

## Education and Social Problems

### Introduction

Today education system faces many issues and problems. It is not possible to talk about all of these issues in this lesson, but we will highlight some of the most important.

### *What is a Social Problem?*

A social problem refers to a state of affairs that negatively affects the people. There are many aspects of social problems including social, economic, psychological, and other. Somali society is undergoing poor economic, poor quality of education, insecurity, and political instability. All these issues are causing many problems including high rates of illiteracy, drug abuse, social tension, discrimination, and others.

### Educational Problems

Educational problems refer to issues of poverty, out of school children, large size of classroom, mental health, drug addiction, school violence, and others.

1. **Poverty:** is a lack of economic resources such, as it is difficult to reach a sufficient level of living standards. On the other hand, it refers to the loss of opportunities and privileges that are normally available to the general population. In short, it means a lack of necessities for the survival of an individual.

In Somalia, nearly 70 percent of Somalis live below the poverty line<sup>1</sup>. The international poverty line, which is currently \$2.15 per person per day. There is a great need for the education of children and adults, access to health services, improved access to water, and access to electricity. Poverty denies individuals and their family of basic rights such as equality, education, health, and other basic service.

- **Causes and Consequences of Poverty**
  - **Low Access to Education:** A lack of opportunity reduces access to the availability of resources and is due to poor economic conditions. For example, more than three million children in Somalia are out of school. In many areas across the country, parents are not able to school fees for their children<sup>2</sup>.
  - **Malnutrition and Development:** Malnutrition influences both physical growth and affect psychological development. A good

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank's 7<sup>th</sup> Somalia Economic Update (SEU), November, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/somalia/education>

diet helps a child to be educated, active, and happy. It brings mental retardation. Children of poor families start life with a handicap of limited food supply, widespread infections, poor health, inadequate stimulation, and lack of education and awareness among parents.

- Socialization Patterns: poverty causes inadequate stimulation, poor or lack of schooling, lack of role models, and lack of social and emotional support from the peer group. It influences the cognitive and emotional development of the growing child.
- Personality Development: Highly disadvantaged children are likely to be higher on neuroticism and introversion, and lower on extraversion than non-disadvantaged children are.
- Mental health: There is increasing evidence of a strong association between poor mental health and the experience of poverty. A 2017 study found that 16% of adolescent girls were experiencing severe anxiety, while 13% faced severe depression<sup>3</sup>. In addition to poverty, migration, displacement conflict, and insecurity are causes of mental health. Although mental health occurs in all ages, sexes, and backgrounds, the risk is higher among the poor, unemployed, and with low education.
- Psychological Interventions: Psychologists believe that human development is shaped by the experiences faced by the individual. It is necessary psychological first aid and child rights training to mitigate the impact of poverty on children.

#### Activity 1:

##### Understanding the concept of poverty

1. As a group discuss poverty and list the four most important reasons for the occurrence of poverty in Somalia.

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2. Does poverty cause low school enrollment? If yes, how it reduces school enrollment?

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<sup>3</sup> Ha, S. & Forney, J. (2018) Somali Girls' Education Promotion Project – Transition: Baseline Evaluation Report, p.66

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3. Provide an example on how malnutrition affects on psychological development.

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4. Do you agree that poverty causes mental health? If yes, can you share an example?

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2. **Drug Addiction:** is a chronic problem that involves habitual drug seeking that it has harmful effects on the individual. It can be due to a combination of factors such as peer pressure, stress, and quality of parenting, role models, and others. It is a common problem and a challenge during adolescence when peer pressure to experiment with new things is present. Drug addiction is closely related to crime and HIV/AIDS. The effects on physical and mental health are also well documented. It can be treated, however, prevention of drug addiction is a better approach. Involving families, schools, the community, and the media are effective ways of fighting against drug addiction.

3. **Out-of-School Children:** Many children are out of school due to many factors. Out of school children are the population between the ages of 3-25 years who do not attend schools or who have studied in schools but dropped out before completing basic education. There are a number of factors that contribute out of school children including low economic barriers, conflict, socio-cultural norms, delayed school enrolment, lack of inclusive education, and a lack of effective implementation of education policies and acts. Children from families living in poverty who do not have the opportunity to attend schools. In Puntland, around 60% of school age children are out of school due to a variety of factors.

## Activity 2

1. List at least four suggestions on how to fight against drug addiction

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2. List at least four suggestions about how to reduce out of schools.

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Further reading about challenges of education in Somalia, click below link.

<https://brokenchalk.org/educational-challenges-in-somalia/>

Motivation for reading:

