

Child Rights Advocacy in Some Schools of Addis Ababa: Could it help In Reducing the Incidence of Corporal Punishment?

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Abstract: *Corporal punishment has been used as a means to modify undesirable student behavior in Ethiopian schools for many years. Although several national regulations and international conventions prohibit the use of corporal punishment, it continues to occur in urban as well as rural schools. The present study investigated whether child rights advocacy in schools had any effect in reducing the prevalence of corporal punishment and in changing attitudes of the school community. Ten principals, 28 teachers, and 168 students, who were selected from 10 elementary and junior secondary schools in Addis Ababa, participated in the study. The results showed a reduction in the magnitude of physical punishment, and indicated a desirable change in attitudes toward corporal punishment as a result of the child rights advocacy. The findings further revealed some problems that hindered child rights promotion in the schools. These problems and the implications for further intervention are discussed.*

Introduction

The use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary method has persisted for many years in Ethiopian schools. Its history goes as far back as the practice of traditional education. It was common in church and koranic schools and teachers had complete power over their students. Despite the various rules decreed since the establishment of the first modern government school (Ayalew, 1996) to do away with or at least reduce corporal punishment, it is quite common in schools even today. Some recent studies (Daniel and Gobena, 1998; Tigest and Derege, 1997) confirmed that school children were subjected to different kinds of maltreatment and that physical punishment was highly prevalent in schools. According to

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Tigest and Derege (1997), for example, 79 percent of urban and 76 percent of rural subjects (children) reported some form of physical punishment. The study further revealed that 21 percent of the urban and 65 percent of the rural respondents had skin bruises or swelling due to the corporal punishment they were subjected to although only two percent of these students sought medical treatment.

It is important to note, however, that corporal punishment is not a problem particular to Ethiopian schools only. It is also common elsewhere in the world. For example, a survey (Rose, 1984: 427) conducted in American public schools revealed "widespread use of corporal punishment with students at every grade level in virtually all regions of the United States." The study further disclosed that whereas 74.1 percent of the principals in the US reported using corporal punishment, 83.3 percent of them supported the view that corporal punishment was effective in maintaining the general level of school discipline.

A similar survey (Zindi, 1995) was carried out to analyse the arguments for and against the use of corporal punishment in Zimbabwe's secondary schools. Students (n=538), teachers (n=21), and parents (n=375) participated in the study. Among other things, the study showed the following:

- A very large proportion of pupils expressed a strong attitude against the use of corporal punishment;
- Parents were divided as to whether corporal punishment should be abolished or should continue to be used in schools; and
- While the majority of teachers were against the use of corporal punishment, a large proportion still felt that it was necessary in schools (Zindi, 1995: 76-77).

Despite a general lack of empirical studies which clearly documented the effect of physical punishment in practical settings (Rose, 1984), a number of educators and psychologists (Biehler and Snowman, 1993; Feeney, Christensen and Moravcik, 1987; Hyman and D'Alessandro, 1984; Lindgren and Suter, 1985; Sprinthall, Sprinthall and Oja, 1994; Zigler and Finn-Stevenson, 1987) argued against the use of corporal punishment. Prominent among these arguments included the following:

- punishment may produce undesirable emotional side effects on children and the children may perceive the teacher and the school as objects to fear and avoid; this may result in truancy, tardiness, and high levels of anxiety;
- punishment could produce in children the feeling that they were always doing something wrong or that they were inadequate;
- punished behaviors may continue to occur in the absence of the punisher; and
- punishment may indirectly encourage aggression in children.

In general, corporal punishment has undesirable effects on children's behavior, attitudes, and personality (Hurlock, 1980). What is more, even the proponents (Killory, 1974) of corporal punishment readily recognize that it can have side effects such as tissue damage and embarrassment.

Above all, however, the use of corporal punishment should be denounced on ethical and moral grounds. The infliction of pain on another person, whatever form it takes, could not be morally or ethically justified. It rather constitutes a violation of human rights. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations generally prohibits the use of

punishment. It states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (Cranston, 1973: 89). Furthermore, though details of its implementation have yet to be worked out, Ethiopia has endorsed and ratified the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which prohibits mistreating children including the use of corporal punishment against school children (United Nations, 1991). The convention, in its Article 19(1), clearly puts the following:

States parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. (United Nations, 1991: 25)

While the above article is applicable to all settings including the school, Article 28(2) of the convention is concerned, in particular, with school discipline. It reads "states parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention" (United Nations, 1991: 34).

In sum, the above United Nations conventions prohibit the use of corporal punishment particularly when it is administered against children. The documents also make clear that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. In addition to these international agreements, a Handbook on School Administration issued by the Ministry of Education (1981 E. C.) rules out corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure (for a short review of this and other administrative regulations for Ethiopian schools, see Ayalew, 1996).

Both the international conventions and the national regulations affirm that school children should be protected from mistreatment of any kind. In practice, however, corporal punishment is reported to be highly prevalent in Ethiopian schools (Ayalew, 1996; Daniel and Gobena, 1998; Tigest and Derege, 1997). It is also reported to be the most frequently employed measure to modify undesirable student behavior (Ayalew, 1996). All these point to the need for a well-thought out intervention on the part of the government and other parties working for the welfare of children. Indeed, the government has the responsibility to do its utmost to ensure the respect for the rights of each child. Among other things, states, parties and child-welfare organizations are obliged to make the main principles and provisions of CRC widely known to adults and children alike.

One of the child-welfare organizations that took the initiative in this regard was *The Ethiopian Chapter of African Network for the Prevention of and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect* (ANPPCAN- Ethiopia Chapter), a local non-governmental organization. Schools have been one of the priority areas of operation for this organization and it has offered training on child rights, child abuse, and neglect to students, teachers, and principals of selected schools in Addis Ababa. Following the training, child rights clubs have been established in the schools with the aim of promoting child rights including the alleviation/abolition of corporal punishment. Despite this objective and the various child rights promotion activities to achieve it the impact and subsequent changes, if any, have not been assessed yet.

This study was, thus, undertaken to examine whether child rights advocacy in schools had any effect in reducing the incidence of corporal punishment and in changing the school community's attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment. By employing a comparative approach, the researcher investigated, among other things, the magnitude of corporal punishment in schools where child

rights clubs were established and in those where there were no such clubs (taken as experimental and control schools, respectively).

Methods

Subjects

The subjects of this study were students, teachers, and principals from ten elementary and junior secondary schools in Addis Ababa. Five of the schools were experimental while the remaining five were control schools. The schools were selected deliberately so as to have one experimental school and one control school from roughly the same area of the city.

Table 1: Sample Size by Subjects, Sex and School Type

Subjects	Sex	School Type		Total
		Experimental	Control	
Students	Male	42	39	81
	Female	53	34	87
Teachers	Male	7	13	20
	Female	3	5	8
Principals	Male	5	5	10
	Female	0	0	0

The student and teacher samples were deliberately made so that they included those who were members of child rights club and those who were not. Child rights club members were selected using purposive sampling technique. In most cases, these were the ones who received the training on child rights, child abuse, and neglect. Those who were not members were selected at random from grades five to eight with the help of teachers. The principals of all the schools were also subjects of the study as shown in Table 1.

Instruments

A number of instruments (namely observation, discussion, interview, questionnaire, and cards) were used to gather data. Observation was employed to see whether teachers and unit leaders used or kept whips /sticks for punishing school children. Discussions were held with 21 students and 10 teachers (who were child rights club members) separately to examine the changes observed as a result of the child rights advocacy in the experimental schools. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with five principals from the experimental schools whereas a questionnaire was administered to five principals and 18 teachers in the control schools. The interviews aimed at investigating changes in attitudes of the school community toward corporal punishment, prevalence of physical punishment in the experimental schools before and after the commencement of child rights promotion activities, and the problems encountered while promoting child rights in the schools. Similarly, items of the questionnaire focused on the most frequently employed measure by teachers against misbehaviours, injuries inflicted on students (if any), prevalence of corporal punishment, and attitudes of the respondents toward corporal punishment.

Cards were also used to obtain information from 147 students who were not child rights club members from both the experimental and control schools. Questions, which called for short responses, were orally presented to the students and the latter were required to write their answers on cards. Each respondent was provided with a card. The items were similar to those of the questionnaire.

Procedure

It should be noted that ANPPCAN-Ethiopia Chapter, prior to the intervention, sponsored a project with a view to securing baseline data on child abuse and neglect in Addis Ababa Elementary Schools.

The study (Daniel and Gobena, 1998) generally reported a high rate of corporal punishment in the schools. The intervention was thus deemed necessary.

Realising that it could not conduct the intervention in all schools at once, ANPPCAN-Ethiopia Chapter selected a few schools for the intervention in the first round. The intervention was carried out in three phases: training, establishing child rights club in each school, and giving the responsibility of promoting child rights to the club. In the first phase, students, teachers, and principals were chosen from the schools to participate in a training on child psychology in general and child rights and child abuse and neglect in particular. Professionals from ANPPCAN-Ethiopia Chapter (with BA and MA degrees in psychology and a broad experience of work with children) offered the one-day long training. The main objectives of the training were to:

- Create awareness among the trainees on the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as on child abuse and neglect and on child psychology in general;
- Convince the trainees to establish a child rights club in each school; and
- Convince the participants so that they could advocate and promote child rights through educational programs that would be organised by the club.

The second phase (that is, immediately after the training) was concerned with the establishment of child rights clubs in the schools. The final phase of the intervention came after the establishment of the clubs. It was actually in this phase that the teachers and the students began the child rights advocacy work through awareness-raising and other educational programs. The present evaluative study

examined the effect of the intervention in the schools that were selected in the first round.

Finally, the investigator and two assistants collected the data for the study in December 1998 and January 1999. Before collecting the data, subjects were informed of the objectives of the study and all agreed to participate. The respondents were also told that their responses would be kept confidential.

Methods of Data Analysis

Except in some cases where the frequencies of responses could be counted, the data were largely qualitative. Consequently, qualitative analysis was mainly employed. The differences between frequency counts (or percentages) were tested for significance using Pearson chi square.

Results

Attitudes toward Physical Punishment

Table 2: Students' Attitudes toward Corporal Punishment

School Type	Positive Attitude		Negative Attitude	
	n	%	n	%
Experimental	5	7	69	93
Control	20	27	53	73

To examine the attitudes of students toward physical punishment, student respondents were asked to specify whether or not they agreed with the use of corporal punishment as a means for modifying undesirable student behaviors. Simple inspection of their responses as summarized in Table 2 indicates that most respondents had negative attitudes toward the use of physical punishment in disciplining students.

However, closer examination of the differences between the experimental and control schools in students' attitudes disclosed some differences between the two schools. That is, substantially more students in the experimental schools than those in the control schools had negative attitudes. Alternatively, significantly more students in the control schools than those in the experimental schools had positive attitudes toward corporal punishment ($\chi^2 = 14.17$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

Unlike students' attitudes, the attitudes of teachers and directors in the control schools were nearly divided. Whereas 57 percent of the teachers and directors had positive attitudes toward physical punishment, 43 percent of them had negative attitudes. From the former group of teachers and directors many of them gave some reasons for supporting the use of corporal punishment. Some were of the opinion that there was no other effective way of disciplining students while others pointed out that since physical punishment was employed by parents over the years teachers could not be effective without it.

To further examine the attitudes of the teachers and directors in the control schools indirectly, respondents were required to indicate what they thought would happen if students insisted that they would not be physically punished. Only one teacher (5%) stated that this would help create an ideal school environment because students and teachers would develop a very close relationship based on understanding rather than fear. All other teachers (95%) expressed their concern that such a resistance from students would only worsen the situation. Most of these teachers stated that this would aggravate the problem leading to more and more confrontations between students and teachers which would eventually lead to a general disorder and/or anarchy in the school.

In direct contrast, the directors, teachers, and students in the experimental schools developed desirable attitudes toward physical punishment after the training on child rights, child abuse, and neglect. But they all admitted that their attitudes were positive before the training.

The Prevalence of Physical Punishment

The data collected from students who were not club members through cards in the experimental schools indicated that there was some reduction in the extent of physical punishment. Asked to list the observed changes in their respective schools which resulted from the child rights advocacy activities, 58 percent of the students stated, among other things, that physical punishment was less frequent now than ever before.

Table 3: Reduction in Physical Punishment (Experimental Schools)

School	Reduction in %*
Africa Union	90
Fitawrari Habtegiorgis	75
Dejasmach Balcha	70
Minilik II	96
Ayer Amba	85
Total Average	83.2

* Reduction refers to percentage of teachers who quitted the use of corporal punishment

Additional support for the reduction in the magnitude of physical punishment was obtained from the directors of the five experimental schools. The directors were asked to approximate the percentage of teachers who quitted administering corporal punishment against school children.

As shown in Table 3, about 83 percent of the teachers in the experimental schools gave up the use of physical punishment in modifying undesirable student behaviors. Although the directors were asked to make rough approximations, some of them actually counted the teachers who, despite the advice given to them by the director and teachers in their schools, could not stop the use of corporal punishment. For example, the director pointed out that among the 98 teachers in Minilik II elementary and junior secondary school, only four teachers continued to use physical punishment. Thus, the approximations made by the directors appeared to be closer to reality.

The data obtained through discussions held with teachers and students who were members of the child rights club in each experimental school likewise disclosed that before the establishment of the child rights club, the most frequently used technique was corporal punishment. According to the respondents, most teachers did not use it then and this change may be the outcome of the child rights advocacy activities in each experimental school. The discussions also revealed that next to teachers student monitors (head boys) were the ones who often mistreated their fellow students in the classroom by whipping or beating them. After the establishment of the club in each school; awareness raising activities on the negative effects of corporal punishment were organized and they were advised not to use such punishment. For this reason, corporal punishment that could be administered by monitors was reduced to a significant degree.

Compared to the state of physical punishment in the experimental schools, it is still a major problem in the control schools, however. The observations supported this argument. Particularly in one of the five control schools which participated in this assessment (Ediget Besira Elementary and Junior Secondary School), most teachers were observed either verbally attacking (insulting and frightening) or

physically punishing school children. Beating, whipping, slapping, and insulting school children appeared to be everyday phenomena in the schools. Teachers were observed using whips and sticks in punishing children.

The data obtained through the questionnaire further revealed that physical punishment was the most frequent measure taken by teachers in disciplining students. About 70 percent of the teachers and directors in the control schools confirmed this. The respondents were also requested to approximate the magnitude of physical punishment in their respective schools in terms of the percentage of teachers who frequently administered it. They indicated that on the average about 43 percent of teachers often administered corporal punishment against children. The same teachers and directors were further asked to indicate if there was any injury inflicted on school children while administering corporal punishment. In response, whereas 52 percent stated that they did not observe any such injuries, 48 percent of them were positive that such injuries did occur though not frequently.

Table 4: Physical Punishment Magnitude in the Control Schools

School	Magnitude in %*
Ediget Besira	40
Dejazmach Omer Semeter	36
Tesfa Kokeb	50
Minilik I	25
Trinity Cathedral	39
Total Average	38

* Magnitude refers to the proportion of teachers that often employed corporal punishment.

Some data were also obtained from students in the control schools using cards. They were requested to give a rough estimate of the

magnitude of physical punishment in terms of the percentage of teachers who employed it.

Table 4 shows that physical punishment was not equally rampant among the control schools. Generally speaking, corporal punishment seemed to be highly prevalent in Tesfa Kokeb Junior Secondary School compared to other control schools. The data indicated that, on the average, about 38 percent of the teachers in the control schools often employed corporal punishment.

To see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control schools in the prevalence of physical punishment it was necessary to examine the data in Tables 3 and 4. The prevalence of corporal punishment in the experimental schools was approximated to be only 17 percent (see Table 3) as opposed to 38 percent in the control schools (see Table 4). The difference between the two percentages was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.02$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). The use of corporal punishment was, thus, more prevalent at present in the control schools than it was in the experimental schools.

Discussion

Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment

The data obtained through the various instruments disclosed a clear difference in attitudes toward physical punishment between subjects in the experimental and control schools. However, the difference between teachers in the experimental schools and those in the control schools was more apparent than the difference between students. Most students in both schools reportedly had negative attitudes. This suggests that the attitudes of students in the control schools could be changed in desired ways with minimum effort. This is likely to be true because 73 percent of these subjects developed

desirable attitudes even in the absence of any effort in the schools. The results in relation to students' attitudes were generally relieving for they implied that there was no deep-rooted belief in physical punishment, at least, among most students. This is in agreement with what Zindi (1995) found regarding attitudes toward corporal punishment among Zimbabwe's secondary school students. Like the present study, Zindi reported that a very large proportion of the students had negative attitudes toward corporal punishment.

But the attitudes of teachers and principals in the control schools were disturbing. About six in ten teachers appeared to have positive attitudes toward corporal punishment. Most of them suggested that physical punishment was not something that started in the school; every child was brought up in his/her family subjected to frequent mistreatment. They thought, therefore, that whips or canes were necessary to discipline students. Without whips or canes, they further pointed out, students would not fear teachers and the rate of disciplinary problems would rise. In short, they could not see how to handle problems without whips and their strong love for whips/sticks was indicative of their attitudes.

Like in the present study, Zindi (1995) showed that teachers in Zimbabwe were divided as to whether corporal punishment should be continued or abolished. The study further disclosed that 18 out of 21 sample teachers generally believed in the use of such punishment particularly for serious offences. In a similar way, Ayalew's (1996) study showed that about one-third of the respondents (principals and teachers) were in favour of physical punishment.

Equally important in the present study were the reasons teachers gave for keeping whips or sticks with them. Asked to state the reasons why teachers and unit leaders had to keep whips with them, only 17 percent of the teachers admitted that it was for punishing children. Others gave various reasons. For instance, about 30

percent of them indicated that teachers used whips for frightening students, not for punishing them. Likewise, 22 percent of the respondents stated that students did not comply with the school's regulations and teachers orders if they did not see whips in teachers' hands.

All the responses evidenced teachers' fear. It appears that teachers would be uncomfortable if they did not have whips. On the other hand, it should be noted that frightening students was no better than corporal punishment. Like corporal punishment (perhaps even more), frightening students would subject them to fear and insecurity, which in turn may have negative consequences on their development.

Unlike the condition in the control schools, it was comforting to find that most students (93%) in the experimental schools had negative attitudes toward corporal punishment. Even those few students (7%) who had positive attitudes were not insensible when they supported the use of corporal punishment. They approved its use on condition that teachers administered it properly. However ambiguous the term 'properly' may seem as used in this context, the respondents' opinion showed that they did not agree with the use of corporal punishment.

According to the respondents, the change in students' attitudes was a result of the child rights advocacy. Also, evidence indicated that students had positive attitudes toward child rights promotion activities. For example, a great majority of students (97%) reported that the sensitization programmes were informative and useful.

Likewise, change in teachers' attitudes because of the training (on child rights, child abuse, and neglect) is illustrated by the following case which was reported by one of the principals.

A unit leader once applied to my office indicating that he wants to have a whip and the school should buy one for him so that he can effectively discipline students. Later

the same person was chosen from the school to participate in the training. After acquiring good knowledge from the training and looking back on his own behavior in relation to handling children, the teacher wanted to expose his wrong doings. He evaluated his behavior and attitude toward students as well as his belief in corporal punishment as erroneous and regrettable (Minilik II Elementary and Junior Secondary School).

Apart from elucidating the value of the training in changing teachers' attitudes, the case sheds light on the major source of teachers' undesirable attitudes. That is, lack of knowledge of child psychology in general and how to handle children in particular appear to explain teachers' attitudes. The implication of this result is obvious. Since the training was valuable in changing teachers' attitudes and beliefs in the experimental schools, it needs to be offered to teachers in the control schools as well. Apparently, child-focused organizations need to exert much effort to change the attitudes of teachers more than the attitudes of students.

The Prevalence of Corporal Punishment

The overall findings indicated some differences in the prevalence of corporal punishment between the experimental and control schools. The condition in the experimental schools was better than in the control schools. The change in the former, according to the respondents, could be the outcome of the various child rights promotion activities conducted and the establishment of child rights clubs in these schools.

Evidently the child rights club members played a considerable role in reducing the extent of corporal punishment in the experimental schools. In the discussions held with the students many cases were

reported that signified children's participation. One student respondent had the following to say:

There was a teacher who was known for his rude behaviour and attitude toward students. He was typical in the school for his physical and verbal abuse against children. The teacher did not care whether he administered the punishment in relative privacy or in public. Nor did he care about the material with which he punished children. He used any thing he got into his hands. He did not care about the welfare of children in general. Being convinced that we should change our teacher's behavior and attitude, we (child rights club members) talked to him. We discussed a number of points with him including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and how children should be handled. Surprised by his students' efforts, our teacher had nothing to say for some time. Later, however, he admitted that his behavior and attitude toward students had not been desirable. Finally, he promised to quit the use of corporal punishment and he kept his word. He is now one of the popular teachers in the school (Africa Union Elementary and Junior Secondary School).

The case illustrates that school children could not only change their attitudes and beliefs regarding physical and verbal abuse but they could also, with reasonable effort, change their teachers' attitudes and behaviours. Particularly in Africa Union Elementary and Junior Secondary School, there were child rights club members (students) in each section or classroom. These students would report to the club's executive committee should there be any child rights violation by teachers, the class monitor, or any student. Under this condition, some teachers may not punish children in the presence of student members lest the latter would report this to the committee. And this may partly explain the significant reduction in the magnitude of corporal punishment in the aforementioned school in particular.

In comparison with the situations in the experimental schools, corporal punishment was still common in the control schools. About 70 percent of the teachers and directors in the control schools confirmed that corporal punishment was the most frequent measure taken by teachers in disciplining students in their schools. This result agrees with what Ayalew (1996) found out in schools in three regions of the country (Amhara, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regions). According to Ayalew's survey, the majority (52.5%) of the respondents identified corporal punishment as the most frequently employed disciplinary measure.

In sum, the respondents disclosed that the state of physical punishment in the experimental schools was not only better than that in the control schools but it was also by far better than the condition that existed before the establishment of child rights clubs in the schools. The findings revealed, however, that the child rights advocacy activities were not equally strong in all experimental schools. In some schools (e.g., Africa Union Elementary and Junior Secondary School), the activities were apparently strong whereas in others they appeared to be weak. Along with this, some problems in promoting child rights in the experimental schools were detected.

One such a problem was related to attitudes of parents. Many parents reportedly had a strong belief in physical punishment. The respondents characterized them as having "spare the rod and spoil the child" attitude. Notwithstanding, most teachers (about 83%) in the experimental schools stopped using corporal punishment as a means to modify undesirable student behavior. Instead, they conferred with parents on children's misbehaviors. But this was not acceptable by many parents. As a result, parents showed no willingness to support the schools' efforts to do away with physical punishment.

It is a serious error to conceive the school as an institution that functions independent of the society. On the contrary, the school and

its functions are affected by what is going on in the society. Any effort to put an end to corporal punishment in schools should be accompanied by a similar effort in the society at large. Unless societal attitude is changed, for example, the observed changes, which were deemed desirable, could not persist for long. Thus, to secure parents' support and thus maintain the observed changes, and even to achieve much more desirable results programs that aim at sensitizing the public need to be launched.

A second problem encountered has to do with some teachers' actions. While most teachers accepted the change as something desirable, some teachers did not seem to take it seriously. The latter teachers were reported to have taken unnecessary measures such as expelling students from class, subjecting some students to forced labour, and even deducting marks instead of corporal punishment which they presumably gave up unwillingly. But if not more painful, obviously these measures are as painful as corporal punishment. Generally, this seemed to emanate from their erroneous belief that coercing students was a necessary method of discipline without which the teachers could not command respect. Nevertheless, evidence indicates that children respect the teachers who are positive and non-coercive in their interactions with them (see Zigler and Finn-Stevenson, 1987; Hyman and D'Alessandro, 1984). This suggests that changing teachers' attitudes need to be the primary objective of child-welfare organizations. This may be achieved by convincing teachers to use alternative methods to modify undesirable student behaviour and by offering some training on these methods.

A third problem concerns students' behaviours. According to the respondents, as teachers stop beating children, more and more disciplinary problems were observed. Simply because they knew they would not be physically punished, many students failed to do their homework and to arrive at school on time. This seemed to arise from the sensitization programmes that were going on for some time

in the schools. These programmes appeared to be biased toward emphasizing children's rights. The efforts to educate school children about their rights should be accompanied by awareness raising activities about obligations. That is, children needed to know both their rights and obligations.

Fourthly, it should be noted that child rights clubs in all experimental schools utilized the 'mini-media' to sensitize the school community on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since in most cases the 'mini-media' functioned during recess, relying on it as the only means to raise the school community's awareness was likely to hinder child rights promotion in schools. Hence, other fora needed to be explored for use. In this regard, the activities that were carried out in Africa Union Elementary and Junior Secondary School were exemplary. Besides using the 'mini-media', the child rights club in the school sensitized the school community by creating fora for competitions among students (on answering questions) as well as for drama, songs, poems, and the like. All these programmes aimed at promoting child rights in the school and their contents were related to the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In sum, the child rights promotion activities in Africa Union Elementary and Junior Secondary School were commendable. In fact, if child rights were to be promoted in an effective manner, following the example of this school would be advisable. For one thing, there was a good division of labor among members and this created a conducive atmosphere for child rights advocacy in the school. In addition, the level of child participation was so high that school children did their part of the child rights promotion activities with interest.

In interpreting the results of this study, readers should note one limitation of the study. That is, in conducting the present study, it was assumed that the extent of corporal punishment in the experimental

and control schools was roughly the same. While this assumption was in line with findings of some studies (e.g., Daniel and Gobena, 1998) which disclosed that physical punishment was highly prevalent in the schools, analysis of the incidence of corporal punishment for each school was not available from the studies. Hence, one could not be certain about the initial assumption though there was no basis to question the comparability of the experimental and control schools in terms of the prevalence of corporal punishment.

Summary and Conclusion

Following child rights advocacy in some elementary and junior secondary schools in Addis Ababa initiated by ANPPCAN-Ethiopia Chapter, the present study assessed the effects of this intervention in terms of attitude change and the reduction in the magnitude of corporal punishment. The results generally showed that the advocacy had a positive effect and that the condition in the experimental schools was better than the condition in the control schools.

All things considered, the reduction in the magnitude of physical punishment in the experimental schools was encouraging. In fact, no one would expect that corporal punishment would be abandoned in Ethiopian schools within a very short period. In a society where there is a belief in the effectiveness physical punishment and where people think that there is no better method of disciplining children, a reduction of its magnitude, on the average by about 83 percent, is a good achievement. Besides, this reduction has been achieved in a period of only two to three years. It would seem that if all concerned bodies exerted co-ordinated effort to abolish corporal punishment from Ethiopian schools we could observe much more desirable changes in the near future. Moreover, if the results so far achieved were to be maintained and if child rights were to be promoted in a better way in schools where there has not been any child rights advocacy, the above mentioned problems should be considered

seriously. There is also an urgent need for follow up, feedback, and support for the child rights clubs in the schools.

Finally, it was not examined in the present study whether some variables (e.g., the age of the students and experience of teaching) moderated the effect of the intervention on the prevalence of corporal punishment in the experimental schools. But if they had any such moderating effects, knowledge of these effects would be useful in planning more effective strategies. For example, if the age of students moderated the effect of the intervention on the incidence of corporal punishment, this would call for different strategies for different age groups. That is, employing different intervention strategies for different groups of students would be more effective than using the same strategy for all groups. Thus, the examination of the moderating effects of age of students and teaching experience is recommended for further research.

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