

The Root Causes of the Educational System Dispute Between the Federal Government and Regional States in Somalia

Mustafe Salad

Department of Planning, Somali National University, Mogadishu, Somalia

Email address:

planning@snu.edu.so, dhoonbe900@gmail.com

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Abstract: Somalia has experienced many educational systems in the last century. Since 1991, after the collapse of the state in Somalia, the country has faced multidimensional problems. The recovery of the education system in Somalia has taken place and many challenges have emerged. The diversity of government styles has an impact on the education system in Somalia. The dispute between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and its Federal Member States (FMS) has emerged in the education system. The article seeks to understand the root causes of the educational system's disparity between Somali education authorities, both at the national and local levels. The purpose of the study is to investigate the main causes of the dispute between the federal government of Somalia and the federal member states of Somalia. The point of the article is that special consideration should be given to educational institutionalization in Somalia. The article indicates that the dispute between the FGS and FMS cannot be solved through negotiation approaches and instead needs legislative or education acts. The paper concluded that the root causes of the dispute are a lack of inclusive legal and educational policies, a lack of educational philosophy and examination regulation, and a lack of financial procedures. The study recommended that education be institutionalized, specifically the legal, policy, philosophy, examination, and financial regulations, as a critical step toward resolving this dispute.

Keywords: Federal Education System, Educational Philosophy, Educational Policy, Curriculum, Educational Aid

1. Introduction

The federal system of government is one of the common models of government in the world. Federalism is defined as the delegation of power to the states or regionals, which contributes to transparency and political participation. The implementation of the education federation necessitates more regulations and practices that are both adequate and applicable for the advancement of society.

Adamolekun & Kincaid have underlined that many countries in Africa have tried to build their systems at the federal level, but they have failed to do so. In Somalia, for the first time, the federalization of the system was started in the twentieth century but failed [1]. Federal regulations have both positive and negative impacts on the education system. Society is close to the education service, and they can count on their government for the service. On the other hand, some federal members can be blocked from exercising civil rights

because they have a lot of interests or many rights, or the system may lead to disturbances due to the chaotic system.

After the collapse of the Somali central government, some Somali intellectuals proposed the federal system as the most appropriate for the Somali people. In 2004, Somalia adopted federalism as a form of government. However, the public sector's problems were exacerbated by the lack of understanding, awareness, and because of special interests of public officials toward the federal system. Since 2011, the ministries of education of the FGS and some FMS have been at logger heads over educational issues.

Studies on the conflict between the education authorities in Somalia are very limited. In general, education in Somalia has been a challenge that has always led to administrative conflicts. Hussein has investigated educational challenges in post-traditional Somalia [2]. He mentioned that the biggest educational challenges in post-traditional Somalia are curriculum chaos, language policy, and teacher training

related challenges. Likewise, Mustafe underlined that basic education in Somalia faces multiple challenges an problems, including the curriculum, qualified teachers, scarcity of budget, and low enrollment of students [3]. Hussein asserted that the education system in Somalia needs to address the challenges of the curriculum, teaching, assessment, and administration. On another hand, Aden studied how the challenges and crises facing the Somali educational process move. The author mentioned that the education act and policies must be put in place [4]. On the other hand, Salad studied the conflict between Puntland regional state and the Federal Government of Somalia under the title "Godah's Mistake and the Trial of Puntland." The author underlined that the conflict between the Somali Federal Government and Puntland administration is based on the diversity of the curriculum and some other issues [5].

This article focuses on the main root causes of the dispute between the FGS and FMS. The study's objective is to highlight the main root causes of controversy among Somalia's education authorities. The study concludes that the main causes of the dispute are the absence of educational philosophy, a lack of inclusive educational legacy and policy, a lack of inclusive regulations for examinations and curriculum, and a lack of procedures for international donations. The study recommended that to resolve these disagreements there is need for institutionalized educational system, including accessing mutually agreed-upon legal and educational policies, redesigning educational philosophy as part of the curriculum, regulating the examination and national board, and moving forward with financial procedures.

2. Federal System in Somalia

In recent years, debate on the federal form of government has garnered pace in many countries across the world. In the context of history, many intellectuals, such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Smith, and Mills, have praised the confederations of small governments [6]. Many political forces and elites of national units have been attracted to federalism, which they see as beneficial to the development of society.

The word federalism has been derived from Latin word *foedus* which means Agreement [7]. Federation is an element that is related to the division of land between parts of it—sometimes, called "states" or "federal states". Federalism is of paramount importance to society and contributes significantly to the process of transparency, political practice, and gaining experience. It makes the political community more active, contributes to the community, and even changes its perspective. The desire for secession and independence not only counteracts the politics of a region, but also plays a major role in the development of institutions and professionals. On the other hand, federalism has disadvantages. These include member states' ability to block civil rights policies and the inability of the local government to enforce its preferences (Scott, n.d.). Many attempts to implement federal form of government in Africa have failed [1].

After, 1960, some Somali politicians have suggested adopting federalism, but Somalia has officially adopted the centralization system. For many years, Somalia has had a central government (1960-1991). Nevertheless, the debate over federalism continued. After the collapse of the central government of Somalia in 1991, the first government of Somalia was formed in 2000 in Djibouti. It is the first time a government has been formed in Somalia since the collapse. The debate among Somali politicians and academicians was twofold: those who wanted to go back to the old system (a centralized system) and those who wanted to adopt a federal system. The argument of those who want a federal system is that Somalia was pushed by the impact of civil war which was attributed to the fact that power was in the hands of one individual, which has led to the collapse of the Somali government and statehood. In this light, the federal system was considered a cure for the Somali people. On the other hand, some scholars criticized the federal system in Somalia as not appropriate for the Somali people due to similarity in ethno-cultural heritage and that it is an external agenda that undermines the sovereignty of Somalia [8].

Nonetheless, in 2004, Somalia adopted the Federal System. The Somali constitution states that the Somali system is federal. However, according to some scholars who instead proposed decentralization as the best suitable model in Somalia, the federal system model is unclear [8, 9].

In 1960, Somalia gained independence from two governments: Italy's trust territory and the British protectorate. These countries had different educations, which had affected the education system in Somalia. The biggest challenge faced the education system in Somalia has been the diversity of curricula and languages. In 1954, Somalia succeeded in uniting all the curricula, syllabi, and textbooks, and it has been a great success. However, language barrier became the most pressing challenge as the Somali language did not exist until 1972 [10].

During the 1969–1991 revolutionary government, education in Somalia was based on the central system. The government made many achievements, such as the number of educated and literate people. Literacy had reached 5% to 55% [11].

In 1991, Somalia's central government collapsed, and education suffered massive destruction due to the absence of an education policy, curriculum, and plan. Most of the education in Somalia became privatized. Somali scholars who remained in the country took the initiative of filling the need for Somali education services at a time when majority of Somalia's human capital fled the country. Currently, education in Somalia is steadily recovering from years of civil war albeit facing many challenges. The federal system is still in its infancy stage and needs a long time to function properly.

3. Causes of Dispute Between FGS and FMS

In recent years, disputes have emerged between the education ministry at national level and some of the regional

administrations. The latest debate was between the federal Ministry of Education and the Banadir region over the registration of schools in this region. The Ministry of Education (federal level) and the Banadir regional education board differed on several issues forcing the FGS to deal directly with the school principles on educational issues. Below, we will discuss the causes of the dispute or disagreement.

3.1. Educational Philosophy

There is no doubt that educational philosophy is fundamental to the education system. Education philosophy is statements or words that express the beliefs, values, and understanding of an individual or group with respect to education. Every country in the world has unique educational and school goals or purposes. It provides educators' leaders and specialists with the power to understand and organize the school and classroom effectively. The educational philosophy is more related to the school's purpose, which is based on the subject values, how the students learn and their material use. The philosophy serves as a guide for educational leaders and experts. Through the philosophy, the goals of education, subject content, educational process, and experiences and activities will be determined, as well as the decision of the educational leaders to contribute more widely to accomplishing the general goals of education [12]. The philosophy of education is important for education and its development. It is part of the curriculum, which directs the educational system [13]. In addition, educational purposes directly influence the learning, teaching, training, and research that are part of the pedagogical activities performed by institutional education.

The criticisms of philosophy become an international issue. Criticism of educational institutions and their objectives is normal, and not hostile to the progress of education and school. Henry Giroux was an educational critic who strongly criticized American education philosophy. He described how the philosophy of education in America is creating problems rather than being part of the solution to the crisis in education. He underlined that the philosophy of education in America is based solely on educational outcomes and the needs of the business community, which undermines students' access to the skills necessary to analyze socio-political processes in the workplace [14]. Besides, Bass underlined that educational institutions are criticized in many directions by governments, businesses, and families [15]. In the same way, different parts of Somalia society are highly critical of their education. Every Somali parent wants to get the best education for their children [13]. But there is no doubt that there is a disruption in the educational and values of the schools. The educational purpose needs to be revised to achieve the desired goals of society.

Somalia has had experience with various educational philosophies. Somalia's educational philosophy has been transformed from one to another due to the change in government. The mostly educational philosophies that have been tested are perennialist, essentialist, and Reconstructionist. Perennialism is rooted in idealism and realism. The main purpose of this philosophy, through the educational aims, is to

help students know and internalize the ideas and values that are universal [16]. Essentialism is similar to perennials in that it emphasizes teaching the students cultural and historical history as well as help them feel the physical environment around them [16, 17]. Finally, Reconstructionism as a philosophy is linked to a social perspective; it believes that a school is a social agent rather than an academic institution.

A clear and explicit philosophy of education in every country leads to progress in education. For instance, the main reason for the tradition from knowledge-based education to competence education and Rwandan students' ability to adapt to international education is due the clear philosophy of education in that country. Ndiokubwayo & Habiyaemye, 2018 cited by (Rwanda Education Board, 2015b) stated that "The Rwandan education philosophy guarantees learners to achieve full potential in terms of appropriate knowledge, skills, and values and attitudes allowing them to integrate into society and exploit employment opportunities after graduation" [18].

In Somalia, a post-conflict country, it is important that its education philosophy is clear, and that the country implements a new education system that is the federalization of education. The philosophy of education in Somalia is unclear. In the curriculum content, which is educational philosophy, Somalia's educated class and politicians confuse curricula, syllabuses, and textbooks. Hussein outlined that the Somalis, even the educated class and politicians, refer to textbooks and syllabuses as the curriculum [13]. Furthermore, debates on education in Somalia to improve the education system are lacking in addressing the philosophy of education. In addition, Hussein noted that educational philosophy or the direction of education rarely features in the debate.

Thus, the educational philosophy that underpins curriculum direction, in the absence of it, is undoubtedly, or always evidently, controversial. Lack of debate on educational philosophy is the root cause of the controversy between the ministries of education at the national and regional levels.

3.2. Parallels in Educational Policy Between FGS and FMS

Education policy is a system that aims to improve the quality of education and the performance of teachers and educational institutions. Educational policy is the practical and operational guide which provides the basis for carrying out the visions, actions, intentions, goals, and objectives of an educational system [19]. It is important that education policy be based on social philosophy and national aspiration goals. On the other hand, the educational policy is currently moving towards an international policy. There are many programs that evaluate the international policy and quality of education, such as the PISA program and the BOLONGA process for higher education, which do not regard education policy as being for domestic use. Countries around the world differ in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of education policies.

Education policy is fundamental to the development of post-conflict societies. Somalia's education policy is not unified, and a consolidated education policy is essential. The unification of educational policies also strengthens the quality of education and promotes international standards of

education. Faqih. Sh, H. A pointed out that the federal government of Somalia has made progress in the education system and structure but still lacks key policies. In addition, he mentioned that the federal government has not approved educational policies and important educational strategies [20]. The policies include the education sector strategic plan ESSP, a draft education policy for 2017 and the National Curriculum Framework Work 2017. As well, these policies by the central ministry do not involve some federal member states, which could lead to implementation problems. Abdurrahman, interviewed by Hanootalo, believes that the completion of the education process in Somalia is fundamental to all education stakeholders contributing to the formulation of an education policy [21]. On the other hand, the constitution, which is important for the government and every society, is still in draft. A constitution is required to ensure the necessity of the state and the direction of the state. So far, the Somali Constitution is a draft constitution. In countries recovering from civil strife, the constitution must be grounded in order for society not to return to the past. Enforcing the constitution and practicing it is another task. The education act deals with the rules and regulations of the education management, school committee, and board of education, as well as the protection of students' rights. Somalia's education still does not have a unified education law. However, it is now necessary to have a unified law and education policy that unites all parties (national and regional states). Adan. A underlined that Somalia is the only country that does not have a unified education law [4]. Although the Ministry of Education has issued a law on education, Puntland has rejected it. There is a considerable need to settle disputes in order to avoid them. Aden believes that conflict between the Puntland Ministry of Education (a regional state) and the Ministry of Education, which has been a major source of concern for Somali students in Puntland, will not be the last issue between the Federal Government and Member States unless immediate education law is provided. Finally, if a unified law is enacted, governed and practiced, it will undoubtedly be a lasting solution to the ongoing disputes within the Somali authorities, especially in the education sector.

3.3. Diversity of Examination and Curriculum

Examinations and the curriculum have always been at the heart of the dispute between the FGS and FMS especially Puntland regional administration. After Somalia's state collapse in 1991, every region that belonged to the Republic of Somalia tried to establish some sort of administration.

In 1998, the Puntland state of Somalia was established becoming a successful regional state, which has allowed its education system to begin early. The Puntland Certificate Examination was launched in 2003, and the Puntland Ministry of Education began using it in four schools: Bosaso Secondary School, Gambol Secondary School, Sh. Osman Secondary School, and Omar Samatar Secondary School. The examination was supported by international organizations CFPT and AET [5].

In 2012, the federal government began the unification of school diplomas. This process has led to the certificate being

unified throughout the FGS. This process is limited only to diploma changes, which were converted into the educational umbrellas and the regional states. In 2016, the government has prepared the examinations of the all-federal member states except the Puntland, which has begun early in 2003. The FGS was not able to persuade Puntland to join the process of the national examination. Puntland's objection was based on the argument that Somalia's education system is based on a federal system in which the local administration has the right to manage its own education system and policies. On the other hand, the FGS argues that Puntland as Federal Member state (FMS), like any other administration and all the local ministries, has equal right for the examination.

Somalia's federal education examination system faces many challenges. Faqih. H. A pointed out that the ministry of education at the federal level is facing challenges related to the examination, such as the inability to plan, invigilate, and mark [20]. Hussein strongly criticized the validity and reliability of the exams by taking league tables for pass and fail rates for regions. The essence of Hussein critique is based on the way a league table can be prioritized without syllabus unification. In addition, he criticized the scoring system, suggesting that the exam system be based on grades and that the student is returned to the subject for the year [13].

The disagreements between the ministries at national and local level are always resolved through political dialogue rather than through legal means. The committees that are important for the federalization of the exam such as the National examination Board are not well established. Likewise, the management system for the examination is under the director of the examination at the ministry, which is responsible for policymaking but not directly responsible for the implementation of the exam policy. Hussein reported the necessity of examination board. Therefore, there is a need for an examination board with clear responsibilities to prevent the recurrence of exam disputes [13].

The curriculum debate is at the heart of Somalia's education controversy. The parts of the curriculum are not uniform. On the ground, the ministries Federal governments of Somalia and Federal Member states (FGS and FMS) are doing same educational activities. Abdurrahman Tahir, former minister of education underlined the similarity of the duties in the national and local ministries and argued that the misunderstanding between the institutions is based on the financial incentives that come from international donors [21].

The absence of a curriculum and teaching qualification council is the basis for a recurrence of the controversy. However, the argument that the curriculum is the basis for the controversy is very logical, and the National Curriculum Committee needs to be established immediately.

3.4. International Aid

International aid in education in Somalia began before 1991. After the collapse of the Somali Republic in 1991, parents and international aid were the main sponsors of education in Somalia. It is still the basis of education for investors.

Somalia's public education budget is very low, and the

ministries of education in Somalia govern their budgets for the development of education policy and the administration of the ministries. Somalia is one of the African countries that are facing a budget shortage. The public education budget in Somalia has been increasing for the last few years. All the budgets are based on the development of education policy and administration, except some of the budgets go to basic education in some regions [3].

In fact, there is no doubt that foreign aid plays a major role in the development of education in society, especially in the communities of post-conflict. The United States of America is one of the countries at the forefront of education funding in Somalia. For example, the US Ambassador to Somalia said that Washington supports education in Somalia and the “BARO AMA BAR” program, which aims to increase the quality of education. (U.S. Embassy in Somalia, 2019). UNICEF and the UK are also major contributors to education in Somalia. For example, in 2019, the UK sponsored a program for girls' education in Somalia [22]. Nevertheless, there is dissent over the nature of foreign aid and its outcomes. Foreign aid has achieved many achievements in aid recipient countries. For instance, the expanding enrolment is one tangible achievement that has made a positive contribution to those countries. In contrast, there is a gap between what aid does and what it could potentially achieve particularly in terms of educational quality [23].

Many organizational aids are involved in funding education in Somalia. Many critics believe that the FGS and FMS education ministries do not have a plan to take advantage of international aid and that the purpose of international donations will be wasted instead of meeting the needs of Somali society. The lack of financial regulations, the lack of privileges of funds and aid from international organizations, and poor management of education funds are often the cause of disputes with the Somali education ministries.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The article studied the root causes of the dispute between the FGS and FMS. The study concluded that the dispute surrounding the education authorities is based on many issues that are associated to Somali educational institutionalization. The study found that the absence of the educational philosophy, a lack of conclusive legal and educational policies and a lack of understanding of some of the Somali scholars about the curriculum were some of the main root causes of the disagreement between the national and local administrations. Legal and educational policy practice necessitates more cooperation with and approval of FMS. Furthermore, the article demonstrated that some of the curriculum and examinations between the administrations are different in terms of experience, which led to some regional administrations squabbling over the national examination as well as curriculum-related issues. Furthermore, the research revealed that international donations to education are the primary cause of the administration's dispute. Drawing from

my findings, I recommend that all stakeholders should agree on the legal and educational policies and regulations on examination and assessment, as well as financial regulations between the FGS and FMS.

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