



Child Labour in Relation to Minority Groups in Somalia: The Case of Bantus and Occupational Groups

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Abstract

This article is a critique and a call toward how the current traditional tripartite approaches fall short in dealing with child labor in minority groups. It focuses on Bantus and occupational minority groups in Somalia and uses Galtung's theory of structural violence to show how these approaches forgo the invisible aspects of child labor beyond education and poverty commonly associated with the disadvantaged groups. In addition, it relies on interviews with minority parents and their children and calls for childhood studies and policymakers in Somalia to rethink the existing approaches and devise alternative ones that take precedence on social injustices in the conceptualization of the predominance of minority children working as child laborers. Finally, the article aims to call for policymakers and international organizations working on child labor to implement policies aimed at curbing while recognizing the vulnerability and the predominance of the minority identity in child labor.

Keywords

Child Labour, Minority Groups, Bantus, Occupational Groups, Somalia

Introduction

In 2021, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported an alarming 8.4 million increase in child labor across the world in the four years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic [1]. Africa is at the summit of the regions with a renewed influx of children into child labor, accounting for one-fifth of every child, which is equivalent to 92 million children. The reports argue that Africa in general is more prone to child labor due to unrest, poverty, and conflict in comparison to Latin American countries, where there is a sharp decline in child labor. The difference between the two is not that Latin America is more stable, but this research finds that in Latin American, Albanian, and Indian countries, the approach to tackling child labor is different from African countries, where issues of discrimination, social justice, and inequality are neglected in policies aimed at curbing child labor. In addition, there is a research gap in Africa generally where the researchers in child labor studies oversimplify the importance of a social justice-oriented approach to solve and tackle child labor problems [2].

Therefore, this study puts commensurate blame on the dearth of research in as much as it critiques the government's refusal to admit the deepening inequalities and civil unrest. In contrast to Africa, countries with a slight decline in child labor, there is visible literature emphasizing social injustice experienced by minority groups and its relation to child labor. Bradford (2019) has documented how discrimination and prejudices against minority groups in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Southeast Europe produce child laborers [2]. In addition to that, Spence (2006) also showed that children from minority groups in Asia and Pacific regions are prevalent in child labor [4]. Furthermore, the work of Gjermeni et al. (2008) warned against the increasing number of children with higher chances of joining child labor originating from minority backgrounds [6]. In India, where extreme social stratification prevails, Kaletska & Prakash (2016) argued that children with minority backgrounds engage in harsh labor and debt bondage [7].

The re-emergence of child labor specifically from 2012 to 2021, according to UNICEF (2024), is due to poverty, high unemployment rates, limited access to free and compulsory education, frequent violation of the existing laws or laws with exemptions, and the intensification of the global economy and societal values [8]. Similarly, the governments in Africa conceptualize conflicts and chaos as major contributory factors in the increase of child labor [9]. Somalia has been one of these countries rife with chaos and recurrent violence since 1991, in which its government uses the existence of security issues and conflicts as an explanatory factor in the rise of child labor. This is evident in the government-produced official discourses, such as the 2019 report entitled "*National Seminar on Eradicating Child Labour in Somalia*" [10]. The report has underlined conflict and poverty as the leading causes of child labor and has also put forth several recommendations to end child labor, including the need to build schools and social services that enable and encourage school enrolments.

However, the most salient questions and issues, such as the discrimination towards minority groups, the question of social injustice, and how it contributes to child labor, are not emphasized in the report. In addition, the report sheds light on how child conscription in armed conflicts often perpetrated by Al-Shabaab (a terrorist organization in Somalia) contributes to the burgeoning number of child laborers in Somalia, and in doing so, the report has omitted how and why Al-Shabaab is capable of recruiting children as combatants. In other words, what Hansen (2017) considered accidental jihadists: how the feeling of grievance and vengeance that is sustained within the unequal social relations encourages minority groups in Somalia to seek justice in terrorist organizations such as Al-Shabaab by becoming members [11]. Therefore, this article focuses on how social injustices against minorities in Somalia lead their children to child labor rather than to school.

The first part of the paper focuses on the specific minority groups in focus, such as Bantus and occupational groups in Somalia. In this part, the paper provides an overview of the current and historical injustices and how they continuously influence children from minority backgrounds to find themselves in child labor. The second part of the paper focuses on sectors where minority groups of children work. The final part deals with the main argument and focuses on the traditional tripartite approaches routinely employed by the governments, including Somalia, and organizations such as ILO and UNICEF to tackle child labor. In this section, the article investigates how these approaches under-emphasize social injustices in relation to child labor. Furthermore, using Galtung's theory of cultural violence, we will explore how these approaches are ineffective in reducing child laborers and show how the unseen violence exacted against minorities forces their children to drop out of school. Finally, the paper concludes with the need for an alternative approach to child labor. Before that, let's first emphasize the methodology of the article.

Methodology and Theory

This article uses semi-structured interviews with child laborers and their parents. It specifically focused on conducting semi-structured interviews with minorities in Somalia. The semi-structured interview is chosen due to the flexibility in exploring the hard-to-reach participants and their subjective experiences. Scholars such as Moore (2018) argue that forming a set of ordered questions to study the crude experiences of the minorities has partially contributed to the subordination and marginalization of the disadvantaged groups [11]. As a result, this article engages with semi-structured interviews to not further contribute to the marginalization of minorities. In identifying children from minority groups and their parents, the article uses the Somali social network to identify participants, starting with direct contact with local communities and then relying on the respondent's networks in referring to another eligible participant due to the nature of the social relationships in the Somali society shaped by a system of networks based on tribes and groups. Furthermore, the researchers interviewed 20 children living in Somali-inhabited cities such as Jigjiga, Bossaso, and Mogadishu areas, which have a substantial number of minority groups. The interviewers

asked two questions to minority parents and their children working in agriculture, farming, herding, shoe shining, vending, and those in construction such as crushing stone, mining, and quarrying. The first question addresses the children's background, focusing on the social and economic situation of their families. The second question is on their education, whether they have ever attended school or not, and if they did what contributed to their dropout. These questions aim to uncover the systematic factors that can lead them to become child laborers.

In addition, the article engages with the literature and identifies the current approaches that are common within international organizations working to end child labor. The approach of the government in Somalia is derived from international NGOs, and by critically looking at these approaches, it identifies how they cannot be equally applied to child laborers from minority groups backgrounds.

The article also uses the Galtung theory, and it is necessitated by how traditional tripartite approaches that the government uses to deal with child labor are often encouraged by the visible aspects and triggers of child labor. These approaches envisage that child labour can be easily seen and tackled by policymakers. For instance, they look at school enrolment statistics and devise their policies based on either the rise or the decline of child enrolment or drop outputs. That is an ineffective way of looking at social problems that are deeply ingrained and rooted in the culture of the society. Therefore, the Galtung theory of cultural violence is a contradiction to that and looks at the deeper and invisible aspects of not only child labor but also conflicts. By using the theory, it strengthens this article and enlightens these invisible aspects of child labor in Somalia. Additionally, Galtung's theory of structural violence considers the exploitation and systemic injustices in Somali forced labor as a reflection of the larger socio-economic institutions that inflict suffering that goes beyond isolated violent incidents [14]. While the approaches of the Somalia government underline how armed groups like Al-Shabaab exploit and recruit children as Jihadists, Galtung's theory will allow us to understand questions such as the lack of resistance against minority groups in Somalia when their children are abducted by the group. While there are studies such as [15] that have shown how the dominant groups in Somalia fight back against Al-Shabaab in similar cases involving the abduction of their children [15].

Brief Description of Bantus and Occupational Groups

There are different minority groups in Somalia. Groups whose identity has long been denied the same rights as the other groups. In this article, the tribes under consideration are considered groups, unlike in Somalia, where they are known as tribes. The reason is that the literature abundantly calls Somalis a homogenous society whose culture, language, and religion are the same. This study denies that and argues the homogeneity argument fosters discrimination towards outnumbered tribes. Assumptions about the presence of a homogenous society in Somalia have denied the exercise of multiculturalism and diversity. It is also a major bottleneck to the survival of the minority identity. Therefore, this study

opposes the essentialist and homogenous Somali scholarship and espouses the emancipatory scholarship that argues against the existence of a single homogenous identity in Somalia [16].

Minority groups in Somalia are numerous, but in this research, they are categorized as follows: The Bantus, the Benadiri, occupational groups, and Asharaf and Shekhal [17]. Nonetheless, Kusow (2015) disregarded Asharaf and Shekhal in their categorization of Somali minority groups [18]. The Bantus and occupational groups represent the largest and most socially othered groups within the Somali clan system. In the following sections, the article briefly introduces the minority groups and how their children are increasingly becoming child laborers.

Somali Bantus

The Bantus are descendants of slave communities who retained their socio-cultural values, languages, and institutions despite attempts to clamp down on their cultural identity [19]. Somalis regard Bantus as physically distinct from them [20]. Bantus are often called the name *Jareer*, meaning a descendent of West Africa [21]. The discrimination towards minorities often stems from their physical appearance, which dominant groups assume is different from the looks regarded as more Somali [18]. The Bantu society is divided into two segments: indigenous groups and former slaves. Indigenous Bantus have their roots in the Shungwaya kingdom that preceded the settlement of the Somalis in the region. The second group of Bantus came to Somalia through the 19th-century Indian Ocean Slave Trade. They were a part of tens of thousands of slaves who were relocated to southern Somalia [22]. Bantus usually reside in the Shabelle and Juba River valleys, which are in the southwestern part of Somalia [23]. The Somali Bantus Community Association website mentioned that their cultural traits are like those of other Bantus ethnic groups residing in West Africa [23]. The Somali Bantus Association group has related their identity to one that is descended from the Niger-Congo Region of Africa.

Historically, the nineteenth century is considered the first time Bantus arrived in Somalia as slaves brought by Arabs [24]. They are marked as agricultural laborers and have undergone centuries of humiliation and oppression [24]. Some of the Bantu sometimes employed tactics to relate themselves to the other dominant clans in Somalia to avoid enslavement and to conceal their identity so that they could not be subjected to humiliation [23]. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Italian colonizers in Somalia instituted laws that abolished Bantu slavery [26]. These laws did not abolish Bantu slavery per se but meant Italians wanted Bantus to only work for them [23]. In the following years, after the Italians ended the practice of slavery, they established agricultural farmlands with more than 100 plantations in the Jubba and Shabelle River Valleys. Italians introduced laws that forced Bantus to work in the farmlands as agricultural laborers on farms that were exclusively owned by the Italian colonial government. Ending Bantu slavery was a euphemism for Italian colonial government, saying we needed to adopt laws that limited Bantu slaves only to work for

Italians [27]. This necessitated the continuation of Bantu slavery until mid-1930. The Somali Bantu Association has stated that since the civil war broke out in 1991, Somali Bantus have been forced out of their farms and homes by clan militias claiming to be from dominant clans. The legacy and stigma of slavery have hitherto been applied to view them as less than the other clans. The legacy of slavery made them vulnerable to rape, killing, and torture. In Somalia, the basis for social and political life is determined by clan and lineage. Bantus tried to substitute their identities and assimilate with dominant groups. They have started identifying themselves as one of the three dominant groups, the Darood, Rahanwayn, and Hawiye clans; despite trying to identify with the other groups, they were not always treated as part of the larger group they sought to surrender and identify as one of their members [28].

Bantus have sought and claimed membership in three of the major five Somali clans, but unfortunately, despite submitting themselves to other dominant clans, their farms, homes, and property were not spared after the civil war broke out in Somalia in 1991 [29]. Often, their farms and properties are pillaged and looted by militias from the clans they sought and claimed membership in. They suffer harrowing brutalities at the hands of the pastoralists and other agricultural laborers living in their vicinities. The larger clans that the Bantus seek membership in oftentimes disregard them, reject them, or vilify them. The calamity of the Bantu people continued after the Siad Barre regime came to power in 1969 [28]. In his early days at the office, he argued to abolish any existing law that might make some people seem more privileged than others. Contrarily, under his regime, class inequality increased to an unprecedented level [26]. In the hierarchy of clan inequality, Bantus stood at the bottom. After the civil war broke out, the fleeing Siyad Barre passed the valleys in which Bantus inhabit and armed the surrounding clans who were supporting his regime policies, but the armed clans used the guns to kill, rape, and pillage Bantu Minorities [26].

Consequently, the Bantus, those who were able to flee, fled to a neighboring country to get registered in the refugee centers, but some of them died in the treks to reach Kenya while fleeing. Even after reaching Kenyan refugee camps, Bantus confronted discrimination and were placed in housing units on the outskirts of the camp, where residents were more vulnerable to looters and women more vulnerable to sexual abuse than their Somali national counterparts in the center-housing units [27]. Bantu families and children were made to work for more powerful Somali families within these camps by building homes and fetching water and firewood [30]. Figures from the International Organization for Migration indicate that 60% of the Bantus are under the age of 17 and 31% of the Bantus are under the age of six. This disproportionate number of young people are subject to social exclusion, blocking them from human development, i.e., the idea that focuses on the progress of human life and wellbeing. Bantu children are completely denied human development, which *“incorporates the most elementary capabilities such as living a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, and enjoying a decent standard of living”* [31]. Therefore, some of the interviewed children for this study note that they must eke out to find livelihood in unfriendly world environments as child laborers.

Furthermore, child protection in Somalia is very ineffective due to long-standing conflict and political instability in the country, which has weakened state authority and the justice system. This has rendered the mechanism for child protection almost nonexistent [32]. Displacement induced by the wars in Somalia has also led many children to separate from their families, prompting children, particularly those from minority groups, to become vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation, and unpaid labor. The long-term reigning anarchy in Somalia exacerbates the challenges that minority groups and their children encounter. Social acceptance of domestic violence and corporal punishment of children if they are deemed to belong to an outcast group became apparent [33]. The anarchy has opened a condition where girls become haggled items. Older children are the ones who become deprived of their human development. Often, they are seen as a resource instead of being granted the human development they are entitled to receive. Furthermore, there is a surprising relationship between double orphan children in Somalia and the incidence of children living with families other than their own families. UNICEF (2016) argued only 1 percent of the children in Somalia are double orphans. The worsening livelihoods and food insecurity forced many parents in southern and central Somalia to opt for either one of the following two decisions.

Firstly, migrating to another strange place with the hope of finding better living conditions while deciding to leave their children behind. Secondly, sending their children to other relatives who they presume can help in their upbringing or sending their children outside to work. Here is usually where both the literature and the common sense disregard the predominant number of the children who are from Bantu and occupational groups and are simultaneously working at tender ages. Many of these children happen to belong to minority clans due to one reason that also overlaps with other dominant clans. After the civil war broke out in 1991, famine and poverty caused the livelihood of the families either belonging to the so-called good clans or bad clans to dwindle drastically [34]. The so-called members of the good clans who are considered privileged sought help from the co-clan/clanmates, relatives who were better than them economically. This prompted them to either send the children to their relatives who were in good condition or ask for something called *Qaaran* (money intended for the recovery of a clan member in economic limbo). The difference between the dominant clans and outcast clans emerges here in terms of the question of who dominates in child labor. Minority groups such as occupational and Bantu have always stood at the bottom of the social hierarchy even before the civil war (During the Siyad Barre regime) and after the civil war. Therefore, there was no option for them to send their children to other clanmates who were economically in better condition than them, just like the dominant clans. Inevitably, the only choice for minority groups was to opt to send their children outside to work at incredibly young ages. This practice of sending the children to work has continued. Additionally, it is observable in big cities such as Garowe and Mogadishu, where children from minority backgrounds live on the street. That is because when minority children migrate to cities, there are no better-off relatives that can help them settle. Often, they are required to hassle themselves to survive [35].

In the following section, the article discusses the second minority groups in Somalia collectively called occupational groups and answers questions such as Who are they? And why they encounter discrimination and prejudices and how that further engenders child labor.

Occupational Groups

The occupational clans or groups in Somalia comprise Gabooye, Tumaal, and Yibir. Kusow 2015 added to their list of occupational groups Midgaan, a group like the minority groups in Somalia [35]. Most of these groups, particularly the Gaboye, are known to work as weavers, potters, smiths, hunters, and tanners. Occupational clans have traditionally worked for the dominant clans in Somalia. They work as barbers and leather workers. These occupational clans have a subclan; for instance, Gabooye is divided into Muse Dheriyo and Madhiban. Tumaals are known for their work as blacksmiths and carpenters. Yibirow usually works as tanners and traditional doctors. These groups are Somali, and they claim so, but the other Somali clans do not treat them as fellow compatriots but rather vilify, discriminate, pillage, and rape them. M. A. Eno & Kusow (2014) have argued that the social segregation of occupational groups is based on Somali myths and narratives that have no evidence or base at all.

Unlike the Bantu group that we have discussed above (Bantu Somalis), who are segregated based on racial difference, the stigmatization of occupational groups as mentioned above is rooted *“on a groundless myth that associates these groups with the consumption of “unclean food”* [36]. Despite having the same language, culture, and physical appearance, the occupational groups have been socially outcast since the early 1990s.

Minority Rights Organization claims that occupational groups suffered widespread killings, displacement, and rape, especially after the collapse of the Somali government in 1991. The dominant clan leaders and warlords launched a violence campaign that included killing and rape against occupational groups while arguing that they were loyal to the ousted regime president of Somalia between 1969 and 1991 [23]. No one spared them because they are considered *“looma-ooyeyaasha”* (no one will avenge their death), which implies that they could not “expect redress if their rights are violated” [15]. Furthermore, the current issues are quite overwhelming; the marriage blockage of both occupational and Bantu Somalis to intermarry with other Somalis is one of the most shocking practices in Somalia. Anyone intermarrying them ends up outcast.

Where Do Minority Groups Children Work

Child labor has become a relative concept in Somalia. About half of Somali children aged between five and 18 engage in child labor [37]. This rate is higher for rural than urban children and is somehow higher for girls than boys [39]. The US Department of Labor categorized the sectors/industries in which children in Somalia mostly work [40]. Agriculture

is the dominant sector where children work, and it includes farming activities, herding, and livestock. Industry is the second sector that children in Somalia work in, and that is construction, including crushing stone, mining, and quarrying. The third sector is services that include *“street work, including shining shoes, washing cars, conducting minibuses, vending, and transporting khat (a legal, amphetamine-like stimulant), working in hotels, and domestic work”* [41]. The US Department of Labor categorized the fourth sector as the categorical worst forms of child labor, which includes recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, herding livestock, breaking rocks, selling or transporting khat, begging, and construction work. Furthermore, children of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are most vulnerable to child labor. The estimation of IDPs in Somalia is over 2 million. Children of IDPs are vulnerable to child trafficking and sexual exploitation. The US Department of Labor in their report argued that trucks that import goods from Kenya to Somalia return to Kenya with girls fleeing from Al-Shabaab recruitment and forced marriages. However, these girls are forced to engage in commercial sex upon reaching Kenya, the capital of Kenya. Furthermore, children are trafficked to Saudi Arabia and subsequently beg in the streets [42] [43] [44].

These minority girls feel the need to evade recruitment and marriages from Al-Shabaab due to the lack of protection [45]. In Somalia, dominant clan mates protect each other, and minority clans are powerless. The other Somali clans consider them as *“Looma ooyan,” meaning, in loose translation, “no one cries for them”* [16]. If any of their members is killed, no one cries. That is why dominant groups imply the word Looma in public confabulations. Furthermore, the terrorist organization in Somalia (Al-Shabaab) constantly recruits children as child soldiers. Most of those who plant explosive devices and conduct assassinations and suicides are children forcibly recruited by Al-Shabaab [46]. Additionally, Al-Shabaab members force young girls to marry them as a form of sexual servitude. It is not only Al-Shabaab that recruits child soldiers; Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama’a Militia, a religious militia organization, also recruits child soldiers by brainwashing both their families and the children. The most surprising thing is, that the Somali National Army recruits children as soldiers. Clan militias also use child soldiers to fight against other clans [47].

Somalia ratified ILO C. 182, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, and yet its military is full of child soldiers. However, Somalia does not ratify the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict and UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography [48]. In addition to that, Somalia is not a signatory of ILO C. 138, Minimum Age Convention, which leaves many children in child labor due to the lack of rules governing who works and at what age. Somalia’s unwillingness to ratify international child labor conventions is linked to its own rules and regulations about child labor, which are in contradiction with the international conventions. Some of these laws meet international criteria, but most do not meet international standards. For instance, the minimum age for hazardous work and the minimum age for work meet the international criteria, but the

question is, do these rules apply equally to every child or do we see the effects of these rules? Child labor laws in Somalia that are in contradiction and do not meet the international standard are the Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, the Prohibition of Child Trafficking, and the Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities, which are a few of the many child labor rules that do not meet the international standard of child labor, although they are locally available. In 2017, Somalia adopted a general education law that requires every child to undergo eight (8) years of compulsory schooling. However, the general law has been criticized by many commentators, including the US Department of Labor, arguing that the law is limited and any child at the age of fourteen (14) can be in child labor. A child can finish his compulsory eight (8) years of schooling even earlier than fourteen (14) which means there are also many children who met the government's compulsory schooling and at the same time working as child laborers [47].

From here, we must ask questions like where children of minority backgrounds stand in these loose child labor laws in Somalia that do not meet the international standard. The award-winning work of Kusow (2015) gives a shocking revelation of how a minority child can be vulnerable to various life-threatening challenges, including the most extreme forms of child labor [49] [17]. Firstly, it normalized child apprenticeship in Somalia, where many children are required to acquire the skills of their parents at an early stage. Secondly, it glorifies child labor, where society views child labor as a precious opportunity and important aspect of child development that will contribute to their later life achievements. Hence, minority children might find themselves in a situation where they are driven out of child labour as child labour becomes favoured among dominant groups

Finally, our study places the concept of Somalocentrism, termed by [[16], at the heart of the increasing number of child laborers from minority backgrounds in Somalia. [50]. Ingiriis (2012) has tried to understand perpetual violence in Somalia, where he argues that the quest for superiority over one another is extended between not only the groups but also families and individuals fighting against one another to demonstrate their supremacy against one another. Therefore, a social system in which people strive for supremacy, superiority, and recognition by default victimizes minorities. Hence, this study recommends that the Somali government consider the underlying and hidden social structure that engenders social inequality that not only puts minority groups of children in child labor but also those with less power and wealth. The government must conceptualize child labor not as a poverty issue but as a social injustice problem.

The Failure of Traditional Tripartite Approaches in Relation to Child Labor Vis-à-vis Minority Groups

The first attempt to critically examine the shortcomings of the traditional tripartite approaches to child labor dates to the seminal work by Cunningham & Viazzo, (1996) in their book entitled "Child Labor Historical Perspective 1800-1985: Case Studies from Europe, Japan, and Colombia." Cunningham and Viazzo have argued that the failure to address child labor in the proto-industrialization and industrialization periods emanated from many laws, such as the prohibition of child labor and compulsory schooling that the governments adopted to end child labor. The study revealed how the tripartite approaches were never successful in eliminating child labor. Despite the pessimism expressed by Cunningham and Viazzo in relation to the implementation of raw policies to end child labor, traditional tripartite approaches are hitherto employed by governments and organizations to end child labor.

The first approach, as child labor historians believe, is direct *child labour laws*. This approach instructs parents who send their children to work to stop child labor. In this approach, laws are compulsory, and therefore families must abide by and adhere to the law. The approach also forces factories and companies recruiting children to abandon the practice of child labor. The second approach is about legislative actions mandating compulsory schooling. The third approach that child labor historians envisage in its actual happening is the "waiting approach." It is the assumption that the economic condition of the families will gradually change, and families will therefore prioritize investing in the future of their children rather than using their labor as a means of survival. These approaches often engender debates around their success in stifling child labor.

Interviews and observations that this study has undertaken in regions where Somalis inhabit the Somali region of Ethiopia, Puntland, Somaliland, and Southern Somalia suggest that traditional approaches dealing with child labor do not apply to minorities as much as they do to the dominant groups. This research argues that when governments, particularly Somalia, implement these approaches, it yields no changes and is static in nature. However, the reason for the lack of success in the approaches is embedded in the disregard for social injustices. For instance, first child labor laws that equate schooling as an inescapable aspect of childhood development do not apply to minority groups. The Somali government encourages parents to send their children to school, but there are no public schools; schools are mostly run privately by individuals. Therefore, the interviews with the minority children and their parents indicate that their reason for not attending school is because they are poor and unable to pay. The following is the verbatim of one of the participants

"I was growing up; we had no public schools in our city (Bosaso); my parents were not able to afford private school fees as they had no good-paying jobs; as a result, every day when I woke up, I had eked out to survive."

The above verbatim is imbued with an assumption that poverty is the sole problem and to eradicate child labor, priority should be given to poverty reduction programs. In some cases that assumption is true and is in tandem with government policies that prioritize eradicating poverty to end child labor, but it is ineffective and a failure in its application to child laborers from minority backgrounds. However, there is a need to look one layer down and invest in understanding why a minority child is not able to study. It is a part of the subjectification; poverty is not something that is natural to all; it is something that has a relation with discrimination and unequal access to resources in some places. In addition, Galtung's theory of structural violence argues that governments apply their policies by making the wrong things right; therefore, the lack of minority students' inability to enroll and pay their tuition in private schools has been considered natural and right, and applying Galtung's theory, that is wrong. Therefore, there is a need to look beyond poverty, the sole cause of child labor, and probe more into why most minorities are in impoverished states in comparison to dominant groups [35]. The study notes the failure of the approach in Puntland, a region in Somalia with stable governance.

The second approach, which is the law of compulsory education, disregards the discrimination that children from minority backgrounds face, and it often forgets the structural issues that underpin child labor, such as identity, ethnicity, us versus them, and dominant group versus minority groups. The Somali government requires children to undergo 8 years of schooling [41]. School interactions are shaped by invisible forms of violence. As Galtung's theory of cultural violence argues, children from minority backgrounds are frequently subjected to abuses that are rooted in the structure of the society. Unlike the children from the privileged groups, school environments are hostile places for children from minority backgrounds, particularly those in the Somali regions. One of the minority parents provided the following verbatim

"School environments are not a friendly place for minority children; there is the constant bullying, and our identity is vilified. Students use terms such as Jareer, Sanwayn, and Midgaan to describe us; therefore, due to the disappointment that my child has faced, I decided to drop him out of school."

Minority studies in Somalia such as Eno 2003, Eno 2008, Kusow (2014), and Kusow (2015) have also observed the experiences of minority children in school environments [18], [22], [27], [49], [52], [53], [54], [55], [56]. Classroom interactions such as pupil-to-pupil interactions and teacher-to-pupil interactions negatively impact minority children. For instance, the above studies note pupils in the class often employ denigrating epithets to refer to minority children. Hill (2010) further found out how some teachers in Puntland adopted a language that disparaged minority children in classrooms, which has also paved the way for high dropout rates. In addition, another interview with minority children noted the following verbatim:

"I dropped out of school due the feeling of isolation in my class as many students deviate to sit with me and classroom teachers who also use degrading language against minorities."

This is what Galtung's theory of structural violence considers identity needs and well-being needs. Minority students drop out because both their identity and wellbeing needs are neglected at school. Therefore, the compulsory schooling approach is futile, and its attempt to negate child labor is often unsuccessful when it is applied to minority students.

Finally, the "waiting approach" that assumes child labor will gradually disappear as the livelihoods of the family change are also not applicable to minority families. The livelihoods of minority families are stagnant, if not deteriorating. The income and status of minority groups in Somali regions are unfortunately stagnant due to the prejudice, discrimination, denigration, and epithets that block them from attaining the vertical social mobility that the other groups enjoy. This leaves them in desperate situations where they only demand the lowest jobs available, jobs that label them different from others. Their identity is seen as threatening to mud the so-called "good values" and "polluting the values" of the other tribes in which they reside [56]. One of the participants has noted this in the following verbatim

"Our dad died during the civil war, and our mother used to help us by begging; every time she sought a proper job, she was not offered. When I became a little older, I started working as a shoe shiner to help, but that did not contribute much to the family, and everyone is waking up to just find food during the day. We have faced and still generational poverty."

Poverty cannot be inherited unless it is subjected to the poor or unless the poor themselves internalize their efforts and cannot produce any change in their lives due to the general link that society makes between the poor and poverty. This is what Galtung's theory of structural violence considers making the wrong things right. Seeing the poor become wealthy as the wrong thing while it is right. In addition, the Galtung theory of structural violence notes that the groups struggling with vertical social mobility are facing unseen violence that hampers their ability to prosper and flourish. The interview with minority children suggests that institutional blockades and discrimination that they face in job applications leave no choice other than using their children as a survival strategy. These are often invisible forms of violence that play a huge role in the "stagnation of the status" that minorities confront in Somalia. Therefore, the wishful thinking and desire of the governments in Somalia who assume the income status of the minorities will gradually change are misunderstood, and that will not change unless they implement an intentional policy to restore social equality and drastically reduce the constant discrimination that is the major bottleneck to the minority identity [56].

The Need for a New Child Labour Approach

There is a need for a new child labor approach not only in Somalia but also in the region, where the national policy of child labor places minorities at the center of formulating action policies. Having seen the shortcomings of the traditional tripartite approaches, the alternative approach will need to understand child labor as a social problem and a sphere dominated by minority groups. This approach will need not to deny conflicts and poverty as plausible explanations for child labor, but it calls for the policymakers to never underestimate how inequality, which we might all think is eliminated, is forcing minority groups to resort to child labor as a survival strategy.

Conclusion

Using Galtung's theory of structural violence, this article has shown how traditional tripartite approaches that governments and NGOs employ to end child labor cannot be applied to minority groups, particularly Bantu and occupational groups in Somalia. Approaches such as compulsory education and child labor laws continued waiting to render no progress in stifling child labor in minorities. These approaches can address the visible aspects that trigger child labor but not the invisible aspects that necessitate child laborers, in other words, what Galtung calls structural and cultural violence. This unseen violence is not often captured by the policymakers in their attempts to forge policies to combat child labor. Furthermore, the forms of cultural violence that minority children face include degrading epithets such as Tumaal that their classmates and teachers employ to disparage their identities, and that takes away two important needs that Galtung structural violence theory captures: well-being and identity that become a threshold for child labor. Traditional tripartite approaches fail to recognize the existence of this invisible structural violence. Therefore, the article is aimed at inviting governments and organizations to consider how child labor is dispersed across minority groups, and by doing so, it will enable them to approach child labor while reproducing the social relationships between the dominant and minority groups that engender and pushes minority children to child labor.

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