

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
POST GRADUATE STUDIES**

**CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF CHILDREN
AND CHILDHOOD IN AMHARA SOCIETY**

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN THE TOWN OF DEBRE MARKOS
AND THE ADJACENT RURAL AREAS**

**AYELE TAMENE MULUALEM
JUNE, 2006**

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AYELE TAMENE MULUALEM

**A Thesis Presented To
The School Of
Graduate Studies
Addis Ababa University**

**In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For The Masters Degree Of
Arts
In Social Anthropology**

**JUNE 2006
ADDIS ABABA**

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

Conceptualizations of Children
And Childhood in Amhara Society
A Comparative Study in the Town of Debre Markos
And the Adjacent Rural Areas

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my Advisor Dr. Melesse Getu for his constructive comments and kindly advice. I am also Indebted to Dr. Eva Poluha who devoted her time in reading the manuscript and giving scholarly suggestions.

I would also thank Save the Children for its financial assistance that covers all the expenses of my fieldwork.

My heart-felt thanks and appreciation, however, go to all my key informants who gave me valuable information and for their kindly cooperation during the fieldwork. In particular, I would like to thank teacher Demeke for his unreserved effort in acquainting me with children and facilitating my fieldwork.

Finally, I am indebted to my brother, Ademe Tamene, who helps me all the time.

Abstract

For a long period, children were not viewed as actors. This was mainly due to the conceptualization of children biologically excluding the socio-cultural aspects of children. Such approach limited our perceptions of children as passive recipients of social structures.

This study tries to provide a comparative analysis on the conceptualizations of children and childhood in the town of Debre-Markos (Eastern Gojjam, Amhara region) and its adjacent rural areas. The data is mainly based on qualitative method by using various methods of data gathering tools such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion, case studies and diaries.

According to the research results, children of the rural and urban areas are affected by various structures of the society like age, gender, religion, and education. Nevertheless, these structures have different effects for rural and urban children. The research underlines that structures cannot determine the activities of children even though they have large impacts.

The study, moreover, depicts how the rural and urban children share the dominant local cultural schema. In this regard, children play an important role in the production and reproduction of the local cultural schema. They reproduce different cultural schemas such as patron-client relations, gender roles, hierarchical, and egalitarian relations, etc. This implies that children are actors who promote cultural continuity and change in their localities.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

The thesis is organized in to six chapters. Chapter one presents the background of the study, the description of the study area, objectives, and significance of the study. Besides, it includes site selection, the methodology, and field experience. Chapter two covers the literature part.

Chapter three explores the theoretical framework regarding the perceptions of children.

Chapter four assesses the major aspects of children's socialization in the study area. It describes the major facilitators of socialization such as peers, plays, and parents. In addition, it examines other instruments of socialization like respect and obedience, and punishment and rewards.

Chapter five deals with gender and education in the study area. The first part assesses the gender-based division of labor of boy and girls in the rural and urban areas while the second one examines the participation and major problem of children's education.

In chapter six, a conclusion is made by relating the findings of the study with the theoretical framework.

Glossary of local Terms

Areke ____ local alcohol drink

Balege _____ bad boy / girl

Chenger _____ a kind of stick used to punish children

Chibto _____ a kind of food prepared from the powder of **teff** or wheat which has ball shape and mainly given to children and a woman who gave birth to recover her from physical strains during delivery.

Dejzmach ____ commander of the gate. A title given below the rank of **ras**.

Dagmia Fasika _____ a season of marriage, which begins a week after Easter.

Deacon ____ a person who serves the church below the rank of priest.

Gatewot ____ being disobedient (for children).

Geta-Yebarkeh ____ God bless you.

Kassa ____ reparation paid mainly in the form money for any criminal damages.

Kebela ____ a season of marriage often two months before Easter.

Meforef ____ sneak out of class.

Rist _____ land uses right transmitted through hereditary means.

Teff _____ *Eragrostis Abyssinica* (Cereal serving as staple food in many parts of Ethiopia).

Tella ____ home made - beer.

Tewahido ____ a belief of the Orthodox Christian, which is based on the absolute union of virgin, marry and Jesus Christ.

Weg _____ being married.

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N

Legend

■ Debre_Markos(Study Area)

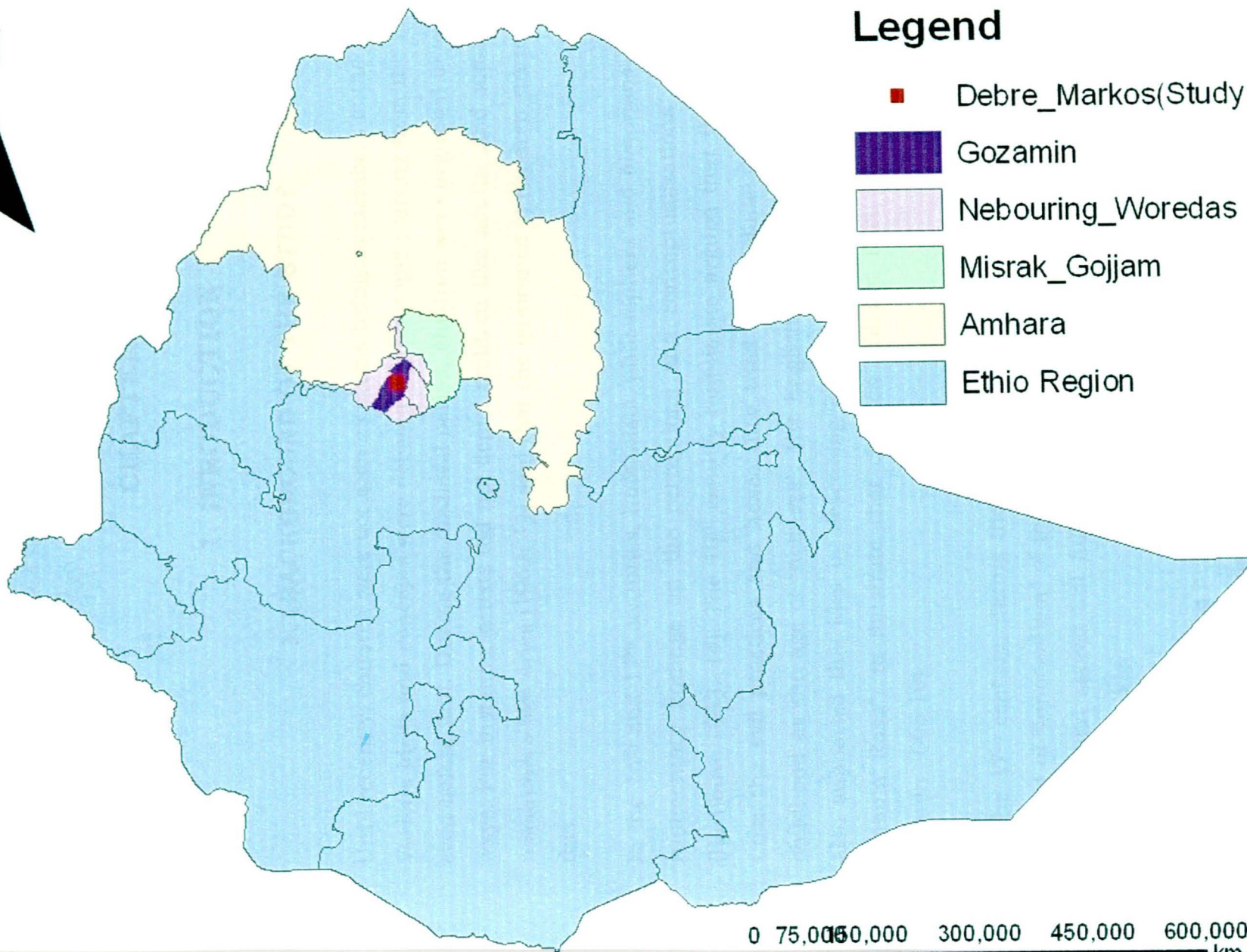
▨ Gozamin

▨ Nebouring_Woredas

▨ Misrak_Gojjam

▨ Amhara

▨ Ethio Region



0 75,000 150,000 300,000 450,000 600,000 km

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Until recently, children were not seen as actors being as members of the society. Various ideas and concepts were debated on this topic starting from the 16th or even before that. During the medieval period, children were neglected in various ways. For instance, artists did not depict children like adults. And some social researchers like Aries (1962: 11) said that the ignorance of children started with this.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, humanists, philosophers and historians revealed rudimentary findings on the perceptions and conceptualizations of children (Barnouw 1963: 14). The 16th century humanists argued that the child is far from the evil practices and hence they tried to conclude that the period of childhood as the age of “holiness”. The English philosopher, John Locke, had also supported this idea by describing it through his metaphoric explanation “Tabula Rasa”, to illustrate that children are not filled with hereditary sin (Poluha 2005:10).

In the 17th century, during the period of reformation, Protestants rejected the concept of “innocentism” of the humanists. They argued that children were not innocent and sacred but full of evils, which are inherited from their parents (Poluha 2005: 11).

In the 18th century, the humanists’ conceptualization of children and child hood was continued by intellectuals of the Renaissance period. For instance, Rousseau thought that children inherit nothing hereditary rather, they learn

from their environment after birth. The 19th century evolutionists conceptualized children and childhood in terms of biological aspects excluding the socio-cultural needs of children. They held the opinion that children were biologically immature and considered them as dependents of adults (Pluha 2005: 15).

In the 20th century, more attention was given for understanding the concepts of children and childhood. Children agendas were incorporated into the various social and legal institutions such as health, welfare and education. Their issues were also included in the major academic discourses such as psychology and medicine. Beyond this, various international medias had paid attention to the socio-economic situations of children. Similarly, international agencies such as UNICEF and WHO gave due attention to the various problems of children. In addition, a welfare organization was set up. Due to this, that century was called as the century of child. In spite of this effort, the conceptualization of childhood was not properly understood. Viewing children biologically as immature and helplessness was still going on (James and Prout 1990:1).

A new paradigm was emerged, however, in the 2nd half of 20th century. The new paradigm brought a dramatic shift in anthropology from the biological and evolutionary to socio-cultural understandings of children and childhood (James and Prout 1990:3).

This paradigm tries to understand childhood as a social construction i.e., the period and concept of childhood varies cross-culturally. In this regard, the comparative study of Mead (1928) and Benedict (1935) laid basis for the new paradigm. Nevertheless, various researches were conducted in the 1970's to strengthen this paradigm.

This paradigm overshadowed the old sociological, biological and evolutionary models that tried to construct a universal childhood in which everybody passes thorough it (Macky 1973:28; Tonkin 1982:245).

The new paradigm has also underlined that the socialization of children should be studied from the perspectives of children, not from the points of views of adults. This means that children must be seen as actively involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live. They can no longer be regarded as passive subjects of the structural determination (James and Prout 1990:4).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is poverty stricken country with multi-faceted socio-economic problems. The problem is chronic particularly for children due to various socio-cultural factors. The report of UNICEF (1993:28) indicated that the cultural attitude and practices prevalent in Ethiopia undermined the social development of children and made them dependents of adults.

Recently, Poluha (2004) gave detailed descriptions on the socio cultural constraints of Ethiopian children. Her book, "Ethiopia through the Eyes of Its Children" examines various problems of children such as socialization, education, gender and the effect of hierarchy and patron-client relations. The book gave an ethnographic account on the situation of Ethiopian children.

Even if some studies were conducted on the socio-economic problems of urban children, such as streetism (Minas 1992), labor & sexual exploitation (Tedla 1999), child neglect and abandonment (Save the children, Sweden 1999), deflected away from this basic issue.

A deeper knowledge of and insight in to how people conceptualize the situation of Ethiopian children will improve and promote the work being done with children by the various governmental and non- governmental organizations.

However, in Ethiopia there was little anthropological study on children, particularly in the provincial areas. The lack of information about the situation of children in various parts of Ethiopia has made it difficult for government agencies and non-governmental organizations to work with children. As a result, in collaboration with Save the Children (Sweden), I am initiated to undertake this study in one of the largest populous regions in Ethiopia, namely the Amhara region, particularly in Eastern part, the town of Debre markos and the surrounding adjacent rural areas.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study is to describe the conceptualization of children and childhood by these various groups in Debre Markos and the adjacent rural areas. In order to achieve this goal, the researcher has the following specific objectives: -

1. Examining the gender induced duties and activities of children.
2. Identifying the views of the local people about rights and duties of children in the household.
3. Finding out the local views and practices regarding both formal and informal education of children.
4. Identifying the major principles of socialization of children.

Research Questions

1. What rights do girls and boys have in their home?
2. What are gender induced duties and activities of children?
3. How do the local people conceptualize the needs of children?

1.4 THE STUDY AREA, SITE SELECTION, METHODS, AND FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE

1.4.1 THE STUDY AREA

The town of Debre Markos was established in 1853 during the reign of **Dejazmach** Tedla Gualu, a regional ruler of Gojjam. Previously Debre Markos was known by the name of Menqoror, which took its name from a known **rist** holder, Manqorar Sare. His **rist** was found in the area where the church of Saint Markos is erected (Fischer 1975:1). King Tekle Haymanot constructed the church in 1883. He renamed the town of Menqoror to Debre Markos.

The town of Debre Markos has been the administrative center of the province of Gojjam until 1991 and now it serves as an administrative center of Eastern Gojjam, which includes fourteen districts.

Geographically, Debre Markos is located at 10° 21'-north latitude and 37° 43' - West longitudes. It covers an area of 6,160 square kilometer. The town is found at distance of 300 km North West of the capital (Municipality 2005:1).

Climatically, the town has a **Woina Dega** (moderate) climate with an annual average rainfall, 1,308 mm, and average temperature 16° centigrade.

According to the statistical data of 1995, Debre Markos has a total population of 49,297 (22,652 males and 26,645 females). As long as the compositions of ethnic groups are concerned, the Amhara who speak a language called Amharic, which is the official language of the state, dominate the area. However, other ethnic groups, though very small in proportion, inhabit the town. These are the Agaw, Oromo, Tigre, and others. See the table below for more information.

Table 1. Composition of ethnic groups in percentage.

S.No	Name of Ethnic groups	Percentage
1	Amahara	97.12
2	Tigre	1.29
3	Oromo	0.67
4	Agaw	0.56
5	Others	0.36

Source: Municipality of the town of Debre Markos(2005).

In terms of religion, the majority of the inhabitants of the town are adherents of the religion of Orthodox **Tewahido**. However, there are few residents who follow protestant, Islamic and Catholic. The following table shows the percentage of followers of each of these religions.

Table 2. Religious groups in percentage.

S.No	Religion	Percentage
1	Orthodox	97.25
2	Muslim	1.88
3	Protestant	0.81
4	Catholic	0.03

Source: Municipality of the town of Debre Markos (2005).

1.4.2 SITE SELECTION

The rationale behind the selection of the study area was mainly related to my familiarity with the area. I was brought up there, but in an adjacent rural area. I became interested in the study of children due to the fact that children in the selected research area have several socio-cultural problems.

I focused on three purposeful selected areas of the town. One is a Muslim residential area, the other is a Protestant quarter, and in between, there are two Orthodox Christian **kebeles** in the town. Furthermore, one school in the town and one rural school in the vicinity of the town were used for comparative purpose. In the rural area, one **kebele** is selected from Gozamn **wereda** purposefully. This kebele is called Addis – Gulit. It is located only 12km., North West of Debre Markos. Besides its location near to the main road of Addis Ababa - Bahir Dar, an old established Primary and Junior school, Fendeka Primary and Junior School, is found in this **kebele**. It is a center of education for the surrounding kebeles of Gozamen **wereda** as well.

1.4.3 METHODOLOGY

The study included boys and girls whose ages are 10-18. These age categories are selected for two reasons. Firstly, I thought that children of these age categories could express themselves more than those who are below the age of 10. In addition, adults above age 30 (parents, teachers, directors, and social experts) are used in the study to triangulate the information. They are important for the study as they have close relationship with children.

Hence 40 children and 10 men and women above age 30 are taken by random sampling both from the town and rural areas in the vicinity of Debre Markos.

Out of the total 40 children, 24 (12 boys and 12 girls) are town children. In terms of religion, 10 children (5 boys and 5 girls) are Orthodox Christians. In addition, eight children (4 males and 4 females) and six children (3 males and 3 females) are taken from Muslims and Protestants, respectively. I used more informants from the Orthodox Christians since they are large in number (97.25 %).

In the rural area, only 16 children (8 boys and 8 girls) are selected for comparative purpose. All are from the Orthodox Christians due to the religious homogeneity.

From adults, 10 persons (4 men and 6 women) were used for triangulation purpose. I focused on women since I thought that children took much time with their mothers than their fathers.

In the study, the researcher has employed qualitative method by using various ways of data gathering tools such as in-depth interview, case studies, focus group discussions, and diaries.

1.4.3.1 In-depth Interview

An in-depth interview was conducted with boys and girls whose ages are between ten and eighteen. In addition, adults (parents, grand parents, teachers and social experts) above age thirty were used as source of information. In this regard, semi-structured interview with girls and boys of the town were undertaken on the issues of peer selection, punishments, rewards, and their activities at home. Besides, in-depth interviews with Muslim, Protestant and Orthodox Christian parents were made to see the religious effects on the socialization of children and also to explore the kind of punishment and reward they forwarded for children. During the interview with those key informants, a tape recorder was used to facilitate the data collection processes.

1.4.3.2 Participant Observation

The researcher tried to study the activities of children by participating in some social activities and practices. An attempt was made to investigate the kind of relationship they have by involving in the plays of children like football and volleyball during sport period and at break time. The researcher also participated being as an English teacher to understand the problems of their education, class participation, gender differences in education, the hierarchical relations between children and the teacher in the classroom.

The major instrument of the study, therefore, was observation. The researcher observed many activities of children and recorded them like with whom they play, the kinds of plays, the form of relationships, etc. Through observation, their emotions and actions when they quarrel with each other, and teachers practice corporal punishments were recorded. In addition, the researcher observed and their activities when they participated in different extra-curricula activities such as drama, sport, mini-media, and anti-HIV clubs.

1.4.3.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The other technique employed in this study was Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Five FGDs (Three for children and two for adults) were used. They are given topics for discussion like gender roles, activities of children, plays, etc.

1.4.3.4 Case studies and Diaries

Information was also gathered from purposefully selected case histories and diaries of children. Children of various age groups were ordered to prepare diaries on selected topics such as activities done at home, respect and obedience, punishments and rewards, etc. Moreover, representative case studies were taken from rural and urban children in order to make comparative analysis.

1.4.3.5 Secondary Sources

In this study, documents, book of various kinds, journals, magazines and research works on children were reviewed.

1.4.3.6 FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE

My fieldwork was conducted both in the town and rural areas. To begin from the town, I had no problem of communication with the town people since I know their language perfectly. Most office workers were cooperative and facilitated my work. Nevertheless, some office workers were reluctant to give information due to their political suspicion. I clearly stated my mission to them and finally they understood the purpose of my study.

In the fieldwork, I took much time with children, parents, and teachers. Some parents considered me as an agent of donor organization. My field assistant persuaded them and finally they understood my mission. Still others viewed me as a journalist. At first, they were reluctant to be interviewed; yet after a while they understood the purpose of the study and became cooperative.

In the school, I faced some problems. In the first week of my fieldwork, most teachers approached me collegially since they looked at me as a new staff member. After the director introduced my purpose however, some teachers soon changed their approach. They were not happy while I undertook class observation. Gradually, however, through long persuasion and discussion, they became cooperative.

In the school, I took much time with children. At the beginning of my work, they were afraid of me. However, after a week, children became my friends. At break time, they wanted to play with me. However, I encountered some problems while I undertook photographing. Every body wanted to be photographed. My field assistant helped me a lot by taking the picture of some selected groups.

With regard to my fieldwork in the rural village, I found it very interesting. The local people received me warmly. Many of them invited me to their home by preparing coffee and local beer. Nevertheless, I faced some problems related to transportation and logistics. The long walk on foot was also unbearable.

I surmounted these problems by using sleeping bags and horse back for transportation.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study have the following contributions. Since little has been written about the conceptualization of children and childhood in the society of Amhara, the study gives relevant information for the various government and non-government organizations who are working with children. The various socio – cultural issues of the urban and rural children are described. Therefore, it becomes very helpful for these organizations to formulate viable policies that could tackle the problems of children. Especially, the study is informative and helpful for the district social affair office in addressing the socio – cultural needs of children. The study, moreover, will serve as source of information for those researchers who want to undertake further anthropological studies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study tries to investigate the situation of children from the various social and occupation groups of the Amhara society. However, due to time and financial constraints, the study is limited to one major town of Eastern Gojjam, Debre-Markos and the adjacent rural areas.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CHILDHOOD AND SOCIALIZATION

2.1.1 CHILDHOOD

Psychologists and sociologists classified child development in to three stages by age with two transitional periods. These are:

1. INFANCY

It encompasses the period from birth to two years. During this stage, the child is expected to undertake the following tasks: - forming social relationship with his parents, acquiring "a sense of basic trust" and fully development of "sensory motor intelligence. From the age of 2 - 4 is categorized as the first transition period (Borman 1981:17).

2. CHILDHOOD

This is the period from age four to twelve. The major developments are: - forming peer relation based on same sex, developing strong siblings bond, and establishing good relationship with teachers. Early adolescence is sequenced as a second transitional period, which includes from the ages of 12 to14. During this time, drastic psychological and hormonal changes have been occurred (ibid).

3. LATE ADOLESCENCE

It includes from age 14-18. During this time, two important developments have been occurred. These are:- weakening of child-parent relationship and strengthening of peer relations of both the same and different sex groups (Borman1981: 18).

2.1.2 SOCIALIZATON

Anthropologists and sociologists defined socialization as a process of enculturation and learning the patterns of culture (Adams, et al 1971:81). They further explained it as a means of acquiring the required social skills and dispositions in order to become a competent member of the society (Levine 1994: X1). Barbera Butler, et al (1987:73) also underlined that socialization is the corner stone of anthropological theory. As she noted, it is only through socialization that individuals of different groups could maintain their cultural differentiations. She stated, "The symbolic nature of socialization process can be powerful in the context of ethnic diversity (Ibid).

In the second half of 20th century, sociologists and anthropologists produced important works. One of these works is the one by Williams (1972:115), which gave a detailed ethnographic study. He assessed important topics on the socialization such as "Critical Periods, Operant condition" and the Social roles of "kin groups" for the socialization of children in the traditional society.

Borgatta and Lambret (1968:10) also gave an ethnographic account of childhood socialization and personality development. They focus on the childhood socialization in the framework of the family. Similarly, Barnouw (1973: 4), and Levine (1968: 163-165) assess the socialization of children cross-culturally. They discuss the internalization of some aspects such as norms, and the mechanisms by which certain behaviors are suppressed during the process of socialization.

Some anthropologists like Cohen (1971: 89), and Dawson (1967: 23), did their research on the attitudes and political participation of young children in America. Their findings indicate that black children have higher political sensitivity and awareness than the white ones. Hess and Torney (1967:42) have also conducted similar studies in Jamaica and United States. As a result, they found out that family 'structure', school curriculum and peer-groups highly

affect the political attitudes of young children. Hess (1970:41) again studied the socialization of children in different social-economic and ethnic groups in American society. In his study, he observes variations on the ways and processes of socialization of children for these groups. Clausen (1968:16) also found out the interrelations of social structure, socialization, and personality. He investigates the "Interaction of social structure" with different phases of the life cycle.

Other studies on socialization looked the behavioral effect on the childhood personality. In this regard, Cooper Smith (1967:20) traces that good parental approach (warmth), giving due attention to the problems of children and appreciating children's performance are very important for the development of high-self esteem which in turn facilitate their socialization. He also investigates that judgmental verbal behavior of parents had a negative impact on the socialization of children. He reports that the non-evaluative one is preferable. On the other hand, Bandura (1973:21) studied the antecedents and effects of aggression and the way to control it. In the past few decades, several monographs and scholarly articles, which describe childhood cross-culturally, have also been produced. It includes important issues such as child training practices, stages in child life, etc.

A number of studies were conducted on child rearing in communally organized communities. Bethlehem (1969:9) traces the impact of kibbutz child attachment, dependency, and the resolution of the Oedipal Complex. Rabin (1965:96) also conducted a comparative study in two areas i.e. kibbutz-reared and Moshav-reared children of Israel whose ages include from infancy to adolescence. Talmon (1972:100) works' also contain brief accounts of the communal child rearing practices.

Konner (1972:55 and 59) gave comparative analysis about the child rearing practices of the !Kung Bushmen and the western ones. He indicates that when “various aspects of infant motor behavior are viewed in their natural environment, their adaptive value can be inferred where as they could not be inferred in the more artificial environment of western crib reared infants” Draper (1971:29) also describes the socio-economic constraints on !Kung child life on sedentary and a foraging subsistence economy.

Leighton and Adair (1966: 60) conducted a study on Zuni children of South Africa in the 1940's. Their study indicates that the Zuni children exceptionally displayed a greater social adaptability to tribal norms than other indigenous tribes.

A comparative study was also conducted by Whiting and Watson cited in Draper (1974: 266) on the consequences of residential shift from rural to urban settings of Kenya and Venezuela. The study illustrates that similar consequences occurred on both countries. That is, in both cases, they report a lowering of the self-esteem of women and increased individualism and aggressiveness in their children. On the same manner, Levine, Klein & Owen (1967:66) indicate in their study in Nigeria that urbanization and modernization change the type of father-child hood relationships.

2.1.2.1 Factors Affecting Socialization of Children

Researchers illustrate various variables that affect the socialization practices of children. To mention, such as environment, economy, social organizations are some of them. Whiting cited in Draper (1974:265) indicates that environment affects the socialization of children. Their study was conducted on six-culture project in which the assigning of boys to cattle herding is practiced. Hence, in this study, they found that this task increased the responsibility of boys than other areas where there was no prevalence of such practices.

Minturn (1966:7) and Lambert (1971:77) conducted studies on the childcare given by mothers. For this matter, they investigated that mother's workload, household composition and family size affect the amount of time and care, and mothers can give to their children.

Whiting cited in Draper (1974:265) also illustrates the positive relationships between infant care and household density. Similarly, Draper (1974:27 & 29) investigates about the relation between subsistence economy and child training practices in Kalahari. He used two groups of !Kung. The first one is from the hunting and gathering group and the second one incorporates from sedentary agricultural group. The finding of this comparative study indicates that “!Kung children should increase pressure for compliance, but there was no evidence for pressure for independence and self-reliance among the hunting and gathering children”.

Another study by Granzberg cited in Draper (1974: 265) on Hopi indicates the effects of initiation rites in minimizing conflicts in children. This research is also supported by the cross-cultural studies of Burton and Whiting, and Young (ibid).

2.1.2.2 Socialization and Gender Role

Anthropologists have produced important works on the process of socialization for gender roles. And many argue that children are trained to adapt appropriate gender roles. (Kagan, 1964:52) analyzed the internalization of children's sex roles in terms of cognitive growth. Some studies indicate that in the early childhood period, females are more active and sensitive than males. This pattern of behavior continues up to their adult life. On the other hand, males are characterized by aggressiveness and less responsive to social enforcements.

Similarly, the studies of Kagan and Lewis (1965:53) indicate that males are more curious to explore their environment than girls of the same age. This ability contributed to male's superiority in spatial ability (Ibid: 84). In contrast, girls are found better in language acquisition, active in social relationships than boys of the same age. He (Ibid) elaborates that girls adapt languages faster than boys do and more interested (sensitive) to 'social cues'. Lastly, he reports that some of the effects of over- socialization of girls and the inducement of typical feminine behaviors such as passivity, compliance and dependence. The cross-cultural analysis of Whiting and Edwards in Draper (1974:272) also illustrates that sex role stereotypes vary cross-culturally.

Most anthropologists and sociologists argue that gender roles are the product of enculturation (Barnouw 1973: 12 - 13; and Draper 1974: 272). Draper (ibid) citing Whiting reports that the role of women in traditional societies of East Africa in training, integration and assigning of children into adult works. He also reveals that such roles of women, however, were changed for some areas due to the influence of verbalization which impeded the interaction of women with their children. In general, he remarks that the differential treatment of boys and girls varies cross culturally depending on several socio-economic and cultural factors such as the statutes of women, on the degree of separation of women and men in space, work, and leisure activities, and on the sphere of activity of women (domestic or public).

For instance, most of the time, mothers train their daughters for routine home activities and to become obedient; particularly in non-western societies. Where as boys in such societies are encouraged to do activities outside home. As a result, according to Draper (1974: 273), differences in gender role arise.

2.1.2.3 Children and Education

Mead discovered about the primitive education of the Manus, an island north of New Guinea. She explained that children started acquiring different skills during their earlier ages through informal education. For instance, at the age of 3, she investigated that the Manus children learn to swim. According to her study, children were also learning about giving values and protecting property (Barnouw1973: 79).

Before the end of 18thc, in which Feudalism was the dominant system, children were trained for the activities of farming. Starting the age of 6-7, they were expected to help their parents both at home and in the field (Poluha, et al 2005: 11).

During the period of industrial revolution, children were trained to become factory workers. However, working in factories had become very disastrous for children. Consequently, considering these difficult circumstances, some countries of Europe promulgated laws about the right age that children should start work in the factories. For instance, in 1830, Britain decreed laws that prohibit the work of children in factories under the age of nine. Finally, child labor is forbidden throughout Europe under the age of 12 (Ibid).

In the 16thc - 18thc, with the establishment of religions Catholic and Protestant schools, children were provided with some spiritual and ethical education (Ibid).

Previously, most anthropological studies on childhood socialization focus on processes of enculturation in the traditional areas. They investigate the indigenous forms of enculturation. However, when schooling expanded, the previous study becomes less practical as it requires its own independent study. As a result, anthropologists turn their face by designing a new approach (Draper1974: 267).

Recently, anthropologists focus on the problems of the importation of western curriculums in to the traditional or non-modern communities. It is indicated that most children of the latter became maladaptive to the former, which resulted in a very high rate of dropouts (Ibid). Many factors contributed for the dropouts of children. It was related with teachers, the curriculum, and discipline. Firstly, teachers had different cultural background from their students. Since most teachers were foreigners, they did not have the knowledge of the native language and it became difficult to communicate with their pupils. Secondly, the fact that the curriculum taught was different culturally from the native culture; made it less feasible and mal adaptive. Thirdly, the more structured level of the discipline became intolerable for students who adapted the less structured ones. The values of western schools such as individualism and competitiveness here became contradictory for pupils who brought up in the extended family (ibid). As a result, students developed negative attitudes and hate the lessons, and finally the goals of the education, which intended to achieve, became unsuccessful. Fourth, the classroom setting also became hostile to children who adapted kin-based settings. They were not accustomed to learning with large groups with a more complex and strict kind of teaching-learning processes. The fact that the school had a separate or isolated environment became difficult for children who were very familiar with the traditional form of learning in which they were brought up. Furthermore, the new type of socialization and interpersonal relations in which children were exposed became incompatible with the traditional form of learning (Wax, et al 1971: 44 and 103, and Howard 1970:47).

As Green Field, Reich, and Olverin Burner in Draper (1974:270) indicate, the two widely practiced traditional form of learning are observational learning and informal learning. They provide non-systemic and continuous form of enculturation to children. They (ibid) state some of the features of this type of learning like this: "Learning is context based, instruction is by example".

Contrary to this notion, formal learning is a more complex process, which is far from the tangible context. The instruction is based on the formal languages (different from local ones in context); a teacher-dominated who inculcates his personal attributes to students. As a result, formal learning is seen as the forerunner of generalizing mental set, one which readily perceives underlying similarity of structure in similar problems and which quickly arrives at solutions (ibid: 273).

Hence, the formal versus informal learning was one of the pressing issues debated by anthropologists. However, some like Cohen (1971: 17) found some elements of formal education in some traditional societies in his case study at Bush schools.

Another case study on the Amish childhood and education, gave detail ethnographic accounts of their formal education, which discourages cultural monopolization of western education. In addition, their indigenous formal education becomes more feasible than the western imposed systems.

However, the indigenous schools have their own shortcomings. In this regard Howard (1970:47) in his study on the Rotuman children of the south Pacific reports that these children were unable to cope up with some school pressures for individual and achievement while surrounded by peers who bring contradictory norms and expectation to class-room and he (Ibid) comments some of the possible anthropological remedies to these problems.

Similarly, Gay and Cole (1967:31) illustrate in their study on Kpelle, the mechanism through which the traditional formal learning can be transformed and become fit with the modern education standards without obstructing it. Collier (1970: 19) also states the shortcomings of Eskimo schools, which are almost similar to that of the Kpelle.

Currently, children's education particularly formal becomes a global concern. It is one of the key instruments for children to develop their socialization and mental abilities (Eva Poluha, et al 2005:33). However, many children are out of school particularly in Africa for various factors such as shortage of schoolteachers and problems related to parents, i.e. parents may not allow their children to attend school for their own reasons (ibid: 35). One of this arises mainly from economic problems. They are extremely in need of the labor of their children.

The other factor is related to cultural constraints. This factor has a great impact especially on girl's education. To mention some of the constraints as described by Eva Poluha, et al (2005:35) such as early marriage, rape, abduction and the like. A good example is illustrated for early marriage by the same work, Eva Poluha in Ethiopia.

In contrast, in France, Girls are encouraged to get more education to work out side farm. Paradoxically, boys tend to stay at home and help farm. Many young men wanted to engage in farming. And young educated women also wanted to marry them and these women contributed to the modernization of farming which raises the income of the couples (ibid: 37).

In Korea, education is considered as the only means of success for life. Because university graduates, women/men can get good job. In this country, taking care of children's education is given to mother. The same is true for Japan and India. In all these countries, mothers are more educated than fathers. As a result, they encouraged their daughters for modern education.

2.2. CHILDREN AND THEIR RIGHTS

Social and legal issues of children have been given a great concern by the current societies. This is mainly due to child neglect and child abuse of various kinds. Different factors are accountable for these problems: One is the prevalence of divorce for socio-economic reasons. It is clearly indicated that divorce would lead to "the change of family structure". This in turn exposes children to the various forms of child abuse and neglect due to the separation of mother and father (Mason, A and Gambrill, E:IX). Separation of parents deprives their right to education and hence forced them to engage in dangerous works which would cut off their life spans.

Besides divorce, various socio-economic and cultural factors such as fertility, demography, and the type of marriage practices certainly affect the lives of children. As a result, children are malnourished, lack educational and health accesses psychologically damaged and totally, they become marginalized from the society. In addition, due to socio-economic factors, children are found under difficult circumstances. Considering these grief problems of children, the UN adopted the declaration of the rights of children in 1989. The convention contained detailed provisions and legislations on the rights of children (Tekeste 2002:6).

CHAPTER THREE

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEBATES

3.1 CULTURAL SCHEMA, PRACTICE, AND STRUCTURE

Three interrelated theories: Cultural Schema, Practice, and Structure help us to understand the life of children.

3.1.1 CULTURAL SCHEMA

I used the theory of cultural schema to describe children's acquisition of knowledge, intra-personal and extra-personal settings, and their enculturation and socialization processes.

Culture as defined by Tylor (1958: 11) is that "complex whole which include knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

In the above definition, two important concepts are used. Firstly, culture is adapted through learning, not endowed with biological heredity. In this case, children learn cultural values from their environment either formally or informally. Secondly, culture is not a unique attribute of individuals, rather a shared property, which is transmitted from generation to generation (Kotack: 1991: 37).

However, this definition is exposed to various literary critiques for it categorizes the people to follow homogeneous culture. I.e., neglecting cultural variations. Hence, anthropologists have misused the concept for long as Hanerz (1993: 109), Abul Lugod (1991), Wikan (1992), and Ingold (1993) indicated. They argue that culture is not a homogeneous thing that every body should follow.

Currently, anthropologists try to focus on the cultural meanings, which are

often learned. They argue that culture is not a bounded (closed) system, rather a widely shared and embedded with in various social groups (Poluha 2004: 18).

Schemas are, as defined by Hinton (1986: 18), networks of strongly connected cognitive elements that present the generic concepts stored in memory. There are different kinds of schema, and most of them are shared. The focal point is that Schemas have cultural features since they are acquired through learning and interaction. They are not innate. That is why Sperber (1985: 9 & 74) tries to explain cultural schema as the shared interpretation of objects or events that are acquired through interactions and learning. He explains that meanings are based on cultural schema; a schema that is shared among people who communicate with each other. According to Sperber, the common experiences and cultural exposures of individual enable them to develop a similar schema. These categories of schema help them to acquire similar mental structures that in turn lead to common interpretation and meanings of objects. Therefore cultural schemas are not bounded and separable, although possessed by individuals. By sharing common experiences, people acquire similar mental structures (Cultural Schema), which enable them to develop similar interpretation and understandings of objects.

All these shared understandings, interpretations and expectations, which emanate from similar cultural meanings, are known as cultural schemas. Cultural schemas are simply the cultural meanings evoked on individuals of a certain group but they are commonly shared ones.

Due to similar experiences and cultural settings, individuals develop common understanding and interpretation of objects Poluha (2004: 18). Cultural schemas as Straus and Quin (1997: 6) explain are the Intra -personal mental structures. However, they are not fixed and bounded, rather flexible and open to change.

These inter-personal mental structures have also an impact on the extra-personal communications (communication with the outside world). The interactions of these (Intra-personal and extra-personal mental structures) as the two cognitive anthropologists (Straus and Quin) indicate, lead individuals to similar interpretation of objects that are widely shared and communicable. They state, "the relative stability of the world and our schemas have the effect both in a given person and in a group of people who share a way of life more or less the same meanings arise over and over" (Quins and Straus 1997: 8).

They also broadly defines cultural schemas "as the interpretation evoked in a person by an object or an event at given time." This definition includes the individual interpretation of an object, identification of it and expectations regarding it, feeling about it and the motivation to respond it. Cultural schemas are the cultural meanings, which are flexible and adaptable through human action (Ibid). They include all the intra-personal cultural knowledge, which is shared among individuals of a certain group. This sharing of different cultural models such as religions, language, etc may be based on regular or irregular basis.

Hence, cultural schemas are nothing but shared interpretations and understandings. They are always embedded in human beings. Sometimes human beings may not be aware that they have with them (Poluha 2004:18).

Straus and Quin (1997:7) explain that cultural schemas are the interpretations and meanings of objects processed and structured in the mind but are shared. They are not innately endowed rather learned and adaptable through interaction and communications. Without them according to Straus and Quin (Ibid), social interaction does not exist.

Cultural schemas are acquired through the interaction of these two broad realms: intra-personal and extra-personal. The extra-personal refers to simply the outside world, which includes the social relationships, the economic,

political, and social relationships. The intra-personal structures are mainly the inner world, which encompasses all psychological aspects (Culture- in person) such as thoughts, feelings, motives, etc.

Although these two domains are distinct, they are closely interconnected and have a boundary, which is permeable. The interactions of two realms hence, result in variation and change but with a relative stability of cultural meanings. Therefore, we cannot separate cultural schema (Intra-personal realms) from the extra-personal since they are maintained through interaction with each other. The development of the former is also based on the accessibility of the latter. Without extra-personal domain, cultural schemas are nothing. This does not mean, however, cultural schemas are the direct copies of the extra-personal settings. The dynamics of these two realms are different. The extra-personal has also a great impact on the formation of cultural schemas but the latter has a complex force to change some structures of the former and create new ones although sometimes reproduce it (Straus and Quin 1997:8).

In this study, I focus on theory of cultural schema to see how children develop shared understandings and interpretation of objects. Whether they repeat every cultural schema (what adults say and practice) or not, in general, in what way they understand and interpret the world they live and how the society conceptualizes their understandings and interpretations are the significant concepts related to this theory.

3.1.2 PRACTICE AND STRUCTURE

It is better to see the life of children relating with these two interrelated theories; practice and structure. For a long period of time, children were not considered as actors, rather remained as passive recipients of various structures with little agency of their own James and Prout (1998: 139). Systems /Structures as defined by Bourdieu (1978) and Sahlins (1981) who based on the French structuralism, “are patterns of relations between relations.”

Hence, Structures are the various social orders governed by rules or norms. James and Prout (1998:140) view structures as “a set of objectives and external conditions that determine the conduct of societal behavior. However, structures are not permanent systems, rather can be transformed (manufactured as they describe) by human actions (actors).

Gidens (1984) also argue that, although structures are long established social orders and components of the dominant system, actors who are creative agents over their structures can transform them.

The issues of actors were given a crucial attention by practice theorists in the 1970's. A French man, Pierre Bourdieu who published a book entitled: “An Outline of a Theory of Practice” in 1972, originally develops this theory (Ortner 1984: 145). According to this theory, practice is simply “the study of all forms of human actions”. The theory of practice focuses on interrelated terms such as “actions” interaction”, activity” “individuals”, “self”, “experience” and “performance” (Ortner 1984: 145). This action based approach in anthropology is increasingly accepted by current anthropologists since it gives an alternative way to the former structuralists approach by focusing on human action rather than structuralism and pinpoints the need to shift from “symbolic structuralism to symbolic action”.

Hence, in the 1970's the notion of structures began to wane in the face of practice oriented approach. This approach became dominant during this period. Geertz cited in Sherry Ortner (1984: 148) states like this: “The instruments of reasoning are changing and society is less and less represented as an elaborate machine or a quasi-organism than as a serious of game, a side walk drama or a behavioral text.”

Collier and Rosaldo (1981:311) other feminist anthropologists, ideally support this approach by viewing practice theory as an alternative solutions to the problems of gender inequality. Ortner (1981:366) feminist anthropologist also suggests a need to focus on identifying the needs of actors and the mechanisms through which they fulfilled it rather than over emphasizing structures.

Sahlins (1981: 61) deconstructs the structural analysis for which they neglect the role of actors. He states like this: "If structure are extended to general anthropology . . . what is lost is not merely history change but practice human action on the world. ... What is lost is what anthropology all about" (Sahlins 1981: 6).

Giddens (1979) a sociologist however, questioned the relationships between structure and agency in which the former is invented by the latter. He argues that structures are products of the thought processes of actors.

E.P Thompson (1978:79) a historian, also highly criticized the former historians for who excluded the actors from the process and notes that history is nothing with out actors. On the same manner, Raymond Williams (1977:46) focuses on the choices of individual actors and argues that there should be a shift from evolutionary to human – action based approach. He stresses the role of actors in the reproduction of structures.

However, the stiffest criticism against the structuralism came from symbolic interactionists such as, Blumer (1962), Goffman (1959) Berreman (1962), Gregor (1977) and transactionalists like Kapferer (1976), Mariot (1976), Goody (1978), Barth (1966) and Bailey (1969). They totally rejected the structuralism approach of Durkheim that views the world as governed by rules and norms (Ortner 1984: 147). They argue that structures are the products of human thought processes.

Unlike the interactionists and transactionists, the newer practice theorists, however, did not deny the influence of structures/systems on the activities of Individuals and the progress of events. They argue that it is better to understand how and where the systems /structures comes from, how they are produced and reproduced, and assess how they were changed in the past, and how they can be changed in the future.

Ortner (1984: 147) a Practice theorist who differ in her approach from the interactionists and transactionists is mainly due to the Marxist influence of the 1960's .The Marxist influence on the newer practice theorists' is by the argument of asymmetrical feature of the structures and agents. The Marxist assumption is that the shape of structures depends on the degree of the interactions of the unequal relations of actors.

In this approach, the interaction (struggle in the words of Marxist anthropologists) is emanated from the asymmetrical participation of actors in the systems since they have unequal role or "status" in the system. This asymmetrical relations lead to interaction. This ultimately will change the shape of structures. The interaction, according to the Marxist perspectives, is the result of the unequal relations among and between structures and actors.

Like the Marxists, Max Weber (1984) has influenced the newer practice theorists. He explains that the role of actors is to free themselves from economic exploitation mainly because of political domination (Ortner 1984: 147).

The difference between the older and the current practice theorists is that asymmetry (domination) is the main concern of the latter as 'action', interaction, and 'transaction' belongs to the former (Ortner 1987:3). Thus, asymmetry, inequality, and domination are the distinctive features of the newer practists. Finally, Ortner concludes that there is no practice in the neutral (equal) system for the absence of human activity in this atmosphere.

Some Current practice theorists, mainly Bourdieu (1978: 15) suggest the need to explain whether structures constrain the progress of actors or not. If so he argues, how do they become constraints of actors? Bourdieu states that constraints can be reflected either in the political or material aspects. Finally, he concludes that structures are imbedded with in the actors (Ibid: 16). Foucault (1980: 44) on his part argues that systems have unignorable impact on shaping the dispositions of actors.

On the other hand, Sahlins (1981:50) explains that actors can transform structures through their thought processes. He illustrated how the social relationships of the Hawaiians were transformed through their interactions with European agents.

However, Bourdieu notes that the two theories are closely interrelated and their relationship is complementary although they seem contradictory (James and Prout 1998: 27), (Giddens 1979: 146-147) and (Ortner 1981:6) Support this idea by explaining that the theory of practice does not deconstruct the study of structure, rather it strengthens it. They argue that human action with out structures is a worthless practice. Because practice becomes action, as they outlined, only in conjugation with structures. That is, practice emerges from structures and it reproduces structures and it has a capacity to transform structure.

Therefore, the key features of the theory of practice in the 1980's as Ortner (1984: 158) explains was to understand how structures are produced and reproduced through actors. She underlines that this is the focus of practice anthropologists and it is a remarkable period in which anthropology begin to refine it self. It was a period, where a major shift in paradigm took place in the field of anthropology from structures/systems (synchronic) to persons and practices ('diachronic, processual) ones. In this regard, practice theory is the main component of this diachronic move. Thus, practice theory always stands

for actors to have a meaningful act up on the world by interpreting their cultural frames.

Hence, children who were considered as recipients of structures in the past should be seen as actors. So, now a days, a focus is given by current researchers to see children as social actors. In this regard, the theoretical approach of James and Prout (1998) is the most important one. In their book, "Theorizing Childhood," describes briefly the socially constructed childhood and the roles of children as social actors. They indicated that in the past, children were regarded as passive recipients of adult orientations.

Huston (1994: 4) also argues that children were voiceless in the past mainly due to lack of child-centered studies. According him, many social developments policies excluded children. As a result, children were out of agenda in every aspect. This was the major factor as James and Prout (1998: 135) elaborated, that make children to have little agency over the structures, which affect their lives. They (ibid) also argue that we cannot separate children's actions from the structures of the society, as they are part of it.

Therefore, in this new approach, children are seen active agents in social structures (Overtrup 1994: 5-6; and James and Prout 1998: 139). These theorists develop a new approach to the conceptualizations of children and childhood i.e., the social construction of child hood. According to this paradigm, Children should be viewed as competent actors like adults.

Straus and Quin (1997: 25) also explain that actors have the capacity to exploit "reinterpret" and create their social structures and even they can "invent" traditions.

3.2 CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD

Different models of childhood emerged during the 19th and 20th centuries. The evolutionary model of childhood was emerged in the second half of the 19th century. This model was based on the concepts of two evolutionists, Tylor (1871) and Morgan (1877). They depict a universal approach to human development.

In the evolutionary model, childhood is constructed biologically and characterized by a universal pattern of development. According to this model, the transition from childhood to adulthood is a universal fact in which gradual and evolutionary changes taken place from simple to complex, irrational to rational in terms of thought and behavior (James and Prout 1990:11).

Tylor (1871:3) for example, tries to make comparison between the period of childhood and that of savages. This analogy is intended to put childhood at the lower stage of human development in the evolutionary ladder.

The concept of childhood universality was also illustrated by Piaget's model of child development. His model is based on three themes: rationality, naturalness, and universality. Piaget argues that all children of the world pass the same stage of development from infancy to childhood and their adulthood. And he categorizes childhood and adulthood as period of apprenticeship (irrationality) and rationality, respectively. He further explains that these stages of child development are predetermined naturally, which every body passes through it. This model try to provide a biological explanation for the enculturation of childhood i.e. it considers children at this stage as immature and primitive in their cognitive development. That is why they were brought to laboratory for the study of primitive cognitive developments (James and Prout 1990:12).

The evolutionary and psychological models of childhood become the basis for the development of the classical theories of sociological account of childhood of the mid 20th century. This theory was based on the perspectives of the Structural-functionalists approach.

The structural functionalists emphasize the biological approach of childhood. They consider socialization as a main paradigm to conceptualize and understand childhood. According to this paradigm, children acquire social roles gradually and slowly through socialization with the help of adult's trainings. Hence, in this paradigm, socialization is regarded as an instrument for children to learn social roles from adults to participate in the society.

However, Rafky (1973:44) attempts to deconstruct this paradigm as it failed to explain the details in to how this socialization takes place .He stated that the old socialization paradigm of childhood is “vague, somewhat muddled excess of psychologising”.

Tonkin (1982:245) also criticizes the classical theory of socialization as being immersed with a lot of ambiguity due to the direct importation of psychological models in to sociological theories. She argued that the spectrum of psychologists and sociologists on childhood is entirely different. As to her, psychologists' focus is on behavior while the sociologists emphasizes on the sociological aspects of children Tonkin again criticizes the structural functionalist approach of childhood for they unable to explain of the processes by which an individual acquires personhood).

Another criticism against the old socialization paradigm came from Jenks (1982:12) and Macky (1973:281) for its focus on the biological process rather than the sociological aspects of children. They debated against the way the old paradigm treat children as passive recipients and receptacles of adults. Especially Macky (Ibid) disagrees with the categorization of children as

'incompetent', "asocial" and "acultural" compared to adults who are regarded as "competent" "social" and "autonomous".

Similarly, Shild Krout (1978:109-10) deconstructs the traditional approaches to childhood in which they made children out of the game of this process. The traditional models, according to him, make children as irresponsible for the reproduction of social order. This task was given only to adults.

Hastrup (1978:4) on his part argues that the traditional models of socialization are more of biological in which he describe it "the semantics of biology". Because as he explains, they neglect the cultural aspects by overemphasizing over biological facts such as birth, infancy, etc.

Danzinger (1970:18) also tries to destabilize the traditional models of socialization as being fabricates of western culture and as result it reflects "cultural biases" and lack comparative cultural framework. He made clear that the emergent paradigm (the socially constructed childhood) is a preferable theoretical approach to study of childhood since the socialization of children is not the same through out the world rather it varies cross-culturally.

The emergent paradigm in contrast, begins with the assumptions that belonging to a "particular culture at a certain stage in its history socializes the child" (Ibid). In anthropology, the emergence of new perspectives, especially interpretive and symbolic interactionism open new insight for the study of child hood (James and Prout 1990:15). In these perspectives, seeing children as passive recipients of adults are discarded, rather a focus is centered for children to be seen as social actors (Ibid). They give a cross - cultural description of childhood and in these perspectives the social life is not fixed, constant" or the same all the time in all social groups. Rather, it changes through time. Secondly, in this perspective, the actors create social relationships. It is developed through the activities and participation of actors. The actors are able to shape, transform, or create all forms of social relationships

Hence, these two dominant perspectives (Interpretive and symbolic interactions) become a challenge for the old theory of Structural-Functionalism approach of childhood” from which conceptions of childhood socialization derived”.

However, the socially construction of childhood was revealed by earlier anthropologists such Benedict (1935) and Mead (1928) in the school of culture and personality. These studies illustrate cross-cultural practices of child rearing. Benedict (1935) comparative study of childhood in Zuni, Dobu and Kwakiutl indicates variation on children’s degrees of subordination, responsibility and gender roles. Margaret Mead (1928) one of the most important figure of the school of culture and personality find out adolescence problematic in Samoa contradicts to the previous findings of Stanley Halls – “adolescence period of natural rebellion” (James and Prout 1990:18). Nevertheless, they (Mead and Benedict) did not come out of the traditional socialization moldings of children by adults. As a result, they did not signify the role of children as social actors in their comparative studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

CHAPTER FOUR

4. SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

Socialization is the most important process in which children acquire the required social skills to conform themselves with social norms (James and Prout 1998:23). The sociological approach of childhood underlines that it is through socialization that children develop their abilities and social potentials.

It is important to assess in this study how, when, where and with whom children form interaction. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to describe the role of sex, age, religion, etc for the socialization of children. In addition, it investigates children's social relationships to see whether they are egalitarian or hierarchical. In this regard, three concepts are important in children's socialization. These are peer formation, parents, and plays.

4.1. Peer formation

Peer group is one of the most important agents of children's socialization. Researches on peer group formation in the 1930's indicate that a peer group implies "a socialization of child to child" (James 1993:215). Similarly, recent studies illustrate that friendship formation is based on various factors such as gender, age, and religion (James and Prout 1994:94). In this study, the researcher wants to examine how far these variables affect the peer formation of children. The following are interviews with some school children of the town, about with whom they interact, and in what ways they select their peers.

Case 1: Etsub Dink (Male), age 16

Etsub Dink, age 16 is a grade eight student. He said that he selects his peer group based on: - Same age and grade level, good conduct and hard work ethics. He explains that his friends are male who follow the religion of Christian Orthodox **Tewahido** Church. In fact, Etsub Dink wants to form friendship with girls, but he is afraid of being criticized by his friends, churchmen, and villagers. He states that they interpret it in another way, i.e. they would perceive it as **bilgina** if his friends were females. **bilgina** means, according to local elders, practicing sex with several different partners, which is considered as taboo in the area.

Thus, this case shows that religion and gender are important factors for peer formation. Comparing the two variables, however, religion tends to be more important than gender. Because, as we have seen, Etsub Dink avoided forming friendship with girls fearing the prejudices of the local people against him. As a **deacon**, he shouldn't form a close friendship relationship with girls. If he does, he will be regarded as **Balege Lij** (a person who practices sex with many girls). The pattern of dominant cultural schema does not allow him to behave like that. It means, the cultural schema of the local people prohibits a religious person from having close social relationships with girls. Thus, he shares the existing local cultural schema.

Case 2: Alazar (Male), age 17

Alazar selects his friends by considering their attitudes, i.e. those who have good attitude towards human beings and have good Conduct. He stated that, he calls a 'true friend' one who shares his problem and keeps his secret. For this boy, except the above criteria, he did not consider religion and sex as major criteria to select his friends. However, most of his friends were males. He explains the reason in the following way. "I have no intention to form peer group based on

religion and gender. I want to approach every body. But my friends should be **acha** (same age and grade level)".

For Alazar, age becomes important in forming his friendship. This case is similar to the findings of Eva Poluha (2004:153) in the school children of Addis Ababa. Biglow and La Gaip (1980) also consider age as a prime factor for peer formation.

Case 3: Getaye (Male), age 16

Getaye's friends are males who follow the Orthodox Christian religion. He explained that his criteria to select his friends were age and same level of educational. However, he did not form friendship with girls. He described the reason as follows: -

I am afraid of girls because I was brought up in the village playing with males. Since most of the children in my village are boys, I did not get the chance to play with girls. In the school also, I always play with boys. If I try to talk with girls, I do not communicate properly because of my shyness. But I am not afraid of boys.

Thus, for Getaye, both gender and age are very important. However, the main factor that affects his friendship is environment (neighborhood) and his personal default (shyness). Since he did not grow up with girls, he has the problems of approaching with them. Whiting and Whiting (1971:111) also mentioned environment as a major factor affecting the socialization of children.

Case 4: Muluken (Male), age 18

Unlike Alazar, most of Muluken's friends are girls who live in his village. He said that he was brought up playing with girls before he started schooling. He always goes to school and study with them. As to him, girls are more loyal and frisky than boys. “ሴቶች ተጫዋቾች ናቸው። ከእነሱ ጋር ስሆን አልደበርም። (I become free when I play with them). Girls make me feel relax since they are funny”.

Like case 3, this case also makes it clear that environment (neighborhood), affects peer group formation.

Case 5: Genet Mulugeta (Female), age 16

The researcher observed Genet while she was playing with Dawit at break time in the school compound. When the researcher interviewed her, she said that her friends are both girls and boys but she preferred boys to girls because the latter were 'talkative'. She explained her view as follows: -

I prefer boys to girls because girls are talkative. They don't keep secret. If they hear something new, they tell it further to everybody. Boys are good, loyal and honest. They share your problem. They keep secret and hence I like boys. ወንዶች እኮ ከቀረቧቸው ታማኝ ናቸው። ሚስጥርህን ይጠብቁልሃል በችግር ጊዜ ይረዱሃል ሴቶችማ ወረኞች ናቸው።

If you have smooth approach with boys, it is good. They understand and help you whenever you face any problem). Once they build trust, they never renounce it. They are always with you. That is why I prefer boys to girls.

For Genet, personality (conduct) is more important than gender, age, or religion. Thus, the above cases enable us to identify four factors that affect the peer formation of the town children. These are: personality, gender, religion, and age.

With regard to the rural children, the researcher identified only three variables: gender, age, and personality. Religion has no impact on peer formation in these areas since there exists only one religion, the Orthodox Christian. The following four cases give us some illustrations.

Case 1: Amarech (Female), age 16

Amarech has four girl friends. She likes to play with boys though she is afraid of the local people and her classmates for they would consider it as **Bilgina**.

Other three girls have similar cases with Amarech except one. This young girl's name is called Enyat. All her close friends are males. Because as she explained, her village is located very far from the school. She is the only female student in that village. For this girl, the only alternative is to establish friendship with boys, near to her village. As a result, her teachers and classmates perceived her as a 'bad girl'.

Some of the boys who were participated in the FGD also unveiled that most of their friends are from similar sexes. On the discussion, most of them agreed on the two variables (gender and age) that could affect their peer formation.

4.2. PARENTS

The other important factors that affect children's peer group formation are parents. Borman (1982: XIII) indicates that parents are one of the prime agents of children socializations because children learn important social skills primarily from parents. In this study, the researcher has investigated the influence of parents on the peer formation of their children.

Ato Negussie who is a protestant Christian and educated parent, has three children. He belongs to the middle class level. His son's friend is a girl and she is a protestant. He said, "I make a pressure on my children how to choose their friends. I always tell them that their friends should be good Christians (Protestants)".

Another protestant woman said that she wants her daughters to have friends from the followers of the same religion. This woman is one of the first converts of the Protestant religion in the area. As a result, she encountered several hardships, mainly emanated from the prejudice and religious discriminations of the local people. She described it as follows: -

As soon as I embraced the new religion Protestantism, the local people isolated my family. They insulted me by saying **pente** (protestant) and **menafic** (pagan). Because of this, initially all the friends of my children were Protestants. Now their friends are both from the Orthodox and our religions; still I try to influence my children to have friends only from protestant religion. However, they did not accept me by saying: *ሀይማኖት የግል ነው አገር የጋራ ነው*. - Nation is shared but religion is private.

Some Orthodox parents also said that they do not want their children to have friends who adhered to a different religion (especially Protestantism). However, most of them revealed that the friends of their children are followers of different religions, Protestantism and Muslim. They disclosed that it is happened by the choice of their children with out their will.

Many Muslim parents said that they do not worry about the religion of their children's friends as long as they are 'good' and obey to parents and elders. Nevertheless, they are looking after their children's friends to know whether they are 'good' or 'bad'.

From these cases, it is possible to infer that parents have a great impact on the friendship formation of children. Although parents have big influences, friendship is mainly built by the will and choice of children. This fact deconstructs the old socialization theory, which explains that children are recipients of adult structures (James and Prout 1998). It helps us to argue that children are actors (practice theory). The above cases affirmed that children did not form friendship only through the pressure of parents, but by their free will and choice.

4.3. Play

Play is one of the most important agents of socialization, in which children express a set of distinctive cultural forms. It is manifested through children's games and verbal lore with which their sub-culture is revealed (James and Prout 1998:82). It is through play that children's social activities with their peer groups are expressed (James and Prout 1998:82).

Play is an instrument for exploring many aspects of children's social lives. It helps them to become competent social actors since it gives them the chance to develop their distinctive social skills. Furthermore, play is important for the development of their cognitive realms (Straus and Quin 1997).

The researcher wants to discuss the role of play for the development of children's cultural schema and their socialization process. As it has been discussed in the Theoretical Framework section, cultural schemas are shared understandings and social relationships.

Children of the town and rural areas in its vicinity, play in the school and at their villages. During the researcher's observation at Negus Tekle Haymanot Elementary and Junior School, he found that children play at break time,

lunchtime, sport periods etc. Most of the time, students of the same sex gather in different parts of the school compound. Some were sitting with their friends and discussing. While the researcher undertook observation in the school compound at break time, for instance, he found five female students from grade eight who were sitting and playing in front of their classroom. They were in a hot debate and the researcher asked them what they were discussing about. They said that:

We are discussing about the class participation of female students. Because the class participation of girls is very low in our class. Although we want to participate, we are afraid of talking in front of the teacher and the students' stereotypic criticisms like **keleblaba** (talkative). Therefore, we are discussing how we can solve this problem and change this situation.

Of course, as they discussed, I observed in the class that girls were less active than boys in the class participation. Although there were girls who had good academic achievement, they remained passive during class participation. This seems mainly due to the dominant cultural schema, which makes girls submissive and silent. Because girls who talk and participate equally or more than boys are not acceptable. They were brought up in way to be submissive and passive member of their society. The FGDS and Diaries of girls also assured this fact.

However, the above cases indicate that girls began to challenge against such systems /structure of the society. They displayed in their discussions that they should not be determined by such structures, as they are actors, not recipients of adults' structures. Finally, this case pinpoints that children can seek out solutions to the problems posed up on them by structures.

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4.3.1 Kinds of Plays

Children play different kinds of plays. Girls and boys do not play together. Some of the plays of girls are the followings: -

1. **Sizo** – It is a kind plays in which children stretch a certain rope by two sides. And they jump it turn by turn.
2. **AreAmsalech** – Girls make a circle by holding hand in hand and say **Are Amsalech**.

With regard to the plays of boys: -

1. **Kuku or Dibibikosh** – One of the boys hides himself while the others cover their eyes and says “**Kuku**”. Then, they are looking for him. If he is found, they will chase him.
2. **Leba Ena Police** (Police and thief) – Boys gather in a specific place. They put one material near to them. One of them will pick it up and runs away somewhere. Then, the other boy chases him by saying **leba** (thief). He acts as policeman and takes the responsibility of bringing back the stolen material.
3. **Erkus -Erkus** – Boys make a circle and one of them counts each one of the boys starting one up to 100. Then, the hundredth boy is said to be **Erkus** (Cursed). At this time, the rest of boys try to escape from him while he chases them.

Thus, in both rural and urban areas, children identified their sex roles by playing with their respective sexes. If they tried to play with different sexes, they would face different criticisms both from their friends and from adults like **wondawend** (boyish) and **setaset** (Girlish). Furthermore, they would be considered as **Balege lijoch**.

4.4. Respect and obedience

Children's socialization is also depicted through respect and obedience. These two concepts are mainly observed in stratified social systems (Kotak 1991) or (Eva Poluha 2004). Obedience and respect are closely interrelated terms. Obedience is a major sign of respect. Both are expressed verbally and non-verbally

4.4.1 Respect and obedience in the school

In the school, children show respect and obedience mainly to their teachers. They call **Gashe** (shield) and **Etiye** (Queen), male and female teachers, respectively. Calling a teacher by name is considered as a sign of misbehavior. In addition, children should do what their teachers order them. They run errands; clean their classroom, doing their home works, etc. However, they obey a teacher whom they respect.

Some of the town children who participated in the FGD said that they respect their mathematics teacher for his good personality, punctuality, warm affection, and delivery of well-prepared lessons. They expressed their obedience for him, as they stated, by doing their homework, keeping silent in the classroom and listening to him while he taught them, running errands, cleaning the blackboard, carrying his educational materials such as text books, duster, etc. One of them said, “እሱ ከክ የሆነ አስተማሪ ነው።” (he is as sweet as cake). In short, it means he is a ‘good teacher’. Therefore, students characterize a ‘good teacher’, a teacher who fulfilled the above mentioned qualities. Moreover, they respect and obey for such kind of teachers.

However, the same respondents uncovered that they do not obey for a 'bad teacher' - as they characterized a teacher who beats, degrades and harasses his students; does not keep his personality; drinks and smokes or chews **chat**; and fails to teach properly.

For example, they do not respect their civic teacher in that specific school.

የሲቪክ አስተማሪዎችን እናከብረውም ደደብ እያለ ስለሚሰድብንና ስለሚደብድብን። (We do not respect our civic teacher because he always beat and insult us by saying **dedeb** (stupid)). Therefore, we do not obey him. We are not happy when he enters our class. Most students do not do their civic homework. Nobody answers when he asks questions. We always disturb and irritate him.

The researcher observed when a group of students who were expelled and punished by the claimed teacher for they failed to do their homework. Some of them followed him and asked him to apologize for their faults while others shouted and insulted him. One of them said, *እሱ እኮ ቡዳ አስተማሪ ነው።* (He is a person of evil eye)"-means 'very bad teacher'. His friend also said that *እሱን ማእከሉ ነፍሱ ነበር መቅበር።* (It is better to bury him with his soul"). The boy wants to express his grievance and dissatisfaction with the mentioned teacher.

Rural children also expressed different modes of respects to their teachers. Some children told to the researcher through their interviews that they even respect teachers more than their parents.

Ayehu (F), age 17 respects teachers for they share her problems. She stated it like this:

They encouraged us to learn by giving moral support and sharing our problems. I even tell my secrets to them especially for my female teachers *እነ አጎዬ እኮ ችግራችንን*

ይረዱልናል:: (our female teachers understand our problems)
and they help us in every aspect.

Another girl, Alem (age 16) also said that she obeys teachers for they allow her to learn.

I respect and obey my teachers because I was able to learn with their help. My father does not want me to learn. He always nags and tells me to drop out school. Nevertheless, my teachers persuaded him to continue my education.

Kebebew (Male), age 17 respects his teachers more than his parents since they are his **Yekelem Abatoch** (father of intellect). **Yekelem Abat** means a person who imparts **kelem** (knowledge). So he expressed his concern for his teachers like this:

*ወላጆቼ ወለዱኝ እንጅ ምን አደረገልኝ እነ ጋሻ እኮ
ኑሮዬን የማሸነፍብትን የሀይወት ትጥቅ ነው የሚሰጡኝ
ስለዚህ የቀለም አባቶች ስለሆኑ አከብራችኋለሁ::*

My parents do nothing except they brought me to this world. However, teachers equipped me with basic skills that enable me to lead my life successfully. Therefore, I respect them since they are my **Yekelem Abatoch**

Before the advent of modern education into the area, churchmen were **Yekelem Abatoch** since they imparted knowledge but now this name is given to teachers. Nevertheless, no one dares to say **Yekelem Enat** to refer to female teachers since there was no woman priest who gave spiritual service to children in the Orthodox Christian culture.

Hence, rural children respect and obey their teachers more than that of the town. Some reported that they perceived them as their parents and tell their problems frankly, even which they did not tell for their parents.

However, it does not mean that they respect and obey all teachers equally. Like the town, there are teachers whom they disrespected by the students. So, girls revealed that there are few teachers who asked them for **Bilgina** (sexual relationship) while approaching them fatherly. Especially they mentioned the name of a teacher who has left the school. He used to practice this kind of relationships with his students. One of my informants was even victims of this assault. She described it as follows:

He called me and **Yashkoremimegnal** (initiates me for sexual relationship). He appointed me at the town to practice sexual relationship with him. Of course, some teachers married their students after they raped them fearing the disciplinary measures taken against them. Therefore, we do not respect such kinds of teachers. Although we hate them for their act of beatings and deducting our marks, we obey them.

Therefore, such a teacher did not fulfill the expectation of children to act as **Yekelem abat**. Some male students who participated in the FGD indicated that they do not respect teachers who harassed and punished them physically. Few teachers (as these students mentioned) drink **tella** (local beer) and they beat them with out any reason. Some students expressed their views as follows:

ከሴት አስተማሪዎችም የሚማቱ ክፉ አስተማሪዎች አሉ።

There are also bad female teachers who
Beat us and do not evaluate properly”.

Some of the expressions of disrespecting a teacher by these rural children are: - calling the teacher by name rather than saying **Gasha** or **Etiye** , being careless for copying the notes that a teacher gives, missing his class deliberately without any reason, discriminating against him during an invitation for holiday

ceremonies and religious festivals conducted at their homes, and attempting to threaten him both verbally and psychically. Therefore, students judge teachers' activities and behaviors and categorize them as 'good teachers' or 'bad teachers' accordingly. And they respect the former and disrespect the latter.

4.4.2 Respect and obedience at home

Below are some cases from the town children on how they show respect to their elder brothers and sisters:

Case 1: Abat (Male), age 17

Abat has a good relationship with his elder brother. He stated on how he showed respect and obedience to his elder brother in the following way.

I do any activity that my brother orders me to do. For example, I bring water when he eats his meal. I run-errand for him both at home and outside.

Case 2: Etsubdink (Male), age 16

Estub Dink lives alone. He has two brothers and frequently visits them. He expressed his obedience by washing their clothes.

Case 3: Liyew (Male), age 18

Liyew responded to the interview that his little brothers and a sister obey him by running errands and washing his socks. In return for this, he tutors them in each subject during his extra time.

All these cases indicate that most children are obedient to their elder brother and sisters. However, the mode of expressing their respect and obedience depends on the activities and duties assigned to them culturally as was discussed briefly in the cases above.

Some rural girls also discussed about on how they showed respect towards their elder brothers and sisters. They agreed that all obeyed both their elder brothers and sisters. However, they are more obedient to the former. One of them explained it like this: 'በእኛ ባህል ታላቅ ወንድምን አለመታዘዝ ነውር ነው':: (In our culture it is strange to reject the order of elder brothers). If I do that, my father, will punish me and my villagers perceive me as **Gatewot** (bad girl)".

So in this case, for girls being disobedient to their elder brothers subjected them to be regarded as 'bad girls. According to local elders, if a girl is conceptualized such a girl, she will not get a husband. Furthermore, her neighbors might isolate this girl for they think that she will spoil their children.

As it was observed and understood from some interviews, girls expressed their obedience to their parents by: washing legs, refraining themselves from talking equally with their parents, not eating together, accepting any order or instruction from their parents by saying **eshi! eshi!** (ok! ok!), standing up when the father blesses the family, and staying out or hiding some where inside the house when a guest comes to home.

With regard to showing respect and obedience towards their parents, I would like to present the data obtained through interviews of three rural girls for whom they obey more.

Aynalem: (F), age 15

I obey my mother more than I obey my father because she doesn't punish me when I make a mistake .She tolerates me and give me an advice, but I also obey my father only to get his blessing. If I refuse to obey him, **yiregmegnal** (he may curse me). As a result, **Aykenagnm** (I will become unlucky).

Meselech who is 17 also responded to above question in such a way:

I respect my mother more than my father because she defends me when my father beats me. However, I also obey him for I am afraid of his bad insults and physical punishment. He always beats me with silly faults. Therefore, if I become disobedient, he will give me his harsh punishment.

Tarik: (F), age 14

I have good relationship with both my father and my mother, but a little more with my mother because እሷ የሴት ልጅን ችግር ትረዳለች:: She understands the problems of females such as menstruation or other problems related to sexual relationships.

They also reported that their mother cared for their education while their fathers failed to do so. Because the latter wanted their daughters to get married by stopping them from going to school, they noted.

The same thing is true for rural boys. In the FGD held with them, they indicate that children have closer relationship with their mothers than their fathers. Most of them maintain that their mothers worry about their children concerning everything including educational and health problems. In contrast, their fathers forced them to drop their education for they need their labors for field works such as plough, herding cattle, etc.

In the town, relatively boys respect their fathers more than their mothers because, as they explained, the former fulfilled their needs better than the latter. Children of both town and rural are also expected to respect and obey religious leaders and elders of neighbors. They expressed their obedience by: standing up when a religious person enters their houses and taking his bless, and running errands for the elders of their neighbors.

4.4.3 Showing Respect in Words

Children of both rural and town are expected to show respect for adults in words and gesture apart from the various forms of activities they practice. Here are some nicknames used by children to express their respect for adults.

In the town, most children call their elder brothers **wondim Gashe** (my shield). Shield is an instrument used by patriots during wartime (fighting to defend any attack from an enemy). So in this case, as key informants noted, it is intended to infer that a brother is the main protector against any body who ignites a quarrel.

In the rural areas **wondimalem** (my brother), in Amharic **wondim** means brother, **Aya** (my eye) which is derived from an Amharic word **Ayen** means eye and **Tilaye** (my umbrella) are the most common names used by children to call their elder brothers. On the other hand, **Etalem** (my sister) is widely used by children of these areas to show respect for their elder sisters. The word **Etalem** comes from **Ehit** (Amharic word), which is equivalent to sister. So, **Etalem**

means my sister. However, town children call their sister by their names like adults.

There is also similarity for addressing parents both in town and rural areas. The name **Emiye** (my mother) and **Abiye** (my father) used for calling a mother and father, respectively. **Abiye** derived from Amharic word **Abat** (father) and **Emiye** from **Emamlak** (Saint Marry). The latter is used to indicate the pitiness of a mother who give true 'love' for her child like Virgin Mary did to the Christ (her son), as local elders and priests noted.

Furthermore, children are expected to show respect for elderly kins and neighbors in their use of words. For instance, in both town and rural areas, children call **Akiste** (my aunt) and **Agote** (my uncle) their aunts and uncles, respectively.

There is a distinction between the town and rural areas for calling neighbor elders, however. While **Irswo** and **Antu** used interchangeably for both an elder man and woman of a town, **Ababa** and **Emama** serve for calling an elder man and woman, respectively.

When these and other people (guests) visit their home, parents order the child to go away some where inside or outside the home. When the researcher visited **w/ro Etunat** (rural) for interview, he found her with her five children (3 males and 2 females). Soon she informed her children to stay outside by saying **Kilu Kilu** (go away).

I asked her why she said **kilu kilu** to her children and she responded that **yaschegeralu** (they might create some problems). When she explained **yaschegiralu**, children might pose some difficulties by interfering in the affairs of adults. So, as she explained my children would be categorized as '**Balege lijoch**'.

However, one of her children, Abel came to us and started playing with us while I was interviewing her. She tried to chase away from us but he refused to go. As a result she pinched him. He cried loudly and said, "I want to play with **Gashe** (the researcher). **Gashe** is used by rural children for calling a town elder man.

Therefore, as it is made clear from the above discussions children (mainly rural) are not allowed to participate equally with adults. There are some stereotype sayings, which reflect this like:

*ከልጅ አትጫወት
ይወጋሃል በአንጨት።*

Don't play with a child

For he pricks your eye.

This proverb has a cultural meaning of avoiding children from adults' world. In addition, it depicts as if children were sources of problems. From these cases, it is possible to infer that there are variations in the modes of showing respect for adults between urban and rural children, and also boys and girls of these areas.

To conclude, children express their respect and obedience both verbally and non-verbally for parents, teachers, sisters, brothers, etc. Children respect their teachers who do not practice corporal punishment, smoke, and drunk or chew chat, and abuse students physically and sexually.

Children obey to their parents mainly for three reasons: Firstly, for socio-cultural reasons- to be blessed and get acceptance by adults as **Tiru lij** (good boy/good girl). Secondly, based on the affection and care given to them. As indicated in the cases children give more respect for parents who provide better care for their lives. Finally, fearing the practice of verbal and physical punishments.

In both the town and rural areas, girls are more obedient than boys because being obedience is one of the most important qualities of a good girl.

In general, from all these discussions, it is possible to analyze that children respect and obey adults (parents, teachers, elder brothers, and sisters) due to the cultural schema they developed through their social interaction with these groups. They learned the ways on how they expressed respect and obedience during their socialization. Therefore, one of the major characteristics of cultural schema is sharedness. Meanings, expectations, interpretations are shared through social interactions (Straus and Quin 199:9).

So far, we have seen how the behavior of children is dictated by cultural scheme in showing respect and obedience to adults. Next, we shall see, the effect of reward and punishment on the mode of children's behavior.

4.5 Punishments and Rewards

4.5.1 Punishment

Punishment is a penalty for an offense, any damage, or misbehavior. Children are often punished by their parents, teachers, and elder brothers either at home or in the school.

4.5.1.1 Punishment at home

In the study area, most children reported that their fathers mostly practiced heavy punishments. Some of them as they mentioned were: -floggings with belt or rod, pricking head, beating with stick, and sometimes boxing, which would result in bodily harms or injuries. The following four cases from the town affirmed this fact.

Abel, age 22 said that his father punishes him with slap and stick or ride. However, his mother does not punish him except some harmless punishments like **quintcha** (pinch) and light slaps.

Another boy, Fekadu, age 18, lives independently. Yet, previously while he was with his parents, his father used to punish him with **chenger** (a kind of stick) when he became disobedient or commits some offenses.

Similarly, Kadija and Alamwork said that the punishments of their fathers were more severe than that of their mothers. Especially the former remembered an incident in which her four teeth had fallen with repeated boxes of her father.

On the same manner, most rural children also uncovered that their fathers imposed harsh corporal punishments up on them. The kinds of punishments were even heavier than that of the town. Some of them as they mentioned were; Prohibition of food, beatings with a stick, rope, or any other materials and floggings on back or lower part of the legs.

4.5.1.2 Punishment in the School

During my fieldwork, I observed that most of the time children of both the town and rural were punished by their subject teachers, monitors and unit leaders. Three kinds of punishments were practiced: Insults, physical abuse, and punishment by money. I discovered that most of the punishments were similar to that of the home, while others became different. To mention some of them like cleaning toilets (for girls), digging whole (for males), and kneeling down (for both), are some of the punishments practiced only in their homes.

In both school and home, pricking heads, beatings with stick or road were practiced. While other punishments such as cleaning toilets (for girls), digging hole (males), punishment by sport (for boys), and kneeling down (for both sexes)

were peculiar to the school. In principle, as the director of the school said, physical punishment was prohibited. Nevertheless, it became difficult to implement it because of the misbehavior of the students, he concluded. Of course, I heard the complaints of some teachers of this school about the intolerable misbehavior of students. They reported that some students usually sneak out (**meforef**) and go to **Amrachoch sefer**(known local beer area).

In **Amrachoch**, '**Tiru Tella**' (best local beer) is found. Some used to go school after they had drunk and too much **Tella** (local beer) and became disobedient to their teachers, as they noted. I also observed one student who threatened the teacher physically. Finally, a police took this student. Such kinds of misbehavior of the students are common in Negus Tekle Haymanot Junior and Elementary School. It was known as a school of **Durye** (gangs) from the rest of school found in the town. Most of children of this school came from the **Mota Sefer** (a known prostitution and drinking area). Consequently, most teachers complained about the behavior of these students.

Nevertheless, there are one strong students' police, which actually involves in correcting the misbehavior of student. As I observed students, listened their advices and were more obedient to them than their unit leaders. They often patrol students at break time and lunchtime to avoid accidental quarrels among children. In addition, they give advice to students by rotating form class to class.

The director of the school also confirmed that that they brought big behavioral changes on students' behavior. Before the establishment of this committee, it was difficult for teachers to teach properly inside the classroom because of the misbehavior of some students. Even unit leaders were beaten, he added. Moreover, they mediate the quarrels between students and teacher. If some cases were beyond their capacity, they would report to the school administration, as a member of this club noted.

Thus, the above cases illustrate that children are actors. They are not source of problems' as some adults complain. They are rather active agents for bringing changes in the structures of the society.

From FGD conducted with children of this school on the use of physical punishment, some said that harmless punishments like pinching slight slaps are important to keep the discipline of students. However, most of them agreed that physical punishment could not convert their misbehavior. Rather, it encourages them for more violence. Finally, they underlined that the practice of physical punishment has violated their rights.

Few teachers share this idea by arguing that corporal punishment could bring serious bodily harm. One of them remembered an incident of the damage of one student's eye by him and subjected to expensive **Kassa** (reparation payments).

However, the majority participants of FGD (from this school) agreed that light punishment such as **quinticha** (pinch), was necessary for adjusting (correcting) the behavior **Balege lijoch** (misbehaved students).

4.5.2 Reward

Reward is something that is given in return for good behavior, attainment or service. The following interviewees from rural areas responded on how and when they get rewards.

Case 1: Biresaw (m), age 10

When I collect firewood for home consumption, my mother blesses me with a word **Tebarek** (God bless you) and gives me **chibto** (a kind of food prepared from a powder of grain).

Case 2: Amelework (F), age 12

My mother praises me by saying **Yasadigish** (May you grow up) when I run-errands for her inside the home and keep the gate.

Case 3: Abebaw (male), age 16

My elder sister gives me prize like watch, dictionary when I pass to the next grade level. My father also praises me with a word **tagleh tal** (be victorious over an opponent).

When I asked her father the cultural meaning of **tagleh tal**, he responded that getting victory over an opponent during a quarrel.

Case 4: Alemnesh (F), age 12

When I fetch water for my mother, she blesses me - **wog mareg eyi** (may you get married). **Emama**, my neighbor, however gives me **tella** (local beer) during my occasional help at her home.

Case 5: Edmealem, age 18

My father blesses me saying **Konjo tal** (may a beautiful girl fall in love with you) when I lay the wood, which I collected from the forest. I also run errands for my neighbors.

The above cases illustrate that reward is given mainly based on gender and age. The form of reward mainly depicts gender inequality, however. **Konjo tal**, **tagleh tal** (see case4) and **wog mareg eyi** can be taken as good examples in this regard. In the former case, **konjo tal** or **tagleh tal** has two cultural meanings. Firstly, it depicts the muscular superiority of boys over girls. Secondly, this kind

of reward might encourage boys for the practice of rape. Because, if they are brought up with such praises, they might tend to think and practice rape. The second case clearly depicts as if girls were marital objects because the praise **wog mareg eyi**, as an elder woman explained, is to get marry. Thus, this case indicates that marriage is regarded as the only possible way of female's livelihood.

Urban children also responded to the above question in the following way:

Case 1: Abera (male), age 11

Every year my father buys clothes when I get promoted to the next grade level. In addition, he praises me when I run errands for him to the market. In school also, I was awarded educational materials such as books, dictionary, exercises books, and bags.

Case 2: Yenegus (F), age 9

My mother buys chewing gum and toys when I help her at home like cleaning houses, watering the garden, etc. some times my elder brother encourages me to be **Gobez** (brave) student by buying shoes and watch. My English teacher also always gives me morals by writing my name on the black board and ordering the students to clap for me.

Case 3: kedija (F), age 17

My father praises me by saying **allah yistish** (may god fulfill it whatever you need) whenever I wash his clothes.

Case 4: Estifanos (Male), age 12

Both my mother and my father bless me when I do good things for them like cleaning house, preparing coffee, taking care of my little brothers. They praise me by saying **Geta Yibarkeh** (may God bless you).

One parent told me that he gives a spoon of honey for his children when they scored good results in a class test. A Muslim parent also stated that he always buys a new cloth for his children every year whenever they have been promoted to the next grade level.

These cases illustrate that various religious and social groups reward town children differently. However, for rural children religion was not found as important variable in the distribution of rewards for the absence of religious differentiations as described earlier under the topic peer group formation. The kind of reward given to children also depends on the type of activities performed by children. It varies from oral blessing (praise) to material rewards, which is also similar to that of rural children.

Another similarity is drawn on the importance of gender in determining the kind of rewards that children should receive. In both cases, rewards are given based on the division of labor and expected behavior that the culture assigns to them. For instance, girls are rewarded mainly for their domestic activities inside the home such as washing legs, washing clothes; fetching water, etc. On the other hand, the rewards of boys are depended mainly for their activities outside home.

HAPTER FIVE

5. GENDER AND EDUCATION

5.1. Gender as a social construction

Gender is a social construction of perceiving men and women roles and responsibilities based on various socio-cultural factors. Gender differs from sex in that the latter reflects the biological differences while the former is learned (H.Moor 1988:12; and Rosaldo 1980:6). Since the conceptualizations of women and men roles differ from culture to culture, gender is not a permanent and universal phenomenon. Rather, it changes through time in accordance with the progress of human technological development (Kotak: 1981).

The responsibilities and activities of men and women, therefore, are learned. These learned tasks and activities that "a culture assigns to the sexes" are called gender roles (Ibid). Most anthropologists underline that gender roles are the products of socialization. Children learn gender roles during socializations. The structure of the society has a great impact on the construction of gender roles.

Thus, in this chapter, an analysis is made on the conceptualization of activities of boys and girls by the society and children themselves. In addition, a conclusion is drawn from it whether these activities are determined by structures of the society, or not. The last part of this chapter assesses children's education based on gender analysis.

5.1.1 Activities of Boys in the Town versus Rural

There are significant variations on the activities of boys of the town and rural areas although both are assigned for activities outside home. Boys in the rural area are engaged in tiresome field activities. Most of them plough, look after animals, carry woods, water irrigation canals, collect animals, milk cows etc. For

instance, if we look at the diary of Hailu, he wakes up early in the morning and milks cows. Then, he goes to school. After school, he helps his father by ploughing in the farmland. After that, he takes the oxen to the pastureland and grazes them. In addition, he helps his parents with seasonal agricultural tasks like harvesting and threshing.

In contrast, most boys of the town are engaged relatively in light field activities like shopping, running errands, etc. However, this does not mean that all town boys are less loaded. There are even some boys who do jobs, which are assigned to girls. For example, if we look at the diary of Mesfin, he frequently helps his old mother with different home activities such as preparing coffee, fetching water, cleaning house and the like.

5.1.2 Activities of Girls in Town versus Rural

Most rural and urban girls do several burdensome and difficult home activities, which are similar, while others are entirely different. Nevertheless, rural girls are found more loaded with home activities than town girls. The following two cases help us to recognize some similarities and differences of activities between the town and rural girls.

Case 1: Ayehu (a rural girl), age 16

I wake up at 6. a.m. and, I clean the dung of domestic animals. At 7:00, I go to school. I leave school at 1.50 pm. and arrive at home at 2.00 pm. Then, I fetch water from the river. After that, I prepare food and take care of babies. Occasionally, I also look after and collect domestic animals. I revise my daily lessons after my parents have gone to sleep.

Case 2: Feven (town), age 16

I wake up at 7:00 am in the morning. Then, I prepare coffee. I leave school at 3:00, pm., and reach home at 3:10 pm. As soon as I reach home, I take my early supper. Then, I prepare coffee for my mother. After that, I water the garden flower. Finally, I revise my daily lessons before I sleep.

The above two cases illustrate that rural girls are engaged in more dangerous and loaded works than town girls. As indicated in case above, activities such as cleaning the faces of animals, fetching water from a river, looking after animals, etc. are the day-to-day activities of rural girls in the study area.

Most girls of the town also share some of these routine activities of the rural girls as it is exemplified in case 2. Some of them are preparing coffee or **wat** (stew), baking **injera**, cleaning cloth, taking care of babies, and running errands are often very similar to the tasks of rural girls.

Unlike the town girls, rural girls even do some works, which are assigned for boys like looking after and collecting domestic animals, harvesting and milking cows (see, case1). Therefore, it seems no clear-cut boundary between the activities of boys and girls in the rural areas.

Generally, from all the above discussions it is possible to conclude that girls of both the town and rural areas do burdensome home activities than boys. However, rural girls are more loaded than that of their town equivalent. Similarly, boys of the rural are engaged in the more dangerous and tiresome field activities.

The factors caused this distinction of gender-based division of labor force me to investigate more beyond the above data. Nevertheless, some anthropologists and sociologists have already indicated in their findings that the differential treatments of boys and girls at home, as mothers and fathers train their daughters for routine home activities and activities outside home, respectively, led for discrepancies in gender roles (Draper 1974 and Brouwn 1973). So, they point their fingers towards parents. Hence, whether this analogy works in my study or not, let's now see the views of parents from different religious and social groups.

5.1.3 Views of parents on the activities of boys and girls at home

Most parents of the town argued that domestic activities should be belonged to girls. They gave different reasons for it. For instance, Manayesh (woman), age 60, and a protestant follower explained it as follows. "Girls should carry out home activities because boys and girls are not equally endowed naturally and I train all my daughters for these activities."

For her, natural (biological) differences caused the gender roles. Another parent (Orthodox), however, considers religion as a major factor. She said "The Bible allows women for home activities while men are assigned for tasks outside home. For example, the bible allows males only to give priest hood services".

Nevertheless, a highly educated parent disagreed on the above arguments. He has two children (one boy, 12 years old and a girl, 10 years old). As he replied, there is no division of labor for his children. Both do the home activities by helping each other, he added. During my stay at his home, I also observed his son while he was cooking **wat**.

The above typologies tell us that various factors contribute for the conceptualization of children's activities, like religion, social and cultural. As a result, the perception of gender roles differs based on these factors. Thus, this strengthens the argument of gender as a socially constructed behavior (H.Moor: 1998).

5.2. EDUCATION

Church education was one of the bases of modern education for the town of Debremarkos in particular and the county as a whole. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church had dominated the county's educational systems for a long period. Debremarkos was not an exception to this. Church education had been the main instructional system before the expansion of modern education in to the area. It was the home of many church students. This form of traditional educational system predominated the area until the post Italian invasion. Therefore, modern education in Debremarkos is a post-Italian invasion phenomenon.

The first school was opened in 1934, by Ras Imiru Haile Sellassie (local governor). This school was called Negus Tekle Haymanot School. I don't want to go in to details, since it seems more of history. Here, the main objective is to take a closer look at the participation of students in the classroom and to study the major problems of girls' education.

5.2.1 Participation in the Classroom

Class participation is one of the major principles of active learning. In this kind of learning, students should react to what ever the teacher says or asks. They may participate in the classroom by asking and answering questions, doing group work, assignments and projects, etc. Despite the fact that there are many determinants of class participation of students such as (class size, normative rules, accessibility of materials books, teaching aids, the nature of the subject

matter, etc...), the teacher plays a significant role in this regard.

In the study area, the researcher observed three kinds of teachers. The majority of teachers do not allow their students to involve in the class. Some of them are so strict that the students are afraid of talking in front of them. Others are too careless to encourage their students. They don't care whether students participate or not. They simply give notes and even go out with out explaining it.

Nevertheless, few teachers allow and encourage their students for class participation. Teacher Demissie is an English teacher for grade seven. Most of the time, he allows his students to involve in his class through group work. Students were divided in to seven groups each with a group leader. The teacher based on academic performance selected group leaders. Most of them are males except two girls.

In general, girls have lower class participation than boys. Some girls explained the reason that they were discouraged by some teachers when they tried to participate. One of them explained it in such a way.

Some teachers do not want to ask or answer questions for them. If we ask or reply, they will demoralize us by considering our answers or questions as irrelevant and silly. Then, the classmates laugh at us. Furthermore, we are given nicknames like **kelblaba**.

Most teachers like the conduct of a girl, (as one of them described), who does her homework and has good academic performance but should be a 'silent' girl, and **Yematedafer** (who doesn't dare teachers). According to this teacher, a girl who asks many questions to a teacher is considered as 'daring' or 'disrespect ion'.

Another teacher also supported this idea by saying through his metaphoric explanation **Neger Belib New** (knowledge is in mind). I also observed that many gentle female students had low class participation while I taught them substituting English teacher. Therefore, for a girl being 'silence' is one of the yardstick measurements of 'gentleness'.

5.2.2 Problems of Girls Education

In rural areas, the major problems of girls' education are the following as described by girls and their advisors.

5.2.2.1 Early Marriage

Early marriage is widely practiced in the rural areas of Eastern Gojam. As advisors of girls' and the director of the school explained, many children dropped out of the school due to forced early marriage arranged by their parents. One of the girls' advisors from this school said that many children from grade four up to six dropped out school for this reason. According to her, the committee of female advisors (which include girls and female teachers) was responsible for combating against the practice of early marriage in the area.

This committee gathers information about early marriage particularly during marriage seasons. The first lasts from January up to the middle of February, which was traditional known as **Kebela**. The second marriage season, in which a large number of couples get married, lasts for three weeks beginning from **Dagmia Fasika** (a week after Easter). During this season, many children are forced to get married. Hence, the committee becomes active during these two seasons. Members of this committee collect information from students of each village who are on the ways of getting married. They list their full name, residential area, age, and other information. Then, the committee reports to the director and the latter to the district office of justice. Finally, the school in collaboration with this office can cancel the cases before the marriage takes place.

From the FGD conducted with girls of grade six and seven, many of them were victims of this early marriage. Their ages range between seven and thirteen. According to their discussions, most of their friends dropped out of school because of early marriage. Some restarted after a couple of weeks or months and others after a year. As girls said, they became demoralized and ashamed of having been part of an early marriage. Moreover, their academic performance declined. One of them told me a proverb that undermines girls' education. This was: ሴት ብትማር የት ልትደርስ። -Which literally means, whether a girl is educated or not, she doesn't make any difference in her life.

5.2.2.2 Rape

The other traditional practice, which became an obstacle to girls' education, was rape. As girls and their committee indicated, many children come from distant areas where they have to cross-difficult obstacles such as rivers, and forests. As a result, they are exposed to sexual assault. Rape can also be practiced in their home by their close relatives. For this reason, some girls dropped their education and they became depressed.

5.2.2.3 Workload

Girls are heavily burdened with their jobs in the home. From the interviews conducted with rural girls, their daily activities such as fetching water, clearing the dung of animals, preparing breakfast reduced the time they could allot to schoolwork.

One female teacher from a rural school expressed the attitude of local people towards girls. According to her, girls have many problems. Most of the time, the latecomers to school were girls. They also drop out of school early. This is mainly due to early marriage and child labor.

The director of the school said that in collaboration with the **kebele** office, they were able to cancel many cases of early marriage each year. Last year for instance, three girls (one from grade one and two from grade three) were forced by their parents to get married. Their ages range from six up to twelve. At that time, the girls' advisors informed the case to the office of justice and they were able to cancel this marriage, he added.

The above discussions illustrate that girls have several constraints such as early marriage, rape, workload, and the like. Some of them are practiced in their home while others are in the school. These problems have a great impact on girls' educational lives.

Nevertheless, the girls neither accepted gracefully nor submitted to these systems (cultural influences). Girls did their best to come out from these problems. It is discussed briefly that they had combated or

Education played a pivotal role in this regard. It is through education that girls could dispute the structures of the society. Hadn't girls known the harmfulness of some cultural practices, they would not have been aware of the impacts of these systems. Hence, the more they become educated, the better they understand the problems. Therefore, they challenge the various socio-cultural constraints posed up on them.

Generally, children are embedded with various structures of the society. Some of these structures influence the over all activities of children. In the above discussions, we have seen how some cultural practices such as early marriage and rape challenged the school lives of girls. However, these structures couldn't determine the activities of children. That is why Practice theorists like Ortnor (1984) and Giddens (1984) focus on the role of actors. They argue that children are not simple recipients of adult structures as they have higher agency in their own lives. Therefore, children are actors who have the capacities to transform those structures that affect their lives and invent new ones.

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CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION

One of the central problems of theorizing children and childhood was related to the conceptualization of children as passive representatives of adult influences. This concept is used to describe children merely from the views or perspectives of such structuralists that give emphasis for social structures rather than to human action. Such an approach gives very limited information about children since they are mainly seen as passive subjects rather than as active human beings.

The findings of this comparative study indicate that structures in the sense of social institutions, traditions, and norms have a great impact on the lives of children. The discussions and subsequent analysis of the preceding chapters illustrate how some structures /systems of the society such as gender, age, religion, education, early marriage, work load, etc, influence most activities of children both in the rural and the urban setting. However, the impacts of these traditions are not quite the same for rural and urban children. For example, while religion is very important for the choice of friends of the town children, it becomes insignificant for rural children. It affects peer formation, plays, gender roles, and the over all socialization of children.

Some cultural practices such as early marriage, rape, and workload, on the other hand, affect rural children, especially rural girls. Hence the influences of social structures are not quite the same for urban and rural children.

One of the conclusions of the study is, therefore, that although structures have a great impact on the lives of children, they do not determine their activities.

Children in town did not form peer groups merely through the discriminatory religious influences of their parents but by their own choice and free will. Rural children also challenged some cultural practices like early marriage, workload, and rape.

Despite the impact of these traditions, children were not simple recipients of outside influences. They tended to challenge some of the structures that affect their lives. For instance, rural girls disputed some cultural practices such as early marriage and rape. They not only disputed but also took practical actions in averting and transforming such practices. They were even able to cancel some cases of early marriage by organizing themselves.

Another practical action discussed in the study about how children challenge the structures of society was the activities of town school children in curbing down the practice of corporal punishments of their unit leaders and subject teachers. For instance, students' police help the work of unit leaders in keeping the order of the school. Furthermore, the activities of children in various clubs like Mini - Media, & Anti-HIV, indicate that children are actors who could transform the structures of the society.

Therefore, this study can conclude that children are not only actors, but also they reproduce the cultural patterns of the society in which they grow up. As actors, they are involved themselves equally with adults by participating in the school system. They even tried to modify some of the school system through the activities of their committees. They were even able to reduce the harsh corporal punishments of unit leaders and subject teachers by keeping the order of the school.

Thus, the findings of this study do not correlate with the approach of structuralists who argue that structures/systems determine each and every activity of children because children are active agents in the societies in which

they live. Rather, it conforms with the notions of two current practice theorists, Ortner(1987) and Giddens(1979). Particularly, the former reconciles the two perspectives by arguing that neither structures determine the activities of actors nor are the latter 'free agents'.

Children in both the rural and urban study areas played an important role in the questioning of the accepted cultural patterns. Some of their activities were highly affected, even constrained, by the underlying local structures. For example, in the rural areas several girls were forced to drop out of their education because of early marriage and rape. In addition, the practice of corporal punishment both at home and in school brought bodily harm and injuries to many children. Furthermore, the gender-based division of labor at home affected the academic performance of girls. Therefore, this study confirms that structures, which are products of human interaction, have a great impact on but do not determine the activities of children. As a result, it supports the theoretical approaches of Ortner (1987) that underline actors are not totally free agents but rather embedded within various constraints or structures. Still, actors can challenge and transform these constraints, and even invent new ones. Thus, approaches, which stress children's agency, enable us to understand the role of children as social actors more than the structural approach.

The other important thing, which needs mentioning, was the role of children in the reproduction and transformation of the local cultural schema, which they acquire when growing up. Previously, it was discussed that children share some of the underlying dominant local cultural schema. This was clearly reflected through the modes of behavior and actions when they showed respect and obedience, their gender roles and the plays of children both in rural and urban areas.

Two patterns in the cultural schema are predominant, namely hierarchical relations when showing respect and obedience and egalitarian relations in their play. Obviously, they learned these when they interacted with the people around them.

The study clearly depicts how children of the rural and urban areas reproduced both hierarchical and egalitarian relations but in different ways. For instance, through respect and obedience, children adapt and reproduce the ways in which they express the cultural pattern both in words and in actions to adults, teachers, parents, elder brothers and sisters, religious leaders, and elder neighbors. However, we have to remember that there are variations in showing respect and obedience for boys and girls, in both rural and urban areas although both reflect hierarchical relations. Concerning gender roles, children reproduce some of the culturally assigned tasks, and expected behaviors.

Therefore, this study concludes that children reproduce various local cultural schemas, which they acquire during the course of their lives. They reproduce hierarchical relations, patron-client relations, gender roles etc. Nevertheless, the role of children is not only restricted to reproduce the local cultural schemas but also in the transformation and even inventions of new forms. As was discussed earlier, children dispute some patterns of the local cultural schema like corporal punishments, some rules of respect and obedience respect, avoidance of adults e.g. by not eating together or talking equally with adults.

Hence, one of the most important aspects of this study is that there is both continuity and change in social life. By continuity, we mean that children perpetuate the underlying local cultural schema. We have seen in the previous chapters that children share and continue the local cultural schema. Continuity indicates consistency with the local cultural schema. However, change shows in quest of transformations. Therefore, continuity and change are very important aspects in children's lives that they learn to handle through experiencing

interactions with the people who surround them.

Thus, these three interrelated theories of cognitive anthropology; cultural schema, practice and structure are very helpful in understanding the conceptualization of children and childhood. Through structure, we learn to what extent social structures affect the lives of children, while practice theory tells us the role of actors despite the structures. In addition, through cultural schema, we learn the need to focus on both continuity and change.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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