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The Dilemma of Corporal Punishment of Children from Parents' Perspective in Some Selected Rural and Urban Communities of Jimma Zone, Oromia/Ethiopia

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Keywords: *child/child corporal punishment/parent's perspective/communitarian view/dilemma.*

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The Dilemma of Corporal Punishment of Children from Parents' Perspective in Some Selected Rural and Urban Communities of Jimma Zone, Oromia/Ethiopia

Dereje Wonde [α], Nega Jibat [σ] & Amenti Baru [ρ]

Abstract- This study investigated dilemmas of corporal punishment of children from parents' perspective in Jimma zone. Quantitative and qualitative approaches, 71 samples, questionnaire, interview, descriptive and thematic analyses were employed. Most parents corporally punish their children. Major contributing factors of the practice include cultural beliefs, social roles, parents' childhood personal experiences, favorable conception of the practice and limited alternative forms of child disciplining. A dilemma regarding child corporal punishment arises on the distinction between child corporal punishment for disciplining and parent's abusive behavior. Parents do not conceive child corporal punishment as a violation of children's rights rather as their cultural responsibility of child nurturing. Parents in rural and urban communities differently view the potential and real effects of child corporal punishment. Male children are perceived as more knowledgeable and capable of controlling themselves than female ones, hence the later need closer supervision. Diametrically opposing views held by parents and public office agents on the practice. Child corporal punishment partly serves the purpose of gender role socialization and mechanism of social control. Workable and traditionally sound community based participatory strategies should be designed to minimize negative effects of child corporal punishments. Yet no 'one-fits-for-all' intervention strategies can be suggested for rural and urban communities. Rather, it needs to be contextual depending on the perceived and realistic effects of the practice.

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I. Introduction

Punishment is a painful action taken against "wrong doers" by individuals, groups or agencies with power and/or authority to do so either as a corrective measure or abusive behavior. Corporal punishment (CP)[4] is a means of social control mechanisms that is externally applied. Thus, corporal punishment is a negative social sanction in reaction to a group or individuals' deviant behavior in case a social norm is really or potentially violated. Corporal punishment is practiced against people of all age categories. Yet, the patterns, forms, type and extent may vary from one to the other of which child [5] corporal punishment is just a one. Corporal punishment of children (CPC) [6] is usually administered to make them disciplined and internalized socially desirable behavior (Turner, 2002:1). In most countries worldwide, many children even babies continue to be subject to corporal punishment of their parents, guardians, teachers in work places, residential and penal institutions (Save the Children Sweden, 2003:3). Even though corporal punishment of child is widely practiced globally, it has become a growing concern of child growth and development. Debates about its acceptance, definition, forms and patterns, and reactions to punishers are not settled.

Regarding its consequences on children, there are different and contrasting views. While some consider it as a normal part of socializing and disciplining children, others equalize it with child physical abuse. In either view, inflicting pain is a common element. Both views imply contrasting measures to be taken against the practice based on their assumptions of its necessity. The controversies and debates prevail not only between parents and scholars/researchers but among professionals with different backgrounds. The debate include whether child corporal punishment by parents should be regarded as parents' role of child disciplining or child physical abuse (Straus and Stewart, 1999: Gershoff, 2002; Turner, 2002; Save the children Sweden, 2005). This particular research strives to reflect on the dilemma arise between the two contrasting views only from parents' perspective in selected rural and urban communities of Jimma Zone.

[4] refers to a form of physical punishment that involves the deliberate infliction of pain as retribution for an offence, or for the purpose of disciplining or reforming a wrongdoer, or to deter attitudes or behavior deemed unacceptable.

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[5] Child refers to a human being below age of 18 years

[6] is any form of physical punishment practiced by parents against their own children that involves the deliberate infliction of pain as retribution for an offence, or for the purpose of disciplining or reforming a wrongdoer, or to deter attitudes or behavior deemed unacceptable.

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Laws of different countries also differently treat the matter with respect to parents and/or guardians, teachers, employers and other stakeholders. Corporal punishment of children is unlawful in schools and other institutions under article 36 of the Ethiopian 1995Constitution. However, neither the constitution nor any other law prohibits corporal punishment by parents and other caregivers within the home or in non – institutional forms of alternative care. Corporal punishment is lawful in home. Article 576(3) of the Criminal Code of Ethiopia (2005) states "The taking by parents or other persons having similar responsibilities; of a disciplinary measure that does not contravene the law, for the purpose of proper upbringing, is not subject to this provision." Provisions in the Civil Code (1960) allowing for "light bodily punishment" as an educative measure within the family have been repealed but the Revised Family Code (2000) states that, "The guardian may take the necessary disciplinary measures for the purpose of ensuring the upbringing of the minor" (article 258).

A few research conducted so far on this topic primarily focused on the negative effects of corporal punishment of children from the view point of the victims and left the parent's perspective untouched. Save the Children (2005), for instance, reported that children in Ethiopia are considered as properties of parents. As a result, parents can do anything they wish to their children and it regards child corporal punishment as physical abuse. Thus, this research strived to contribute towards filling the present knowledge gap concerning the dilemmas of corporal punishment of children in Jimma Zone. The study aimed to answer two basic research questions: What dilemmatic conditions are there around corporal punishment of children from parents' points of view? What are the reasons and outcomes of corporally punishing children as believed by parents? The specific research objectives include: to investigate parents' view of child corporal punishment in rural and urban communities; to identify major factors contributing to the prevailing practice of child corporal punishment; to identify common types of child corporal punishments used by parents; to explore the relationship between child corporal punishment in terms of gender roles; and to elucidate the role of cultural values and beliefs for the prevalence of corporal punishment.

This study is delimited to exploring dilemmas associated to value and practice of child corporal punishment only from parents' perspective in some selected rural and urban communities of Jimma zone. It does not extend to perspectives of other stakeholders in institutional setup such as schools, day care and orphanages. The study does not intensively examine services provided and public responses to the problem except mentioning the legal provisions on the issue. The researchers' intention was just to discover insiders' view and not to judge the practice against any standard.

We believe that such study helps to enhance readers understanding of the practice from the stand point of parents and the community at large. Such understanding in turn enables interested parties to identify gaps of intervention and design sound community based intervention. It also gives a clue for law formulators, policy makers and implementers.

II. Theoretical Framework

Communitarian theory (Kinney, 2011) is used as explanatory tool in this study. This theoretical framework views children as crucial for the reproduction and stability of communities through socialization towards a collective consensual values; children's responsible autonomy is emergent and must be conceptually and practically distinguished from that of adults; and they require agents (e.g. parents, guardians, teachers, judges, doctors) to act on their behalf. It assumes that social continuity depends on progeny. Without children who are socialized and eventually willing to take on the burdens of community life, no social system can survive. Central to the communitarian argument is a concern with how minors are transformed into citizens, and the hurdles that they face in the transition. Without the transition of power or the transmission of responsibility from generation to generation, order is impossible.

The fate of communities depends on the socialization of children. Socialization produces children's social selves. It confers identities and the capacity to understand each other as individuals. It transforms children into citizens. Recognizing the baseline function of the community in which the child is socialized (including the family and secondary institutions, such as schools, churches, and clubs) is a key. The child builds on and modifies what has been given through the expectations of the social environment. The community becomes a model that the children use to measure the good life, either accepting it or by using it as a negative reference. The child must build a moral position based upon earlier socialization, coupled with communal reinforcement of core values.

Because children's autonomy emerges over time, children require agents to act on their behalf. This complicates discussion of autonomy, since a child's emerging autonomy must be reconciled with the autonomy of those who act on behalf of children. This can lead to bitter conflict between the rights of parents to raise children as they see fit and the rights of children as citizens. While the attitude of the government is changing, becoming more involved (or intrusive, depending on one's perspective), collective ideology posits a zone of autonomy and control for parents. Does the state have the authority to insist that parents bear responsibility for their children in the ways that public

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representatives believe best? This is an issue of which we as a society are deeply conflicted, and is exemplified in questions as to whether parents should be held responsible for the misdeeds of their children. The debate over who should speak for children has a greater import and inspires greater controversy than the question of who should speak for adults. The question of how adults should treat children makes clear that this central responsibility of a society is a matter of controversy.

III. Materials and Methods

A cross sectional survey design supplemented with qualitative research methods was employed in the study. Survey/personal interview was used to collect data from parents regarding their perception and stands on administering corporal punishment of children. Qualitative research was used to understand the meaning parents attach to their practices of corporally punishing their children, impact of cultural values and beliefs on the practice of corporal punishment of children by parents. Key informants interview was conducted with elders, workers of women and children's affairs office.

The study was conducted in Jimma zone of Oromia regional state. This area was selected because of vicinity advantage for the researchers and lack of adequate research in the area. Accordingly, two rural kebeles (Tikur Abulo and Toli Karso) and two town kebeles, Mendera Kochi of Jimma town and Sokoru were investigated. Non-probability sampling technique such as purposive and convenience sampling techniques were administered to select 71 sample sizes; 11 from each rural kebeles, 39 from Mendera Kochi kebele in Jimma town and 10 from Sokoru town. Quantitative data were presented and analyzed using tables and simple statistical techniques where as qualitative data was interpreted and analyzed using content analysis. Informed consent was obtained from all voluntary study participants.

IV. Results

a) Socio- Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

As indicated in Table 1a, females are over-represented as respondents. This is because during house to house survey more women than men were available at or around home. This shows that women are still as compared to men are significantly confined to traditional domestic-sphere home located activities and are observed playing child rearing roles. From responses to open ended questions we understood that even if increasing number of women are apparently engaging in paid or income generating activities, traditional gender role division is nearly intact. In terms of age, all of the respondents were more than 25 years old and they are parents. Regarding marital status, majority of respondents (71.42%) in urban areas and (81.82%) in rural areas, were married which roughly implies that most children are born in established families. Yet more children are born to unmarried parents in towns than rural communities.

Table 1 a : Socio-demographic Conditions of Respondents

Variables	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Sex (n=71)	Male	22	6	44.89	27.27
	Female	27	16	55.11	72.73
Age (n=71)	25-34	11	8	22.44	36.36
	35-44	11	6	22.44	27.27
	45-54	13	-	26.53	-
	55-64	11	3	22.44	13.63
	≥65	3	5	6.15	22.74
Marital status (n=71)	Married	35	18	71.42	81.82
	Divorced	6	2	12.26	9.09
	Widowed	8	2	16.32	9.09

In terms of religion, about 60% of respondents in urban areas and 100 % in rural areas were followers of Orthodox Christianity and Islam respectively. The religious proportion of the respondents is the reflection of the population composition in rural areas of Jimma Zone and probably certain degree of selection bias in towns so long as non-probability sampling techniques were employed. In terms of ethnic composition, about (42.85%) of samples in urban areas and (100%) in rural areas were Oromo which also indicates the actual population composition of the respective settings. With respect to educational status, most respondents in urban areas (69.3%) have attained secondary education and above whereas in rural areas the significant

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proportion of respondents (86.36%) were non literate. Such variation in educational status between respondents in the two areas resulted from limited educational access during the school age of current parents in rural areas.

Table 1 b : Socio-demographic Conditions of Respondents

Variables	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Religion (n=71)	Orthodox	30	-	61.22	-
	Islam	10	22	20.40	100
	Protestant	6	-	12.26	-
	Catholic	3	-	6.12	-
Ethnicity (n=71)	Amhara	11	-	22.44	-
	Oromo	21	22	42.85	100
	Tigre	5	-	10.22	-
	Gurage	5	-	10.21	-
	Others	7	-	14.28	-
Educational status (n=71)	Non-literate	7	19	14.28	86.36
	Read and write	4	1	8.26	4.54
	Primary education	4	2	8.16	9.10
	Secondary	7	-	14.28	-
	Certificate	8	-	16.32	-
	Diploma	10	-	20.40	-
	Degree and above	9	-	18.30	-

In terms of occupation about (36.83%) of respondents were employed by other body and about (30.61%) of them were self employed in urban areas. Whereas, in rural areas, (95.45 %) of respondents means of livelihood were agriculture. With regard to average monthly income slight majority of samples in urban areas earn more than 900 birr per month while most of samples in rural areas on average earn less than 300 birr per month. The researchers found that measuring monthly/annual income of a household in rural area is a difficult task because they do not calculate their income in terms of cash on the one hand and they do not actually tell data collectors their agricultural out puts in calculable units.

Table 2 : Economic Conditions of Respondents

Variables	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Occupation (n=71)	Self-employed	15	-	30.61	-
	Employed (full time)	14	-	28.57	-
	Employed (part- time)	4	-	8.26	-
	Contract	6	-	12.04	-
	Farming	-	21	-	95.45
	House wives	10	1	20.52	4.55
Average monthly income (n=71)	< 300	11	13	22.44	59.09
	301-600	9	3	18.36	13.61
	601-900	4	-	8.10	-
	> 900	25	6	51.10	27.30

Interview results show that rural mothers care for children, assist husbands in agricultural activities, shoulder domestic works and in some cases engage in petty trades. The relative reluctance of fathers/husbands of the study area in even the traditionally male domains aggravates the women's/mothers' burden of life. Partly growing khat consuming behavior induced declining productivity of men in the area usually irritates rural women towards their husbands. This concern needs due attention as it tends to result in role replacement in favor of men without appropriate adjustment of role shift among men and women. It is quite clear that such role confusion will have negative impact on child development.

b) Popularity of CPC and Factors Associated to the Practice

Majority of respondents who took part in this study (38.78%) and (72.73%) have had more than 5

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children in urban and rural areas respectively. It indicates that relatively larger family size is still observed in rural areas compared to its urban counterpart. No parents in rural area have less than three children among those who participated in this particular study. It is not common to find parents with only one or two children whereas about a quarter of urban parents involved in this study have one or two children.

Table 3 : Distribution of Respondents Based on their Experience and Reason for CPC

Item	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
How many children do you have?	1-2	13	-	26.53	-
	3-4	17	6	34.69	27.27
	≥5	19	16	38.78	72.73
Have you ever punished your children?	Yes	44	22	89.79	100
	No	5	-	10.21	-
What is the major cause of CPC?	Culture	33	22	67.34	100
	Large family size	15	-	30.61	-
	Lack of awareness about alternative form of disciplining	18	11	36.73	50
	Poverty	13	-	26.63	-
	Other	3	1	6.12	4.54

In assessing the extent of child corporal punishment a question, "Have you ever punished your child/ren?" was posed for the respondents. The answer of most urban (89.79%) and all (100%) rural respondents to this question was "yes". Their primary reason for the practice is using corporal punishment for disciplining or making children comply with the conventional behaviors. A dilemma regarding child corporal punishment arises here. The data shows that CPC is the most widely used and shared technique for making children conformist in the studied population. Broadly speaking, child corporal punishment is simply part of the social control mechanisms to prevent deviant behaviors of children from parents' perspective.

Parents also do not conceive child corporal punishment as a violation of children's rights rather as their responsibility of child bearing. Nearly all and most of parents in rural and urban parents respectively share cultural assumptions and beliefs in the necessity of child corporal punishment so as to insure proper child upbringing. Almost all parents assume that so long as the intention of child corporal punishment is not to harm children and if it does not involve injury or over punishment using potentially harmful objects like fire, rubber, hard and dry sticks, it is not considered as child maltreatment.

Nearly all respondents believe that child corporal punishment is a normal practice because they have cultural support to do so. One respondent said, "We grew up getting punished. We have had orientation from our families that corporal punishment is acceptable when children deviate. If parents do not corporally punish their children upon wrong deeds, the response of neighbors towards such parents is negative". This response reveals that in the studied population the use of corporal punishment for making children obedient is a common norm. Within the culture of community studied, there were popular sayings which support the practice of CPC. Many parents are proud of their own parents' for corporally punishing them during their childhood that resulted in their present "good behavior". Hence, due to cultural transmission through vertical generations, it seems that CPC tends to be long lasting with only some modifications than moving towards its elimination.

During the data collection a proverb which many rural respondents were raising is "Ijoolleen waaqni ishee uleedha" literally means "The god of children (of a child)is stick". This means among the studied population, there is widespread belief that beating with stick (which is one form of CPC) is the only thing which children fear and make them remain obedient. The same proverb also implies that there is limited alternative to using stick to discipline children and it is unavoidable. A proverb, "Utuun gaafaa ulee gate na dhaananii, kophee hin gatuun ture jedhan" which literally means "Had I had been punished when I lost stick[stick for taking care after cattle], I wouldn't have lost shoes" is also the one which the people inherited from their fore fathers and use as justification for applying CPC. It indicates that if they do not whip children when they deviate, they would do even further serious evils another time. Hence, the cultural beliefs of the people implies that CPC guarantees prevention of future and more serious violation if minute ones are left unchecked.

And the interview results from urban areas also confirm the existence and persistence of the practice of CPC along the process of urbanization. There are also sayings which support the importance of`CPC and which they use as justification for punishing their children. One middle aged woman, for example said ""

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'ምነዉ በእንቁላሉ ጊዜ በቀጣሽኝ አሉ' [which roughly means, "All this serious violation wouldn't come if I were punished when I did less serious one ".Hence every time a child violates it should be punished even though the nature of punishment varies depending on the seriousness of violation.

According to the information collected from key informants interview from Jimma zone women children's affair office, the problem of CPC is a common practice and serious in the surrounding woredas of Jimma town. The office has been arranging and offering awareness creation strategies about the right of children and working with different stakeholders like NGOs, the police, and religious organizations to curb the problem. There are different child based NGOs, children parliament, child right committee, women's and youths' forum in Jimma town. Ihe women and children's affair office has been working with these and other stakeholders like Jimma FANA FM 98.1 and Human Right Commission to minimize the problem of CPC by rising the awareness of the people about the adverse effects of CPC.

The key person from the same office of Jimma town told the researchers about the commonality and factors associated to CPC saying, "Almost all dwellers of Jimma town have awareness about the negative consequences of CPC, but still they are practicing it, including the educated and elites; they use corporal punishment as a measure of disciplining children." The informant added the following, "It's too difficult to get rid of harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia."

It is easily understood from the key informant interview that the practice of child corporal punishment does not significantly vary across social classes based on level of education and economic status. The key informant also has different conception about the practice as he clearly categorized it as one of the harmful traditional practices whereas the general public (as can roughly be inferred from the respondents) view it as appropriate. The researchers, therefore, suggest that workable and traditionally sound community based as well as participatory strategies should be designed to minimize negative effects of child corporal punishments.

c) Effects of CPC from Parents' Perspective

Generally, wider variation is observed on parents' perspective regarding the effects of child corporal punishment based on their settlement backgrounds. Rural parents view child corporal punishment for its positive contribution in the child's psychological, social and moral developments than the possible damages it creates in their life course. On the other hand, urban parents are more hesitant of short and long term functions of child corporal punishment than their rural counterparts.

As Table 4 reveals, the majority of respondents of urban (71.42%) and all (100%) respondents of rural areas believe in the crucial role of CPC in making the child disciplined. From these responses, one can logically argue that child corporal punishment as a social control mechanism is more used in rural than urban setting.

In addition, (46.93%) and (100%) urban and rural parents respectively think that CPC can ensure immediate compliance. Similarly, (73.46%) and (100%) parents residing in urban and rural areas respectively accept the notion that CPC supports suitable moral development of children. Respondents from urban areas mentioned industriousness besides immediate compliance and moral internalization as advantages of CPC.

The above mentioned facts lead us to the following inferences; parents' administered CPC for the preconceived intention of keeping their children humble, disciplined, and responsible. However, critical community based response to excessive and irresponsible child corporal punishment goes beyond the social intention of the practice need to be in place. That is, the mere justification of defending CPC under the disguise of disciplinary purpose without appropriately checking the act of negligent parents increases children's physical, psychological and social risks.

Table 4 : Distribution of Respondents Based on Their View about the Outcomes of CPC

Items	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Does CPC make children disciplined?	Yes	35	22	71.42	100
	No	14	-	28.58	-
What are the advantages of CPC?	Immediate compliance	23	22	46.93	100
	Moral internalization	36	22	73.46	100
	Others	5	12	10.21	54.54
What are the negative consequences of CPC?	Physical injury	30	5	61.22	22.72
	Psychological pain	27	6	55.11	27.27
	Undermining the quality of parent child relationship	34	4	69.38	18.18
	Make children aggressive	13	4	26.53	18.11
	Others	5	3	10.21	13.72

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Does CPC affect the social life of children?	Yes	31	-	63.26	-
	No	18	17	36.74	77.27
	I don't know	-	5	-	22.73

As per the negative outcomes of CPC, the followings are dealt with. Physical injury is selected as one negative consequences of CPC by (61.22%) respondents from urban areas and (22.72%) respondents from rural areas. The former reported physical injuries like scar may appear on different parts of the body of the child as a result of repeated whipping. The rural-urban variation in response to the question could be either the result of differently conceiving the concept 'physical injury' or applying different forms of punishment techniques which in turn result in different effects on the subject or the victim. As long as participants of this study are concerned, almost all rural parents disregard the negative effects of child corporal punishment to the extent whether it can cause any form of physical injury.

Psychological pain is the other undeniable negative impact of CPC identified by respondents which also more prevalent in urban cases. The following lists are among the psychological pains facing children's as inferred from parents' responses: unhappiness, low-self esteem, feeling of hopelessness, anxiety and low-self confidence. Majority of the respondents (69.38%) from urban and (18.18%) from rural areas consider poor parent-child relationship as the other negative consequences of CPC.

According to the study conducted by Save the Children Sweden (2005), CPC results in the following major negative long term consequences: streetism, prostitution, anti-social behavior, abusing one's own child and suicide. As far as long term challenges of CPC is concerned information collected from informants also agreed with this. One informant replied for the question 'why do you punish your kids' saying that "I was facing the same problem in my childhood."

Regarding the effect of CPC on the social life of children's, most of the respondents (63.26%) from urban areas and none of the respondents from rural areas responded that CPC definitely results in unhealthy social life. In urban settings, therefore, CPC seems to erode positive child-parent relationship at least to certain extent as perceived by parents. A key person from Jimma town women and children's affair office also highlighted some of the negative consequences of CPC which better characterize parent-child relationships in urban centers. Accordingly, the problem of juvenile delinquencies, unwanted pregnancy, rampant of homosexuality, streetism, and widespread drug addiction are some of the problems children face. These in turn could be resulted in ill-social relationships among repeatedly punished children and their parents.

The dilemma of CPC here is, on the one side the law prohibits punishment. For example the UN Universal Declaration of human rights adapted by the UN assembly in 1948 gives a common standard of achievements for all people and all nations. This declaration states, "No one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Corporal punishment of children is unlawful in schools and other institutions under article 36 of the Ethiopian constitution (1995). The UN declaration seems more tolerant of parents' disciplining social roles focusing on serious forms of child corporal punishment that are considered as mal-treatment. Laws in Ethiopia are more tolerant of child corporal punishment and far from effective enforcement so long as child corporal punishment by parents is unchecked unless very serious inflictions are reported to the police. Another dilemma is, therefore, if parents fail to punish, the socialization process will be incomplete at least from parents' perspective.

d) Common Types of CPC

Table 5 : Distribution of Parents Based on the Common Types of CPC they use

Item	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Which types of CPC you used?	Slapping	9	2	18.36	9.09
	Beating with stick/belt	30	20	61.22	90.91
	Spanking	9	5	18.36	22.72
	Pinching	26	16	53.06	72.72
	Others	7	-	14.28	-

As Table 5 points out, there is similarity in patterns of types of child corporal punishment commonly used by parents. Child beating with stick/belt is the most commonly used by parents both in rural and urban areas. The majority of parents in urban areas (61.22%) and most of rural areas (90.91%) prefer beating children with stick/belt. Pinching is the second mostly used child corporal punishment technique by 26

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(53.06%) and 16 (72.72%) parents in urban and rural communities respectively. Spanking and slapping are the least techniques of child corporal punishment patterns both in rural and urban areas. Some parents, 7 (14%), in rural areas also reported that they use other forms of punishing children like kneeling them down, forcing children to do physical exercises, assigning them to do additional tasks, and burning with pepper and whipping. There is also significant variation in types of child corporal punishment techniques employed for male and female children as reported by most of the respondents, (67.35%) from urban areas and (68.19%) from rural areas.

e) The Gender Dimension of CPC: Parents and Children

Table 6 : Distribution of Respondents Based on their Response about the Relationship between CPC and Gender

S.No.	Item	Response	Frequency		Percentage	
			Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1.	Who punishes children more at home?	Father	24	12	48.97	54.54
		Mother	24	10	48.97	45.46
		Others	1	-	2.06	-
2.	Which sex of kids is more punished by parents?	Male	26	8	53.06	36.36
		Female	23	14	46.94	63.64
3	Is the technique of CPC you use for each sex of children the same?	Yes	16	7	32.65	31.81
		No	23	15	67.35	68.19

As depicted in Table 6, in this study data have also been collected to study the link between CP and sex of punishers, and also to identify who is more punished in terms of sex. Regardless of their backgrounds, there is no significant difference between fathers and mothers concerning dominance of playing the role of corporally punishing children at home although fathers take little dominance over mothers in rural areas. From the surveyed 49 samples in urban areas equally 24 respondents (48.97%) from each sex parent is responsible for the duty. And from the rural peoples (54.54%) of them responded that it is mothers who more of the time punishes children at home than fathers where as the remaining (45.46%) reported that fathers are the perpetrators of CPC than mothers.

As also clearly indicated in Table 6, in urban areas males are more exposed to CP than females. The majority (53.06%) of respondents said parents use CP against males than females. Therefore, the difference between sexes in terms of CP in urban areas is not as such pronounced. But in rural areas daughters are more punished than sons. Respondents have been asked with open ended question the reason why females are subjected to CP than males. Qualitative information from both areas supports the idea that female children are more punished. Rural parents witnessed that they give different attention to male and female children as the punishment for daughters is more extensive compared to males. There is also similar stand of posing more extensive control upon daughters among fathers and mothers in both areas. Such differential treatment of their children of different sex is simply a reflection of prevailing gender structure and process of interaction.

Parents believe that girls should be more disciplined than their counter boys and they are more vulnerable to get off socially acceptable behavior which would be difficult to correct. Parents tend to reduce the importance of daughters' discipline to ensure their conformity to sexual norms particularly avoiding premarital sex as one can easily capture this point from one of the interviewee who stated as, "If you don't punish your daughter, she will go here and there and may come back with unwanted pregnancy and this is the most spoiling thing that eradicates the family status and dignity." Yet, severe forms of punishment are for boys than girls. Male children are mainly supervised to lead socially acceptable goal oriented life. Accepting job order from their father and hardworking values are the major yardstick for punishing sons. Hence, CPC is considered as a tool of gender role socialization.

Many respondents had a mental construct that males are more knowledgeable and can control themselves whereas females cannot control themselves because they are less intelligent which in turn presupposes the need of close supervision. One 27 years old mother, for example asked, "In the university in which you teach [i.e one of the researchers as interviewer], who is dominant (she meant majority)? For sure it is males. Females cannot reach there because they are not smart enough. They cannot also control themselves unlike males".

V. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

a) Discussion

Children's exposure to diversified and heterogynous environments in urban context compared to children growing in relatively homogeneous rural community could be the main contributing factor for the

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variation. Ever growing prevalence of delinquency in urban areas is a supportive evidence of such argument. Hence, it is sound to suggest that searching alternative and suitable child disciplining strategies in urban setting for urban parents is crucial.

Moreover, females mostly perform house hold chores and they also have extensive time contact with mother; when they fail to properly do activities or fail to finish activities on time, CP immediately follows. But males are given outdoor activities, i.e. they spend the day away from home. Due to this, they have less contact with parents and are less punished as compared to females. Even in case they violate certain rules they can escape CP since parents may not around to immediately react.

This research found that parents do not conceptualize corporal punishment of children as a criminal act rather as socially acceptable parenthood responsibility. As supported by Turner (2002:1), child corporal punishment is a means of reproducing socially desirable behavior and securing disciplined young generation. More abstractly, corporal punishment is part of social control mechanisms that is externally applied by primary socializing agents, parents. Donnelly and Straus (2005:3) also view CPC as acceptable disciplinary tool. Parents' perspective in the study area, does not replicate the notion that child corporal punishment is classified under physical abuse that is usually taken as illegal act (Save the Children Sweden, 2005:8).

Parents in the studied communities condemn excessive physical punishment practiced with primary intention of hurting children as evil act and believe such case has to be reported to the police. This commitment contradicts with a finding by Save the Children Sweden (2005:8) which argues that "… children are seen as parental property; hence parents can do whatever they like to their children." In light of parents' perspective, children are divine gifts hence they impart responsibility on parents not to be abused. This proves that people in the study areas have shared distinctive conceptual frames for practices considered child corporal punishment on the one hand and those viewed as child abuse. The conflicting findings might be better attributed to variation of the conceptual, theoretical and methodological approaches chosen in respective studies.

In this particular research, communitarian view from insider's perspective is employed towards understanding the subjective meaning of the practice through interpretive methods. In this regard, parents conceptualize CPC as descipling mechanism where as Save the Children defines the practice as physical abuse and violation of children's rights. Employing objective standards against parents' beliefs and practices as might have been done by foreign based organizations, like Save the Children, with commitment of minimizing the "abusive" practice would bring different results.

Child corporal punishment should not be seen as particular to certain cultures. Regardless of economic, social and political level of development, the practice persists across cultures. Straus and Stewart (1999) found that 94% of American children were hit by parents (usually hand slapping or spanking), and that 35% corporal punishment starts as an infant. This result coincides with average rural-urban distribution of the practice in the study area which accounts for 95% and early initiation of the practice is at the age of two years or earlier. That is, democratic socioeconomic and political environment is not a proof of child corporal punishment in a country. What matters most is parents' view of the practice which in turn derived from community's view of the act and values attached to it.

A number of potentially negative outcomes are attributed to parental child corporal punishment by different scholars or agencies. Gershoff (2002, p. 549) for example argues that the practice can result in unnecessary constructs of behavior and the practice is physical abuse. Save the Children (2005) identified biological, psychological, emotional, and social effects of CPC on children as well as long term national effects in Ethiopia. Among the possible effects, corporal punishment induces fear which in turn leads to low performance (at school) (Global initiative to end all corporal punishment of children, et al 2011, p. 2). While results obtained from parents in urban areas of our study sites partly show commonalities with these findings, the rural side is the direct opposite whereby CPC is viewed as normal in the course of life. The implication is that exposure to western view of the issue through mass media and urban living environment might have brought change on lived or perceived outcome of the practice. More importantly, CPC may produce different outcomes in such diverse world.

As far as causes of CPC is concerned those who approach it as unacceptable behavior identified cultural values, poverty, large family size, alcoholism, unemployment, gaps in legislative enforcement and lack of awareness about alternative discipline as factors contributed to the practice (Save the Children Sweden, 2005, p. 8). As parental view is focused in this study, shared cultural values of the practice is given attention than personal attribution of parents. Yet these variables should not be overlooked in dealing with the matter.

Corporal punishment of children is unlawful in schools and other institutions under article 36 of the Ethiopian Constitution (1995). However, neither the constitution nor any other law prohibits corporal punishment by parents and other caregivers within the home or in non –institutional forms of alternative care. Corporal punishment is lawful in home as the Civil Law reads, "The guardian may take the necessary

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disciplinary measures for the purpose of ensuring the upbringing of the minor" (Article 258).

b) Conclusion

Child development is affected by the tradition of role division among parents. Role confusion resulted from mothers' growing engagement in traditionally males' role and other emerging activities on the one hand and fathers' reduced productivity because of their withdrawal from farming activities on the other has been a growing problem among rural households.

Given very limited access to education during their school age, most rural parents cannot read and write. Larger family size continues to be valued or family planning schemes are less effective (more challenged) or less accessible to parents in rural communities.

The practice of child corporal punishment persists along the process of urbanization. Effects of parents' ethnic, religious, economic and educational statuses upon their child treatment behavior seek detailed investigation on large and representative samples. However, this study finds a clue that no remarkable differences against these variables as long as the practice of and belief in child corporal punishment are concerned.

Disciplinary child corporal punishment by parents, when need arise, is permitted not only culturally but under UN convention, Ethiopian Constitution and Laws. The practical challenge is on detection of where disciplinary and abusive parental corporal punishment starts to overlap. Classification of child punishment practices under each category is a difficult task. Empirical measurement of the differences between the two marks the challenge.

Diametrically opposing views held by parents and public office agents undermine their cooperative responses to improve parent-child relationships and to tackle evil outcomes of uncontrolled child corporal punishment by the former.

Child corporal punishment serves the purpose of gender role socialization and mechanism of social control.

c) Suggestive Recommendations

1. The dividing line between physically abusive punishment and disciplinary corporal punishment by parents is practically blurred. So are the effects so long as exceptional parental abusive behavior is unavoidable. This is an area that necessitates responsive intervention in ensuring children's integrated healthy development and recognizing parents' irreplaceable socializing roles. Although precautions should be taken for exceptions, parents are the most important figures in children's lives. Hence, any programmatic intervention to children's problem is required to be carefully responsive to this central matter. Participatory, parental and community oriented approaches to all child related intervention has to be a priority.
2. Administering effective parenting education may improve the overall parents' effects on child development.
3. Making distinction between practices categorized under disciplinary and abusive child punishment, and setting enforceable strategies to tackle child maltreatment may help to strike balance between parents and children's best interests.
4. Workable and traditionally sound community based participatory strategies should be designed to minimize unavoidable negative effects of child corporal punishments by parents. Yet no 'one-fits-for-all' intervention strategies can be suggested for rural and urban communities. Rather, it needs to be contextual depending on the perceived and realistic effects of the practice.
5. Thorough examination of effects of the practice is beyond the scope of this study; so further rigor investigations are required to come up with replicated findings so as to establish evidence based policy and legal frameworks. To the scope of this study, however, rural parents in contrary to urban ones perceive CPC to have more positive outcomes on children taking their own life course as a model. Regardless of the opposing views on conceptualizing child corporal punishments, we aspire more studies to come to fill the gaps. Hence, the researchers recommend further empirical studies on problems such as child vulnerability in terms of homosexuality, juvenile delinquency, child drug abuse, effects of CPC and child abuse and neglect in Jimma town.

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