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An Analysis of the Status of Marginalization of School Age Children in Wolaita and Dawro Zones:The Case of Maraka and Damot Pulasa Weredas of the two Zones, South Ethiopia

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Keywords: *marginalization, social classes, potters, firewood carriers.*

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An Analysis of the Status of Marginalization of School Age Children in Wolaita and Dawro Zones:The Case of Maraka and Damot Pulasa Weredas of the two Zones, South Ethiopia

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Abstract- The purpose of this study was to analyze the major causes of marginalization and illiteracy of "Menas", "Menjas", and "Hilanchas" social classes in Dawro and Wolaita zones. In order to attain this objective descriptive survey method was employed. The study was carried out in four kebeles of Wolaita zone and 6 kebeles of Dawro zones. Purposive sampling technique for the selection of the weredas and availability sampling technique for the selection of the kebeles and subjects were used. Hence, the wereda education office authorities, parents and the children of 'Menjas', 'Menas', and 'Hilanchas'(in Wolaita case) were involved, and the questionnaire was distributed among officials, filled out and in addition, the wereda education office authorities, parents and children of those social classes were interviewed in group. The data gathered through questionnaire were analyzed using percentages and average mean. Based on the analysis, the study disclosed that the inferiority complex, the economic problem, the non-'Menjas',non-'Menas', and non-'Hilanchas'(including authorities) implicit and explicit violence, lack of awareness creation on the part of wereda officials, lack of support to capacitate the subjects economically, discouraging children in class rooms by even the school directors, lack of evening class, orphanage, the still negative attitudes of the society towards these subjects were found to be the major challenges. Accordingly, it was concluded that the challenges were multifaceted. Hence, it is recommended that all the concerned bodies(including the government, large society, and NGOs) of the zones should take measures to send these school age children to schools taking into consideration that they are part of the society and citizens.

Keywords: marginalization, social classes, potters, firewood carriers.

I. Introduction

Many young people in developing countries have weakened or severed family ties, are subject to social stigmatization, and are not connected to institutions such as schools, youth clubs, or the formal workplace. These youth—whom we refer to as "socially marginalized"—are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and are at disproportionately high risk of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmit ted infect ions (STIs), information, counseling, legal protection, and health and other services, so reaching them requires special planning, advocacy efforts, and supplemental resources. Socially marginalized youth often have weakened or severed family and social ties. Some have been abandoned by their families, lured or abducted from their families, or sold into bonded labor or brothels. War and the AIDS epidemic have turned many into orphans. Psychological and physical abuse at home may have led many to prefer life on the street. Living or spending most of their time on the streets, they may beg, hustle, steal, or sell sex to survive. Others, especially the girls, are domestic workers who live at their place of employment. Cut off from families and the larger society in which they live, these youth have little or no system of social protection. The social support they receive is usually from peers living in similar circumstances.

Lack of family and social ties can be worsened by social stigmas. Whether they are members of ethnic, national or religious minorities; migrants or young people in "floating populations;" street children viewed as nuisances or criminals; or homosexual youth facing discrimination or repression; the indifference or hostility with which society treats these youth may further traumatize them. They may be subject to harsh discrimination at mainstream health service delivery points and in the marketplace, and they may internalize society's negative views of them, damaging their self-esteem and their ability to have healthy relationships with others.

Poverty may require these youth to work long hours to support themselves or their families, but they often are not recognized officially as workers. They may be forced to work under exploitative and hazardous conditions that endanger their physical, mental, and social development.* Lacking job skills, they tend to work in informal sectors of the economy.

Many of these youth are victims of violence and physical abuse, including sexual abuse. Domestic workers may be forced to provide sex to their employers, street youth may be abused by other street youth or by adults, and refugees and youth in areas of

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armed conflict may be obligated to grant "sexual favors" in return for documentation, relief goods, or both. Young girls are trafficked into slave-like conditions in brothels. This abuse can result in STIs, unwanted pregnancy, and physical injury, as well as psychological trauma that increase vulnerability to future abuse.

Some of these youth, especially those who live on the street, use drugs to diminish hunger, cold, and emotional pain or to help them sleep or stay awake. Repeated use of these drugs can cause physical and psychological problems, including hallucinations, pulmonary edema, kidney failure, and brain damage. When intravenous drugs are used, the additional risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis, and other diseases exists.

Collectively, all of these characteristics make these youth more vulnerable to unintended pregnancy and STI/HIV infection. Poverty and lack of education and job skills make them more vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation. Social stigma and lack of a stable, supportive environment diminish the self-efficacy needed to undertake self-protective behavior. Sexual abuse stunts the skills needed to prevent unintended pregnancy and STIs. Drugs diminish inhibitions and impair judgment, making it less likely that youth will use information and skills to protect themselves from risk.

Although it is difficult to quantify the extent of the problem, according to the United Nations estimation, 404 million youth under the age of 18 do not attend school; 190 million youth between the ages of 10 and 14 work; three quarters of these youth work six days a week or more, and one half of them work that approximately 100 million youth work on the streets in activities such as picking garbage, hawking small goods, parking and washing cars, shining shoes, and begging. It is estimated that 10% of these youth actually live in the streets, with no connection to their family or a permanent home.

United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) estimate that at least one million young people under the age of 14 are lured or forced into commercial sexual exploitation each year. While the vast majority of these are young women, young men are also exploited. Hence, Ethiopia in general and Wolaita and Dawro zones in particular are no exceptions .Thus, the study aims to answer the following basic questions.

- What are the causes for marginalization of school age children?
- Who are the marginalized elements?
- Which problem is the most serious one?
- What attempts were made to tackle this problem?
- How is the status of illiteracy?

II. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following general and specific objectives

a) General Objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate the causes of marginalization of school age children and to come with solutions for those who are concerned about them so that to increase the participation of children and contribute to illiteracy reduction.

b) Specific Objectives

- This study has the following specific objectives: To investigate the root causes of marginalization;
- To identify different marginalized groups;
- To identify the most serious problems;
- To examine the attempts made by different stake holders in the society;
- To investigate the status of illiteracy to provide training and pave the way to reduce illiteracy

III. Significance of the Study

a) The study will have the following significances

1) The findings may be the reliable sources for the policy makers at different administrative echelons;
2) It may add to the corpus of literature in the area of marginalization;
3) The study may create awareness on the part of government officials about the importance and the problems of the subjects'
4) The study may reduce the level of illiteracy in the country and in the zones as well through implementation;
5) The findings may contribute to changing the negative attitude of the the large society and the government officials as well through its dissemination.

IV. Delimitation of the Study

The study was conceptually delimited to investigating the status of marginalization and geographically to the two weredas of Wolaita and Dawro zones and 6 kebeles of Dawro zone and four kebeles of Wolaita zone:

V. Limitations of the Study

The researchers have faced the following problems while conducting the research

- Topography where the subjects were living.
- Availability of the subjects/ business of the experts.
- Lack of transportation or its expensive cost.

VI. Research Design and Methodology

a) Research Method

Descriptive survey and both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection were employed.

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b) Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample Size

The marginalized school age children of the Maraka and Damot Pulasa weredas of Wolaita and Dawro zones were the target population of the study and the sample were as per the availability of the marginalized.

s.no.	Name of the Kebele	Name of the wereda	Name of the zone	Technique of Sampling	Name of social classes	Their work/known for	Size of the family
1	Shanto ketema	Damot Pulas	Wolaita	availability	Chinasha	pottery	large
2	Golo Shanto	"	"	"	Chinasha	pottery	large
3	Zamine Wulisho	"	"	"	Chinasha	pottery	medium
4	Warbira Golo	"	"	"	Chinasha	pottery	small
5	Koysha	Maraka	Dawro	"	Men & Menja	Pottery +selling coal &fire wood	large
6	Mada Gendo	"	"	"	Mena	pottery	medium
7	Gendo Shama	"	"	"	Mena	pottery	large
8	Maila	"	"	"	Menja	Selling fire wood &coal	small
9	Ocha	"	"	"	Menja	Selling fire wood &coal	small
10	Semu	"	"	"	Mena	pottery	small

Key: large= >18 heads of household medium=between 7&18 heads of house hold;small=<7 heads of house hol

c) Sampling Technique

The sampling techniques used were availability sampling for the selection of the subjects, and purposive for the selection of the weredas.

d) Data Administration

Tools for critique were prepared and checked by experts tool was prepared and used. After thorough discussion with the subjects the time was arranged and tools were distributed and the data were gathered.

e) Data Collection Tools

Close ended questionnaire with 5 scale likert, focus group interview of 6-12, non- participatory observation and documents were used.

f) Data Analysis Tools

The quantitative data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, and average mean, and the qualitative data was categorized and used as supportive for the quantitative.

VII. Discussions and Findings

a) Discussions

This part of the research deals with the characteristics of the respondents, and the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through the research tools—questionnaire and interview from the 2 weredas of two zones. Hence, the wereda education office experts and heads and parents and children of menjas, menas and" chinashs" were involved.

Eight wereda education officials and fifty parents and children of menjas, menas, and chinashas were involved in the study. Eight copies of questionnaire were distributed among the wereda education office experts and returned back. Again focus group discussion was made with the parents and children of menjas, menas, and chinashas.

i. *Characteristics of the Respondents*

Table III : Description of the Respondents by age, sex, qualification, marital status, specialization and work experience.

No.	Characteristics	Respondents			
		Wereda Education officials N=8		Parents and children N=50	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Sex Male	8	100	30	60
	Female	-	-	20	40

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2	Age below 20			36	72
	20-25			10	20
	26-30	8	100	4	8
	31-35				
	36-40				
	41-45				
	Above 45				
3	Marital status single	-	-	40	80
	Married	8	100	10	20
	divorced	-	-	-	-
4	Qualification diploma	-	-	-	-
	Bed/BA/BSc	8	100	50	100
	Above			-	-

With regard to the personal information of the subjects, 8 officials from the wereda education office, all are male and 30 male and 20 female parents and their children were involved in the study.

With regard to the age, all wereda education office authorities were aged between 26 and 30; whereas, 36(72%), 10(20%), and 4(8%) parents and children were found to be aged below 20, between 20

Regarding the marital status, whereas all the wereda education office officials were married, however, 40 subjects were children and the rest 10 were married. As far as the educational qualification is concerned, while all wereda education officials were first degree holders, parents and children of the subjects were all found to be illiterates.

Table : Research questions that require orderi

S.NO.	ITEMS	RANK OF DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS	REMARK
1	Harmful traditional practices	6th	
2	Institutional Barriers	3rd	
3	Self image and self- efficacy	1st	
4	Economic Barriers	2nd	
5	Socio-cultural Barriers	4th	
6	Political-Ideological Barriers	7th	
7	Geographical – Environmental factors	5th	

With regard to the above table, it could be learnt that self-image and self efficacy related problems took the first position, economic barriers took the second place, institutional problem took third place, socio-cultural problem took fourth place, topography and distance related problem took fifth position, harmful traditions and practice related problems took sixth place, and finally, the political ideological problems took the last position according to the data obtained both qualitatively and quantitatively from the subjects.

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Table 3 a : Harmful Traditions, Institutional, self-Image and Self-efficacy Related Problems

S.No.	Items		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Harmful Traditions	Abduction					
		Rape					x
		Abortion					x
		Pregnancy					x
		Early marriage					x
		Battery					x
		child trafficking					x
		Seducing				x	
		Inducing				x	
		Procuring					x
		Enticing				x	
		Labor exploitation		x			
		FGM		x			
		Average				x	
2	Institutional Factors	Lack of facilities for children of these classes			x		
		Non-attractive school compound			x		
		Discouraging children while asking questions			x		
		Lack of affirmative action				x	
		Harassment				x	
		Covert influence by leaders in schools			x		
		Lack of model subjects teachers		x			
		Overt violence		x			
		Average			x		
3	Socio-cultural Factors	Negative or low attitude the society has towards the education of these social classes			x		
		Reluctance of the society to send school age children		x			
		Overload by house chores		x			
		Religion related factors				x	
		Public versus private concept		x			
		Average			x		

Key : 5=very high;4=high;3=medium;2=low;1=very low

It could be learnt from the above table, that institutional and socio-cultural factors are still the main challenges for the children of the subjects either not to join schools or not to retain in the schools. There are still

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social classes. Because of the socialization of this negative attitude, menas, menjas, and chinashas as well are not willing to send their school age children to schools. And also the family make their children overloaded by house chore and exploit the labor of their children. They make them fetch construction soil for pots of different sizes and types. They make them to carry the pot to distant market places. The menjas on the other, hand make their children carry and sell coals and fire woods to distant market places and local towns. Furthermore, the subjects themselves and the society still consider these social classes as if they are not fit for the public according to the data obtained both qualitatively and quantitatively. Hence, institutional and socio-cultural factors were found to be still significant problems.

Table 3 b : political-Legal, Economic, self image and self-efficacy and geographical-environmental factors

1	Political _legal Factors	Legal literacy					x
		supportive rules and regulations					x
		support on the part of law enforcement bodies for the children of the subjects					x
		justice and respect of human right					x
		effectiveness on the part of law enforcers					x
		Average					x
2	Economic Factors	Lack of basic needs		x			
		Lack of educational materials and facilities		x			
		Lack of transportation		x			
		Lack of roads		x			
		Migration to urban areas in search of work		x			
		Lack of pocket money	x				
		Poor health condition			x		
		Average		x			
3	Self Image and Self efficacy	Lack of confidence	x				
		Inferiority complex	x				
		Reluctance to benefit from their rights	x				
		Fear to others	x				
		Average	x				
4	Geographical environmental factors	Un conducive school topography	x				
		Non-attractive school compound	x				
		Lack of bridges and roads		x			
		Average		x			

Key : 5=very high;4=high;3=medium;2=low;1=very low

According to the above table, self-image, economic, and topography and school distance related factors were found to be the significant problems. Accordingly, the subjects were found to develop

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inferiority complex, fear to others, lack of confidence on themselves, and also found to reluctant to benefit from the constitutional human rights.

And also it is learnt from the data that lack of basic needs, transport access to schools, lack of pocket money, migration to the nearby towns(though insignificant), lack of standard roads, bad topographies, lack of bridges, non-attractive school compounds , poor health conditions were some of the significant problems. And also it was learnt and observed that law enforcing bodies and the authorities themselves were found to be negative towards these social classes(though there were positive rules and regulations on the paper). And also the subjects were observed that they were not aware about the existence of supportive law regarding human and democratic laws.

Furthermore, information could be obtained from the experts of wereda education offices,parents and children of manas and menjas(marak)and hilanchas(Wolaita)through focus group discussion. Hence, accordingly, the following data were obtained

The focus groups in both Damot Pulasa and Maraka weredas raised the following issues as the major problems for their marginalization and absence from the school

- The school leaders were said to have discouraged and insulted the children of hilanchas in case of Wolaita zone;
- There were no awareness creation on the part of the wereda administrative councils and wereda education offices for the children of these social classes;
- There were no evening class to make these children continue their formal education;
- Children were said to have participated highly in house chore to solve the economic problem(carrying and selling fire wood and charckol, clay soil,pots and ovens,grinding clay soil);
- There was high child labor exploitation –parents were reluctant to send their school age children so that to make them help in labor and help themselves economically;
- There was no attempt made to support their activity by organizing them together to store what they did and seeking market for their products on the part of government authorities;
- Though there were some models from such social classes, they made no support for others by such models;
- There was both implicit and explicit violence on the part of the authority;
- It was observed that in both weredas and zones the authorities were found to defame these social classes;
- There was a psychological violence by non menjas, non menas,and non-hilanchas on the children of such social classes.

VIII. Major Findings

The general objective of the study was to investigate the causes of marginalization of school age children and to come up with solutions for those who are concerned about them so that to increase the participation of children and contribute to illiteracy reduction.

Accordingly, the assessment of the major factors—socio-cultural, political- legal, economic, self-related, institutional, and geographical and environmental factors were carried out.

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following basic questions were stated and dealt with

- What are the causes for marginalization of school age children?
- Who are the marginalized elements?
- Which problem is the most serious one?
- What attempts were made to tackle this problem?

Accordingly, the major findings of the analysis made were as follows

1) School age children of menjas, menas, and chinashas were marginalized.
2) The self image related, economic, and institutional factors hold the places of high marginalization ranking from first to third respectively;
3) The children of the subjects were overloaded by house chores and highly labor exploited as well;
4) There was both explicit and implicit violence observed on the children of these social classes by the leaders of the schools and the authorities as well;
5) Self related, economic, institutional, socio-cultural, topography, traditional practices, and political-ideological-legal were the causes for marginalization.
6) Low/or no attempt was made to enable the parents of these children to send their school age children by the local government; and to capacitate the economically;
7) There was no alternative education like evening class;
8) There was discouraging actions observed on the part of school leaders and authorities that contributed the dropout of children immediately after their enrolment;
9) Though there were some model teachers from the 'chinasha' family(in case of Wolaita zone), however, they failed to convince and bring their families to school;
10) No attempt was made to economically settle and capacitate the family and children of these classes.

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11) The subjects were found to be reluctant to benefit from the human and democratic laws stipulated in constitution, and also found to be illiterate of laws;
12) There was an explicit violence of classmates on the children of these classes—the classmate children of non-menjas, non-menas, and non-chinashas insult them saying 'chinasha' or 'goromotia' in Wolaita case and 'manio' or 'manjio' in Dawro case.
13) It was observed that they still (in both Wolaita and Dawro zones) the children of these classes fear other people both to talk to and to listen to.

IX. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn

1) The children of "menas" and " menjas"(in case of Dawro) and "chinashas"(in case of Wolaita) were found to be marginalized because of mainly their self image and self-efficacy problems, economic problems, institutional problems, negative socio-cultural attitudes, bad environmental and geographic conditions(topography), and bad practices and traditions.
2) It could be concluded that the effort made to improve the education of the children of the subjects by the government officials was weak may be due to the negative attitude developed towards these social classes.
3) The self-image and inferiority related complex are still the significant problems which are may be due to the socialization of the subjects into negative societal attitude.
4) Lack of the evening classes was found to be one of the causes for the illiteracies of these children.
5) It could be concluded that the wereda education offices and the wereda administrations could not organize these subjects economically just by constructing a store for what they are making and selling.
6) High level of illiteracy is still prevalent in the two weredas of the two zones—Wolaita and Dawro zones.
7) It could be concluded that no/ or low attempt was made to mitigate such long lived marginalization problem in both zones.
8) It was learnt that the subjects were interested to discuss and tell their problems to the researchers and did not hesitate to provide the researchers with information. This indicates that the concerned local authorities did not do on them as required regarding their education though they were volunteers.

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