

Incidences of Child Abuse in Four Woredas in Addis Ababa

Desalegn Chelchisa*

Abstract: *The study of the incidence of child abuse in four woreda police stations in Addis Ababa where child protection units are established revealed that the most prevailing forms of child abuse are beating (61.9%), bodily injury (6.9%) and theft (6.3%). The least prevailing form is attempted rape (0.2%), murder (0.5%) and abandonment (2.6%). The other forms which are prevalent in the four woredas are attempted murder (4.3%), verbal threat or intimidation (3.7%), and robbery (2.9%). The average age of the victims was found to be 15 years and the average age of the abusers 22 years. Efforts to minimise child abuse require social policy support to improve the living conditions of the society and the revision of the existing legislation concerning child welfare and development.*

1. Introduction

Social concerns and studies about child abuse is relatively a recent phenomenon although it is an age-old practice. In Ethiopia, to the present day, public awareness about child abuse is minimum, and therefore, it is not considered as a problem (Befekadu and Tsegaye, 1977).

However, as a member of the UN, Ethiopia has already ratified Universal Conventions on the Rights of the Child's right. The UN has adopted conventions and international agreements to protect children from any form of abuses and neglect. As a result, some activities were initiated to implement the convention notably by the government and some NGOs. The government of Ethiopia has set up in 1979 the Children and Youth Affairs Organisation (the former National Children's Commission), thus showing the giving concern for the well-being of children. The main activity of the Organisation was to create public awareness about the problem of children and youth and to contribute toward their well being and protection, from any form of abuses. The

* Lecturer, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University

Incidences of Child Abuse in Four Woredas in Addis Ababa

Desalegn Chelchisa*

Abstract: *The study of the incidence of child abuse in four woreda police stations in Addis Ababa where child protection units are established revealed that the most prevailing forms of child abuse are beating (61.9%), bodily injury (6.9%) and theft (6.3%). The least prevailing form is attempted rape (0.2%), murder (0.5%) and abandonment (2.6%). The other forms which are prevalent in the four woredas are attempted murder (4.3%), verbal threat or intimidation (3.7%), and robbery (2.9%). The average age of the victims was found to be 15 years and the average age of the abusers 22 years. Efforts to minimise child abuse require social policy support to improve the living conditions of the society and the revision of the existing legislation concerning child welfare and development.*

1. Introduction

Social concerns and studies about child abuse is relatively a recent phenomenon although it is an age-old practice. In Ethiopia, to the present day, public awareness about child abuse is minimum, and therefore, it is not considered as a problem (Befekadu and Tsegaye, 1977).

However, as a member of the UN, Ethiopia has already ratified Universal Conventions on the Rights of the Child's right. The UN has adopted conventions and international agreements to protect children from any form of abuses and neglect. As a result, some activities were initiated to implement the convention notably by the government and some NGOs. The government of Ethiopia has set up in 1979 the Children and Youth Affairs Organisation (the former National Children's Commission), thus showing the giving concern for the well-being of children. The main activity of the Organisation was to create public awareness about the problem of children and youth and to contribute toward their well being and protection, from any form of abuses. The

* Lecturer, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University

government also enacted laws in the Penal Code (1957) to provide legal support for the protection of children from abuses and neglect (refer to articles 527, 545, 546, 548, 552, 558, 560, 589, 594 and the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 36).

Recently, Region 14 Police Commission in collaboration with the Friendship of Street Children-Ethiopia (FSCE) and RADA Barren - Sweden has set up child protection units in four woreda police stations. The units were established with the aim of training the police to handle and protect children in accordance with legal provisions, international conventions and agreements.

In spite of some efforts to protect children from abuses, child abuse is widespread in Ethiopia (Darge, 1996; Tigest and Derege, 1977). The abuses range from murder to offensive behaviours such as insult. This study tries to shed light on the magnitude of child abuse based on the 1995/96 and 1996/97 reported data obtained from the four woreda police stations (woreda 3, 5, 6 and 21) where child protection units were established in Addis Ababa.

2. The Problem

Child abuse is widely practised in Ethiopia. In fact, one can say that every family is an abuser in the strict sense of the word (Daniel and Gobena, 1998). At least every family commonly practises the use of physical punishment or beating in order to discipline their children.

According to the report of the National Police Head Quarters (cited in Befekadu and Tsegaye, 1997) there were 2040 children who were victims of different types of abuses including murder, bodily injury, beating, sexual abuse, robbery and theft during the ten month period - from September 1992 to June 1993. Another study by Daka (cited in Tigest and Derege, 1997) showed that child abuse was widely practised in different localities in Ethiopia in the form of excessive child discipline by parents and guardians, child abduction, child abandonment, use of child as means of begging, child prostitution and child labour.

Since many of the cases remained unreported, especially in the rural areas, the above report shows only a little portion of incidents of child abuse in Ethiopia. Although child abuse is widely spread (Darge, 1996; Daniel and Gobena, 1998; Tigest and Derege, 1997) in Ethiopia, it has received little attention among the professionals and the public at large.

This study tries to present the incidence of child abuses in four woredas in Addis Ababa by using reported data obtained from the four woredā police stations during the year 1995/96 and 1996/97 where child protection units were established. The data cover various types of child abuses reported to the four-woreda police stations including bodily injury, beating, verbal threat, theft, sexual abuse, robbery, and murder. The study contributes to the attempts to fill the gap in knowledge about the incidences of child abuse in Addis Ababa, and helps to raise public awareness on such incidences.

The study tries to answer the following questions:

- What forms of child abuse are prevalent in the four weredas under the study?
- Which type(s) of child abuse is the most or the least prevalent?
- Who are the most abusers of children?
- Who are the most victims of child abuse?
- What are the educational implications of the study?

on of Child Abuse

The definition of child abuse varies depending on the intensity and frequency of behaviours regarded as abusive. According to Melton and Davidson (1987), the definitions of child abuse must be comprehensive enough to check and treat many of the harmful actions towards children. Child abuse has been defined (Befekadu and Tsegaye, 1997) as any act of omission by individuals, institutions or society as a whole and any conditions resulting from such acts which deprive children of their equal rights and liberties and/or interfere with their optimal development. Daniel and Gobena (1998) defined child abuse as any deficient, excursive or inappropriate behaviour of an individual, or community or a system, that endangers the healthy development of the child.

Currently, the following five types of child abuse or maltreatment are included in the legal and professional definitions of child abuse (Siefert and Hoffnung, 1991; National Steering Committee Against Sexual Exploitation, 1998).

Physical abuse includes assaults such as on children those that produce pain, cuts, welts, bruises, burns, broken bones, and other injuries. **Sexual abuse** includes sexual molestation, intercourse, and exploitation of children. **Physical neglect** includes exposure of children to conditions where they receive insufficient food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision. **Emotional neglect** includes conditions in which parents or other care givers fail to provide children with the basic nurture and emotional support required for the normal development; and **psychological abuse** includes actions that seriously damage children's emotional, social or intellectual functioning.

According to Beckwith (1990) child abuse is defined within each culture and can include physical battering, emotional mistreatment, neglect (not providing adequate food, medical care, or adult supervision).

These definitions of child abuse indicate that child abuse is both physical and psychological in which both types are highly interrelated. In this study, child abuse is defined as any violent maltreatment or neglect of children by the most powerful person who causes physical, emotional, or psychological damages that hamper the healthy personality development of the child.

3. Review of Literature

Origins of Child Abuse

Child abuse first became a topic of research in the early 1960s (Kempe cited in Berk, 1991). Child abuse is caused by a multilevel causal environment or context (Belesky, 1990). Belesky points out four levels: *Ontogenetic* unique background and personal history of the abusing parents; *Microsystemic* family interactions which are most directly responsible for child abuse; *Ecosystemic*-work and neighbourhood; and *Macro-systemic*-the culture and society including social and economic conditions, political policies, values and beliefs.

The first studies based on the ontogenic perspective explained that adults who physically abused or neglected their offspring usually had one or more of the following characteristics. A history of abuse or neglect during their own childhood, unrealistic expectations that children satisfy their own unmet psychological needs and poor control of aggressive impulses (Spinetta and Rigler, 1972). These early findings suggested that only particular kinds of families mistreat children.

Later on, however, it became apparent that many who had been abused as children did not repeat their cycle with their own children, that a single "abusive personality syndrome" did not exist and that even "normal" parents were capable of abusing (Emery, 1989).

The social systems perspectives offered a more comprehensive explanation on the occurrence of child abuse. It showed that it was determined not only by multiple forces within the individual, but also by the characteristics of the family, community and culture of which the child and parents are parts of (Finkelhor, 1983).

According to Belsky (1980), the attributes of the child also increased the chance that child abuse occurred. For instance, a premature or very sick baby, or a child with a different temperament, a hyperactive behavioural style, or other developmental difficulties had an increased likelihood of becoming the target of abuse. Moreover, a passive and apathetic behaviour which may manifest itself by not demanding for care and attention from parents could also cause abuse, especially in the form of neglect. However, whether such children are abused or not depends on the characteristics of the parents. In this regard, a recent study by Bugental, Blue and Crazcosa (1989) showed that mothers who attribute the unruliness of their children to a stubborn or bad behaviour often use coercive strategies in disciplining their children. From the studies by Belsky (1980) and Blue and Crazcosa (1989), it appeared that both the parents and the children contribute toward child abuse, that is, the problem is embedded in a family relationship. Beckwith (1990) viewed child abuse as a breakdown in the basic function of parenting, which is protection of the child. In the final analysis, a

number of factors contribute to the occurrence of child- abuse including the family, community, culture, legal system, economic status, and others.

Characteristics of Abusive Families

Research shows those abusive interactions between the mother and the infant sometimes appears as early as the first few weeks of life (Kennell, Voos and Klaus, 1976). The abuse within the family is the abuse of power – the greatest abuse is mainly directed against the most powerless children under the age of six (Finkelhor, 1983). During the pre-school years, abusive families are characterised by low levels of parent child interactions. If parental communication occurs it tends to be negative (Burgess and Conger, 1978; Trickett and Kuczynski, 1986). Research further indicates that unmanageable parental life stress and emotional problems are almost invariably associated with child violence, abuse or neglect (Mussen, et al., 1990). Unemployment, marital conflict, large and closely spaced families, over-crowded living conditions and extreme household disorganisation are common in abusive homes (Finkelhor, 1983).

Studies also show that (Berk, 1991; Seifert and Hoffnung, 1991) the majority of the abusive parents are isolated from formal and informal social supports in their communities. They usually mistrust and avoid other people and lack the necessary skills for establishing positive interpersonal relationships

Furthermore, the broad ideology and the cultures of the society profoundly increase the chance of occurrence of child abuse especially when the parents feel stressed and overburdened. In societies where force and violence are viewed as appropriate techniques for solving problems, the stage is set for child abuse (Berk, 1991). In this connection, although the Federal Government of Ethiopia included articles in the constitution about protection of the child's' right, there is still strong tendency on the part of the parents to use physical force in disciplining the child.

Nature and Magnitude of Child Abuse in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia the studies conducted on child abuse are little and scanty due to limitations in financial resources, technical manpower and unavailability of well documented data (Befekadu and Tsegaye, 1997).

According to the study conducted by Child and Youth Affairs Organisation and the Italian co-operation (1996), the causes of child abuse include: poverty, illiteracy, recurring famine and drought, internal conflicts and wars, high rate of population growth and harmful traditional practices and beliefs. In 1997 the rate of population growth for Ethiopia was 2.8% (World Data Sheet, 1997). Poverty is widespread in Ethiopia. The GNP of Ethiopia is US \$100, which is the second lowest GNP in Africa (World Data Sheet, 1997). Some of the harmful traditional practices and beliefs that contribute to child abuse and neglect are: lack of family planning, extensive child labour as a source of income, renting children as beggars, female circumcision and early marriage, traditional practices of treating sick children such as the use of blood letting, cauterisation and physical punishment (Ali, 1996; Darge, 1996).

Another study by the Children Family and Youth Organisation and United Nation Children's Fund reported that disease, malnutrition, famine, lack of clean water, poor sanitation, lack of child care, the poor education of the mothers, low income of the families, poverty are the major factors that prevent good child development. Most of these factors are related to child abuse and neglect which prevent many children from developing physically and intellectually.

The report compiled on 2040 abused children (below the age of 18) by the Ethiopian National Police Head Quarter (cited in Befekadu and Tsegaye, 1997), showed that the major types of child abuses were beating and bodily injuries (31.9%), theft (20.5%), and robbery (13.4%). A study by Ayalew (1996), showed that physical punishment is a common practice in schools by school personnel. In agreement with this report, a study by Daniel and Gobena (1998) indicated that elementary school teachers and all educational administrative staff members inflicted abusive and neglectful treatments. Their study showed that the most frequent abuse in the classroom was emotional abuse and neglect

followed by physical neglect. A similar study by Tigist and Derege (1997) reported that physical punishment of elementary school children was a common practice in the urban and rural areas. In America, physical punishment accounted for high rates of child abuse (Straus, 1983).

Consequences of the Child Abuses

Hurlock (1980) viewed child abuse as a serious family relationship hazard during the early childhood. Similarly, Egeland and Sroufe (1981) noted that the consequences of child abuse may become apparent very early. They observed that in the interactions with their mothers infants showed much more avoidance, resistant and noncompliant behaviour than non-abused children.

In day-care centres, toddlers who have been abused tend to be more aggressive toward their peers and more wary and ambivalent toward their caregivers, which they seem to distrust and sometimes threaten or attack (Mussen et al., 1990). Abused toddlers who were observed in day-care centres sometimes reacted to others' distress with fear, regression or anger, and no abused children showed sadness or empathy under these circumstances (Main and George, 1979).

Apparently many abused children learn to distrust adults and to react aggressively to others, a pattern they maintain and use when they become parents. Nevertheless, many abused children develop into well-functioning, empathic, and kindly individuals who become excellent parents (Conger cited in Mussen, et al., and 1990)

Befekadu and Tsegaye (1997) noted the physical and psychological consequences of the sexual abuse of children. On the physical side, they listed consequences like physical damage, infections with STD/HIV-AIDS and premature pregnancy. On the psychological side, they mentioned psychological trauma - distorted feelings and views regarding sexual intercourse. On the other hand, the study by Finkelhor (1979) showed that the presence of intercourse or other serious sexual acts caused little traumatic reacting on the part of the victim child unless force was involved. Berk (1990) believed that consequences of sexual abuses were severe. She reported the following adjustment difficulties

experienced by sexually abused children: depression, low self-esteem, distress, poor social skills, repressed anger and hostility, impaired ability to trust others, difficulties with self-control, pre-cautious interest in sex and seductive behaviour. Furthermore, Berk (1990) noted that young children often reacted with sleep difficulties and generalised fearfulness whereas adolescents reacted with runaway and suicidal reactions.

In agreement with Berk (1990), Mouzakitis (1988) discussed the integral relationship between physical and psychological abuses. He wrote that children who were subjected to various forms of physical abuse had emotional problems. For example, a child whose bones were fractured, or who was burned, beaten or repeatedly molested sexually bore emotional traumas that eventually manifested in a variety of psycho-pathological conditions and behaviours. With the respect to the consequences of child abuse, Mouzakitis (1988) noted that such victims may become withdrawn, had speech problems, and /or showed neurological difficulties, chronic depression, compulsivity or hyperactivity. Severe corporal punishment appeared to hamper the physical, emotional, and psychosocial development of children (Tigist and Derege, 1997)

4. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The source of the data was the daily records of child abuse cases (from birth to 18 years as defined by the reports) either by the victim or his/her parents or guardian reported to Woreda 3, 5, 6 and 21 police stations during the years 1995/96 and 1996/97. The data was obtained from the office of FSCE, which works with Region 14 Police Commission in establishing child protection units in the four-woreda police stations.

The data was compiled by photocopying the daily records of the reports of the victims to the four police stations. Each police station uses a standard form for recording reported abuses. The recorders are policemen with a minimum of 12th grade qualification and short-term training in the area of child protection.

A total of 265 in 1995/96 and 386 in 1996/97 cases were recorded by the police stations. These raw data were classified and analysed with the use of descriptive statistics.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presented and analysed in this section are the cases reported by victims or parents or guardians to the police stations of Woreda 3, 4, 6 and 21 during 1995/96 and 1996/97. The presentation includes data on 651 cases who reported one or the other types of abuse as classified in this study. Moreover, data on the number of reported children and age of the abusers are presented.

Table 1: Reported Child Abuse Cases in each Woreda

Year	Woreda								Total	
	3		5		6		21			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1995/96	36	13.6	145	54.7	27	10.2	57	21.5	265	100.0
1996/97	—	—	218	56.5	54	14.0	114	29.5	386	100.0
Total	36	5.5	363	55.8	81	12.4	171	26.3	651	100.0

Data was not obtained for Woreda 3 during the year 1996/97. During the years 1995/96 and 1996/97 the Woreda with the highest proportion of reported child abuses was Woreda 5 (54.7% in 1995/96 and 56.5 % in 1996/97) followed by Woreda 21 (21.5% in 1995/96 and 29.5% in 1996/97). Compared with the number of abuses during the year 1996/97 excluding that of Woreda 3, the number of reported abuses in 1996/97 increased by 155 cases (58.3%).

The highest prevalence of child abuse in Woreda 5 may be explained by the fact that the Woreda has high population with low income families (Belsky, 1980).

Table 2: Types of Child Abuses (Reported)

Type of Child Abuse	Year				Total	
	1995/96		1996/97		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
1. Bodily injury	24	9.1	21	5.4	45	6.9
2. Murder	2	0.8	1	0.3	3	0.5
3. Beating	157	59.2	246	63.7	403	61.9
4. Rape	14	5.3	10	2.6	24	3.7
5. Abandonment	12	4.5	5	1.3	17	2.6
6. Theft	14	5.3	27	7.0	41	6.3
7. Verbal threat/intimidation	7	2.6	17	4.4	24	3.7
8. Attempted Rape	1	0.4		-	1	0.2
9. Attempted murder	7	2.6	21	5.4	28	4.3
10. Robbery	11	4.2	8	2.1	19	2.9
11. Others	16	6.0	30	7.8	46	7.1
Total	265	100.0	386	100.0	651	100

In this study the major types of child abuses reported to the woreda police stations were classified into eleven. These were: bodily injury, murder, beating, rape, abandonment, theft, verbal threat/ intimidation, attempted rape, attempted murder, robbery and others (which are general in their nature and very difficult to classify such as unlawful act, for instance). Theft and robbery could be forms of child abuse because of the principle that the strongest victimises the weakest operates (Finkelhor 1983). Here, children are the victims of theft and robbery by adults. During the 1995/96 and 1996/97, beating constitutes the largest proportion of the abuses, which were 59.2 % and 63.7 % respectively. In Ethiopia where beating is used as a major technique of disciplining children, the number of cases reported to the police is believed to be very low as compared to the number of cases that actually happened. Thus, from the point of view of accepted practices, this finding may not be surprising. The second type of abuse observed in this study is bodily injury (9.1% in 1995/96 and 5.4% in 1996/97). Beating may also cause bodily injury since the type of bodily injury reported to the police is expected to be directly caused by the offenders. Bodily injuries due

to burning, for example, as experience shows, most often may not be reported to the police. Therefore, naturally both beating and bodily injury overlap. However, both are also different because beating is less serious whereas bodily injury is more serious causing physical damages. The proportion of reported rape cases has reduced from 5.3 % in 1995/96 to 2.6 % in 1996/97. As experience shows since abusing children sexually is a taboo in Addis Ababa, the number of rape cases during childhood is expected to be low.

Table 3: Child Abuse by Age and Type of Abuse (1995/96 and 1996/97)

Age	Type										
	Bodily injury 1	Beating 2	Murder 3	Rape 4	Abandonment 5	Theft 6	Verbal threat 7	Attempted Rape 8	Attempted murder 9	Robbery 10	Others 11
below 1		-	1		17	-	-	-	-	-	-
1		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7		-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9		2	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
10	2	6	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
11	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
12	4	15	-	4	-	1	-	1	-	4	1
13	6	29	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
14	5	51	-	3	-	3	3	-	2	4	4
15	9	82	-	7	-	10	5	-	3	3	8
16	5	63	1	1	-	4	6	-	1	1	8
17	5	46	-	1	-	4	1	-	7	4	6
18	9	103	-	1	-	19	8	-	13	5	18
Total	45	403	3	24	17	41	24	1	28	19	46

Table 4 shows the majority of the reported abuses are above the age of 12. In fact, from the theory of cognitive development (Piaget cited in Mussen et al., 1990), children below the age of 11 are not mature enough to think and reason abstractly the consequences of abuses and report to the police. In this study, 94.3% of the victims were within the age ranges of 11-18 years which may be explained in terms of Piaget's theory of cognitive development. The only exceptional case in this study is abandonment. The age of abandonment for all the cases was below the age of one year. The age of ten was the minimum age at

which bodily injury, verbal threat/terrorisation and attempted murder were reported. It is also interesting to note that the minimum reported age for the other type of abuses age ten. For instance, the minimum age for rape was seven and robbery was eleven. In the report, almost the age of all the reported abuses clusters around the age of seven to eighteen (the maximum age for all types of abuses) except for abandonment. Here, care should be taken in interpreting the data in Table 4. Absence of report for the younger children may not mean that abuse is not prevalent or less prevalent below the age of seven. Even the reported cases are assumed to be a very little proportion of the actual cases. The most plausible explanation for the present case is that abuses below the age of seven are rarely reported by the victims or their guardians and in most cases children who were abused possibly did not know that the case ought to have been reported.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Ages (in years) of the Abuser and the Abused (1995/96 and 1996/97)

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age of the abused/child	15	3	1 month	18
Age of the abuser/adult	22	8	10	65

The ages of 650 abused children and 182 of abusers were reported. In the majority of the reported cases in the woreda police stations the ages of the abuser were not reported. From the available reported cases, the mean age for the victim was 15 with a standard deviation of 3 and that of the abuser were 22 with the standard deviation of 8. This indicates that the majority of the abusers are persons between the age 14-30 (Mean ± 1 SD) and the age of the abused children is 12-18 (Mean ± 1 SD).

6. Discussion

The present study showed the prevalence of different types of child abuses in four woredas in Addis Ababa. The following were major observations with respect to the prevalence of different types of child abuses reported to the four woreda police stations.

In the four woredas under study the prevalent forms of child abuses from the most serious to the least ones were bodily beating (61.9%), bodily injury (6.9%), theft (6.3%), attempted murder (4.3%), rape (3.7%), verbal threat/intimidation (3.7%), robbery (2.9%), abandonment (2.6%), murder (0.5%) and rape (0.2%).

Among the woredas included in the study, Woreda 5 was found to be the Woreda to have the highest proportion of child abuse cases. It constitutes 55.8% of the total cases when the data for 1995/96 and 1996/97 are combined. This finding for Woreda 5 might be explained in terms of the ecosystem (Belsky, 1980). The Woreda is located around "Markato"—the biggest market in the country—a densely populated area in Addis Ababa.

The most dominant type of child abuse in the four woredas was beating which was about 61.9% of the total child abuse cases. This finding is consistent with the studies by Tigist and Derege (1997) and Ayalew (1996) who found physical abuse as a very common phenomenon in Ethiopian elementary schools. Similarly the finding agrees with Straus (1983), who reported 97% of the American children experience physical punishment.

The age of the majority of the abusers was found to be between 14 and 30 years with the standard deviation of 8 years. This indicates both adults and children are abusers where the oldest child abuses the youngest child (Finkelhor, 1983). The age of the majority of the victims ranges between 12–18 years with the standard deviation of 3 years. This is in disagreement with Finkelhor (1983), who argued that the greatest abuse was directed against children under the age of six. This disagreement between the two studies might be explained by the nature of the data used in both studies. It appears that victims below the age of

I rarely report to the police station whenever they are abused. The data from the present study does not indicate the magnitude of abusive cases among different age groups. Future studies may survey the magnitude of child abuses among different age structures.

The reported types of abuses in the present study agree with the definition of child abuse by Berk (1991) and Daniel and Gobena (1998). Many of the reported child abuse cases in the present study can be categorised into the classification given by Berk. With respect to the major types of abuses, the findings of the present study agree with the 1993 report of the Ethiopian National Police Head Quarters (Befekadu and Tsegaye 1997). In both reports beating and bodily injuries were reported to be the most serious forms of child abuses followed by theft. The figure for sexual abuse was also very close to each other which was 3.9% in the present study and 2.4% in the Ethiopian National Police Head Quarter report cited in Befekadu and Tsegaye (1997).

Although the present study sheds some light on the incidence of child abuses in Addis Ababa, it has its own shortcomings. The major shortcoming is that reported cases are supposed to be lower than the actual child abuse cases. Many of the abuses that may cause serious physical and psychological harm would not have been reported. Another shortcoming of the present study is that the consequences and prevention of child abuses were not fully treated. More comprehensive studies will be required to fill in the gaps of the present study. In fact, such study cannot be taken as typical in Addis Ababa itself.

7. Conclusions

The study discussed the major types of child abuse based on the data obtained from the records of the four Woreda police stations (woreda 3, 5, 6 and 21) where child protection units were established in Addis Ababa for the years 1995/96 and 1996/97. The number of cases reported to the police stations during the two years was 651. The major types of child abuses were found to be beating (61.9%), bodily injury (6.9%), theft (6.3%), attempted murder (4.3%), verbal threat/intimidation (3.7%), rape (3.7%), robbery (2.9%), abandonment (2.6%), murder (0.5%), attempted rape (0.2%) and others (7.1%). Beating was

the most serious type of child abuse in the four woredas. The findings may be explained in the context of the microsystems (Belsky, 1980) where families are most directly responsible for the abuse of children. It may also be explained in the context of an ecosystem (Belsky, 1980) where the nearest environment may be considered as a causal factor for the abuse of children. The Microsystems – the culture, social and economic conditions, political policies, values and beliefs – may greatly contribute to the prevalence of such abuses (Belsky, 1980).

The age range for the majority of the victims who reported to the police stations was between 12-18 years with the mean age of 15 and standard deviation of 3 years. The age range of the abusers ranges between 18–30 with the mean age of 22 and standard deviation of 8. Because child abuse prevails among children and adults in families, communities and society as whole, efforts to prevent it need to be directed at the segments of the society. The incidence of the child abuse can be reduced in the short-run if potentially abusive families are provided with educational opportunities through public service programs such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines. Moreover, efforts to minimise child abuse requires social policy support aimed at improving the living conditions of the society and the revision of the existing legislation concerning child welfare and development.

References

- Ali Yimer (1996). **Child Maltreatment at home and school**. Paper Presented to the National Workshop organised by the Children and Youth Affairs Organisation and the Italian Corporation on Protect Children from Abuse and Neglect. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Ayalew, Shibeshi (1996). **School Discipline and Corporal Punishment in Ethiopian Schools**. In Proceedings of Research Papers on the Situation of Children and Adolescence in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University.
- Befekadu Tolera and Tsegaye Dadda (1997). **Procedural Manual for the Police Working in Child Protection and Care Unit**. Region 14 Police Commission, Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia and Radda Barnen-Sweeden, Addis Ababa.
- Belsky, J. (1980). *Child Maltreatment. An Ecological Integration. American Psychologist*. 35:320-335.

- Berk, L. E. (1991). **Child Development** (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Berkwith, L. (1990). Adaptive and Maladaptive Parenting - Implications for Intervention. In Meisels, S., and Shonkoff, J.P. (Eds.). **Handbook of Early Child Intervention**. New York: Cambridge University presses.
- Burgess, R. L. and Conger, R. D. (1978). Family Interaction in Abuse, Neglectful and Normal Families. **Child Development**. 49:1163-1173.
- Bugental, D. B. , Blue, J. and Crazcosa, M. (1989). Perceived Control over Caregiving Outcomes: Implications for Child Abuse. **Developmental Psychology**. 25: 532-539
- Daniel Teffera and Gobena Daniel (1998). *Study of Child Abuse and Neglect in Addis Ababa Elementary Schools: Ethology, Manifest and Effect*. Addis Ababa .
- Darge Wole (1996). *Child Abuse and Neglect in Selected Parts of Ethiopia*. Paper Presented to the National Workshop organised by the Children and Youth Affairs Organisation and the Italian Corporation on Protect Children from Abuse and Neglect, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Egeland, B; Sroufe, J. and Crazcosa, M. (1981). Attachment and Early Maltreatment. **Child Development**, 52: 44-52.
- Emery, R. E. (1989). Family Violence. **American Psychologist**, 44: 321-3288.
- Finkelhor, D. (1979). **Sexually Victimized Children**. New York: The Free Press.
- Finkelhor D. (1983). Common Features of Family Abuse. In Finkelhor D. et. al. (Eds.). **The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research**. London: Sage Publications.
- Mouzakitis Chris (1988). The Emotionally Maltreated Children: Diagnosis and Treatment. In Hibbs, E. (Ed.). **Children and Families: Studies in Prevention and Intervention**. Madison: International Universities Press Inc. 367-378
- Mussen, P.H. et al. (1990). **Child Development and Personality** (7th ed.). New York: Harper and Colliins Publishers.
- Penal Code of the Empire of Ethiopia: Proclamation No. 158 of 1957 (1957). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- Seifert, K. and Hoffnung, R. (1991). **Child and Adolescent Development** (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Spinatta, J. and Rigler, D. (1972). The Child Abusing Parent: A Psychological View. **Psychological Bulletin**. 77: 296-304.
- Straus M. (1983). Ordinary Violence, Child Abuse and Wife-Beating. What Do They Have in Common? In Finkelhor D. et al. (Eds.). **The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research**. London: Sage Publications.
- The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1994). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Tigest Ketsela & Derege Kebede (1997). Physical Punishment of Elementay School Children in Urban and Rural Communities in Ethiopia. **Ethiopian Medical Journal**. 35: 23-33.
- Trikett, P., and Kuczynski, L. (1986). Children's Misbehaviours and Parental Strategies in Abusive and Nonabusive Families. **Developmental Psychology**. 22: 115-123.
- Population Reference Bureau (1997). **World Data Sheet** Washington D.C.: Population Reference Inc.