



SEEK WISDOM, ELEVATE YOUR INTELLECT AND SERVE HUMANITY !

Addis Ababa University
አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ



**Opportunities and Challenges of the Ban of Inter-country Adoption:
the case of selected organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

By: Hiwot Tilahun

**A Thesis Submitted to School of Social Work, Addis Ababa
University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters
in Social Work**

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

**Opportunities and Challenges of the Ban of Inter-country Adoption: The Case
of Selected Organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

By: Hiwot Tilahun

Advisor: Abebe Aseffa (PhD)

A Thesis Submitted to School of Social Work, Addis Ababa University

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Social
Work**

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

December, 2020

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Hiwot Tilahun entitled: **Opportunities and Challenges of the Ban of Inter-country Adoption: The Case of Selected Organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**; submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Masters of Arts (School of Social Work) complies with the regulation of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Acknowledgement

First off, I would like to say God: through Your enduring grace and unfailing mercy I have reached here. I am nothing without You and I am forever indebted to You!

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to my instructor and advisor Dr. Abebe Assefa for his time and helpful advices and directions throughout this research. Candidness is one of the lifelong lesson I got from you.

Next my highest thankfulness goes to Tigist Bazezew who has journeyed with me from the start till the very end. I would not have been able to do this without her support and encouragement.

My heartfelt thanks goes to my beloved family and friends as well! I can't thank you enough for always being there for me and encouraging me.

It is rare and most fortunate thing to find a group of compassionate academicians and staff which I have come across at the Social Work Department. With this note I would like to forward my sincere gratitude to Commander Dr. Demelash Kassaye for being exemplary Social Worker.

Finally, I would like to extend my earnest thankfulness to all of the participants of this study. Without your cooperation and priceless participation this study would have never happened. I am grateful to you all for providing me with all the useful information that comprised this study, with no hesitation.

Table of Contents

Page

Acknowledgement	i
Contents	ii
Abstract	v
Acronyms and Abbreviations	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Statement of the problem	3
3. Objective	5
3.1 General Objective	5
3.2 Specific Objectives	5
4. Research Question	5
5. Significance of the Study	6
6. Scope of the Study – Indent	6
7. Limitation of the Study - Indent.....	6
CHAPTER TWO	8
2. Literature Review	8
2.1. Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ethiopia	8
2.2 Existing child care alternatives in Ethiopia.....	10
2.3. History of Inter Country Adoption in Ethiopia.....	11
2.4. Inter country adoption and Child trafficking and abuse.....	13
2.5. Inter country adoption and Identity Crisis	16
2.6. Culture of domestic adoption in Ethiopia	17
2.7. Other countries experience regarding Inter Country Adoption.....	19
CHAPTER THREE	21
3. Research Methodology	21
3.1. Research Design.....	21
3.2. Study Area	23
3.3. Participants of the Study	24
3.4. Sampling	24

3.5. Instruments of Data Collection	25
3.5.1. In-depth interview	26
3.5.2. Key-informant interview.....	26
3.5.3 Observation	27
3.6. Data Analysis Techniques.....	27
3.7. Ethical Considerations	27
CHAPTER FOUR	29
4. Findings	29
4.1. The rationale behind the ban of ICA.....	29
4.1.1 Inconvenience for follow up and supervision	29
4.1.2 Child trafficking and abuse	31
4.1.3 Identity Crisis faced by adopted children.....	35
4.1.4 Implementation gaps	39
4.1.5 Priority for Domestic Adoption and other local alternatives	43
4.2. The Opportunities of the Ban of ICA.....	45
4.2.1 Improvement in the practice of domestic adoption and other local alternatives	45
4.2.2 Clearing up implementation gaps and malpractices.....	50
4.3. The challenges of the ban of ICA and limitations of the proclamation	54
4.3.1 The challenges of the ban of ICA	54
4.3.1.1. Closure and downsizing of organizations	55
4.3.1.2 Additional burden on the governmental institutions	59
4.3.2 The limitations of the proclamation	63
4.3.2.1 Disregarding less developed domestic adoption practice	64
4.3.2.2 Lack of research and analysis	66
4.3.2.3. Lack of exceptions	68
CHAPTER FIVE	75
5. Discussion.....	75
5.1. Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ethiopia.....	75
5.2 Existing child care alternatives in Ethiopia.....	76
5.3. History of Inter Country Adoption in Ethiopia.....	76
5.4. Inter country adoption and Child trafficking and abuse.....	77

5.5. Inter country adoption and Identity Crisis	78
5.6. Culture of domestic adoption in Ethiopia	79
5.7. Other countries that banned ICA	81
CHAPTER SIX.....	82
6. Conclusion and Implication	82
6.1 Conclusion	82
6.2 Implications.....	84
6.2.1. Implication for social work practice	84
6.2.2. Implication for policy maker.....	84
References	i
ANNEXES	vi

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the rationale, the opportunities and challenges of the ban of inter-country adoption on a few selected organizations as a general objective. The study has specific objectives of looking into the existing child care alternatives, understanding the rationale behind the ban, assessing the opportunities and the challenges of the ban. The research was a qualitative study applying instruments of data collection such as observation, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. The study followed exploratory research design and case study method. Although there are different types of case studies, illustrative case study type has been applied. The researcher applied both primary and secondary data sources.

The study area of this research was in selected child care organizations that used to work on Inter Country Adoption (ICA) and government offices that are stakeholders in the area under study. These organizations include Sele Enat Mahiber (SEM) and Kibebe Tsehay Orphanage, Bethany Christian Services (BCS), Holt International, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) and Addis Ababa City Administration Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (BoWCYA). Purposive sampling was applied to select the participants of the study as the participants of this study were administrative bodies of these organizations. There were a total of twelve participants, two from each organization.

The findings of this research indicated that there were a few rationales behind the ban such as challenges for follow up, identity crisis and child trafficking. The opportunities of the ban were improvement in the local childcare alternatives and clearing up implementation gaps and malpractices related to ICA. Some of the challenges of the ban were downsizing and closure of organizations and additional burden on government orphanages. The proclamation of the ban had its own limitations as well which include disregarding less developed local alternatives, lack of research and lack of exceptions. Based on the findings, the researcher has concluded that the ban on ICA should be partially ineffective and ICA should remain practical for exceptional cases. Finally, Implications for Social Work practice and policy makers have been forwarded.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACPF – African Child Policy Forum

ACRWC – African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children

AIDS –Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BCS – Bethany Christian Services

BoWCYA – Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs

FHI – Family Health International

HPR – House of Peoples Representative

HIV – Human Immune Virus

HSRC – Human Sciences Research Council

ICA – Inter-country Adoption

IJMSSR – International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research

MoWCYA – Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs

MoLSA – Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

OVC – Orphan and Vulnerable Children

SEM – Sele Enat Mahiber

UNICEF – United Nations Children Emergency Fund

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

For a child to have full and harmonious development of her or his personality it is important that he or she be raised in a family environment, where she or he can feel happy, feel loved and understood (UNCRC, 1990). Nonetheless, when a child is deprived of his/her family environment; the state has the responsibility to accord special protection and further encourage institutions that advances their welfare and education and ensures and promotes their adoption to be established as clearly stated on Article 36(5) of the Ethiopian constitution.

Ethiopia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child (ACRWC). Furthermore, there are local legal frameworks in place to protect the rights of children. The government has also come up with different alternative childcare strategies to provide services that redress the problems of orphan and vulnerable children (OVC). These childcare alternatives include community based child care, reunification and reintegration, foster family care, adoption and institutional child care (MoWCYA, 2009).

Ethiopia is among the African countries implementing adoption as one of the alternative childcare options. Adoption is one of a wide range of practices that societies throughout the world have developed to allow a child who is unable to live with his/her parents for different reasons and to be brought up in a stable family based environment (ACPF, 2012).

Adoption is recognized as an alternative care option which may take domestic or inter country form. The latter is a last resort and will only be employed when domestic adoption or other alternative care mechanisms at domestic level are exhausted (Melat, 2018). Until recently, Ethiopia was implementing both domestic and inter-country adoption alternatives. Domestic adoption is an adoption that involves adoptive parents and a child of the same nationality and the same country of residence. On the other hand, according to MoWCYA (2009), inter-country adoption (ICA) is defined as an adoption that involves a change in the child's habitual country of residence, whatever the nationality of the adopting parents. It also includes an adoption that involves parents of a nationality other than that of the child whether or not they reside and continue to reside in the child's habitual country of residence (Pp.11).

On January 2, 2018 the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's (FDRE) House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) has reformed the federal adoption law by voting on a bill that put an indefinite suspension on ICA on Proclamation No 1070/2018 to harmonize the revised Family Code with the National Children's Policy (The Reporter, 2018). As per the National Children's Policy (2017) the rationale for the ban was the fact that ICA falls short of satisfactorily compensating for the parental love and care the child is deprived of in Ethiopia and it further caused an ensuing identity crisis. As a result, ICA is excluded from the means of alternative care options for the OVC. Inter country adoption, along with domestic adoption, was placed as a fourth alternative preceding institutional care only, until the ban happened. Even while it was in practice, it was supposed to be taken as a last resort after all local alternatives such as community based child care, reunification and reintegration, foster care and adoption are thoroughly exploited.

Despite the alarming number of orphan and vulnerable children in the country, the government has decided to ban ICA because it was believed as the demerits outweighed the merits. Therefore, this research aims at presenting the rationale behind the ban of ICA, and exploring the opportunities and challenges that came along with the ban of ICA.

2. Statement of the problem

In Africa, every 15 seconds another child becomes an AIDS orphan, every day 5,760 more children become orphans, every year 2,102,400 more children become orphans (IJMSSR, 2014). According to a study conducted in January 2014, 143,000,000 orphans in the world spend an average of 10 years in an orphanage or foster home while 250,000 children are adopted annually (Ibid). Every year 14,050,000 children still grow up as orphans and age out of the system (Ibid).

Over ninety-six million or 44.2 % of the estimated Ethiopian population is under the age of 14. In 2012, there were 4.5 million orphaned children (900,000 due to Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNICEF, 2014). According to a head count of street children in 2010, done by UNICEF in collaboration with the Ethiopian Bureau of Woman and Children Affairs and Street Invest London, there were about 10,710 street children living in Addis Ababa, of which 67% were boys (Ibid). However, this number needs to be taken with caution, especially due to the fact that girls are less visible (seeking protection by night in rented rooms or safe places in order to prevent sexual abuse; engaged in work as house maids or prostitution). This extremely vulnerable community is deprived of its basic needs, like shelter, food sufficiency and medical care (Ibid).

Natural calamities, war, extreme poverty, accidents, terminal diseases, epidemics, etc. are among the reasons that could deprive of a child of natural family environment turning them into an orphan and/or vulnerable. Orphan problems are universal, but the magnitude varies from one geographical location to the other. In 2015, there were nearly 140 million orphans globally including 61 million in Asia, 52 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IJMRSSR, 2019). This figure includes orphan who had lost both parents and “half” or “single” orphans who had lost only one parent. Orphan and vulnerable children suffer profoundly and experience psychosocial distress, economic hardship, and withdrawal from school, malnutrition and illness, loss of inheritance, fear, isolation and increased abuse and risk of HIV/AIDS (Melat, 2018).

Supporters of ICA assert that it is the most viable solution for the disparity of the number of children without families and number of families without children. As opposed to other alternative care mechanisms, adoption provides a child with loving, permanent home that is necessary to meet that child's physical and emotional needs since the possibility of children in sending countries being adopted at domestic level is not a very feasible option (Melat, 2018). On the other hand, opponents of ICA depict as there is a concern on resettling a child from one country and culture to another, the child will be exposed to identity crisis, child trafficking and other problems which are against the best interest of the child (Sarah, 2010).

Due to several reasons, significant number of children end up being temporarily or permanently deprived of his/her family environment. ICA may offer the advantage of a

permanent family to a child for whom a suitable family cannot be found in his or her state of origin (Hague Convention, 1993). However, as stated above Ethiopia has recently banned inter country adoption.

Although several studies have been conducted on the merits and demerits of ICA for the orphan and vulnerable children of Ethiopia, only few studies are done regarding the ban of ICA since the ban is a recent phenomenon. Therefore, this study aspires to present the opportunities and challenges that came along with the practical application of the ban.

3. Objective

3.1 General Objective

The overall objective of this study is to explore the opportunities and challenges of the ban of inter-country adoption on selected organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- To understand the rationale behind the ban of ICA in Ethiopia
- To assess the opportunities of the ban of inter-country adoption in Addis Ababa
- To assess the challenges of the ban of inter-country adoption in Addis Ababa

4. Research Question

- What are the major rationales behind the ban of ICA?
- What are the opportunities brought by the ban of inter-country adoption?
- What are the challenges caused by the ban of inter-country adoption?

5. Significance of the Study

This research intended to assess the opportunities and challenges that came along with the ban of ICA by involving orphanages, adoption agencies and related government offices. As the ban of ICA was a recent phenomenon, enough studies are not conducted to analyze the effects of the ban. Therefore, the result of this study will provide a substantial input to depict the opportunities and challenges caused by the ban of ICA. The analysis of the opportunities and challenges of the ban will give an insight for future decisions regarding elongating or ceasing the ban with valid evidence obtained from primary stakeholders. In addition, this study will serve as a benchmark for further studies to be conducted on the ban of ICA as the subject matter is new.

6. Scope of the Study

This study was restricted to examining the opportunities and challenges brought by the ban of ICA. The target population of the study was limited to Sele Enat Mahiber, Kibebe Tsehay Children's Village, Bethany Christian Services, Holt International, MoWCYA and BoWCYA. Besides, the study relied on purposive sampling so as to deal with relatively fewer respondents so as to conduct detailed study.

7. Limitation of the Study

Due to different reasons every research has its own limitations. The fact that the research area is a recent phenomenon, there were not enough references to be used as an input for the study. Moreover, the study is restricted to a few orphanages, adoption agencies and

government organizations that are involved in service provision for destitute children due to the researcher's limited reference as well as contact. In addition, by the time the research was conducted many of the orphanages and the adoption agencies were shutdown.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ethiopia

A child who has lost both parents through death is the most accepted definition of Orphan (HSRC, 2004). This definition later on, expanded to include loss of parents through desertion or if the parents are unable or unwilling to provide care. However, there was a concern on the latter definition since there is a chance of such parent returning to care for the child (Ibid).

A vulnerable child is defined as being under the age of 18 years and currently at high risk of lacking adequate care and protection. Accordingly, all children are vulnerable by nature compared to adults but some are more critically vulnerable than others. Child vulnerability is a downward spiral where each shock leads to a new level of vulnerability and each new level opens up for a host of new risks (CELCIS, 2012).

According to MoWCYA (2009), orphan and vulnerable children are children whose survival and development is jeopardized by certain circumstances and are therefore, in need of alternative childcare services. For instance, single and double orphans, street children, abandoned children, children with disability, trafficked children could fall under this category although the list is not limited. According to MoLSA 2005, the population in Ethiopia is generally characterized by a very young structure, with children below 18 years accounting to 52% of the national population. The number of children living in difficult circumstances is

noted to be significant due to social, economic, political as well as cultural factors. It is currently estimated that there are about 4.6 million orphans, out of which 1 million have lost their parents due to AIDS. According to UNICEF 2001, there are at least 100,000 street children in Ethiopia (about 25% are girls.) UNICEF's projected estimate puts the figure to 185,000 in 2003. Children with disabilities account for 51%, out of the estimated 4.9 million persons with some disability in the country. It is to be noted that there is also a large number of Ethiopian children who are in conflict with the law, children working in hazardous conditions, displaced and refugee children (MoWA, 2009). According to the above figures, Ethiopia has significant number of deprived children who needs the intervention of concerned stakeholders.

In Ethiopia, 73 percent of children under age 18 live with both parents, 12 percent live with their mother only, 4 percent live with their father only, and 10 percent live with neither parents. In 2005, Ethiopia was home to estimated 77,000 unaccompanied child-headed households, second only to Zimbabwe in sub-Saharan Africa. Rural children are more likely than urban children to live with both parents. The highest proportion of children living with both parents is in the Somali Region (79 percent), whereas the lowest proportion lives in Addis Ababa (49 percent) (FHI, 2010).

Children exposed to one or more of the vulnerability situations described below have been categorized into children in need of special protection or children at risk. Children in need of special protection include orphans, abandoned children, children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, abused children whether sexually, physically or emotionally, street children, children in conflict with the law, children victims of exploitation whether sexually or any

forms of harmful labor, children with disabilities, children addicted to drugs and children whose basic physical needs are not being met (Amy, 2013).

The category of children at risk relates to contexts of extreme poverty, breakup of the family, alcoholism, gambling, domestic violence, dropping out from school, living in newly resettled areas (internally displaced people/ migrants, returnees, demobilized soldier families), and living with other than biological parents. Children who have been affected by any of these and other vulnerability situations are eligible to receive community based child care (Kingdom of Cambodia National Religion King, 2006 p2).

As the above literatures indicated clearly, there is a significant number of orphan and vulnerable children who are in different kinds of difficult circumstances within the country. The alarming number of vulnerable children and the problems they are facing call for attention and various organized interventions.

2.2 Existing child care alternatives in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has ratified different international child protection conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (FDRE Constitution, 1995). In addition, there are national rules and regulations developed to protect the rights of children such as the FDRE constitution, the Revised Family Code and Alternative Childcare Guideline.

There are two types of adoption namely domestic and inter country adoption. Domestic adoption stands for an adoption where the adoptive parents and the adopted child are of the same nationality and reside in the same country while inter-country adoption

involves a change in the habitual country of residence moreover it could also involve adoptive parents a nationality other than that of the child (Hiwot, 2017).

Adoption is one of several alternative cares in which societies throughout the world allow a child who is unable to stay with his/her parents due to different causes to be grown up in a stable family based environment (ACPF, 2012). It is commonly practiced in different parts of the world. For instance, in the Ethiopian context, the country's alternative childcare guideline defines adoption as childcare and protection measure that enables an unaccompanied child to benefit from a substitute and permanent family care (Tariku, 2015).

As stated above, the five child care alternatives come into practice as it fits appropriate for the situation of the children. There are alternatives that are applicable for vulnerable children who have either nuclear or extended family. There are also alternatives applied for orphaned or abandoned children. ICA was applicable after all the other domestic alternatives were exploited and when the other options failed to serve the needs of the children. Even if, ICA has ceased to be one of the options at present, the other alternatives briefly discussed above are being applied.

2.3. History of Inter Country Adoption in Ethiopia

Due to cultural and ideological reasons, ICA was rarely practiced in Ethiopia during the Haile Sellassie's era (1930-1974) and the Dergue regime (1975-1991). Ethiopians were against the idea of ICA as it was culturally considered as giving up their children. There were other local practices such as the safety-net which served as a means to take care of one's neighbors and villagers. This practice provided the OVC with alternative family care while they stayed in their country. In addition to the cultural perspective, the socialist ideology the

Dergue regime followed which was against the Westerns and the U.S.A was a factor that hindered the spread of ICA. Between 1960 and 1991, many children in Ethiopia lost their fathers as a result of the civil war that happened with different opposition movements particularly, the Eritrean liberation fronts and various political groupings (Solomon, 2011 pp185-200).

The other major incident which caused children to be orphan and vulnerable was the Red Terror conflict between the government and its allies around 1977 to 1979 which also killed thousands of people. The 1977 conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia was also another cause. At that time, the major destination of Ethiopian orphans was Cuba although it was not carried out through the formal process of ICA. Cuba granted full scholarship for around 4000 orphans of the war to study in Cuba besides assisting Ethiopia against its fight with Somalia. In 1982 the other major factor that caused orphan-hood and vulnerability in Ethiopia was the HIV/AIDS pandemic. During that time, Ethiopia was among the countries that were highly affected by HIV/AIDS. The famine that occurred in 1984 left many children without parents and families. Consequently, diplomats and foreigners started taking orphans abroad informally. Generally, the recurrent conflicts, the instant famine resulted from the periodic drought, the damage of HIV/AIDS and other diseases tremendously reduced the culturally cherished safety-net practice which Ethiopians applied to help each other (Melat, 2018 pp35-36).

Unlike the previous socialist regime, the EPRDF government had good diplomatic relationship with U.S.A and was open to the Western world. Although there were different organizations that facilitate adoption, there was no inclusive law that particularly guides local

and international nongovernmental organizations and adoption agencies until 2009. Besides, the establishment of those organizations was also stimulated by the privatization policy adopted by the EPRDF. These factors made foreigners, especially the Americans to associate Ethiopia with drought, famine and conflict which made the country a hot spot for international adoption. Furthermore, the fact that the Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie adopted an Ethiopian orphan in 2005, made Ethiopia the center of attention regarding ICA and it quadrupled the number of Ethiopian children adopted by American families annually (Solomon, 2011, pp. 185-200).

The literatures on the history of ICA in Ethiopia shows that ICA has always been used as a last option. Nonetheless, once it came into practice, it has saved the lives of many children specially when the country went through difficult times and was not able to provide care for orphaned and vulnerable children and the survival of these children within their country was at risk.

2.4. Inter country adoption and Child trafficking and abuse

As literatures, articles, news and online materials indicated, the operation of adoption agencies in Ethiopia who used to facilitate ICA have been highly involved in illicit activities. There have been many reported cases of child laundering and child harvesting for the purpose of adoption which was done through the involvement of adoption agencies and local administrations. These activities include, child recruiting, buying and falsification of documents, child trafficking such as moving children from one administrative locality to another. Such adoption agencies operating in Ethiopia had been increasing due to the closure

of the system in countries including, among others, Romania, Guatemala, Cambodia, Nepal and Vietnam (Tesfaye, 2016).

In effect the process of inter country adoption has exceedingly been demand driven riddled by fraud and other criminal activities. Specifically, children have been prepared for inter country adoptions through producing and providing false documentations including cases in which parents are stated dead while they are not; and false information to Courts. Such illicit operations have been “breaking up families, who could be helped in building up their lives with a fraction of the money involved in inter country adoption”. Hence, it was concluded that adoption agencies managed to make the family service of Ethiopia depend on their funding requiring more and more children for inter country adoption in return (Wereldkinderen, 2009).

According to Tesfaye, (2016) in the research he conducted on operation of adoption agencies, some of the factors he identified that contribute to the shifting focus of inter country adoption to Africa and violations of Children’s best interest. These factors include shortage of adoptable child in other parts of the world, rampant poverty and the unfortunate circumstances in which children and parents find themselves as well as scant regulations along with weak institutional law enforcement capacity of State institutions. Thus, so far a number of African countries including Ethiopia have experienced incidences of child harvesting, child laundering and child trafficking in the operation of inter country adoptions.

According to Hubing, (2001) the process of ICA was used as a source of improper financial gain for the facilitators as it creates a loophole for “black market” of baby selling

due to high demand of children. Furthermore, adoption was considered as a manifestation of the new form of “colonialism” or “imperialism” as it involves taking away of children from the poor developing nations to the rich, industrialized nations of the world. If it is seen from the perspective of this definition, international adoption highly compromises the best interest of the child and the family in sending countries.

In this regard various literature accounted so far tend to conclude that child buying, defrauding, coercing, or even kidnapping children away from their families coupled with improper financial gain and corruption have been widespread in Ethiopia under the guise of inter country adoptions. (Graff, 2010). Specifically, a study report on inter country adoption in Ethiopia conducted in 2009 finds out that with the presence of adoption agencies, in practice, inter country adoption has become the mostly used by those involved in it than any domestic care options. This contributed to create high number of children available for inter country adoption, in which the market has been taking control over the local child protection, social and health sectors (Wereldkinderen, 2009).

One of the concerns that is raised in relation to ICA is the children who are sent abroad may be exposed and be a victim to different illicit acts. Furthermore, the gaps within the process creates room to drift away from the main purpose and focus of ICA that is, from the best interest of the children to improper financial gain of the facilitators. This can be rectified by working on to fill and correct these gaps.

2.5. Inter country adoption and Identity Crisis

Identity development is a lifelong process that begins in childhood and extends till old age. Identity formation has many components - physical, sexual, social, vocational, moral, ideological, and psychological characteristics (Rice, 1996). Many series of conflicts are involved in the process. Adolescence is a period when individuals examine identity as a process of finding out the fidelity in them, with reference to their peers. Orientation about the society they have to survive here gets redefined, from a world of parents and relatives who always attended them, to the world of peers who would attend them in special situations only (Nair, James and Santhosh, 2015).

Identity crisis is a recurring phase in psychosocial development because it occurs in every phase of life from early childhood to late adulthood. Therefore, it has become an integral part of the identity formation process (Erikson, 1963). Issues about identity might also increase the degree of emotional or conduct difficulties experienced by an adopted person (Emma, Jana and others, 2008). ICA is criticized to not fully compensate for the love and care the children have missed in their natural homes which in turn exposes those children to identity crisis and other problems that will affect them psychologically and socially. It further exposes children to different cultural and racial environment than their country of origin (Hubing, 2001).

“On the whole, social workers have been less than enthusiastic about inter country adoption in recent years. A commonly expressed objection is that the children involved will grow up with an inadequate or incomplete sense of their own identity. They will come up

against racial prejudice in the local community, and in extreme cases may even be driven to feel like social outcasts.” (Michael and Heather Humphrey, 2002)

Studies of adult inter country adoptees indicate that, as a group, they are more likely to have mental health, social and economic difficulties than other children in the same families who were not adopted (Hjern and Alleback, 2002). It has been suggested that these elevated levels of difficulties for inter country adoptees may be due to the child having a different sense of nationality or ethnic status from the adopted country (Juffer, 2006). However, it is equally possible that their problems are related to other pre-adoption factors, such as experiences of deprivation.

On the other hand, studies have indicated that local alternatives such as kinship care, community based care, adoption, and foster care have been found to be by far superior to ICA, as the strengths of traditional practices are respected, the child’s right to an identity is upheld, there is continuity in the upbringing of the child (Bunkers 2010).

Identity crisis is a phase in psychosocial development of human beings and could be prevalent from childhood to late adulthood. There are a number of factors that can cause identity crisis. ICA is considered among these factors as it involves changing place of abode.

2.6. Culture of domestic adoption in Ethiopia

Local adoption seems largely neglected or utterly out of the focus of attention of many adoption service provider organizations (Alternative Child Care Guideline, 2009). There is a belief that the practice of adoption in Ethiopia was introduced by the Oromo ethnic group, as usually termed as guddid ffacha, and to lesser extent by other ethnic groups of the country

such as Amhara, Kambatta, Sidama, Zay, etc (Desalegn, 2006). The most well-known of the traditional practice of childcare responsibilities in Ethiopia is Guddifecha, a voluntary system of local adoption (Sarah, 2010).

Formal Domestic adoption in Ethiopia is a new phenomenon and the number of children placed through domestic adoption over the past few years may seem like a drop of water in the sea. Ethiopian children being formally and legally adopted by Ethiopian adoptive parents is relatively a newly emerging issue. (Simegn, 2015)

On one hand, ICA advocates argue that the child's rights are not protected and that the child is deprived of permanency in local alternatives (Sarah, 2010). On the other, authors who study the Ethiopian context warn that local placements "can also result in children being fostered for their labor value and thrown out when times get too hard to feed an additional mouth" (Ennew 2003).

In past times there was the hunt for a child to meet the families need. The more recent thought being proposed is find a family to meet the child's needs. The finding of the current study was contrary to the recent thought of finding a family to meet the child's needs (Levy & Orlans 2014). However, as stated in Simegn Petros (2015) the current domestic adoption in Ethiopia is finding children for the families' needs. As the study revealed none of the adoptive parents adopted a disabled child or a child with special needs. The finding of this study indicated that healthy infant girls who were abandoned are highly preferred for domestic adoption. All parents were assigned to a child as per their preference.

In addition, the fact that infertile couples adopt in most cases supports the claim that the center of adoption were the families, not the children. According to Semegn's study showed, among the five couples 3 of them considered adoption purely for infertility reasons. Among these couples 2 of them never had children and one of the couple had one child but was never able to give birth to another child. These adoptive parents went through different medical procedures, went to different churches hopping for miracles and tried several other things to get a child for many years from (7-15 years) and eventually considered adoption (Simegn, 2015).

Before it was banned, ICA was placed the fourth alternative alongside domestic adoption. The fact that it is no longer an option sparks an interest of finding out to what extent domestic adoption is being practiced. Accordingly, literatures about the practice of domestic adoption has been reviewed and discussed briefly above.

2.7. Other countries experience regarding Inter Country Adoption

The ban on ICA in Russia resulted in the formal termination of the agreement i.e. "Adoption Agreement" signed in 2011, between U.S.A and Russia. The agreement was regarding the co-operation in the adoption of children and it was intended to promote safe, transparent and ethical adoption process for all parties involved in ICA between the countries (Melat, 2018).

Romania adopted the law that ultimately eliminated the possibility of ICA of Romanian children with the exception of the adopter or one of the spouses in the adopting family who have the domicile abroad is the grandparent of the child (Richard Carlson, 2010/11). However, on April 2012, an adoption law went into effect in Romania that extended

the criteria for prospective adoptive parents to include relatives up to the fourth degree of kinship, the spouse of the child's natural parent, and Romanian citizens who are habitually resident abroad (Ibid).

The Children Act of Uganda recognized in-country adoption and ICA as the last forms of alternative care, ICA being reserved as a last alternative (The Children Act, 1997). The act put fostering a child for three years as a condition among other things for both Domestic and Inter-Country Adoption of the specific child to whom the adoption relates by prospective adoptive parents in Uganda (Ibid). Not only making ICA a last resort, but linking it to foster care for three years was a stringent requirement, hence to circumvent this precondition legal practitioners devised certain mechanisms (Chirwa D, 2016). Uganda made the legal requirements for guardianship of Ugandan children by foreigners stricter and the legal requirements for ICA less restrictive than it was (The Children, 2015). For instance, the law shortened the length of time that an applicant for adoption must reside in Uganda and foster the child from three years down to one year.

When we see the experience of Uganda, it constitutes a very good example to rectify the flaws on the law and practical problems on ICA through legislative reforms but not necessarily through banning the process.

Ethiopia is not the first country to face hurdles in relation to ICA nor to take measures against it. There are other countries that have dealt with this kind of situation. Therefore, looking into the experiences of these countries could help to see different perspectives get lesson when dealing with the situation.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

This part of the study gives details of research method used accordingly; the study area, the study design, sampling and data collection methods. In addition, data analysis method and ethical consideration are also incorporated in this section.

3.1. Research Design

The researcher employed a qualitative exploratory research design as the title picked deals with a recent phenomenon which is not much studied. In the exploratory approach the researcher first begins with a qualitative research phase and describe the views of participants. The data are then analyzed, and the information used to build into a second, quantitative phase. The qualitative phase may be used to build an instrument that best fits the sample under study, to identify appropriate instruments to use in the follow up quantitative phase, or to specify variables that need to go into a follow-up quantitative study (Creswell, 2014).

Kreuger and Neuman, (2014) also argued that, when the issue is new or researchers had written little on it the researcher start at the beginning. Accordingly, this research follows the exploratory research. The information requirements and the methods of data collection mainly explored the challenges and opportunities that arise as a result of the ban of inter-country adoption (ICA) on selected organizations in Addis Ababa.

The research relied on qualitative data that was collected through in-depth interview with administrative bodies of the orphanages and adoption agencies and key informant

interview with officials of concerned government offices accompanied. The fact that observation checklist, in-depth interview and key informant interview guides have been applied and the information has been obtained through different sources, has helped to improve the data quality of this research.

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves questions and procedures; data typically collected in the participant's setting data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

Since it was a qualitative inquiry, it helped the researcher to understand the detail reflection of participants regarding the issue. The analysis was done through utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. In depth interview guide, key informant interview guide and observation checklist served as instruments to obtain primary data. These can be considered as tools as they are the instruments used for the purpose of data collection and data analysis constructed by the researcher according to the research objectives.

This research followed case study method so as to achieve its objectives. In case study research, the researcher examines, in depth, many features of a few cases over a duration of time. Cases can be individuals, groups, organizations, movements, events or geographic units (Kreuger and Neuman, 2014). In this research, the services providing orphanages are units of observation while the changes on the services of these organizations provided after the ban of ICA were the unit of analysis. Hence, the researcher chose case study over the other methods

so as to assess the opportunities and challenges brought by the ban of ICA focusing on selected organizations.

Under the more generalized category of case study several subdivisions exist, each of which is custom selected for use depending upon the goals and/or objectives of the researcher. From the common types of case studies, the researcher applied illustrative case study type. This case study type is primarily descriptive study. They typically utilize one or two instances of an event to show what a situation is like. Illustrative case studies serve primarily to make the unfamiliar familiar and to give readers a common language about the topic in question (Kreuger & Neuman, 2014).

The researcher used observation check list and most of the interviews were tape-recorded based on the consent of the participants. The researcher also took notes during the interview process. The researcher promised not to utilize the interview tape records and written notes except for the purpose of the study and as all documents would be avoided on the completion of the study.

3.2. Study Area

The study area of this research was Addis Ababa focusing on selected organizations that are directly engaged in child care services and organizations that used to work on ICA and government offices that have stake in the matter. The organizations which were the focus of this study are non-governmental and governmental child care organizations, respectively, Sele Enat Mahiber (SEM) and Kibebe Tsehay Orphanage, adoption agencies; Bethany Christian Services (BCS) and Holt International and two government offices; The Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) and Addis Ababa City Administration Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (BoWCYA). The child care organizations were selected because they are affected by the ban while the adoption agencies were selected because they used to work on ICA. The government offices were included as they are the major concerned government bodies.

3.3. Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were administrative bodies of the child care centers and the adoption agencies, and government officials who are directly concerned with the issue from the two Women, Children and Youth Affairs Minister Bureaus. Two respondents participated from each office. Hence, twelve participants were involved in the study. These participants were selected in order to obtain ample information from respondents who have direct involvement with the subject under study. Furthermore, the participants of the study included both non-governmental organization leaders and concerned government officials in order to examine different perspectives.

3.4. Sampling

Among the distinct types of non-probability sampling, purposive sampling was applied to select the participants of the study. Purposive sampling can be used when there are special informants the researcher wants to include, when the researcher wants to include specialized population who are difficult to reach and when the researcher wants to identify particular types of case for in depth investigation not to generalize to a large population but to get deeper understanding about a narrower group of study (Ruane, 2005).

This research used exclusion criteria to do purposive sampling. OVC could have been target population of this study. However, the researcher excluded this target population taking in to consideration their level of understanding and their ability to comprehend the opportunities and challenges the ban brought on them. Therefore, organizations that provide care and support for these children were taken as target population. The research was conducted on a few governmental and non-governmental organizations that have direct relationship with the subject of the study. Moreover, the researcher selectively included a few administrative bodies of those organizations as they could give detailed data regarding the subject.

3.5. Instruments of Data Collection

Before commencing on the data collection process, the researcher collected letter of request from Addis Ababa University. I also prepared a consent form and handed out both forms to the selected organizations prior to the interview day. Consent was secured from the organizations before interviews and observation was started.

The interview guides were designed based on the information gathered from different literatures. The interview guides were prepared in English and translated into Amharic language before the interview was conducted. The in depth and key informant interviews were open ended and during the interview, notes were taken and responses were tape recorded. The purpose of the tape recording was so as not to lose any essential information the participants had at the time of the research. Interviews were conducted in Amharic language and were translated into English at the time of data analysis.

3.5.1. In-depth interview

The main primary data source was in-depth interview. The main participants of the in-depth interview were the administrative bodies of the selected child care organizations and adoption agencies. Here, the researcher used purposive sampling, in order to get participants that are capable of providing detailed information and who are facing the results of the ban. The total number of people who participated in the in-depth interview were eight, which means two participants from each child care organizations and adoption agencies. The reason for this sample size is because the study intends to acquire detailed information regarding the issue. The interview was composed of open ended questions, and all of them were presented in Amharic. The researcher presented the interview question in Amharic, so that the respondents can understand it very well and give appropriate answers. At the time of in-depth interview there were both written and also tape recorders and which were done based on the consent that the participants signed before the interview. In general, the main reason for the in-depth interview were to get detailed information to assess the challenges and opportunities that came up with the ban of ICA.

3.5.2. Key-informant interview

The other source of primary data was key informant interview. Key informant interview was conducted with officials that represent the two government offices. Four key informants were included in the key informant interview. The purpose of this interview was to see a different perspective and to get information from the government offices that are directly involved in policy designing.

3.5.3 Observation

The observations were conducted at the child care organizations. The researcher prepared observation checklist so as to limit the focus areas and to make a well-organized assessment. The observation checklist included the number of children getting service in those institutions, child nanny ratio, and child to bed ratio. These variables helped the researcher to in order to examine the condition of the organizations after the ban of ICA.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis was done through qualitative data analysis techniques. Then the researcher listened to all audio records and read the notes taken during the interviews repeatedly to maintain accuracy. The in-depth interview and key informant interview were done in the native language and the result was translated and transcribed into English. After the transcription, the data was sorted and the important data was filtered out.

The information obtained from the data collection addressed the research questions. Hence, the data gathered were themed based on the research questions to present it in an organized manner. The major themes of the research are the rationale behind the ban of ICA in Ethiopia, the opportunities and the challenges that came along with the ban.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Prior to, during and after the research was conducted all ethical issues were considered as required (Creswell, 2014). The main ethical issues that were considered while doing this research are; the consents of informants were sought before their voice was recorded and they signed a consent form. What is more, the informants have been given explanation that the

records would be used only for the research purpose, and the data would be disposed after the completion of the study. They were also guaranteed anonymity that is; they were notified that their names would not be used in any part of the research. The respondents were also informed that they have the right to stop the interview whenever they want to and also refuse to answer any interview question that is not comfortable to them to answer (Dawson, 2002).

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Findings

This section of the study intends to show the various findings of the study based on the data collected through qualitative research method. Accordingly, findings area arranged based on the research questions and categorized under specific topics. The topics addressed under this section include childcare services, rationales behind the ban of ICA, opportunities and challenges that came along with the ban of ICA.

4.1. The rationale behind the ban of ICA

One of the objectives of this study was examining the rationale behind the ban of ICA. Therefore, the researcher, had discussed about the rationale of the ban with representatives of concerned stakeholders. These include, orphanages, adoption agencies which used to work on ICA and government offices that have the highest authority on issues related to women and children at national and Addis Ababa level. The researcher has observed varying perspectives on the rationale among the government and non-governmental institutions even though there are some points they concur on. The rationales mentioned by the respondents are mentioned below.

4.1.1 Inconvenience for follow up and supervision

According to the respondent 1 at BoWCYA one of the rationales behind the ban of ICA is the fact that it is not suitable for monitoring and supportive evaluation. Many children used to go abroad via ICA and after they go it was difficult to follow up their living condition and to trace their whereabouts. The follow up demanded high expense and was not suitable

for implementation. Besides, expertise return rate after they are sent to monitor the living condition and safety of children adopted abroad was very low.

The respondent 1 at BoWCYA has mentioned it as follows.

There are parents who still come to our bureau saying their children were sent years back and they could even be adolescents but their parents come looking for them because they have not heard from them in years. Actually we think there is fault on both sides to mean; on one hand the fact that parents sent their children/given up their children for adoption while they are alive is wrong; on the other hand, it is inappropriate that the agencies sent children while knowing a parent is alive. After all, hiding or not having the inquired information when parents seek for update is neither good nor right. Such cases are still coming to our bureau and what this implies is ICA had big gaps in many ways specifically when it comes to giving priority to children's benefits and safety.

Nevertheless, respondents on the NGO side stated as the major problem in relation to the follow up and supervision is the fact that experts do not come back when they are sent abroad, especially America to check the overall condition of the children. Hence, for WYCA the issue has become not just about losing experts but a matter of the experts betraying their country, not about the children. The respondents added, even if there were hindrances for follow up, the government was in charge to make the required adjustments to facilitate for the supervision.

On the other hand, the respondent 2 from MoWCYA stated, even if conducting supervision was inconvenient, yearly follow ups were being held to assess the condition of adopted children and the results led to a conclusion to effect the ban. He has explained it as follows.

As a responsible organization we do an official follow up. Our directorate through Women and Children's Affairs sends groups for visits and monitoring and evaluation and conduct regular follow up every year to study the condition of adopted children. They could come across various situations; and such follow ups come up with different implications. Sometimes after the children whose adoption was processed by this minister office go abroad, there are instances where the adoptive family rejected the children some have gone as far as returning them back here. Hence the minister office had to find them another family who can adopt them. And sometimes a problem of fitting in and attachment may occur. When such kind of cases happen, there were cases where families could give the children and the responsibility to raise the child for a third party or their country's government. This could be some of the evident problems the children have faced. Even though there were successful adoptions where the children benefited a lot, we have also come across such kind of cases where children suffer.

4.1.2 Child trafficking and abuse

The other reason mentioned for the ban was child trafficking and abuse faced by adopted children. The respondents from the government offices mentioned as there were cases

went against the aim and children were exposed to acts that jeopardized their rights and safety, different kinds of physical, psychological and emotional abuses were committed on them and some have even lost their lives. ICA increases the vulnerability of children to various risks due to the fact that they are far away from their country and this same reason might even hinder the tendency of follow up. Actually it is believed there is technology however gaps will still prevail in the process.

According to the respondent 1 at MoWCYA, ICA predominantly served as a means to child trafficking and abuse. He stated the situation as follows.

Well, as far as ICA is concerned what was going on could be put as nearly child trade (trafficking). How you can actually prove that it was a trade is, out of around the 30 orphanages that operated in Addis Ababa, those which are currently functional are not more than 10 for certain. When the program was closed, they closed down right away since their goal was not supporting the children rather, it was profit making. Per child they make 40,000 USD it might even exceed 40,000 USD because it was black market. As it was black market and it was open, children were even adopted and taken to Equatorial Guinea. ICA was used as a means to conceal the transaction of fuel. It is like trading by children. The families here are looking for their children because they do not have any information about their children. The families were given wrong information at the initial point when their children were sent aboard. They are told that the children will send them money, come back to support them and take them abroad. Families gave up their children for ICA

through such kind of wrong information and deceiving. After parents waited for long for these promises to happen but nothing happens, it resulted in an enormous complaint and good governance issues. So we are visibly in a huge problem, this is one of the rationales to enact the ban.

According to the government officials, there were different follow up mechanisms to monitor the wellbeing of the children who go abroad through ICA. However, the follow ups could not stop the maltreatment and abuse. The respondents have also mentioned as we cannot generalize the maltreatment as there were children who were well treated and got better opportunities. There are children that went abroad via ICA who have been engaged in different wrong deeds, children in foster homes that have involved in crimes, evidently there are even children who died, children in Atlanta who died, there are many children who have become homeless, who couldn't be neither for their country nor their biological parents who remained in vain. When I say this, to be fair, there are also children who got education and who got good adoptive parents. Nonetheless, this would not avoid the identity crisis issue.

The respondent 1 from MoWCYA has stated it as below.

Before ICA was banned, there was monitoring and evaluation. There are different findings. As I told you, we have to be balanced. There are children living in a good condition. On the contrary, there were also instances where different breaches were committed on children so, many of the minister office experts and bodies went abroad to visit and investigate the situation. This is the case; the finding shows both, the good as well as the bad.

On the other hand, the respondents from the NGOs side, were against this idea. According to the respondents, the issue of vulnerability and abuse was not significant enough to cause the ban. The respondent 2 at Sele Enat explained it as;

Orphanages such as Sele Enat has preconditions to prepare children for ICA. One of this preconditions is attachment perio which helps the organization to learn about the families and enable the children to find it easy to integrate to the family. There are also other preconditions such as conducting family case studies to reduce the vulnerability of children to the absolute minimum. Furthermore, post placement reports will be sent every four years in the first year and then annually till the children turn 18 years. These reports are great ways to know about the overall condition of the adopted child. The adoption agencies are responsible to handle these processes properly. There might be rare cases where children face problems after they go through ICA. However, those cases are not significant considering the number of children who got better lives and children who are vulnerable here in Ethiopia without getting alternative care.

According to respondent 1 from the same organization, one of the reasons the government mentioned to them during the meeting they had at parliament level is the fact that children who grow and live abroad do not bring any relevance for Ethiopia as a country. It looks like this reason has got bigger attention from the government than the child trafficking and abused caused when children are adopted internationally. This is not either a sound or a convincing reason to ban ICA. Because children's right to live comes before the relevance to

the country, identity crisis or the other issues. Their life is more important than their citizenship and contribution for their homeland.

4.1.3 Identity Crisis faced by adopted children

Identity crisis is the most emphasized rationale that initiate the ban. Especially the participants from the government offices have tried to emphasize the depth of this problem. According to the respondents from BoWCYA, their assessments and evidences have shown as internationally adopted children have experienced identity crisis. Those children have been susceptible for questioning their identity and origin when they are surrounded by people having different color, language and culture. As a child they may be in peace with their difference but the more they grow up, the more they start to inquire about their family and country of origin. This leads them to emotional and mental distress. Hence, it is believed growing in their country within their community where their identity is preserved would have better advantage psychologically.

The participants from MoWCYA added as they see the major side effect of ICA starts with children going to a community that has different culture, norm and language than theirs'. It is undeniable fact that children will later in life question where they come from as they will be different from the community they would grow in when they are adopted this might result in identity crisis. Furthermore, it is by taking in to account the effect it will have on their social life and psychological effect, it was believed that it is appropriate to ban ICA. Children have the right to grow up in their country learning their custom, values and culture. But there are many children that grow up away from these things and many of these children are

exposed to identity crisis. These children will question “why were we abandoned?”, “why did they give us up?” so for this reasons, in general ICA is not appropriate from different angels.

One of the respondents stated, it is not just about being exposed to foreign culture that caused the identity crisis but also the way adoption is processed and the children go abroad. When a child is adopted through ICA what is going to be on the record is that s/he doesn't have parents but in reality the parents are there therefore one could notice government's structure has also involved in this. The respondents also added after some years some people came and said “*I am not dead I am alive, I was deceived, it was because they gave me money*”. They have come across such people and those people came and shouted and cried. They explained the situation as being very disappointing and referred to it as a very devastating mistake. And they believe it is going to take a long time and a lot of work to rectify this mistake.

When the researcher asked if there was any research to back up the claim about identity crisis respondent 1 from MoWCYA responded as follows.

Yes, there are researches for certain. There are researches done abroad and within the country evidently. However, there are hindrances so that we don't access the researches done. As I told you, since it is an area where huge amount of money transaction takes place. Consequently, we face so many challenges in this area. Very powerful people participate in this business and it is with such people government is dealing with. Although it is not a recent one there is also a research done on ICA by our institute in collaboration with other concerned government bodies. However, I can't certainly say there is an

updated research conducted on identity crisis among adopted children and their experience. Nevertheless, on different Medias and even Ethiopian social workers that work in America have done researches and we have seen these people presenting their findings on different Medias but I can't say there is an updated research conducted by our institute.

However, some respondents from the non-governmental organizations do not concur with identity crisis being the reason behind the ban of ICA. This is how respondent 1 from the non-governmental orphanage opposed this claim.

One of the major rationales mentioned in the House of People's Representative (HPR) to ban ICA was identity crisis faced by the adopted children. This argument is not sound enough to be considered as a justification. Because, identity crisis can be faced by children and teenagers here in Ethiopia as well. For instance, it is known that students who came to Addis Ababa University face intense identity crisis. It depends on having good personality and emotional intelligence. Any change that happens in children's and teenagers' life even while they are in their country can cause this problem. It depends on getting familiar to new system, learning and adopting new tradition or culture. Then it gets improved when they accept the new environment. Most of all this claim was not supported by research based evidence. On the other hand, children are exposed to so much worse problems when they stay here in their country without an alternative to take care of them than the prospective identity crisis they would face when they go abroad through adoption. Besides, Ethiopia as a country has no problem when people

go abroad through DV lottery or other ways. We don't worry they will suffer from identity crisis, rather we hope these people will be reasons for education transfer, even culture and civilization transfer when they return to their country. The fact that the ban doesn't allow this people to adopt could be a reason to say the ban has not centered the children.

On the other hand, the respondent 2 at Holt International mentioned as ICA has its own limitations like any other alternatives, however the advantages outweigh.

Identity crisis is amongst the major challenges raised in relation to ICA. From experience, there are children who face identity crisis as they live within white community and they are black. They might face what a black person who lives in America faces. Therefore, it should be considered as a challenge. Other than that, toddlers who are grown enough to realize some things about themselves may face language barrier. There were cases where adopted children express themselves in Amharic and the adoptive parents do not understand Amharic. So, communication barrier happened. This problem lasted only for a few months as children learn language quickly.

However, the respondent implied, these challenges can't be compared with issue of being able to survive. The adoption agencies conduct post placement follow up. Once the children are adopted and go abroad, they do follow up first in a month time, then after 3 months, after 6 months, and every year until the children turn 18 years old. The adoptive parents send them reports and the reports come along with photos. Moreover, the adoption agencies submit these reports to either regional or

Addis Ababa BWCYA, and even to the orphanages the kids used to be at if the orphanages have not closed down. According to most of the reports they received, the adopted children develop good attachment and good relationships.

4.1.4 Implementation gaps

The other reason presented as a factor for the ban was the implementation gap in the process of adoption. As the respondents from the government office mentioned, on top of the above problems, there were lots of implementation gaps on the adoption process particularly when it comes to adoption agencies. These include, financial transaction and documentation gaps such as incomplete information, sending children who have parents via ICA by depicting them as orphans, and not following on their conditions and whereabouts after children go abroad. There was a discussion held on parliament level about the overall implementation of ICA and a guideline was designed which is being implemented.

According to the respondent 2 at MoWCYA, the mismanagement in the process of adoption was very deep. The extent of the malpractice went further to producing false documents and spreading deceiving information. He stated the situation as follows.

In some cases, there were instances where the documents used in their adoption process was false. The people who facilitated the adoption process abused the system, despite the fact they are licensed. While there is a family or a guardian here or even the birth mother and father sometimes it is said the parents have passed away. When the parents are economically incapable, the agencies try to convince them by using different means as they won't be able to raise the child. The intermediates that work between the family aboard and

create match by taking children from families here in Ethiopia are the one who do this. These licensed organizations are known as agencies but they work as brokers. Due to these organizations, sometimes inappropriate things happen. Such happenings will also affect children who really do not have neither close nor extended families, and deprives the opportunity to grow up in their country for the children who have families. ICA is banned to avoid this wrong deed and to discourage those who use ICA as the first alternative without properly exploiting the locally available alternatives and send the children abroad.

However, the respondents from the NGOs on the other hand stated as this is the gap on the government and government led institutions. According to those respondents, the other reason presented by the government was because ICA allows additional financial transaction beside the regular flow known by the government. However, it is the government institutes responsibility to monitor, control and improve the system if it has any gaps as well. Hence, the government was responsible to alter this system with legitimate alternative and amend the system if they believed this to be a challenge. However, they preferred to ban it instead of making corrections to the problem areas.

Respondent 1 of the non-governmental orphanage had said this regarding the issue.

For instance, one of the corrective mechanisms we proposed as concerned stake holders to address this unrestricted financial transaction is to accumulate all the money collected by all adoption agencies into a government owned deposit account and the responsible government body to be in charge to allocate the budget to all orphanages. Nevertheless, they did not either take this suggestion or came up with

a better alternative rather banned ICA. This implies, the center of attention for those offices were not the children rather it was the financial transaction. Hence, the decision they made was not focused on the best interest of the children.

Respondent 2 at one of the adoption agencies supported the idea raised by the respondent 1 from the non-governmental orphanage. The respondent stated it as follows.

In relation to ICA especially as a major reason there is payment families that want to adopt make for the process. When adoption agencies started to receive that money to handle the adoption process, some parties started complaining saying the money the agencies make is a lot. But the center of this complaint was not the children, rather it was the money. Honestly, those entities that were not able to be part of this transaction were disappointed and judgmental without accurate information. On the contrary, those people in which the transaction happened through them collected the money and allotted some of it to run their office (for their staffs), some of it for orphanages, and the rest for development works but it is obvious there was some gaps managing this money. However, still in reality, this financial supports have helped orphanages, have assisted the community based supports and also were a source of employment and income for the staffs. Therefore, when we look at it from different angles, what ought to be done was weigh out the advantages and disadvantages of ICA and make possible

adjustments to the mismanagements. However, instead of doing that completely banning ICA was taken as the only option.

The above respondent explained the other challenge on ICA is the awareness gap the society have towards it, including government offices. Most people think the agencies engage in this line of service for the sake of money. However, the respondent stated that, ICA is a long process that could take a year on average. In addition, there is the involvement of government entities like Kebeles and the Federal court from the start till the end at every level. Besides, the embassy also does its own inquires. This indicates there are different controlling mechanisms to reduce mismanagements.

The respondents from the government offices were asked if there were attempts or measures taken to alleviate these gaps and they assured there were. According to the respondents, one of the measures government took to correct this was sending experts to the country the children were sent for follow up, support and evaluation. The results found from the supervision visits served as inputs when the decision to ban ICA was made. The second action was strictly following the activities of adoption agencies and also making sure that these agencies have complete information concerning the children. The third measure taken was designing a legal framework and implementing it as the issue calls for solution and measure.

Besides the legal framework the government had to come up with other options. When a government ban something there would be a reason for banning it, since, what would happen after the ban becomes effective should be taken into account, as well. Hence, promoting domestic adoption (DA) was the alternative the government proposed as a way out.

There exists a big assignment of enlightening the society to raise children through DA. In fact, works have been done so far. Plus, it is not that long since the ban happened. After it, by designing DA implementation manuals and procedures, listing down categories and creating awareness about it. Actually DA is not something new so by taking such measures it is increasing the ways for children to be raised within the country.

4.1.5 Priority for Domestic Adoption and other local alternatives

The other justification to ban ICA was the intention to give priority for domestic adoption (DA) and other local alternatives. According to most of the respondents, domestic adoption did not get the attention it deserved both from the government and NGOs side. As the officer from BoWCYA even though adoption has a long rooted history in Ethiopia, we as a country have not used it to the best of its capacity. If we had worked hard to develop the practice and implementation of DA, we would not have resorted to ICA in the first place. Now since ICA is banned many people are taking children as a foster or adoptive family. There are also people on the waiting list to adopt children.

As the country director at Bethany stated as domestic adoption is the best option to take care of vulnerable children. Since the community is part of the problem in different ways, exploring local alternatives including DA is appropriate. The children are coming out of the community; the crises happen within the community whether it is rape, unwanted pregnancy, family disintegration or divorce. As the problem comes from the community, DA would be the best alternative since the solution arises from the community where the problem arises. This is how we can empower the community; by making it part of the solution. This is the biggest attitudinal change to bring among our community and the way to address huge

national problems. in our community, there was a thought as taking care of children is a work of foreigners or the responsibility of NGOs It was widely believed that NGOs are the ones responsible for taking care of children, vulnerable, hurt and destitute people and that is not our responsibility as a community or a nation. Hence, changing this attitude could be count as a big success.

However, the respondents from the NGO owned orphanage, mentioned as the ban of ICA will not encourage and support either domestic adoption or other local alternatives as most of the community based interventions used to be financed by the support found through ICA. Respondent 2 from this orphanage depicted the effect as follows.

Even though the government officials said the NGOs will focus on the other alternatives as a justification for the ban, however, when we see the reality and try to see the effect of the ban, perhaps, all it did was made us think of implementing DA. However, our orphanage used to work on DA along with ICA even before the ban. There was a year where 11 DA took place alongside the ICA but last year after Ethiopia banned ICA the DA we facilitated was only 4 more than in a year's time. This was due to financial and human resource constraints caused by the ban because it used to support the other community based programs as well. Therefore, just because ICA is banned DA number will not go higher rather the reverse might be true. On the other hand, in rare cases there might be the risk of giving up a child that is eligible for the other local alternatives for ICA. In other words, ICA might take place before other local

interventions are well explored. However, instead of the ban coming up with a way to prevent such wrong deeds would have been better.

4.2. The Opportunities of the Ban of ICA

4.2.1 Improvement in the practice of domestic adoption and other local alternatives

The other objective of this study was scrutinizing the opportunities that came alongside the ban of ICA. According to some of the respondents, especially those from the government institutions, the ban of ICA has brought several opportunities. However, some of the respondents from the non-governmental orphanage, adoption agencies as well as one of the respondents from the governmental orphanage did not concur with the achievement of these opportunities.

According to the one of the respondent at BoWCYA, several programs have been designed and both the new and already established programs came into practice after the ban of ICA. Sufficient number of programs were available to support vulnerable children but were not used widely because one way or another, all the focus was on ICA, including regions as well as the entities at federal and Addis Ababa level but now, at this moment, programs that were designed and already made available are being properly and extensively used. Potential families are being selected and screened, billboards that invite families interested to adopt and/or provide foster care have been posted in different parts of Addis Ababa and different sub cities. Potential families are being recruited in various sub-cities and areas. Domestic alternative programs are being broadened and are being promoted with a pace better than prior times. Different manuals are also being developed. Currently there is a manual called

“Foster to Adopt Manual” which is being already finalized. When this manual is ready it will also be promoted through using media so as regions could also engage in it.

In addition to this, the government offices are planning to start region to region adoption. Respondent 1 at MoWCYA explained, since all are Ethiopians, we are planning to give children born at Addis Ababa to other regions of the country and vice versa. Nonetheless, regions are highly challenging to accept the new method. There are two regions that have accepted the proposed alternative but there are still challenges. Some kind of line has been drawn, some kind of wall is put up so as this may not be possible. We should lift that up and address the children’s issue, the officer elaborated.

The other major benefit achieved from the ban is the increase in domestic adoption, foster care and other local alternatives in practice. According respondent 1 at MoWCYA, there is a significant increase in the local adoption rate. The ban has shifted the focus to DA and government is working towards better implementation of DA. It is paving way to strengthen the DA through different mechanisms as ICA is no longer an option.

Respondent 1 at MoWCYA has stated it as follows.

The amount of domestic adoption has increased tremendously after the ban of ICA! For instance, this year (2011 E.C.) Within 9 months over 130 children have been given to families through DA. And around 125 children got foster families. There are instances we place children permanently or for a definite period at a foster home; this is still better than children being in institutions. The bureau has come up with guideline that specifies what kind of families would be eligible for definite foster care. Families with economic limitations

or families that have low income are economically empowered and are given some sort of support and it is arranged for such families to take children under institutional care in to their homes and be a loving foster parents for a definite time. Especially children whose mothers are in prison, mothers who used to live on the street but who are following vocational training at the moment, mothers who gave birth to unwanted pregnancy; could be because they were raped, or university or college students that gave birth but for a reason that is beyond their control could not take care of their children, children of such parents are not placed to a lasting foster families rather to definite foster family.

According to the respondents, the government came up with the ban to avoid the breaches of ICA and to give priority for DA. However, there are concerns that could pose as a challenge when it comes to DA. This includes, it would be a problem to find an adoptive family for children with disability and children with illness. However, they still believe, if awareness is created within the community everyone could play her/his part even to extent of adopting children with cases of disability and disease.

As respondent 1 from the government orphanage stated, the good thing that could come out of the ban is the fact that children will remain in their country and grow in their own community. Consequently, the children will have the opportunity of growing up getting to know their own culture, their language and religion. Plus, it will lessen the chances of problems that could come along with skin color and identity and the like. In addition, the focus will be mainly on local alternatives thus organizations and individuals will fulfil their

social responsibility. For instance, the MoWCYA have designed a contribution scheme for children so that their office could take part in the action taken to alleviate the problems of vulnerable children.

Some of the respondents from the NGOs and adoption agencies agree with this claim. Respondent 2 at Holt international and respondent 1 from Bethany has mentioned as the ban of ICA has increased the number of children being adopted locally. Attention of the child care organizations and government has shifted to local adoption. They also added as other local alternatives such as foster care has also been implemented with better attention. Local resources have also been mobilized to address the problems of destitute children.

Respondent 2 from Bethany has also supported this claim. She has indicated as they started working on DA before the coming of the ban. Nonetheless, after the coming of the ban the institutions are giving it more attention and people are showing more interest to participate in DA. Previously, when children who are vulnerable and has no option stayed in institution it they expected that foreigners should come and adopt them and it was not thought doing such thing was the responsibility of Ethiopian citizens but now people are understanding and realizing this issue is ours.

However, on the contrary. Some of the respondents do not agree with this conclusion. They believed DA has been in place even before the ban and the ban has not improved the practice of DA. They argued, if the aim of banning ICA was to nurture the practice of DA, it is visibly not going well since preliminary things have not been done yet. It would have been better if they improved the guidelines of ICA to be strong and

apply the rules strictly since the gaps were shared among the orphanages, adoption agencies and concerned government offices.

Respondent 2 from Bethany added, they have observed as the practice of domestic adoption is very low and it takes a lot of effort to develop it to the level where it can redress the need of vulnerable children. A lot has to be done to reach to the point where as a society, we can accept and raise orphan children as our own. Even if one decides to adopt a child the response he would face a challenge from that person's neighbors or family. They will be very resistant and will not accept it easily. However, there are many children who need family while our society's adoption practice is very low. Therefore, it was better if government had come up with a way for more control over domestic adoption agencies until works are done to change the attitude of our community towards DA.

Respondent 1 from BoWCYA had elaborated as there are still challenges on the practice of DA and how concerned government offices are working to address the problem. The problems regarding DA and the new strategy to come with a legal procedure and implementation plan are the fact that the community is more familiar with the traditional adoption practice like the "Guddificha" within the Oromo culture and an awareness gap when it comes to where to adopt a child through the proper legal procedure. So there still remains too much work regarding this and their Bureau is currently carrying out an intensive awareness creation campaign and they believe if they collaborate to fill this gap, there are people who have the initiation and who can afford to adopt vulnerable children. They have

witnessed significant number of people are willing to care for needy children within this short time through their efforts towards creating attitudinal change regarding DA.

The respondent added as they have heard comments like the criteria and the procedures for adoption are bureaucratic and long and some people consider to withdraw from the process due to these reasons. So they are working to alleviate both internal and external bureaucracies and prolonged procedures. Works have been done to improve the process of matching children to families. They are also looking into the formalities people have to go through when they come here to adopt and they are trying to come up with a way where people will get an inclusive service at one center to reduce the inconvenience.

4.2.2 Clearing up implementation gaps and malpractices

The other advantage that came along with the ban of ICA was clearing up malpractices in the sector. According to some of the respondents, there were implementation gaps that used to be against the best interest of the children. Respondent 1 from Bethany has explained the opportunity regarding ending the malfunctions as follows.

I see enormous opportunities that came due to the ban. One is stopping the bad actors or people who involved for their own benefits. Therefore, there were corruption and bribe, unethical practices in the procedure of ICA. It nearly looked like “child trade”. Like some families who pay a lot get children in a relatively shorter time and less procedure. The relationship between adoption agencies and orphanages are referral based. Adoption agencies pay more when they get referral. Therefore, for this sole purpose orphanages are encouraged to get more children, like even if the parents are able to take of their child they

relinquish the child in to the orphanage in order to get for the orphanage manager or the orphanage to get more money. So, they refer children to the adoption agency and in between there are actors who are gaining out of this adoption so it appears like that it is not for the best interest of the children rather adoption is happening to enrich those actors. So now since ICA is closed the only option is DA thus all orphanages are giving up the child for Ethiopian nationals. Therefore, now even the number of DA here in Bethany Christian Services has grown dramatically. Only 40 children were adopted locally in 2017 but in 2018 the number has significantly increased; it has tripled. Even though there are other variables to the increase in the number, but I think the major reason goes to the ban.

Respondent 1 at MoWCYA has emphasized the level of the malpractices and supported the claim mentioned above. This was how this respondent stipulated the complication of the problem.

There was an abused system run by the stakeholders at each level. It all started with the documentation of the child profile. Wrong information used to be written on adoption contracts. While families are alive, it would be written down as they have passed away or missing and as the children are abandoned. This is the information to be passed to the adoptive parents and gradually to the children. The adoption agencies give this wrong information in most cases even though other entities might involve. Abandoned children are preferred as adoptive parents want to raise the child as their own. They don't want a child

that have a parent because they fear that one day the parent will claim the child. Hence, the agencies get good payment for children that are deemed as abandoned.

According to this respondent, there were government owned orphanages in prior times. Private adoption agencies used to conspire with police men and they used to gather pregnant women. When these women gave birth they dismissed the mothers and the children were given to orphanages and then sent abroad. There were such times in our country. Such kind of high offences were committed. As a result, there are huge grievances at present. This is one face of the ICA. After some years in Addis Ababa and regions such orphanages started to be assessed and they were replaced by non-governmental orphanages. Then these non-governmental orphanages gathered all the information about the children and they claimed they have looked in to the other childcare alternatives. But in reality they don't do that rather they automatically place the children for ICA as it was taken as a business. They used to make big amount of money from each inter-country adoption. Therefore, even if an individual comes and asks to raise a child via DA they wouldn't give him/her a child.

The respondent added, orphanages are the ones that prepare the children's information; false information in alliance with polices and by bribing them they prepare false papers. On the other side agencies outside of the country like American based, Italian, France and other countries based agencies recruit families that can pay well. They compile the document and send it so these agencies and the orphanages come together and sign the agreement. It is a hidden transaction which is really tough to control. It has never been managed properly.

This being the case, when adoption files were opened in court and the court requested their comment, they answered on the appropriateness of the adoption. The document that came from the Woredas' is sealed and authenticated. So, they will look into the appropriateness and give their comment to court. The responsibility of approving adoption lies on courts. What the family code stipulated as their mandate is the responsible government authority is required to give comment in comment stage of adoption. Hence, they give their comment according to the article. And if the adoption is approved they render support to the concerned body. Nonetheless, approving and denying adoption is affairs of a court. This process has been a major barrier for the bureau and ministry of women and children affairs since they did not have the final say on the adoption process despite they are major stakeholders. Therefore, this malfunctions continued for a long time until the ban of ICA brought it to an end. Thus, this is one of the major opportunities that came along with the ban.

According to the respondents in charge of the supervision, which are the government offices, the other advantage obtained from the ban of ICA is convenience for follow up. Since the focus has shifted to local alternatives after the ban of ICA, it has reduced the burden of follow up and supervision. This regular follow up has alleviated the potential mistreatment of children, has ensured their wellbeing and best interest.

Although most of the respondents agreed with the achievement of either all or some of the opportunities, some of the respondents do not agree. For instance, the respondent 1 from the non-governmental orphanage argues, the ban would have had some opportunities to clear up the gaps of ICA if it was well planned, analyzed and based on research. It would have corrected the problematic areas or improper implementations. However, it does not have much opportunity now since it was not research based. It would have served much of a

purpose if a research was conducted ahead of time and the ban was applied like a short term break taken to correct the gaps observed on the malfunction of ICA and bring it back with a better implementation plan.

Other participants from the NGOs side also supported the idea discussed above. They stated as Ethiopia used to work on adoption even in ancient times. Yet the traditional adoption system was loose so in view of making the concept constitutional the legislators included adoption on the 1987 constitution and a legal framework was designed for it without making distinction whether as to local or international. It was believed that children need families and for them to get families the concerned government body will facilitate and support the child and in collaboration with orphanages. The Ministry and Bureau of WYCA encourages and supports those orphanages to serve children. The family code also states that adoptive parents should treat their adopted child as their own biological children just like that, adopted children bear responsibility as biological children will. So 1987 onwards having a family became a child's constitutional right. Nonetheless, through time the process started to be corrupted and the concerned stakeholders did not work on correcting the process rather preferred to fight the alternative that was brought as a solution instead.

4.3. The challenges of the ban of ICA and limitations of the proclamation

4.3.1 The challenges of the ban of ICA

The following part of the study discusses about the challenges that are caused by the ban of ICA, which is the other objective of the study. According to the respondents, the spontaneous ban of ICA has caused significant challenges on both the governmental and non-governmental institutions providing service for destitute children. The ban has

multidimensional effects on all alternative childcare packages and sectors. One of the challenges was closure and downsizing of non-governmental orphanages and adoption agencies.

4.3.1.1. Closure and downsizing of organizations

According to the non-governmental orphanage representatives, the ban has affected their organization severely as their programs used to be supported by the fund gained from adoption agency resources. No alternative source was replaced as the ban happened abruptly. The challenge was faced as institution, as a community and as a nation entirely.

Respondent 2 of the non-governmental NGO has depicted the effect of the ban as follows.

With no exaggeration 70% of orphanages' expenses used to be covered by ICA support. This does not mean only the expenses of institutional care such as costs of providing shelter, feeding, clothing and sending the children to schools but also other programs for instance in our orphanage's case the Female empowerment program and the integrated care for children with special needs used to run from ICA supports but government bodies failed to understand those programs relied on supports secured by ICA. When we raised this issue the response from the government's side was 'you should just work on the community based supports as if those sectors were not affected. However, the impact of the ban of ICA has been extended to those programs. To mention practical example, our orphanage used to have 355 children on the sponsorship program 6 years ago now it has decreased to 155 children. When

the support we got decreased we had to reduce the number of children, so the ban is indirectly affecting our capacity to stretch on other alternatives. Some government officials say, “When ICA is banned you will work devotedly on the other alternatives.” However, when we see to the reality the reverse is true as the other programs are shrinking along with the ICA. Many orphanages have closed down. In other words, this would mean, many community-based services have ceased as well. The other issue besides the downsizing is reduction of service quality.

Respondent 1 from that orphanage explained how the ban affected both the size and the quality of their work and the mechanisms they came up with. The service quality of orphanages is measured by a standard of service set by government. This standard guides the way the orphanages serve children. If the organizations compromise the standards, it would affect their effectiveness and it would not be acceptable by the government. The organizations that are closed and even some of the functional ones, they are not fulfilling the standard. They may not maintain their services up to the standard due to financial constraint. It has not been possible to keep our service as it was. The respondent added, even in their orphanage, they are not availing the food items and the facilities they used to.

In addition, it has affected the size of the services provided by the orphanage. This non-governmental orphanage and some other organizations do not accept as many children as their facility allows due to the financial limitation. For instance, this orphanage’s facility considering the size of the compound, number of rooms and other resources, could accommodate up to seventy children. There were even times they took care of 84 children at a

time. However, now they are taking care of less than 30 children due to the financial struggle. They could not stretch to reach more, needy children due to the financial limitations.

The other respondents on the NGO side agreed with this claim. According to the respondents, it has been impossible for them to admit new children into their support program. As a result, the number of children who are prone to street life and other forms of vulnerability has increased. Significant number of children have died because of deprivation. It is only because there is no accurate record of birth and mortality rate in Ethiopia that we don't know how many children die due to lack of care and impoverishment. The adoption agencies are closed. The organizations have not done what they had to do since the measure was taken abruptly. The effect on the adoption agencies has been reflected on the orphanages. Many orphanages are ceasing their programs, downsizing and even shutting down.

Sele Enat Orphanage was one of the orphanages that went through significant downsizing. Respondent 1 from this orphanage has explained how they dealt with the financial crisis. As an institute, when a significant change happens, the organization is expected to make systematic measures to its programs before the problem destroys the whole organizations. Among these measures the major ones are laying off staff, changing intervention mechanisms or alternatives, ceasing some programs and reducing or closing branch offices in order to survive as an organization.

The researcher has also confirmed the points stated above through observation. As per the observation, the compound is big and the rooms are spacious. Children are categorized among the rooms based on their age. The compound accommodates special needs children as well. However, the child to nanny ratio is below the standard. There is a mini clinic and a

nurse in the compound. Children do not share beds in Sele Enat as each of them has one. The number of the children is close to quarter of the number of children the compound can accommodate. As the respondents explained, they could not fulfil the basic needs for more children if the number is bigger due the financial struggles the orphanage is facing at the time. The orphanage is not taking in more children after the ban of ICA as most of the children stay in the compound for long time. In comparison to the responses I found regarding the previous service, changes have been made to different areas such as number of children, feeding, physiotherapy for special needs children and other medical care as the ban of ICA has brought financial loss.

The respondent added, one of the contribution they could make for our country, as organization was to hire as many staff as possible (both professional and supportive). The number of staffs and nannies who got employment opportunities in these orphanages makes a difference on the unemployment rate of a country thus it had its own relevance at national level. However, now they are forced to lay off many staff members and reduce our staff again due to the financial struggle. At this orphanage for example, they used to have more than 100 staff previously but now they have only 40 plus, not even 50. And, if the organizations that are closed due to financial limitation are taken in to account, their contribution for the country has been totally ceased weather their service and implementation had limitations or not; that being a different topic and needing detailed investigation, however, their service was undeniably relevant.

Respondent 1 at Holt mentioned as not only orphanages but agencies that mainly focused their work on ICA have been shut down. All agencies were not engaged in other

development programs like their organization. Holt International has been working on its other community based programs simultaneously although adoption was its primary focus. However, this was not the case for other adoption agencies. Hence, they had to close down when ICA was banned. However, the respondent recommended as the government could have pressured these agencies to engage in other development programs and community based childcare interventions alongside adoption instead of banning ICA and taking them out of the picture. If the government allowed the adoption agencies to run ICA for specific children and oblige them to engage in other community based humanitarian programs, the agencies would have agreed to that.

4.3.1.2 Additional burden on the governmental institutions

The downsizing and shutting down of organizations has brought additional burden on the government orphanage as the major causes of the problem have not been addressed or alternative interventions have not been designed. According to our respondents, that is one of the major challenges the ban has brought on the government institutions. There is a condition where children found vulnerable and brought to institutional care centers each day. Although they are carrying out local adoption and foster care services side to side their facility is overflowing. Respondent 1 of the government owned orphanage: Kibebe Tsehay has mentioned the effect like this.

The number of children who stay in our orphanage has increased. Due to the ban some orphanages have closed down. Hence, as a side effect the number of children at our orphanage has increased; as we cannot send the children here to other orphanages as we used to; even if the children's number reach 100,

200 or 300 they are going to stay here so the burden has increased. Before we might even not have a child on hand because we sent them to the other orphanages. Moreover, the orphanages used to take in those children who needs intensive care from us and care for these children because they care for a relatively smaller number of children. There are orphanages that provide quality service. I know some of them personally. The orphanages used to ease our burden. But now relatively the load has increased. In fact, we are working on DA as well as foster care but the orphanages used to support us well, we can't deny that because it is a fact. They used to support us in different ways; by taking in and caring for children, with ideas, some maintenances they really used to support us. Now this all has stopped.

The respondent also recommended as amendments could be made on the law as it is the output of the deliberation of legislators, they could look at the advantage and disadvantage and make required amendments. It is understandable as the ban didn't happen without a reason. However, rather than completely banning, finding ways for controlling would have been better. The children could go and find something better than institutional care, so it would be good if the opportunity remains available.

According to the researcher's observation, the number of children at Kibebe Tsehay Orphanage is not proportional to the number of rooms, beds and nannies. Children from infant to 10 years old stay in this compound while those who are above 10 are sent to other compounds. There were rooms where four to five children slept on one bed and a nanny was responsible to take care of 15 to 20 children. There is a primary clinic in the compound. As

the respondents explained, the number of kids who stay in the orphanage has increased significantly after the ban of ICA as the orphanages owned by NGOs are not taking children as frequently as they used to before the ban. This has affected the quality of service they provide. The respondent added, the more the number of children, the less the quality of service.

According to the respondent 1 of BoWCYA, the challenge posed by the ban of ICA has been observed by the concerned government offices, as well. Challenges are raised from two sides; the NGOs and the community. One is the problem adoption agencies that engaged in ICA encountered. They used to work with BoWCYA since they have operational agreement. The organizations complained as they could no longer access fund and were going to close down since they were working on adoption solely. There are also organizations that have closed down after the ban of ICA. When it comes to the community's ICA is preferred among some groups due to a wrong perception towards developed countries. There is a wrong belief as everywhere else outside Ethiopia is favorable and very comfortable. Therefore, the ban of ICA is not accepted by some part of the community.

On the other hand, the respondents added as the decision did not happen at the proper time. They did not forecast the upcoming situations before they made decision. The past two years have been full of changes and related repercussions such as displacement of people in large number. In such kind of incidents, children are the primary victims. Hence, the ban was not a wise decision in such kind of tough time without preparing alternatives. On top of this, the ban of ICA happened at the time of world economic crisis which made the problem worse. Different international organizations have ceased or deducted their support due to the

international economic recession. Besides that, in addition, they did not consult us when they pass the decision. This hindered them from observing the practical effects of the ban.

For instance, according to respondent 1 of the non-governmental orphanage, consortium of the NGOs which is known by the name Consortium of Child Development Organizations (CCDO) had conducted a research that took 3 years regarding the overall service towards destitute children in our country. The research was about the mechanisms to improve the services provided for needy children through different alternatives. However, the responsible government bodies did not consider the results of the research when they made the ban.

Moreover, as the participants stated, another issue that must be emphasized greatly is, the aid dependency on foreign support. Not only the NGOs but even the country is still dependent on the developed countries for different resources and alternatives. When we come to the NGOs, no prior works have been done to make orphanages independent; neither on their own nor via government support. As mentioned above the support that came through ICA used to support the other community based programs in each orphanage. However, now the ICA which is the main means to get support is closed without doing any work that would enable orphanages to become independent. This has hampered their implementation capacity significantly.

When we raise the economic issue in relation to ICA, the issue of high flow of foreign currency into the country should also come into the picture. In a research conducted in recent years by a forum called Ethiopian Charities and Societies Forum showed that the cash flow

that came into the country via NGOs exceeded the cash flow that was gained through chat and coffee. The economic relevance of the foreign currency flow for the country is undeniable.

The respondents added, the current situation of our country such as the recurrent displacement, instability and its repercussions are rising. Thus those things needed to be considered before significant decisions are passed. As an example, when one family or household is displaced the major victim will be children. Therefore, many children are becoming vulnerable. on top of this, banning ICA would increase the number of vulnerable children so the ban is adding fuel to the fire. Research shows that in 2002 around 5.6 million vulnerable children existed in Ethiopia. If we ask what has been done to reduce this number, much has not been done. Rather, most likely since we have not done much the number has gone higher. In addition, the unrest that is being witnessed in our country this past three years may have left many children vulnerable; leave alone government has released the toll of internally displaced people which counts 3 million. It is easy to estimate how many children have become vulnerable due to these reasons.

4.3.2 The limitations of the proclamation

When the researcher analyzed the challenges caused by the ban of ICA, some of them turn out to be gaps that were supposed to be considered during the process taken to enact the ban than effects caused by the ban. This implies the gaps can be addressed by making adjustments to the ban or taking other remedies. Major limitations of the ban are discussed here based on the findings.

4.3.2.1 Disregarding less developed domestic adoption practice

According to the participants, one of the major limitations of the ban was the fact that it happened while the country has less developed practice of DA. Some of the respondents argued, if the aim of banning ICA was to nurture the practice of DA, it is visibly not going well since preliminary things have not been done and the decision was not analyzed well. In addition, the fact that the culture of DA is less developed, the ban of ICA may pose a considerable challenge in the process of providing alternative care for vulnerable children.

Respondent 2 from Holt international explained the situation as follows.

When we see the issue of finding families for children it is obvious priority must be given to DA. However, when we see the reality, finding local families that are willing to adopt is difficult. The Bole branch court can attest to that as it handles adoption on federal level. The DA rate is making a slow progress yet not ready to address the need of vulnerable children. Therefore, the ban happened before we were ready to provide alternatives as a country. Due to these reasons children remain or stay in orphanages for a long time.

Moreover, respondent 1 from Bethany has elaborated the situation of DA as follows.

Our country's DA culture is not that much. It has not developed yet so a lot has to be done still. Bethany is a pioneer to introduce foster to adopt program in Ethiopia in 2010. So at that time 9 years ago people had many concerns like if someone take in a child through foster care or adoption there was a challenge from the society, the foster/adoptive family 'feared that the adoptee or foster

kid (a child who is not biologically their own) will become an inheritor'. There is a problem of not accepting the adopted child hundred percent as their own, equal to their biological children. So there is an awareness gap. Much emphasis should be given that those older kids, kids with special needs are still struggling to get a family. We have various kinds of family recruitment strategies to get more families such as announcing on the media, on television, making promotions at religious institutions, Idir, Equb and the like but still there are many children but our pool of options when it comes to the families is still limited. We have a matching problem; we have many children now referred to us but we still are struggling to get many families. Honestly speaking, I see no future for those special needs children at the orphanage I mean unless they get a domestic family. Like, those children with mental health issues for instance, it could be autism, it could be mental retardation, and there are many children with various kinds of problem. With the current awareness gap, it would be very difficult to get an Ethiopian who would take and raise this kind of kid so what's the future of these children. So I see no hope now if ICA is closed unless the law allows some kind of exceptions, some windows for those special needs children and even older children.

The respondent added, as one of the challenges on DA is that parents that come to adopt have age and gender preferences. Most families prefer children aged 4 to 7. Infant and toddlers are not preferred because raising such children is expensive for changing diapers, preparing their meal, they need to have someone who takes care of the child at home. So they don't want to make such sacrifices, in addition they prefer girls than boys. Hence there are

many variables that challenge DA including age, sex, special needs. Generally, there are factors to be considered as exceptions both on the adoptees and the adopters' side. That is why revising the law is very important.

Some of the respondents from the government institutes support this claim as well. Respondent 1 from Kibebe Tsehay Orphanage as well as the respondent 1 from MoWCYA explained, as there are boys (male children) in the government available for adoption and high number of adopters on the waiting list at the same time. This waiting list is filled by families who are interested in adopting girls (female children). This implies awareness creation should be done in the community to promote the adoption of boys (male children) as much as female children and to emphasize the primary purpose of adoption is to find families for children than the reverse.

4.3.2.2 Lack of research and analysis

On the other hand, the respondent 1 of non-governmental orphanage believes as the ban happened because of recurrent change of government employees or public servants who work in concerned government organizations (MoWCYA and BoWCYA). According to this respondent, three ministers have been changed while the NGO representatives were working with MoWCYA to improve the overall service delivery for vulnerable children and there was a continuity problem during the transition of the appointees. The director explained as the consortium of the NGOs was also advocating the same thing the government targeted which was improving the gaps based on research and diversifying alternatives for vulnerable children. However, the new appointee left everything behind and proceeded with what they wanted to do. When a government official with big responsibility is changed, there should be

a proper mechanism to transfer tasks and resume activities from where they were. However, this has not been done since most appointed officials start everything from the scratch. When the NGOs had a meeting with the government offices, the meeting was generally on the service provision, alternative mechanisms and ways of improvement besides ICA. However, while we were working on this, at some point when the minister was changed, we were informed as ICA was banned abruptly. They could not maintain the effort and involvement of the NGO representatives.

As the respondents stated, the other limitation of the ban was the fact that it did not give time for the NGOs to prepare themselves to adjust to the change and look for other sources. Some of the respondents believe one of the reasons for the challenges of the ban to outweigh the opportunities is because they were not informed ahead of time to prepare themselves and exit strategy was not designed by either the government offices or the NGOs. There was no discussion held about banning ICA although there were ongoing discussions about the ways to improve the services provided for OVC. The non-governmental organizations were severely affected by the ban of ICA as their finances were entirely dependent on external sources, particularly ICA. Most of the NGOs run their community based programs using the finances secured from ICA. Therefore, when ICA was banned, not only the adoption but also other community based projects were affected significantly.

According to the respondents, possible alternatives such as adjusting the government system that works to manage and control ICA have not been thoroughly exploited before resorting to the ban. In order to solve the problem, ICA was supposed to be closed but not for good, rather for provisional time till the government investigate and redress the problems

related to it. Because there are children ICA is their only option. Considering the depth of the problems faced by OVCs, ICA should have been practiced until the local system becomes well-functioning, self-sufficient and effective. So, it would have been good if it was ceased for a while and the government reformed the whole structure, enhanced the system and applied vigorous system among sector offices. ICA did not have to be banned till they become capable to do these and other related improvements. As one of the participants stated, when the government found it difficult to do all the adjustments mentioned above, the officials took banning as an option. It looks like the concerned offices took ceasing as a solution when they could not change the existing situation and come up with solutions. Attention was given only to the burden it creates on government bureaus than how it affects the fate the needy children. However, this could be taken as ruining children's lives as there are children whose only option was ICA. We do not need to take opportunities away from destitute children living in Ethiopia while it is the government's responsibility to create a healthy system to implement ICA as it was one of the alternatives for vulnerable children.

4.3.2.3. Lack of exceptions

According to the respondents, one of the limitations of the ban was lack of exclusivity. The respondents stated, the other limitation of the ban is prohibiting Ethiopian Diasporas to adopt. According to the proclamation, even Ethiopian Diaspora's are not entitled to adopt a child from Ethiopia. The fact that Ethiopians with other nationalities on their documents ineligible for adoption is strange because one of the reasons the law is enacted is that children are exposed to identity crisis when they are raised by foreigners. But if an Ethiopian living abroad, in the developed nations, wants to adopt a child, they were supposed to have a legitimate ground or legal right to adopt and to be part of the solution. However,

this is not the case given the new proclamation. Therefore, since there are many confusions even in the law, a revision is required considering children with special needs, older children and Ethiopian nationals living abroad.

Respondent 1 at Kibebe Tsehay also supported this claim. He stated, the fact that the ban completely prohibits ICA without any exception, made it challenging. Ethiopian Diasporas who live abroad and typical Ethiopians that live here but have another country's citizenship on their passport couldn't file for adoption. When the government banned ICA it should have made an exception regarding those people who are Ethiopians by blood but live alone and have the citizenship of another country. Those Diasporas were not supposed to be prohibited like any other foreigner. This is the demerit of the proclamation.

The respondent added, given this situation, those Ethiopians have no option to adopt and be part of the solution even if they want to. Ethiopians are citizens that have high regard for blood ties. From experience, Ethiopians prefer to adopt a kid from their own country than other countries. So, the law is affecting them greatly. In addition to this, people whose citizenship is Ethiopian even on documents but got married to a foreigner are not able to adopt a child from Ethiopia since both adoptive parents are supposed to be Ethiopians. This has also created another problem. This implies children who are vulnerable here in Ethiopia but have extended families abroad cannot be taken and cared for due to the ban. If children get adopted by Ethiopian citizens who live abroad or those who are back but have foreign citizenship, the children will get better facilities. Exception should have been made considering these situations. The manager stated as they have been insisting to all concerned

government bodies as there could be ways to solve this problem. However, they have not get any response yet.

Respondent 2 from BoWCYA stated as complaints came from different stakeholders against the generalized ban. One of the complaints is claiming as the ban should have at least made Ethiopian nationals an exception. Ethiopians who are citizens of other countries should have been allowed to adopt. According to the current ban, if a child loses his/her both parents and have extended family abroad they could not take him as the law completely shuts ICA. However, the concerned government offices have not done any amendment towards any of the complaint areas so far.

In relation to this, respondent 1 at BoWCYA stated as the awareness gap regarding the ban itself has been another challenge on it is own. People particularly Ethiopians that are citizens of another country who were processing for adoption are not thoroughly convinced of the ban so many complaints are coming to their bureau. This implies as there are Diasporas or Ethiopians having foreign citizenship who are interested in adopting children from Ethiopia but prohibited by the ban.

Furthermore, some of the respondents from the NGOs side, stated as the ban was generalized. The only issue that was taken into consideration when effecting the ban was the few adoptions that were not successful even though the successful ones outnumbered significantly. Respondent 2 from one of the adoption agencies stated this as follows.

For instance, regarding WCYA, if 100 children go abroad via ICA and 5 families don't receive report, those 5 families will go to WCYA and file

complaints. Hence, even if the adoption of 95 children is successful they will only be concerned about the complaints that came to their office. They will not take in to account the adoptions that succeeded. The respondents added, most of the time, the successful ones go to the NGOs. When adopted children grow up and come back to visit, they visit orphanages; they don't go to WYCA. However, the ones disappointed due to lack of or delayed report approach WYCA. Consequently, the data government have is distorted.

The respondent added a point to elaborate as the ban has also been generalized on the adoptive families' side as well. The officer explained, when it comes to families who adopt, they instantly become family to the child and raise him/her to the best of their ability and to the extent they can afford. Given her personal experience, more than 90% of these children will grow up and become successful. Children that fall in the remaining 10% might turn out to be addicted, not be able to fit in the family, could face attachment issues and in rare cases die. For instance, there was a death case of an Ethiopian child adopted in the US 8 years ago. The government officials always talk about that case whenever they speak against ICA even if there are high probabilities where many more children could die here in Ethiopia due to several reasons. Even though it is sad that she died but the American court accused them of negligence and sentenced her parents to 37 years of imprisonment. This implies the country where the adopted children live in give due attention for children right and wellbeing. Therefore, as an orphanage, finding a permanent family for children and see them grown up and independent is a big advantage while we were not able to think past their basic needs.

In addition to this, respondent 2 of the non- governmental orphanage mentioned as the ban was made without taking special needs children into consideration, HIV positive children, and children with other chronic illnesses who need complicated procedures and advanced medical supports that couldn't be accessed within the country. For instance, in case of Sele Enat the process of two HIV positive children was interrupted due to the ban. On top of this, alternative packages are not designed to provide long term care and support for special needs children.

Respondent 2 at Bethany supported the idea discussed above and explained the adversity of the problem as follows.

From the beginning we gave the ICA service mostly to special needs children. Special needs children include HIV AIDS positive children, physically and mentally challenged children, hepatitis B positive children, children with congenital hereditary diseases and autistic children. These children do not have option now. Ethiopian families have not reached to the level of willingness to take in and raise such children through adoption. Up to date Ethiopian families want to adopt healthy children. Therefore, the fact that ICA is banned have made special needs children more vulnerable. So now these children are still in institutions (orphanages) and they still do not get continuous medical help. In worst case scenarios, there are children who have died after the ban.

Respondent 1 at Kibebe Tsehay has also raised his concern regarding the complete ban of ICA and its effects on special needs children. He elaborated as the problem caused by the ban was not just on increasing the number of children who stay in their center but also on the

special needs children who barely have better option within the country. There is no one who is willing to adopt special needs children locally. On the other hand, via ICA they do not make preferences even in the case of HIV positive and physically and mentally challenged children. There was the tendency of adopting all children. However, now they are transferring children with such cases from institutions to institutions by identifying which institutions are suitable for those children, provide better services and good professionals could be available and letting them stay there, the manager stated.

According to respondent 2 at MoWCYA, ICA had been advantageous in regards to children with different kinds of problem including special needs. However, the complete ban of ICA has dismissed this advantage. The expert elaborated the side effects of the complete ban on special needs children as follows.

In our country, there are children with different problems There are those who have families as well as who don't. To be more specific, there are children who have medical issues that cannot be treated easily, such as genetically/biologically deformed children, children with mental retardation, children that live with HIV/AIDS exist. In our country's context families of these children plays a low role to accept and treat the children as their own. This could be resulted from attitudinal problem or our traditional and social norms as there will be a fear of discrimination. This will affect the children and will create a possibility where they will lose what they deserve to get from their families. However, foreigners take these this kind of children and get them the medical attention they need and help them to recuperate to their

normal body structure and recover from their biological deformity at whatever cost. In this regard, I believe ICA had a good effect as we have come across such kind of cases. They don't hesitate to adopt children with special needs too: they are mostly willing. ICA was also beneficial for children who are really orphan and there are no alternatives available for them in the country. It could serve the children to get what they deserve as a human being or as children.

Respondent 1 at MoWCYA also agreed as so much work has to be done especially regarding DA. The tendency of adopting children with special needs is very low. The number of children is not high but awareness works must be done so that people will adopt those children.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Discussion

5.1. Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ethiopia

According to the findings, the alternative childcare packages in place are prepared to address the needs of vulnerable children who are exposed to several problems. Besides, child care package includes different alternatives considering the situation of the children than generalizing them into one category. This implies as the designed alternatives can be put into practical implementation.

According to MoWCYA (2009), orphan and vulnerable children are children whose survival and development is jeopardized by certain circumstances and are therefore, in need of alternative childcare services. For instance, single and double orphans, street children, abandoned children, children with disability, trafficked children could fall under this category although the list is not limited.

As it is clearly depicted in the above literature, the children who are categorized under in need of special protection include children with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS and children with disabilities. However, when the ban of ICA was enacted, it was effective for all children without any exception. This implies the situation of those children with special needs and chronic illnesses is not taken into special consideration, rather they are treated similarly with the other children. This has been mentioned as one of the limitation of the ban since

these children are left out of any permanent solution rather stay in institutions since it is nearly impossible to get them local alternatives such as domestic adoption or foster care.

5.2 Existing child care alternatives in Ethiopia

The NGO and government owned child care institutions, and the supervising government offices provide services for orphan and vulnerable children according to the laws designed locally and conventions signed at continent and international level. Child focused interventions promoted by the government offices are drawn from the alternative childcare guideline. These alternatives include community-based childcare, reunification and reintegration, foster family care, adoption and institutional care services. Both the government and NGO owned orphanage implement all of these programs and the government offices conduct their supervision accordingly. Besides, the adoption agencies also implemented some of these alternatives along with ICA until the ban was effected and now they are settled to community based child development programs which are drawn from the aforementioned guidelines.

5.3. History of Inter Country Adoption in Ethiopia

The fact that drought, famine, conflict and other calamities prevailed in Ethiopia, made the country a hotspot for international adoption. Further, the adoption of an Ethiopian orphan by the Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie in 2005 put Ethiopia on the spotlight of ICA, the aftermath of which almost quadrupled the number of Ethiopian children adopted annually by American families (Solomon, 2011). The findings from the participants also go along with the above statements.

Those findings stated as the number of adopted children has elevated over the past three decades due to several factors such as draught, loss of parents from recurrent war and other calamities. Most of the internationally adopted children were taken to America followed by the European countries. Several indigenous and foreign adoption agencies and childcare institutes were also functional. Most of those childcare organizations were closed down after the ban.as they particularly relied on the support that came from inter country adoption.

5.4. Inter country adoption and Child trafficking and abuse

In this regard various literature accounted so far tend to conclude that child buying, defrauding, coercing, or even kidnapping children away from their families coupled with improper financial gain and corruption have been widespread in Ethiopia under the guise of ICA. (E.J. Graff, 2010).

As stated in the findings, children have been exposed to trafficking and abuse through the name of adoption. Adoption agencies which are legal registered entities have been accused of involving in illegal activities that are against the best interest of the children. Local administrators and government officials have also been part of these illicit activity being lobbied and bribed by the adoption agencies. According to the participants, in some cases the adoption was serving the interest of the agencies and the people working there than the children. They have stated cases where children were sent through black market even without proper documentation.

In Ethiopia the operation of adoption agencies in the context of ICA have been highly masked with illicit activities. There have been many reported cases of child recruiting, buying

and falsification of documents through the involvement of adoption agencies and also local administrations (Tesfaye, 2016).

According to the respondents, there were cases where documents were falsified to state the parents dead while they are alive and to hide other crucial information as well. Children were stated as orphan or abandoned in most cases since those children have high probability of getting adoptive families through ICA and for the agencies to make more money. Parents were deceived as their children would send them money and come back to take them abroad to give up their children for ICA. As the respondents stated, there was also high flow of unknown financial transaction in the process of ICA. On top of this, children were lost, injured and even died after they were sent through ICA. This implies the data gathered from participants in this regard goes along with the information on the literatures.

5.5. Inter country adoption and Identity Crisis

There is a commonly expressed objection that children involved in ICA will grow up with an inadequate or incomplete sense of their own identity. They will come up against racial prejudice in the local community, and in extreme cases may even be driven to feel like social outcasts.” (Michael and Heather Humphrey, 2002)

Identity crisis is mentioned as one of the major rationales behind the ban of ICA in Ethiopia. The findings reveal as children have high probability of experiencing identity crisis when they are taken abroad through ICA and live with a community that have a different culture, language and color. This has been depicted to be against the best interest of the child as it affects the psychosocial and emotional wellbeing of the children.

Studies of adult inter country adoptees indicate that, as a group, they are more likely to have mental health, social and economic difficulties than other children in the same families who were not adopted (Hjern and Alleback, 2002). However, it is equally possible that their problems are related to other pre-adoption factors, such as experiences of deprivation.

Some of the participants, especially those from the government offices, support this claim. The respondents indicated as the government officials have witnessed the identity crisis faced by adopted children through regular monitoring and supervision conducted in the countries where children are taken through adoption. On the contrary, some of the respondents, mostly those from the NGOs, stated as identity crisis cannot be stated as a reason to ban ICA since it is a problem anyone could face even while they change places within the country to pursue higher education and better work in different region of the country than their place of origin. These respondents added, the possibility of experiencing identity crisis depends on the emotional intelligence and personality of the person that the place they live in. Moreover, the participants mentioned as the problem of facing identity crisis could not be presented as a major factor in comparison to the children's right to live and to have family which would have fallen in a huge risk if they remained in their country.

5.6. Culture of domestic adoption in Ethiopia

Local adoption seems largely neglected or utterly out of the focus of attention of many adoption service provider organizations (Alternative Child Care Guideline, 2009). Ethiopian children being formally and legally adopted by Ethiopian adoptive parents is relatively a newly emerging issue (Simegn, 2015).

According to the findings from the study, less developed local adoption practices have been one of the significant barriers faced by the government offices and the NGOs while they try to look for local alternatives for the child. Some respondents stated as traditional domestic adoptions are more preferable among Ethiopians than the formal one. They added as improving this tradition would take a huge awareness creation campaigns involving all stakeholders. Not taking poor culture and practice of domestic adoption into consideration has been mentioned as one of the limitations of the ban since it can affect the fate of vulnerable children.

ICA advocates argue that the child's rights are not protected and that the child is deprived of permanency in local alternatives (Sarah, 2010). Authors who study the Ethiopian context warn that local placements "can also result in children being fostered for their labor value and thrown out when times get too hard to feed an additional mouth" (Ennew 2003).

The findings have also depicted even if few number of domestic adoption happen; it was more focused on the interest of the families than the child. There is a tendency of sex and age preference even when adoption takes place. Girls are more preferable for adoption than boys which increases the chance of boys to stay in institutions for long time. The concerned bureau is conducting a research on this to figure out the reasons behind the sex and age preference. When we see the case of special needs children having chronic illnesses or physical and mental disability, their possibility to be adopted locally is hopeless. Hence, they are destined to remain in institutions unless amendments are made to the ban. The respondents added, these all preferences were not issues when ICA was practical since the foreigners were willing to take all children without age, sex and other preferences including special needs.

This implies as the ban was taken without taking these factors and the benefit of those children into consideration and this is also stated as one of the amendment areas.

5.7. Other countries that banned ICA

The Children Act of Uganda recognized in-country adoption and ICA as the last forms of alternative care, ICA being reserved as a last alternative (The Children Act, 1997). Not only making ICA a last resort, but linking it to foster care for three years was a stringent requirement, hence to circumvent this precondition legal practitioners devised certain mechanisms (Chirwa D, 2016).

When we see the experience of Uganda, it constitutes a very good example to rectify the flaws on the law and practical problems on ICA through legislative reforms but not necessarily through banning the process.

Even though ICA is reserves as a last resort in Uganda, it is not entirely banned rather amendments have been made to have preconditions for both in country and inter country adoptions in order to reduce unintended consequences. These preconditions help to correct the gaps observed on the law and implementation of ICA without banning ICA as it can serve as a last resort for children who run out of local alternatives. On the contrary, when we see the case of Ethiopia, ICA was banned entirely without any exception and preconditions even for children who barely have local alternatives. This implies, Ethiopia has not applied the right procedure before banning ICA completely.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Conclusion and Implication

6.1 Conclusion

The researcher has attempted to explore the opportunities and challenges that came along with the ban of inter-country adoption as well as the rationale behind the ban. The inferences hereafter are drawn from the findings of the research. As the respondents stated, some of the opportunities the ban of ICA include improvement in the practice of domestic adoption and other local alternatives, and clearing up implementation gaps and malpractices related to processing ICA. This indicates that, the domestic care options can address the needs of OVC if implemented well.

However, as all respondents indicated, the adoption and foster care practices of the country are not well developed yet. Hence, banning ICA while local alternatives are not well developed to provide care for vulnerable children would aggravate the problem than reducing it.

The challenges of the ban have caused more problems to vulnerable children than reducing them. As the respondents stated, the changes made regarding ICA were mainly initiated by the challenges faced regarding follow up. This decision did not make the children the center of attention.

In addition to this, according to the responses from both the government and non-governmental institutions, the ban was not research based and exit strategy was not designed. The absence of exit strategy deprived the NGOs enough time to prepare themselves hence, it brought a devastating effect on the alternative child care offered for OVCs.

According to proclamation No 1070/2018 the ban did not have any exceptions for special cases such as Diasporas and children with special needs. According to the Ethiopian Diasporas policy, Ethiopian nationals who live abroad and have the citizenship of other countries have the right to involve in economic and social aspects. Besides, there are children with different kinds of special needs who can barely get local childcare alternatives. These children will remain in institutions without any chance for better future.

Given these factors, the ban should be partially ineffective or should have exceptions. Accordingly, the government should take administrative measures to rectify the problems on ICA and make sure that it would be applied as a last resort. In general, as far as the prevalence and level of undesirable effects of ICA are not proven by research and local alternatives are not well nurtured, ICA shall remain practical.

6.2 Implications

Based on findings of this research discussed below are implications of the study, implication for social work intervention and implication for policy makers.

6.2.1. Implication for social work practice

According to our respondents, the local options are not proportional to the needs the OVC. Developing the local alternatives such domestic adoption and foster care through different mechanisms is required. Therefore, social workers could involve in awareness creation activities, public campaigns, need assessment and trainings to improve the use of domestic childcare options. In addition, well organized plan needs to be designed to address the issue. Local resource mobilization and searching for opportunities can also be used to support the efforts to address the needs of vulnerable children.

There are instances where special needs children may need medical treatments that are not available within the country. Besides, if children get the chance to be adopted by Ethiopian diasporas, would lessen the risk of experiencing identity crisis. Social workers need to advocate for ICA to still remain an option for special needs children and for the ban to exclude Ethiopian diasporas.

6.2.2. Implication for policy maker

Research needs to be conducted by concerned government offices to assess the effects of the ban on OVC at national level and to determine future directions. The research and decision making procedures should involve concerned stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and

adoption agencies in all steps. Furthermore, findings of the study show that, the ban needs to have exceptions for Diasporas and special need children.

The government needs to work on designing more organized follow up strategies both for the governmental administrative offices and non-governmental organizations such as orphanages and adoption agencies. One of the solutions for follow up related challenges could be designing well organized follow up systems than banning the alternative.

References

- ACPF. (2012). *Inter-country Adoption: An African Perspective*. Addis Ababa: The African Child Policy Forum.
- Adams, G. R. (2007). Identity status. *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*. SAGE Publications.
- Amett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55, 469-480.
- Amy Gilbert. (2013). *Community based child care in Ethiopia vs. the individual centered model in the United States*. Loyola University Chicago.
- Bimal Kanta Nayak. (2014). *Orphan Problems and Community Concern in Ethiopia*.
International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research (IJMRSSR) ISSN:
2319-4421, No. 1, Vol 3.
- Chirwa D, (2016). *Children's rights, domestic alternative care frameworks and judicial responses to restrictions on inter-country adoption: A case study of Malawi and Uganda*. *African Human Rights Law Journal*.
- Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Proclamation No 1/1995.
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln fourth edition.
- Dawson, C, (2002). *Practical Research Methods A user-friendly guide to mastering research techniques and projects*. Oxford OX4 IRE, United Kingdom

Desalegn Negari. (2006). Guddifachaa Practice as child problem intervention in Oromo society.

HSRC. (2004). Defining Orphaned and Vulnerable Children ISSN 1810-5564

Emma Colvert & Jana Kreppner. (2008). The importance of cultural identity in adoption A study of young people adopted from Romania.

Ennew, Judith. (2003). Difficult Circumstances: Some Reflections on 'Street Children' in Africa,' Children, Youth, and Environments, Vol. 13, No. 1.

Erikson Erik. (1963). Childhood and Society. New York: Norton.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Women's Affairs. (2009). Alternative Childcare Guidelines.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2017). National Children's Policy. Addis Ababa.

Graff, E. J. (2010). *The Baby Business*. Democracy. A Journal of Ideas. [Online] available at <http://www.democracyjournal.org/17/6757.php?page=all>, accessed on 5, February 2018.

Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of inter country adoption. (1993). The International Journal of Children's Rights 3: 463-468, 1995.

Hiwot Ashenafi. (2017). Exploring the Practice of Domestic Adoption: the case of selected organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Unpublished MA Thesis, College of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University.

- Hjern A and Alleback P. (2002). Suicide in first and second generation immigrants in Sweden: a comparative study. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*.
- Hubing B, (2001). International Child Adoptions: Who Should Decide What Is in the Best Interests of the Family. (15 Notre Dame J.L. Ethics & Pub, Pol'y 655.
- Michael Humphrey and Heather Humphrey. (2002). Inter-country adoption Practical Experiences. Tavistock/ Routledge. London and New York.
- Janet M. Ruane. (2005). Essentials of research methods: A guide to social science research. Blackwell Publishing.
- John W. Creswell. (2014). Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches. 2nd ed., University of Nebraska Lincoln.
- Juffer F. (2006). Children's awareness of adoption and their problem behavior in families with 7-year old internationally adopted children.
- Larry W. Kreuger & W. Lawrence Neuman. (2014). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. 7th ed., Pearson Education Limited.
- Levy, T., Orlans, M. (2015). Treating attachment disorder and trauma in children, adults and families. 26th Conference of ATTACH. (September 17-20, 2014) Orlando: Florida.
- Melat Assefa. (2018). The Ban of Inter-country Adoption in Ethiopia: Implications on the Right to Alternative Care. Unpublished MA Thesis, College of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University.

Rice, F. P. (1996). *The adolescent: development, relationships and culture*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Richard Carlson. (2010/2011). *Seeking the Better Interests of Children with a New International Law of Adoption*. Vol 55.
(<http://www.nylslawreview.com/wpcontent/uploads/sites/16/2013/11/55-3.Carlson.pdf>)

Sarah Brittingham. (2010). *Birth Families and Inter-country Adoption in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*. International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands.

Simegn Petros. (2015). *The Experiences of Adoptive Parents with Domestic Adoption*. Unpublished MA Thesis, College of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University.

Solomon Addis Getahun. (2011). *A History of Ethiopia's Newest Immigrants to the United States: Orphans*, *Journal des Africanists*.

Tariku Ayana. (2015). *Policy Practice of Inter country versus Domestic by Childcare Institutions: the case of Adama Town*. Addis Ababa University.

Tesfaye Alemu Osman. (2016). *The Operation of Adoption Agencies in the Context of the Best Interest of Orphan and Vulnerable Children to Alternative Care in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa University, College of Law and Governance Centre of Human Rights.

The Children (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2015, the Republic of Uganda.

The Children Act, Chapter 59, 1997, the Republic of Uganda.

UNICEF Ethiopia Statistics http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ethiopia_statistics.html#116;

UNICEF Ethiopia Situation Report N° 3, May-June 2014,

United Nations Child Rights Convention, 1989, preamble, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Wereldkinderen. (2009). *“Fruits of Ethiopia” Intercountry Adoption: the Rights of the Child or the “Harvesting” of Children?* Commissioned by Wereldkinderen (N.I.C.W.O.) to Against Child Trafficking [Online] available at <http://www.againstchildtrafficking.org/wp-content/uploads/Second-Interim-Report-FINAL-redacted-for-distribution+annexures.pdf>, accessed on 12 December 2012.

Yonas Abiye. (2018). Parliament passes the Bill Banning Adoption by Foreigners. The Reporter.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

Consent Form

My name is Hiwot Tilahun. I am a Masters student at school of social work, Addis Ababa University. I am doing a research on Exploring the Opportunities and Challenges of the Ban of Inter Country Adoption: The Case of Selected Organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I would like to ask for your permission to participate voluntarily in this study. I am interested to know about the opportunities and challenges that came along with the ban of inter country adoption. During this process, I would like to assure you that your identity will not be disclosed to anyone. This is to protect your privacy and confidentiality of the information you provide. I will use tape recorders to correctly record the conversations we did, and the recordings will be locked in a safe place and will not be exposed to anyone. The notes and tapes will be destroyed after the study is completed and approved by the School of Social Work. By participating in this interview, you will contribute to the success of my study. You are free to answer questions only if you want to do so. You may not answer questions if you feel uncomfortable. You can ask questions at any time during the interview and in case you do not understand the questions or in case you feel tired and you want to continue later, that will be your choice. Finally, I would like you to confirm your agreement by signing on the space provided bellow. I am really grateful for your cooperation for the success of the study.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Annex 2

Data Collection Tools

I. Observation Check List

Note: The researcher will put tick marks in the respective box.

S.N	Things to observe in the child care centers	Poor	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Very good	Excellent
1	The neatness of the rooms					
2	The conduciveness of the compound					
3	Child to bed ration					
4	Child to nanny ration					
5	Daily meal schedule and menu					

Annex 3

II. In Depth Interview Guide (For the administrative bodies of the NGOs and Childcare Agencies)

1. What is your position in this organization?
2. What are the child care services you provide? How many beneficiaries do you have right now?
3. Why do you prefer include those service in you organization?
4. How did the ban of ICA affect the works your organization does?
5. What are the opportunities that came along with the ban of ICA on your organization?
6. What are the challenges caused by the ban of ICA on your organization?
7. How do you see the ban of the ICA considering the current situation of the country?
8. Are there any changes you made on the service provision after the ban of ICA?
9. If there are any changes, what are the options you came up with to deal with the situations that came along with ban?
10. What do you suggest to improve the current situations of OVC in the country?

Annex 4

III. Key Informant Interview with Federal MoWCYA and Addis Ababa BoWCYA Focal Person

1. What is your position in this organization?
2. Can you tell me the number of OVCs in Ethiopia currently?
3. How many childcare institutions exist in the country currently?
4. How does your organization involve in the work related to OVCs?
5. Which child care alternatives are being practiced in Ethiopia at present?
6. What was the reason for banning ICA? What was the rationale behind banning ICA?
7. How did the ICA affect the lives of OVCs in the country?
8. Are there any researches conducted as to how ICA has affected the lives of the OVCs?
9. What are the opportunities that came along with the ban of ICA on your organization?
10. What are the challenges caused by the ban of ICA on your organization?
11. How do you see the ban of the ICA considering the current situation of the country?
12. Which child care alternatives your organization promote at present? Why?
13. Are there any changes in the functioning of the child care organizations you supervise?