not only the physically harmful disciplining that the children in Adi-Shumdihun need to be free from, but also the non-physical but humiliating forms.

Pinheiro's report indicated that "physical violence is often complemented by psychological violence" (UN General Assembly 2006:13:para.42). In addition to the degree of occurrences, the in-depth interviews have also indicated that most parents usually employ a combination of physical, verbally humiliating and psychological punishments. The table below shows the frequently employed violent disciplining measures against the child participants:

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[7] See Annex 1 for details on the child participants.

Forms of Violent Disciplining Mentioned		CP 1	CP 2	CP 3	CP 4	CP 5	CP 6	CP 7	CP 8	CP 9
Verbal/Psychological Punishments	Shouting or glaring	■	■	■	■		■		■	■
	Causing fright	■		■	■	■	■			
	Ridiculing and inflicting humiliation					■	■		■	
	Ignoring and unhappy looks		■		■	■				
	Being locked-up in a toilet					■				
	Discounting and isolation								■	
Physical Punishments	Beating (with electric wire or belt)		■			■		■		
	Hitting with stick or hand	■		■	■	■	■		■	■
	Throwing stuff (like an armchair)						■	■		
	Kneeling down					■	■			
Key: CP = Child Participant ■ = Has experienced ☐ = Has not experienced										

Table 2 Frequently Employed Violent Disciplining Measures

The punishment may start with verbal threats, then transform to beating, hitting or punching and conclude with ignoring the children for a while. The sequence may also sometimes mix-up. For simple offences the children usually experienced verbal threats; including shouting or glaring, causing freight, ridiculing and inflicting humiliation, or psychological punishments including ignoring, unhappy looks, being locked-up in a toilet, discounting and isolation. The following graph shows the frequently employed violent disciplining measures by percentage:

Frequently Used Violent Discpling Measures by Percent
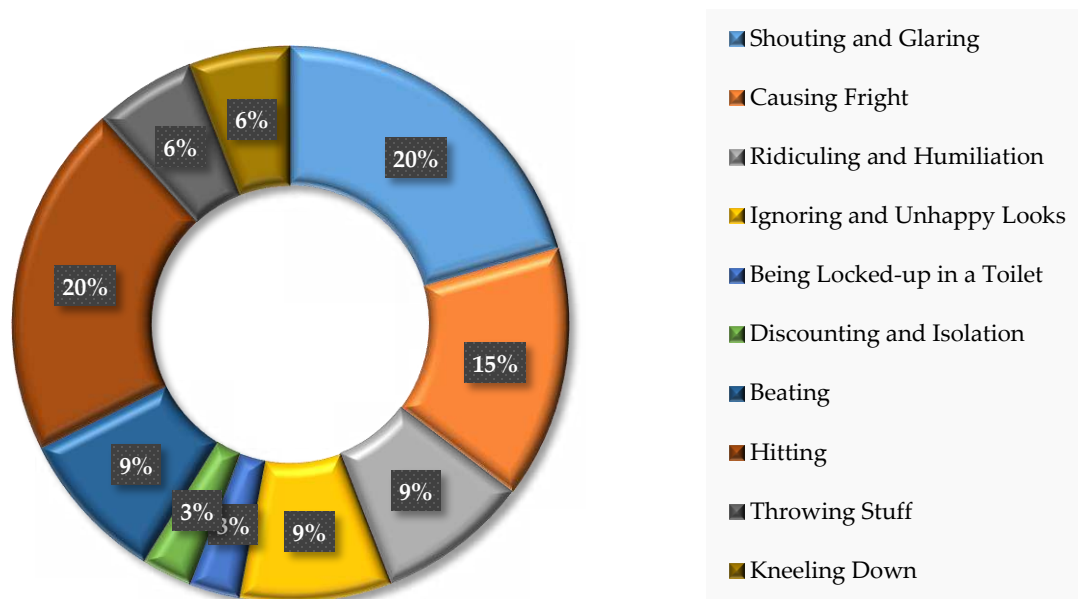
Figure 4 Frequently Employed Violent Disciplining Measures by Percentage

As indicated in the above figure, shouting and glaring (20%), hitting with a stick or hand[8] (20%), and causing fright (15%) are the most frequently employed forms of violent disciplining against the child participants. These three forms of violent disciplining together have been imposed upon more than half (55%) of the child participants. 39% of the child participants experienced ridiculing and infliction of humiliation (9%), ignoring and unhappy looks (9%), beating (9%), throwing stuff (6%) and kneeling down (6%) respectively. Conversely, discounting and isolation (3%) and locking-up in a toilet (3%) were imposed on only one child participant each.

According to Pinheiro (UN General Assembly 2006:13:para.42) such violent disciplining practices "can be detrimental to a child's psychological development and well-being — especially when it comes from a respected adult such as a parent". One child participant alluded to this in the following manner: "my mother ordered me to kneel down and she beat me badly with a wire. I remember that

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[8] This includes hitting, punching and slapping using a hand.

I spent the rest of the day crying, because it was really hurting" (Child participant 4: a 13 year old boy).[9]

The above statement shows a typical example of the experiences children have with violent child disciplining practices employed at the home and in the family. A wide range of perpetrators of violent disciplining have been identified by previous studies conducted in Ethiopia. These included parents (fathers, mothers), other family members (older sisters, older brothers, and stepmothers), other relatives and neighbors as perpetrators of violent disciplining at the home and in the family (Save the Children 2005a:32; 2010:18; Admassu et al. 2006; Wonde and Baru 2014:16).

Almost all of them were also mentioned as perpetrators in my interviews with the child participants and other relevant actors, but also all adults in the community (CP 1-9; Informants 1, 4 and 5). Parents were mentioned as the principal perpetrators of violent child disciplining at the home and in the family context (CP 1-9; Informant 2). They were also recognized as the most responsible for punishing children. However, other relatives, neighbors and other adults among the community have also sometimes imposed such violent disciplining measures upon the interviewed children. This usually happened when the children did wrongs in the absence of the parents or when the parents themselves asked them to punish the children. Thus, it is the parents or family members primarily who employ violent child disciplining at home and in the family. Relatives and neighbors are positioned, in the chain of perpetrators, next after parents. Further, other adult members of the community, outside the family group, are also entitled by the community to impose violent punishments against children.

5.2. Local Beliefs Used to Explain and Justify Violent Child Disciplining Measures

> *I think children have to fear their parents in order to listen to them and obey their orders (Informant 2:*
> *a Judge from Hawelti Sub-city First Instance Court).*

Most of the parents and guardians who participated in this study reported that they employ strict punishments for the children's own good (Parents 2-6). They believe the children will benefit from

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[9] See Annex 3 for further stories.

these punishments at last. They believe that children who were not punished well at the early stage will be soft, unethical, and lazy and have no respect for adults. For instance, Parent 4 (a mother of one child) said that: "most of them ended up being thieves, street venders, out of school, unemployed and generally got wasted".

These parental accounts are similar to the universal narratives established by other studies conducted in the area. Gershoff (2010:34) found that, when employing violent disciplining, parent's short-term goal often is to stop what they regard as undesirable behavior by the children. The long-term goal, according to Gershoff, often is one of "reducing the likelihood that the child will repeat the undesirable behavior and increasing the likelihood that the child will behave in socially acceptable ways" (Ibid). Hence, the main aim of parents in employing violent disciplining are to increase obedience (short/long term) and decrease undesirable or culturally/socially unacceptable behavior (Ibid:35). However, the effectiveness of violent disciplining in achieving these intended short and long term goals is academically debatable (see Kerr et al. 2004; Lopez and Schneider 2001). There are abundant sociological explanations for and against the necessity and importance of violent disciplining measures. However, despite the theoretical debates, there is already conventional consensus in the international and African regional human rights regimes that violent disciplining is damaging to the life and development of a child, and that it is a child rights violation.

Two of the parent participants recognized the harmfulness of violent child disciplining practices (Parents 1 and 2). They recognized the possible physical and psychological harm that violent punishments may inflict on the life and development of the children. However, they also mentioned that they sometimes employed violent physical, verbal and/or psychological punishments as a last resort to keep the children in shape. They turned to the stick, verbal threats or ignoring the children when the other options, such as advice and guidance, failed to make the children behave at the time. These parents also indicated that they employed violent punishments when the children did some serious wrongs, and they wanted them to take unforgettable lesson for the future (Parents 2, 3, 4 and 6).

Most of the officials from Adi-Shumdihun showed a strong standpoint against violent child disciplining practices and called them totally unnecessary (Informants 1, 2, 5 and 6). Most of the officials recognized that violent disciplining practices have inflicted various physical and psychological

wounds on the children. However, some of the officials – including the Judge from Hawelti Sub-city First Instant Court and the Commander of the Sub-city Police Office – reflected a divergent opinion on the significance of employing violent punishments on children. Two of the officials didn't completely refute violent child punishments. They rather argued that there are times when employing violent child disciplining measures become necessary and effective. They advised parents to initially try to guide their children using constructive advises and guidance, but also to use violent (physical, verbal and psychological) punishments as a last possibility.

The explanations of the officials who partly supported the use of violent disciplining at home are somehow different from that of the parents. The latter claimed that non-violent disciplining measures do not always work. And when the children refuse to listen to parents' advice and behave accordingly, there is no other option for parents than to make them listen forcefully. For instance, the Judge from Hawelti Sub-City First Instant Court believed that children usually tend to listen best to the one who is aggressive on them than to the forgiving one among the senior family members. These officials also explained the significance of violent child disciplining by mentioning its role in decreasing juvenile offences. Two of them mentioned the failure of parent's to punish their children properly as one of the main reasons for the increase of juvenile delinquency in the Sub-city. It seems relevant here to question this line of reasoning, that using strict violent disciplining helps to reduce/prevent crime youth criminal behavior. Two of the representatives of relevant authorities (Police and Court) argued that juvenile crime is increasing in the area because of failure in the family to "properly" punish their children. However, this line of argument seems logically fallacious.

Studies in the area have established that the use of violent disciplining makes children more offensive and aggressive, not vice-versa (Larzelere 1986; Parke & Slaby 1983; Straus 1991; Turner and Finkelhor 1996:156). Hence, contrary to the above explanations, the more parents employ tight or violent disciplining measures, the more likely it becomes for children's delinquency tendency increase. This is actually also the kind of outlook that a CRBA requires duty-bearers to have. Violence cannot be solved by other violence. Thus, the key in decreasing juvenile delinquency is not tightening child disciplining, as the Judge and Commander of the Sub-city Police claimed, but rather making the environment the children are raised in more non-violent.

Most of the parents who participated in the study, mentioned the importance of punishments like flogging, beating, hitting, insulting, verbal threats, showing an angry face and ignoring (Parents 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). They referred to these kinds of violent punishments as effective measures to be taken at the time a piece of advice or guidance failed to make the children behave. This kind of explanation is also reflected in the interviews with some of the relevant actors (Informants 2 and 4). For example, the Judge from the local court stated that parents should be somehow hard on their children (Informant 2). There are some local sayings that reinforce such a position on children in the family. These include sayings like: "children and leather should be shaped early", "punishment makes everything remain stronger, except for pottery", "punishment doesn't melts down children, rather makes them more stronger and brave", "parental authority should never be undermined", "a child who starts questioning his parents' orders today, will one day raise his hands against them", "a child should not look straight to the eyes/faces of his/her elders", "parents should be feared by children next to God", and "a child should be raised being shy".[10] All these sayings and myths endorse the use of violent child disciplining at home and in the family. Almost all of them express a notion of bottomless parental/adult power and authority that may be exercised upon against children. Hence, using violent disciplining is somehow beyond individual behavior or decision by the perpetrators. Rather, it is socially constructed, accepted and encouraged practice or behavior.

Nevertheless, most of the interviewed officials identified violent child disciplining as a child rights violation (Informants 1, 3, 5 and 6). Most of them believed that children should never be punished by anyone including their parents, though some believed parents have to and/or are responsible to punish their children. Actually, no such right is given to parents. Instead, parents are among the duty-bearers responsible to protect children from violent disciplining practices. Hence, violent disciplining practices are indisputably a violation of children's rights, and no exception has to be made for parents. Thus, while the quoted local discourse may help to explain why the parents employ violent disciplining, they do not justify or make their actions correct and acceptable.

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[10] The local says were collected from the interviews conducted with parents and other relevant actors, informal discussion with two elders in Adi-Shumdihun community, and a discussion on violent child disciplining on radio program transmitted in Mekelle City 104.4 Radio FM Mekelle on 18 August 2015.

5.3. Consequences of Violent Disciplining on the Life and Development of the Children

Violent disciplining practices leaves lifelong wounds in the children (Informant 5: Commissioner of the Tigray Regional Office of the EHRC).

The in-depth interviews have pointed out the damaging consequences of violent punishments on the present and future life of the children. They leave the children with physical and psychological wounds. The consequences can be more physical and immediately recognizable, but sometimes also internal and not easily detectible. The most visible immediate consequences may include "fatal and non-fatal injury, cognitive impairment, failure to thrive, and psychological and emotional harm" (Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF 2007:44). The officials from relevant actors indicated that violent punishments make children shy and fearful to actively engage in school activities, family matters and the life of their community in general (ibid). It was also stated that, children who have regularly been punished violently are raised being coward, unconfident, aggressive and violent to other children below their age (ibid). Likewise, Heather Turner and David Finkelhor (1996:155) have confirmed that experiences of violent disciplining are traumatic for children. Hence, such experiences may make the children psychologically unstable and isolated from their peers, and the community as a whole (Informants 3 and 5). Similarly, authors like Larzelere, Slaby and Straus sustained the linkage between violent disciplining and aggressiveness/children's aggressive behavior (Larzelere 1986; Parke & Slaby 1983; Straus 1991 in Turner and Finkelhor 1996:156). These scholars agreed that violent disciplining increases aggressive comportment by the punished child.

The in-depth interviews with representatives of relevant organizations showed that children who have experienced violent punishment at home are relatively weak in their educational performance (Informants 1 and 5). This kills their appetite to learn, to know and to become someone in the future (Informants 1, 2, 3 and 5). They usually become hopeless and sometimes leave the house to live in the streets (Informants 3 and 5). This immediate and long-lasting harm is what makes violent disciplining so detrimental to the life and development of the children subjected to these practices.

In fact, no part of the children's life remains unaffected by violent disciplining practices. It poses a threat to the life, survival and development of the children. That is why these violent practices have

to be stopped. All forms (physical or verbal/psychological) of violent disciplining inflict harm on the punished children. Hence, not partially, not almost all, but all forms of violent, degrading and humiliating disciplining practices are entirely child rights violations. Thus, I believe that, the time in which parents used the walls and roofs of the home as a cover to commit child rights violations, and violent disciplining in particular, has to end. And it has to end now, rather than tomorrow or sometime soon!

5.4. Access to Institutional Responses to Violent Child Disciplining Practices

The interviews revealed that the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun are devoting a substantial proportion of their resources to awareness raising operations, except for the Police and Court (Informants 1-6). The awareness raising trainings and human rights education were given to different actors of the community: including parents, influential community figures, school teachers, and youth and school children. In addition, the relevant actors also indicated that they are working together on prosecuting perpetrators of violent child disciplining. In this regard, UNICEF has established a child justice program (Informant 3). The main purpose of the program is to protect children from violations of their rights, such as child marriage, violent disciplining and other forms of domestic violence, and bring the perpetrators to justice. Through this program, the UNICEF Child Protection Unit officer said, UNICEF capacitated the justice delivering bodies such as the police and courts, with the needed resources and skills to enable them to provide justice for victims of various rights violations (including children) and to provide it on time.

The issue of violent child disciplining practices is usually included in the contents of these workshops. For instance, the Adi-Shumdihun area Police teaches children about their rights and to encourage them to come and report violations. The main themes of the trainings were parental skills of raising, treating and disciplining their children, without violating their rights (Informants 1-6). However, though the start of these initiatives may be encouraging, the responses are not significantly helping the children in the area to lead a violent free life at their home. All of the child participants in my research have reported that they are experiencing and living with violent disciplining imposed by parents, guardians and other senior family/community members.

On the top of the limited efforts made by the relevant organizations, the in-depth interviews also established that children are not equipped with knowhow and courage to report their grievances to the concerned bodies in the area. They are not yet ready to speak out when their parents committed violation of their rights, though relevant actors have claimed that the children's awareness and capacity to claim their rights is increasing. According to the officials, the establishment of human rights clubs and child parliaments in schools, plus the Community Care Coalitions[11] (CCC) established at grass-root level, is helping the children to have sufficient awareness to enable them to boldly stand up for their rights. Children in the area are described by the officials as committed and attentive enough to report violations of their rights, including violent disciplining, to the concerned bodies in the area (Informants 4 and 5).

Conversely, the interviews with the child participants show a different reality. None of the child participants has ever reported a single case to any of the concerned bodies in the area. None of them have shared their experiences of violent punishments at home with the local police, the court, or other concerned government offices or NGOs working with children in the area (CP 1-9). The interviews and my personal observation made me notice that most of the interviewed children are not even mentally prepared to share their experiences with adults in their family or their neighborhood. The child participants have stated that they rather preferred to discuss such issues with their peers or playmates, or not to speak about this at all (CP 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9). For example, child participant 7 (a 17 year old girl) said she usually shares her experiences of violent disciplining at home with her peers if she only thinks it is funny, or at least not too humiliating. Most of the child participants do not even believe that they have the right to question the actions of their parents, no matter how violent these actions are. Actually, questioning the actions and commands of senior members of the family is culturally discouraged, and sometimes counted as misbehavior itself.

One of the major reasons identified for the non-reporting of cases by the child participants is the fact that most of them believe it is parents right to punish their children. Likewise, Wonde and Baru (2014:16) have established that violent child disciplining is usually taken as part of parent's responsibility of guidance. Most of the interviewed children, except for child participant 6, revealed that they will also employ similar disciplining measures upon their children in the future. This shows

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[11] CCCs are institutions founded at local levels to help children in need by using local resources.

the cyclical nature of the problem. The child participants believe that it is important and necessary for children to be strictly punished/disciplined, and even that it is parental obligation to do so. Only child participant 6 (a 14 year old girl) has stated that she will only employ advices and guidance, and not violent disciplining, upon her children in the future. The important question to ask here seems to be how children could report or share such experiences with relevant actors in the area if they believe there is nothing wrong with violently punishing children?

The answer is clear. It is highly improbable for the children to stand up for their right to be free from such violent disciplining practices, without knowing/believing that they are entitled with such a right from the very beginning. This is, I believe, an essential awareness gap on the side of the children (rights-holders). Tackling this requires a huge effort. It can also broadly be seen as an expression of institutionalized violence, which needs institutional reform at a community level. In addition, a countrywide study conducted by the Save the Children (2010:20), identified "children's lack of information on the procedures to report an incidents of abuse to the authorities and other challenges to access the police, *Kebelle (*local) administration, and prosecutor and health centers" as a major reason for not reporting. The other factors that made the children not report incidents of violent disciplining were fear of the perpetrators, social taboos and shame (ibid).

This shows that the awareness of the child participants about their rights, and particularly their right to be free from violent, degrading and humiliating punishments is remained poorer. And that means, as what a CRBA entails, the relevant actors or duty-bearers in Adi-Shumdihun have failed to live up to their obligation to capacitate the children with the needed awareness about their rights and also to protect them from violence. It is the obligation of the duty-bearers to educate and capacitate the children to be fully aware and claim their right to be free from violent, degrading and humiliating disciplining practices. This includes parents and guardians, the State, non-state actors and the community as the whole (CRC 1989, article 37(1); CRC Committee 2015:para.42(a)(b)). As a matter of fact, children does not born knowing their rights. Starting from the time they joined the earth, they need to be cultivated and cultured in the way they can defend their rights.

5.4.1. Child Participation

Children are usually not a contributor in many of the projects launched with the aim of benefiting children.
(Informant 3: Child Protection Unit Officer at the Tigray Field Office of UNICEF Ethiopia).

Achieving children's desires and safeguarding their rights entails "allowing children a voice to express their thoughts, feelings and concerns, and to articulate their anxieties, hopes and aspirations" (ACPF 2006 in Tafere et. al 2009:14). In this regard, I found out that training and awareness raising programs/campaigns are very limited and inconsistent. None of the relevant organizations has delivered such trainings in a planned and regular fashion. For example, the Police have arranged awareness raising campaigns (i.e. trainings addressing the issue of violent disciplining) in the year 2013/14 only three times (Informant 4). Save the Children and UNICEF have arranged four to five campaigns addressing the issue of violent disciplining in the same year (Informant 1 and 3). However, both mainly focused on violent disciplining practices in school contexts, not at home and in the family. The Tigray Regional Branch of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has trained teachers, police officers and officials working in justice delivering institutions only once in the year 2013/14 (Informant 5). And once again, it focused hardly on the violent disciplining practices exercised at the home and in the family context. The Court has daily crime prevention educational programs delivered in the court compound for its clients (Informant 2). But, these are limited to the persons who appear in the court compound and these are mainly aimed at increasing the general legal consciousness of the addressees. These programs do not particularly deal with children's rights or violent disciplining.

Despite the inadequate awareness raising efforts, both the Sub-city Police and EHRC have indicated that there are children who directly come to their offices to report violations:

> There was one child, I found him one day in the morning at the gate of my office. The child was here to report an incident in which his father brought a knife, brushed it up in front of the child and told the child that he was going to behead him. He told me what happened with his father and the fact that he did not want to return back to his home. He said "my father is going to kill me if I go back, or maybe I will kill him first" (Informant 5: Commissioner of the Tigray Regional Office of the EHRC)

The above statement was mentioned as an example of how the children in the area are aware and brave enough to directly come to the offices of the concerned bodies and report child rights violations.

However, this study shows that there is no enduring structure built that makes the children consistently reflect on the responses and express their views except for the Tigray Regional Office of the EHRC. The EHRC has in fact made an exemplary effort in establishing child parliaments and human rights clubs in most of the schools found in the region (Informant 5). To be more specific, there are human rights clubs in 34 elementary schools in Mekelle city. There are currently around 85 (elementary and high/preparatory) schools in total in Mekelle city (MAO 2014). Among these, 48 are elementary (i.e. 1 to 8 grade) schools, and four of these elementary schools are located around Adi-Shumdihun neighborhood.

These school human/child rights clubs are connected to the local and regional human rights forums through the school teachers who are appointed as supervisors and facilitators in each school. These parliaments and clubs have been headed and run by the children and consist of a vast number of child members. The child parliaments and human/child rights clubs have an institutional shape which includes student leaders, student committees, and permanent members. They are open to every child in the school. Thus, ideally, every child in the schools can participate in the activities, forums and meetings organized by the clubs. They can also report any violation to the club members, student leaders or supervisors so that the messages can be channeled to all concerned bodies following the structural chain:
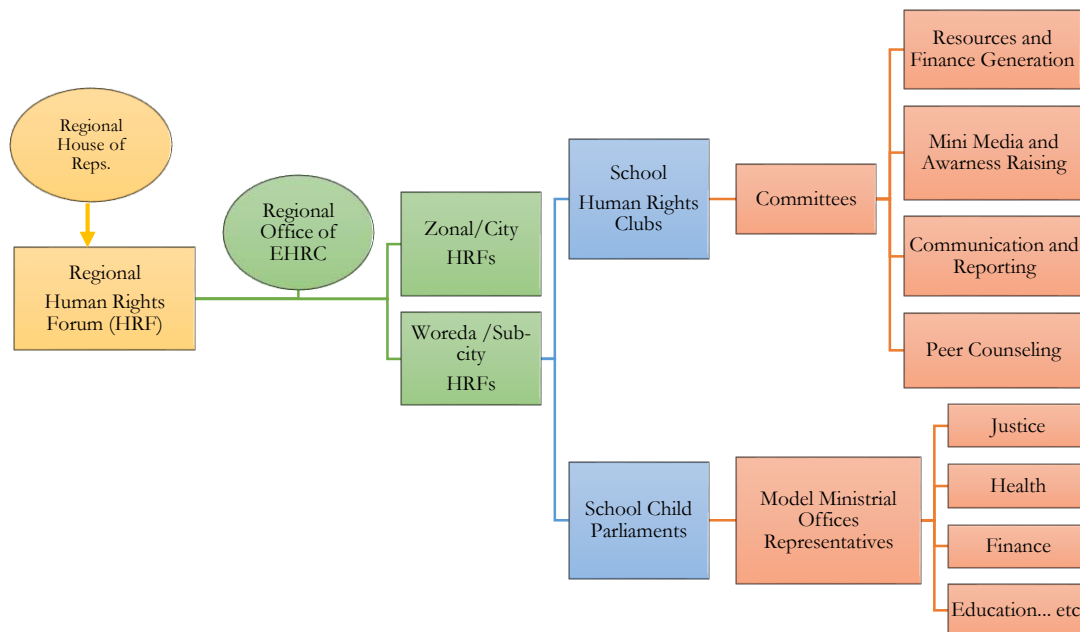

Figure 5 Structure of School Human Rights Clubs (HRC)

Mostly, the institutional informants recognized the paramount role these clubs are playing in making children familiar with their rights. These structures are serving as a bridge between the EHRC and the children, in which information can be passed to both directions. These structures are also playing a significant role in making the children express their views on matters concerning them and standing up for their rights (Informants 1, 3 and 5). However, these structures excluded children outside the education system or school drop outs. For instance, street children or children without parents who can supervise them, are excluded from these structures. It would be better for the children in Adi-Shumdihun if other relevant organizations would also establish such permanent channels of communication with the children, but in more inclusive manner. In fact, two or three workshops in a year, involving small number of children, cannot ensure the full participation of the children on issues affect their life and development.

Having Laura Lundy's child participation model in mind, the spaces created here to make the children actively involved in their own affairs are very limited. The children are not capacitated enough by the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun to claim their rights from the duty-bearers and report violations of their rights to the concerned bodies in the area. Besides, there are no effective establishments that connect the children with the relevant actors in the area, except for the EHRC. Thus, the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun have a very limited chance of knowing what the children think and feel about their responses. As a result, the children in Adi-Shumdihun are not having a significant influence on the decision making process of the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun. Generally speaking, the child participation principle is not fully introduced to the works of the relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun. Children are still largely passive agents in the interventions made to facilitate their development and to protect them from violence.

5.4.2. Non-discrimination

The interviewed relevant actors have stated that they are providing equal protection from violent disciplining practices to all children in the area. According to them, no categories of children are excluded in any of the responses, for any reason. However, the interventions or works of the relevant organizations participated in this study are not accessible to all children in the area. Most of the structures established to serve and engage children are not equally reaching all children in Adi-Shumdihun. For example, street children and children outside school system or drop outs are not

reached by the human rights clubs and child parliaments operating in many schools. Besides, the relevant actors have indicated that they provide special attention to vulnerable children and children living in unsafe situations. A study conducted by Save the Children (2010:18) identified young girls, small children and children in conflict with the law as children vulnerable to violent punishments. Besides, girls, and children living with HIV/AIDS, have also been identified as more vulnerable to psychological abuses (ibid). The official from UNICEF has recognized that vulnerability is defined based on the local contexts: "the definition of vulnerability is actually subjected to the local context. The type of vulnerability we have here and somewhere else is always different" (Informant 3: Child Protection Unit Officer at the Tigray Field Office of UNICEF Ethiopia).

However, beyond the local contexts, the relevant actors have recognized the universally acceptable forms of vulnerability: such as children raised with in chronically ill parents, children with disabilities, children belonging to economically poor parents, children living with HIV/AIDS and children living in rural areas (Ibid). The relevant actors have reported that they give priority to such vulnerable groups of children. The Commander of the EHRC stated that girls with disability are identified by the EHRC as the most vulnerable category of children. She said that they are often victims of double vulnerability: on the basis of both gender and disability. Generally, the responses of the representatives of relevant organizations and child participants in Adi-Shumdihun indicated that the principle of non-discrimination is hardly considered and applied.

5.5. The Best Interests of the Child

All relevant organizations, except the Sub-city Court, described that they sometimes conduct need/baseline assessment surveys, or at least have staff meetings, to study the impacts of their responses before implementation. UNICEF and Save the Children have most experience on this regard, as both have conducted pre-implementation assessments to measure the impact of most of their projects involving children (Informants 1 and 3). The EHRC has conducted very few assessments (Informant 5). The police has a trend of holding staff meetings to discuss the potential impacts of the measures proposed to be taken, but none of them included children (Informant 4). From a Child Rights-Based perspective, ensuring children's physical and emotional well-being is at their best interest. That includes protecting them from violent disciplining. Thus, in the case under discussion, the children's best interest is not significantly served.

As far as the court decisions are concerned, the Sub-city court has always tried to prioritize the best interests of the child in all of the cases involving children. For instance, cases involving children are always addressed in closed trials. No one, except their guardians and some concerned bodies, do attend the trials. That is, according to the Judge of the Sub-city Court, to let the children speak freely without fear and to reduce the re-traumatization of the children when they are confronted with the public. Besides, a professional defendant is appointed to represent them in the court, to ensure that their interests and views are appropriately presented during the hearings of the court proceedings. Actually, this is also a right guaranteed in the FDRE Constitution. There is one child-friendly court in Mekelle City, which is found in Kedamay Weyane Sub-city. The child-friendly bench is instituted, but not fully functioning yet due to lack of resources (Informants 2 and 3). This seems a good start for the Region, although such a separate child-friendly court is not yet instituted in the Sub-city where Adi-Shumdihun is located: i.e. Hawelti Sub-city.

5.5.1. Survival and Development

The interviewed officials have recognized that they have limitations in making children live and grow up in a violence free environment. The interviews with the child participants have established that the children in Adi-Shumdihun are not fully protected from violent child disciplining practices at the home and in the family context. I observed an ample space (culturally and legally) reserved for parents and adult family members to impose violent disciplining measures upon children at home and in the family. All the child participants experienced violent disciplining, at least once a week, in the home and family. This implies that the relevant (State and non-State) actors are not fulfilling their responsibility to secure the survival and healthy development of the children in Adi-Shumdihun.

The children's rights to life, survival and development is determined by the accumulative achievement or failure of applying the above three principles: child participation, non-discrimination and best interests of the child. This includes the availability, effectiveness and accessibility of enduring participation structures, the inclusion of all individual or category of children in the interventions and consideration and priority given to the interests of the children in matters involving them or potentially affect their life. Thus, weak performance of the relevant organizations in integrating the above three principles into their works means denial of the children's rights to life, survival and health development.

Chapter Six: Concluding Remarks

This study has explored the experiences of children in Adi-Shumdihun with violent disciplining practices, the explanations given by the perpetrators of the actions vis-à-vis the responses by relevant organizations and actors. All of these are examined in light of a Child Rights-Based perspective. A CRBA is grounded in the four general principles of the CRC: non-discrimination, child participation, the best interests of the child and the rights to life, survival and development. The study has shown that a CRBA to violent child disciplining entails equal and full protection of children from all forms of violent disciplining in both private and public spheres. Besides, it requires meaningful involvement of children in the decision-making process concerning all actions and responses intend to alleviate the problem.

This study revealed that children in Adi-Shumdihun are passing through painful experiences of violent disciplining at home and in the family context. Many forms of verbal/psychological and physical violent disciplining measures are employed by the perpetrators of violent disciplining actions. Parents and senior family members are mentioned as the principal perpetrators of such practices, but other relatives and other adult community members also resort to violent disciplining. Verbal/psychological violent disciplining forms were imposed against the children more frequently than physical punishments. Violent physical punishments are usually used as a last resort to make the children stay in shape. Human rights studies have proven that violent child disciplining inflicts many interrelated emotional and bodily harms upon the children who pass through such experiences. Such violent practices thus have the power of darkening the future and development of the children and turning them to a mood of consistent hopelessness.

Violent child disciplining is believed necessary and even useful for the children's own development by most parents and some representatives of relevant organizations who participated in this study. It is also assumed to be an effective way of shaping children's behaviour. This belief is more armoured by various local sayings, myths and narratives known among the local community in Adi-Shumdihun. Verbal/psychological forms of violent disciplining are considered by the perpetrators as less harmful.

The tendency to recognize violent child disciplining as a proper way of guidance and parenting is also reflected in the domestic laws relevant to the rights of children in Ethiopia. The cultural environment in Adi-Shumdihun is in favour of the application of violent disciplining at home and in the family context. Besides, the broader legal frameworks in Ethiopia, in relation to violent child disciplining in the private sphere, are contradictory and confusing. The sum total of these institutional gaps, violent practices/behaviours and cultural discourses is compelling children in Adi-Shumdihun to grow up in an intense climate experiencing violent disciplining at home and in the family. I argued that no cultural value, practice or dogma is an acceptable justification or excuse to punish or discipline children in degrading and humiliating ways. Punishing children cannot be all right, just because the local trends and traditions says so.

Even though no individual/category of children is explicitly excluded from the responses to violent disciplining practices by relevant organizations in Adi-Shumdihun, in fact the responses are not accessible to all children in the area. The relevant actors in Adi-Shumdihun failed to establish enduring structures that can be used by the children to share and express their experiences with violent disciplining at home. Institutional structures that can be used to permanently involve children in the decision making process of the responses are not yet established. Thus, rare space is given to the children in Adi-Shumdihun to participate. Besides, lack of awareness among the children regarding the violent nature of the punishments employed at home by parents is significantly limiting their capacity to claim their rights. The children are raised in such a way that they accept and recognize the importance of employing violent disciplining as proper guidance. As a result, the voices of the children in Adi-Shumdihun are having zero influence on the decision-making process on the interventions devised to protect them from violent disciplining at home.

The performance of relevant organizations in terms of conducting pre/post-implementation assessments is poor. Conducting such systematic assessments would help the relevant actors to measure and comprehend the impacts of their responses on the life and development of the children. The efforts of the relevant actors to prioritize the interests of children in their daily business is encouraging. However, more is needed. The only way to ensure the survival and development of the children is to eliminate any violent action against them, including violent disciplining practices. At present, children in Adi-Shumdihun are not fully protected from violent disciplining practices at home and in the family. Thus, their right to life, survival and development is presently compromised.

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Appendix 1: Background of Research Participants

No.	Name of Respondent	Age	Sex	Grade	Data of Interview	Time of Interview	Place of Interview
1	Child Participant 1	9	M	3	07/08/2015	11:33	Youth Recreation Center, Adi-Shumdihun
2	Child Participant 2	9	M	3	07/08/2015	11:33	Youth Recreation Center, Adi-Shumdihun
3	Child Participant 3	10	M	4	07/08/2015	11:33	Youth Recreation Center, Adi-Shumdihun
4	Child Participant 4	13	M	6	17/08/2015	10:02	Adi-Shumdihun Elementary School compound
5	Child Participant 5	16	F	8	17/08/2015	10:02	Adi-Shumdihun Elementary School compound
6	Child Participant 6	14	F	6	17/08/2015	10:02	Adi-Shumdihun Elementary School compound
7	Child Participant 7	17	F	10	28/08/2015	18:39	Home of Child Participant 9, Adi-Shumdihun
8	Child Participant 8	17	F	10	28/08/2015	18:58	Home of Child Participant 9, Adi-Shumdihun
9	Child Participant 9	16	F	7	28/08/2015	18:58	Home of Child Participant 9, Adi-Shumdihun

Table 3 Background Information of Child Participants

No.	Name of Respondent	Sex	Position on the Organization/Office	Name of Organization/Office	Data of Interview	Time of Interview	Place of Interview
1	Informant 1	M	Sponsorship and Education Programs Coordinator	Save the Children Ethiopia, Tigray Field Office	10/08/2015	11:11	Office, Kebelle 16
2	Informant 2	M	Judge	Hawelti Sub-city First Instant Court	04/08/2015	08:22	Office, Adi-Shumdihun
3	Informant 3	M	Child Protection Unit Officer	UNICEF Ethiopia, Tigray Field Office	13/08/2015	10:44	Cafeteria around office, Kebelle 16

4	Informant 4	M	Commander	Hawelti Sub-city Police Office	06/08/2015	9:35	Office, Adi-Shumdihun
5	Informant 5	F	Commissioner	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Tigray Regional Office	18/08/2015	10:43	Office, Hawelti
6	Informant 6	M	Child expert	Hawelti Sub-city Bureau of Social and Labor Affairs	16/08/2015	11:06	Office, Adi-Shumdihun

Table 4 Background Information of Informants from Relevant Actors in Adi-Shumdihun

No.	Name of Respondent	Sex	Number of children at home	Relationship with the Children	Date of Interview	Time of Interview	Place of Interview
1	Parent 1	F	1	Grandmother	04/08/2015	10:10	Work place
2	Parent 2	F	2	Mother	08/08/2015	14:34	Home
3	Parent 3	F	1	Mother	28/08/2015	20:43	Home compound
4	Parent 4	F	1	Mother	14/08/2015	17:30	Home
5	Parent 5	M	3	Father	14/08/2015	18:10	Home
6	Parent 6	M	2	Father	14/08/2015	19:15	Home

Table 5 Background Information of Parents and Guardians

Appendix 2: Interview Guides

Interview Guide 1: Interview with Child Participants in Adi-Shumdihun Sub-city

Interview Site:

Site name: _____   Place: _____

Date: _____   Time: _____

Interview questions:

1. How old are you? Are you a student? What grade are you in? How is school? What is your favorite subject at school?

2. Do you have friends at your resident area or school? What games do you usually play with your friends? Which one is your favorite?

3. Are you currently living with your parents or guardians? Tell me about the size and members of your family. Whom do you love among the family members? And do you fear any of your family members? What makes you fear him/her?

4. How do your parents respond at the time you commit some wrongdoings at home? What would be the response of your father/mother (or another senior member of your family) if you did something wrong; for example spending the whole day outside playing with your friends, break a drinking glass, quarreling with your playmates or failing to accomplish what you are told to accomplish at your home…?

5. Have you ever experienced any form of physical or verbally humiliating punishments at your home? Please tell me how that did happen and, if you remember, the time (year, month, day…) at which it occurred and how you felt about that at the time? How do you feel about that now?

6. What actions, misdeeds or wrongdoings are usually punishable at your home? What are the common punishments you and the other family members received at the time you did these actions, misdeeds or wrongdoings?

7. How frequently do you receive punishments (both physical, verbal and psychological) at your home? For example how many times per day/week/month or year?

8. Who usually imposes the punishments (physical, verbal or psychological) at your home? Tell me what that person says or does at the time you do something wrong? For example break some stuff, disobey orders or some other 'wrongdoings' at your home? What about your father, mother, grandparents, senior brothers and sisters?

9. What do you do as a response? Have you ever told or discussed with someone else about the punishments you received at home? For example, someone close to you or the police maybe?

10. Do you think that punishment of children at home is necessary or appropriate? What do you think is the effect of punishment on child's life? Can you please give me some examples?

11. Do you think parents have the right to physically, verbally or psychologically punish their children at the time they did something wrong? What about the children's right not to be hurt? Will you do that to your kids, when you will have some in the future?

Interview Guide 2: Interview with Parents and Guardians

Interview Site:

Site name: _____   Place: _____

Date: _____   Time: _____

Interview questions:

1. How many children do you have? How old are they?

2. How do you describe their conduct or behavior at home and outside? Did they usually make some mistakes or misbehave at the home? For example, they may disobey your orders, break some stuff or get involved in some quarrels.

3. How do you react when your children did something wrong at the home? How do you usually try to guide their behaviors or discipline them?

4. Have you employed physical, verbal or psychological punishments to correct your children's behavior or give them some lesson about what is good/right and bad/wrong? Can you tell me some examples of the forms of punishments you usually employ?

5. For what types of behavior do you usually employ punishment upon your children, if at all? What kind of punishments?

6. Do you think it is right or necessary to use physical, verbal or psychological punishment of children as a disciplining measure? Why do you think it is right/wrong? What do you think is its implication on the life of children?

7. Do you think that physical punishment of children is a culturally supported practice?

8. Who do you think is the most responsible person within the family for disciplining the children? For example, is it the mother, father or other senior family members or the father? Can you tell me why?

Interview Guide 3: Interview with Relevant Other Actors

Interview Site:

Site name: _____   Place: _____

Date: _____   Time: _____

Interview questions:

1. What is your position in the institution?

2. What is your personal perspective on physical, verbal and psychological punishment of children at home? What about your institution's position?

3. Do you think it is a problem or a violation of the rights of the children? Do you think parents have the right to take such punitive measures upon their children? What do you think are the consequences of these punitive practices?

4. How do you see the magnitude of the problem (physical and humiliating punishment of children at home in Adi-Shumdihun Sub-city?

5. How is your institution responding to the problem? What measures are taken by your institution to alleviate the problem in the Sub-city and to protect children from violence? Responses may include legislative measures, awareness raising, education, guidance and training. How are children benefiting from your responses?

6. What are the challenges that your institution faces in taking the necessary measures to alleviate the problem in the Sub-city? How are you working in coordination with the other relevant actors in the area?

7. Are children one of the beneficiaries of your services? Are all children in the Sub-city equally benefiting from your responses? Does your institution have a focus on a particular group of children or are you just serving all children in the Sub-city? What special measure does your institution take to address the most vulnerable or marginalized group of children in the area?

8. What is the role of the children in the intervention process (in all the intervention stages including the need assessment → planning/designing → implementation → evaluation steps) of your institution's responses? What efforts does your institution make to involve or make participate children and incorporate their voices in the responses? Questions from Lundy's child participation model:

   • Space: Have children's views been sought actively? Is there a 'safe space' in which children can express themselves freely? Have steps been taken to ensure that all children affected by the decision can take part?

   • Voice: Do children have the information they need in an appropriate format to enable them to form a view? Have children been given a range of options as to how they might choose to express their opinion?

- Audience: Who is the 'audience' for children's perspectives? Is there a process for communicating children's views? Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?

- Influence: Were the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change? What process is in place to ensure that children's views inform decisions that affect children? Have children been informed of the ways in which their opinion may impact decisions? Have the children been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

9. What mechanisms does your institution have to learn about the potential impacts of the planned programs or responses to alleviate the effects of the problem on the life and development of the children? Are the children's best interests getting priority over the interest of adults in your programs?

10. What do you think is the overall impact of your institution's responses on the survival and development of the children in the Sub-city?

Appendix 3: Stories of the Child Participants

A. Experiences with Violent Disciplining

Yes, of course my parents do beat me if at the time I misbehave or did something wrong, but the times I get physically punished and beaten are actually rare. My parents have usually insulted us with verbs or words and try to make us fright. Verbal insults and threats are actually common in our home. For example, my mother and father have usually used words like I am telling you kid, do not do this; I am warning you, I will hang you with my own hands until you die… etc. then I often stopped what I was doing, because such words makes me fright and think about the consequences or the measures followed after (Child Participant 4: a 13 year old boy).

My parents have usually used verbal punishments to make us behave in the way they wants us to behave, but my mom has sometimes beaten us if we make some serious mistakes. She beat us with stick, electric wire and sometimes slapped us with her hands. Our older brother has also sometimes forced us to kneel down and hit us if he observed us making some wrongdoings. He told us to not play in the soil and to not make our cloths dirty, to not spend too much time outside playing with our playmates, engaging in conflict with kids of our neighbors. They ignore us, insult us with humiliating words, and threaten us with word, asked god to make something bad happened on us in front of us to make us fear and behave (Child Participant 5: a 16 year old girl).

I don't recognize my father, he died when I was a little kid. I and my two little brother and sister and my big sister are living with our mom. Our bigger sister sometimes punishes us in the absence of my mom, and if our mom is at home she punishes us on herself. Yes we are sometimes punished. One day my mom sent me to a shop to buy a kilo of sugar and I lost the 10 birr my mom gave me to buy the sugar. I was extremely shocked and afraid at the time when I realized the 10 birr was gone, because I knew what will happen when returning back home without the sugar and my mom found out. She was waiting for me to drink a coffee. I searched it all the way to the shop, but I couldn't found it. When I get back home and told first my older sister, she just picked a stick and hit me on my hand until I got wounded and told to my mother when she get back. Then my mother also ordered me to kneel down and beat me with a wire. I spent the whole day crying, because it was really hurting. One other time we quarreled with my older sister, we usually do. And she got irritated and threw a

chair towards me and the chair hit me in middle of my left leg. Because of that I slept and was treated in a hospital for about a week (Child Participant 6: a 14 year old girl).

I am one and the only child to my mother. She raised me without a father, so I really love my mother. She has beaten me earlier, but now when I am growing up the punishments are reducing and changing to advices and guidance. When I did something wrong that made her angry, my mother just picked anything she could find (an armchair, a TV remote control or any kitchen stuff) and threw it towards me. Sometimes she hit me, and sometimes I blindly ran or covered myself with something and she missed. Hence, punishment is my lifetime companion. For example, I was punished many times and beaten for dropping the key to our home's gate. She also punished me if I scored unsatisfactory marks/grades in my school results. Usually, my mother becomes irritated if I fail to accomplish the home tasks she ordered me to do before she went to work. For example, if she told me to clean the house before she went to work and found out that the house was not cleaned when she got back home, then she punish me. She used various punishment techniques. Usually she just threw any stuffs nearby and hit me, and sometimes she beat me with electric wire. There are also times she just give a piece of advice and told me that what I did was wrong politely (Child Participant 7: a 17 year old girl).

The family size of our home is somehow big. There are nine children in the home including me. Three of them are already adults, but the rest of us are still kids. My mother and father have used various punishment techniques to make us disciplined. They sometimes threaten me with verbal insults or hit me using their hand. My mother has sometimes ordered me to get into the toilet and closed the door on me. The toilet in our home has no light and it really smells bad. Sometimes I spent hours in that toilet, and I feel very bad when my mother does that to me. She also sometimes told our older brother in the home to beat us badly. So, there were times when we received such punishments from our older brother, he is the first son in our home. My older brother is really cruel and his punches and beating hurts so much more than the types of punishments our mother or father imposed on us (Child Participant 8: a 17 year old girl).

There was one child, I found him one day in the morning at the gate of my office. His eyes were turned red, because he had not slept the night before. The child was living only with his father. His mother had left the house because of disagreements with the father. The father of the child was

somehow unstable, drunk and sometimes got aggressive. He was badly angry with the child's mother. One day he got angry with his child too. Then, the father brought a knife, chaffed it in front of the child and told the child that he was going to behead him. The child was really terrified and did not sleep the whole night. He was actually awaiting the morning to run away from the house to escape the threat. The next morning, I found him in my office gates. He was really terrified. He told me what happened with his father and that he did not want to return back to his home. He said "my father is going to kill me if I go back, or maybe I will" (witness from the Commissioner of Tigray Regional office of EHRC).

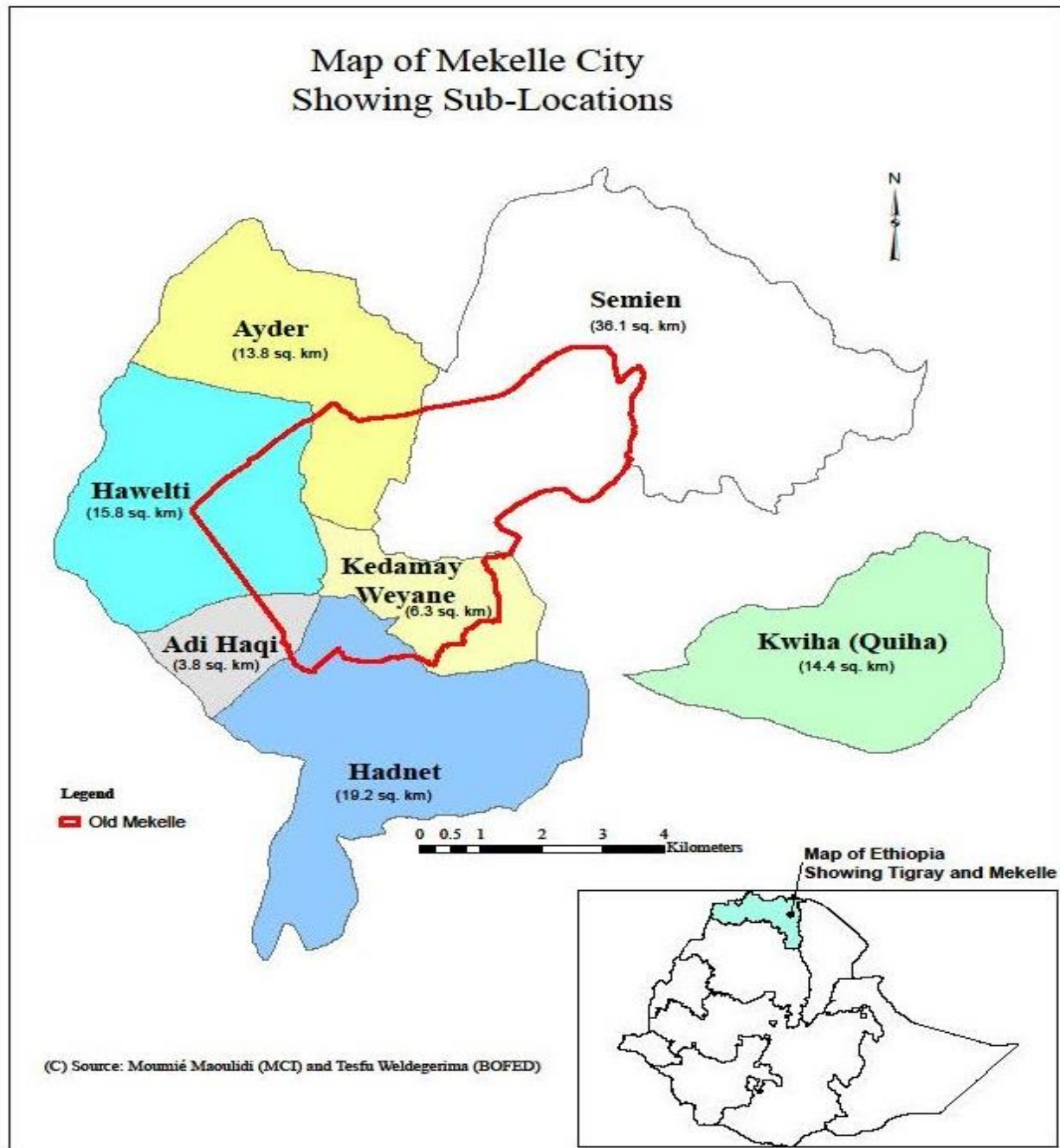### B. Necessity or Appropriateness of Violent Disciplining

I believe violent disciplining is necessary for children. Children cannot focus on their education and become clever if their parents did not punish them well, they may misbehave, disturb the family and their fate will be darkened. Thus, I think children should be punished at the time they behave inappropriately. That makes them to identify good and bad. That is why our parents used such measures when we start to behave inappropriately (Child Participant 4: a 13 year old boy).

I agree with the idea that parents should appropriately raise their children by strictly punishing them when they misbehave. I will also employ the same with my children in the future. Here is what I am going to do when they start misbehaving, quarrelling with other children and being unable to focus on their education. I will firstly warn my children to behave and act appropriately, I will try to make them behave through advice and guidance. However, I will also hit them if they cannot listen to me. What am I supposed to do then if they are not listening to what I am saying to them? (Child Participant 5: a 16 year girl).

No, these kinds of punishments are not necessary and important at all. For me, it is good if the parents try to guide their children by advice and instruction. I do not think hitting or beating children is good. It really hurts. I am not going to employ any violent punishments on my children in the future. They are children, they may do wrong things. However, I will verbally tell my children to be committed to their education, to respect their elders, and I will give them good advice. I will never hit them (Child Participant 6: a 14 year old girl).

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Yes, I believe that children should be punished. That is the only way to show them the right direction. It is very important to their future life. They have to be raised in the appropriate manner. Children are not born with knowledge of what is good and bad. It is up to the parents to show them that. Thus, they make them behave and stay in the right track. I do not know many things about rights of parents or children, but I believe that children should be punished. For example, a child disrespecting or raising his/her hands against his/her parents cannot be corrected through advice or guidance. They have to be punished in order to know it is wrong. Proper punishment gives children an unforgettable lesson. I want to raise my children in the same way I have been raised, which is by hitting, beating and guiding them. I want them to grow into appropriate conduct. I will also give them useful advice and make them read things that could help them identify the good from the evil (Child Participant 7: a 17 year old girl).

Map 2: Map of Mekelle City

Map of Mekelle City Showing Sub-Locations

Semien
(36.1 sq. km)

Ayder
(13.8 sq. km)

Hawelti
(15.8 sq. km)

Kedamay
Weyane
(6.3 sq. km)

Adi Haqi
(3.8 sq. km)

Kwiha (Quiha)
(14.4 sq. km)

Hadnet
(19.2 sq. km)

Legend
Old Mekelle

0 0.5 1   2   3   4
Kilometers

Map of Ethiopia
Showing Tigray and Mekelle

(C) Source: Moumié Maoulidi (MCI) and Tesfu Weldegerima (BOFED)

Map 1 Map of Mekelle City, Tigray: Ethiopia

Source: Moumié Maoulidi (MCI) and Tesfu Weldegerima (BOFED) in Castro and Maoulidi 2009).