

# Girl-Child Education: Challenges and Opportunities in Somalia, with Special Reference Bay Region

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*One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. "Malala Yousafzai"*

## Abstract

Mainly the Girls are more vulnerable to any violation among and unequal access to schooling in fragile states human beings. The factors, including Long conflict, lack of resources, traditional attitudes, high levels of obstacles, and political instability are barriers for Somalia Girls not to get education in schools. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine girl-child education: Challenges and Opportunities in Somalia, with special reference Bay region. The study was based on primary data and descriptive-cum-analytical in nature. The data has been collected through interview method (unstructured). The population of study contains Selected some Private Schools, Principles and Scholars in Bay region. The data obtained from select sample provide initial information about general educational system that how it becomes a barrier for girls to assess the education from schools, colleges or in universities in (Bay Region). The main objectives of the study are - To analyze the attitudes and practice towards girl child education in Bay Region – To examine gender difference towards girl education in Bay Region and To find out the impact of instability and situation of crisis on girl-child education. It was found that More than one million of children were not accessed in primary schools in Somalia. The majority of these children are girls between the ages of 0-14 years. Bay region is one of the leading places in Somalia having higher rate of illiteracy in girl-child. Generally, the importance of girl-child education is the foundation and preparation of getting better community through knowledge and emphasized achievements towards their life. Parents in Bay region should concentrate and encourage their girls to go learning and assure them with full confidence during their study.

## Keywords

Somalia, Southwest State, Bay Region, Violations, Fragile State, Traditional Attitudes, Political Instability

## Introduction

Education is a learning process in which knowledge and skills are transferred through teaching. Education is a process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. Educational methods include story-telling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research. A 'Right to Education' has been recognized by some governments, including at the global level. Today millions of children around the world are under ignorance due to problems and long conflict to get proper education. Poverty, inequality and unemployment are the major problems obtainable in Africa, Asia and Latin American, for the reason that they have been experienced under agri-system production since from past centuries onwards.

Women are at the heart of most societies. Regardless of whether they are working or not, mothers are very influential people in children's lives. Educating girls is one of the most important investments that any country can make in its own future. Education has a profound effect on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. As the following examples demonstrate, having an education can make an enormous difference to a woman's chances of finding well-paid work, raising a healthy family and preventing the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

## Education in Somalia

The education infrastructure of Somalia has been damaged by decades of colonial neglect, followed by the outbreak of a civil war in 1990 that has led to widespread population displacement and paralysis of social services. The sector suffers from severe managerial, technical and financial resource limitations and a lack of consistency in standards across regions. Superimposed on this context are challenges facing access to education for girls. Cultural norms and practices contribute to disproportionately low access to schooling; Somali culture assigns women and girls

subordinate roles in the society. Women and girls lack educational opportunities and have very low representation in both the political and economic sectors. Female teachers are under-represented.

Education is an integral component in rebuilding Somalia, particularly in the South and Central areas, where the majority of the population has largely been deprived to education due to lack of consistent centralized governance. Economic and environmental factors have seen a country-wide shift from traditional pastoralist and agricultural livelihoods to a high degree of urbanization; lack of education limits the employability of new rural-to-urban migrants. At a national level, poor education of government personnel permeates Somalia's limited governance infrastructure, raising serious longer-term concerns for future leadership at the various levels of government.

## Statement of The Problem

Education is a human right. It is guaranteed under the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child. This convention is the most widely ratified international treaty in the world today. Social exclusion is an additional barrier to girls going to school. Certain groups of girls are more likely to be excluded from school on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion or disability. Disabled children, and among them disabled girls in particular, constitute a significant group that is denied access to education. In a recent World Bank report it is estimated that only about 1-5 per cent of all disabled children and young people attend schools in developing countries.

This study emphasizes that a major barrier to girl-child access and participation in formal education is the cultural and traditional values and the daily realities of poverty stand between girls and their prospects for educational opportunities. Traditional beliefs, practices and sayings perpetuate gender imbalance in terms of educational attainments. This paper argues that the education of girl-child would improve their

life chances, and also enhance the welfare of their households, thus its resultant benefit of the girl-child being empowered. In the light of these challenges in the girl-child education, this paper further brings to the fore the efforts of a growing number of NGOs and international agencies complementing the government's efforts in the Bay Region of Somalia in promoting greater participation towards girl-child education. Therefore, this study investigated girl-child education: Challenges and Opportunities in Somalia, with special reference Bay region, southwest state of Somalia. The continuation of very less concern of girl child education may result on unfavorable consequences.

### Significance of The Study

The possession and use of formal education can improve the quality of life without necessarily increasing economic freedom. Education is an important foundation to improve the status of women and has also been recognized as a fundamental strategy for development. No sustainable development is possible if women remain un-educated, discriminated against and disenfranchised. Improving and widening access to education, especially basic education, is not only an objective in itself but also accelerates social and economic advancement. Improving basic education, especially female education, has a powerful influence on both mortality and fertility. Indeed, the close relationship between education and demographic changes has clearly emerged in a number of recent empirical studies. A wide range of theoretical analyses from different disciplines confirms that education improves health and reduces fertility.

The whole message and specific purpose of this study was to examine promoting girl-child education in Bay region, southwest state of Somalia; in order to provide initial information about how girls are getting education rights in Somalia, especially Bay region. The study was adopted descriptive-cum analytical research design, which was used to explain general educational situation entire of Somalia particularly girls live in Bay region and surrounding districts those have been facing under very less level of education. But, unfortunately, the facts and shocked situations facing by girls in Bay region schooling matter mentioned inside of this study were not good. But it could be used by the parents, school administrators and teachers and ministry of education for both central and state, in order to understand that girl-child education is very essential to the community, socio-economic growth, socio-cultural, parents' level of education and distance from school factors and give them necessary guidance and counseling to improve principals' influence on girl child participation in pre-school to tertiary education.

### Objectives of The Study

1. To analyze the attitudes and practice towards girl child education in Bay region.
2. To examine gender difference/dimension towards girl education.
3. To find out the impact of instability and situation of crisis on girl-child education.

### Research Question

1. How cultural attitudes and practice influenced the girl child schooling in Bay region?
2. To what extent have gender disparity enrolment in primary schools in Bay region?
3. How situations of crisis and instability have slowed the girl-

child education in Bay Region?

### Overview of Bay Region

Bay region is one the eighteen regions that Somalia has and it is an administrative regional in southern Somalia. Bay region consists of five districts namely: Baidoa, Buurhakaba, Diinsoor, Berdale and Qansahdhere. The capital city of the Bay region is Baidoa which is situated approximately 247-50 kilometers west of Mogadishu (the capital of Somalia). The population of Bay region was estimated 792,182. The nature and character of the people of Bay region very quiet, non-violent, peace loving, caring and supporting democracy system of government besides being fervent supporters for humanity. The well-known crops found in Bay region are include cereals, livestock, maize, bean, all types of vegetable, non-food substance and a large quantity of a valuable natural substance.

On the other hand, currently Bay region is opening 30 primary and secondary schools, approximately 7 intermediate schools and 10 universities those all giving education service to the local students. Also, there are small numbers of pre-universities colleges those are participating strengthening of regional education capacity. The table bellow indicates number of schools operating in Bay region and its districts.

No.	Name of the District	Region	Number of Schools	Total
1	Baidoa District	Bay	30	30
2	Buurhakaba District	Bay	11	11
3	Diinsoor District	Bay	2	2
4	Berdale District	Bay	2	2
5	Qansahdhere District	Bay	2	2

### Why it is important to promote and reduce girls' education gap

Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women, but parents and community leaders know the importance of education and dream of giving every school-age child a chance to go to school and learn. It's important to promote girl's education in poor countries in order to allow girls to make decisions about their own lives, to acquire skills and competences to secure jobs and to contribute to their communities as well as to promote progress for society as a whole.

Somalia holds a less determination and very weak capacity in educating all children, especial for girls. Not to educate by girls is a long problem and had believed majority of Somali parents due to practicing wrong traditional views. According Chapter Two, Title one and two, 29 and 30 Articles of Somalia constitutional provision ensures general principles of Human rights particularly focused on rights of the children including education is a basic right for all Somali citizens and to providing free and compulsory education to all the children between 6 to 18 years of age up to secondary school.

Girl-child education has these major central advantages like Reduces inequality, Increases productivity and earnings, Drives economic competitiveness, Poverty-reducing effects, Improves health and nutrition, Contributes to democratization of the nation and extra significant.

### Unesco and Human Rights Education

According to UNESCO, Human rights education is a vital part of the right to education and is increasingly gaining recognition as a human right in itself. Knowledge of rights and freedoms is considered a fundamental tool to guarantee respect for the rights of all. UNESCO's work in human rights education is guided by the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Giving education to all youths is the ultimate purpose to gain community with positive mind and it brings major advantages and possibilities that can reduce many social problems existed.

UNESCO has been operating in Somalia, especially Bay region for many years by playing a major role in the implementation of education rights to the children those have been facing lack of education due to conflict and various situational crisis in entire of Southwest regions of Somalia. UNESCO still is working all regions of Somalia by supporting and funding poor children particularly internal displaced children, alternative basic education (ABE) and awareness towards how to promote education rights to the children of Somalia. In addition, UNESCO has established numbers of primary schools in Bay region current studying some children both internal displaced people (IPDs) and ordinary pupils. Although UNESCO could not possible to delivery her education program campaign properly in Bay region due to insecurity and lot of challenges found in the region. Yet a lot of children are facing lack of education in Bay region. Therefore, it is very hard at this time UNESCO to operate actively in Bay region and its district.

### Methodology

The study is descriptive-cum analytical in nature. The study based on primary data. The data has been collected through interview method (unstructured). The primary data has been collected from Select Private Schools, Principals and Scholars to defend the study. Also the related previous studies have been used by the researcher for the reference and to fill the gap with the requirements of study.

### Conclusion

Girl child education is an effective strategy plan and social transformation into organized community and remaining developmental goals are all concerned points by handling transparency, result and finalizing of all things in a way of progress. But, unfortunately girls in south and central Somalia have been facing massive challenge and very low of enrolment in primary school education due to traditional ideologies and insecurity problems have been witnessing in Somalia since in 1991 up to now. Girls in Bay region had no accessed to go learning. Cultural, the people in southwest state regions are not preference to promote girl child education and many activities those are able girls to do so. Women are the producers of tomorrow leaders and national defenders in any country over the world. Provision and maintenance of girl child education is the foundation of next generation potentiality. Girls are the centre nerve of any social performance and create them bright future to their young's. It is not secret that educated girl will play a vital role and serious efforts to her family and as well as the community she lives. Without doubt, educated girl expects various opportunities through her skills and knowledge. So that this means educating girl child is a duty to every parent and each parent should stand up and provide first priority for girls and must support during their schooling. Educated girl can determine a significant step in her community by creating a better stage such as entrepreneur, civil servant, teacher and other

useful activities in the community; in order to mobilize our life in the right way to reach positive, we must educate our children. It is generally declared that education is as a fundamental right; there are numerous hurdles that forbid a girl child from actually getting education. The biggest hurdle is the prejudices that families have about girls like girls are slow learners, their education will benefit by their husband, they are not rational; they are to be restricted inside the domestic household, and why bother about educating them. All these bad issues exist in Bay region were led girls to be illiteracy than other regions in Somalia; that is why girls from Bay region are very low number in education places. Girl-child education has a major significant to the family and parents should have given first priority for schooling girls.

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