

# **UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SOMALI CHILDREN**



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**SOMALI EDUCATION FORUM**

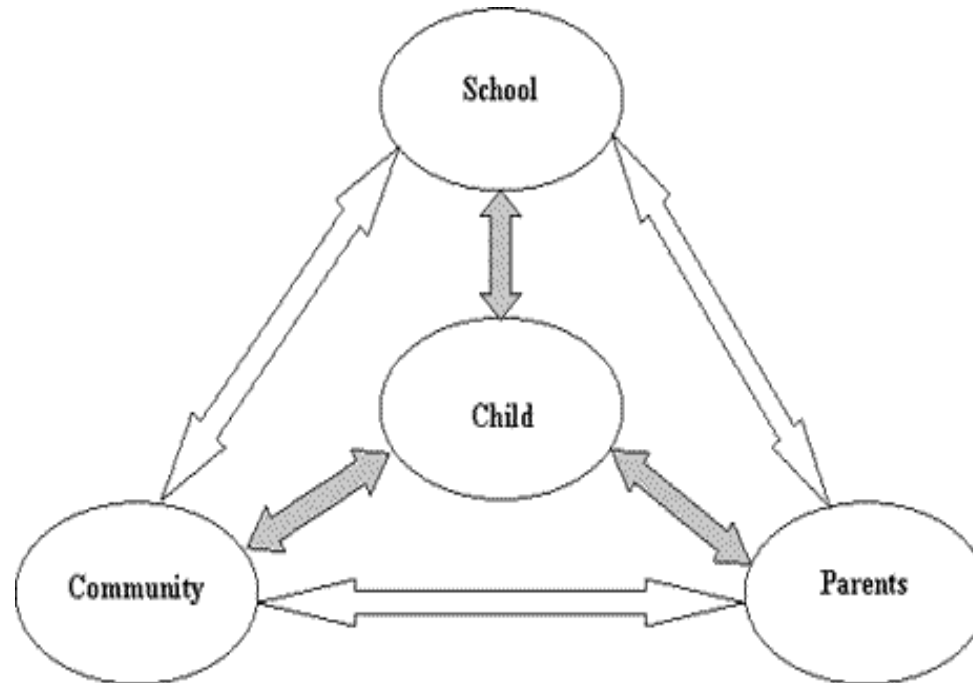
HOMAN HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE, 19/05/2006

A decorative header with a light green background. On the left, there is a vertical strip containing two images: a glowing lightbulb and a glowing orb. The main title 'Underlying causes' is written in a bold, dark green font.

## Underlying causes

- Lack of/ minimum parental involvement
- Lack of role model
- Residential mobility
- Low expectations from schools
- Poverty/social deprivation

# Lack of/ minimum parental involvement



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# Lack of/ minimum parental involvement

- Language barrier
  - Most of Somali parents can't speak/read English
  - Their ability to assist their children in their studies is limited
  - Language barrier may diminish their will to visit the school and speak to the members of staff about their children
- Most of the schools don't have special arrangements to reach out those parents



# Lack of/ minimum parental involvement

- Lack of understanding of British education system
  - UK system : children pass from stage to stage according to their age
  - Somali Ed. System : children pass from stage to stage according to their ability
  - Most of parents don't understand levels (1-8) as measurement for child's progress



# Home-school agreements

- Poorer parents who are already under stress could see them as an added pressure and another opportunity to be blamed.
- Parents who have poor literacy or are not fluent in the language of the school may sign agreements without even understanding what is in them

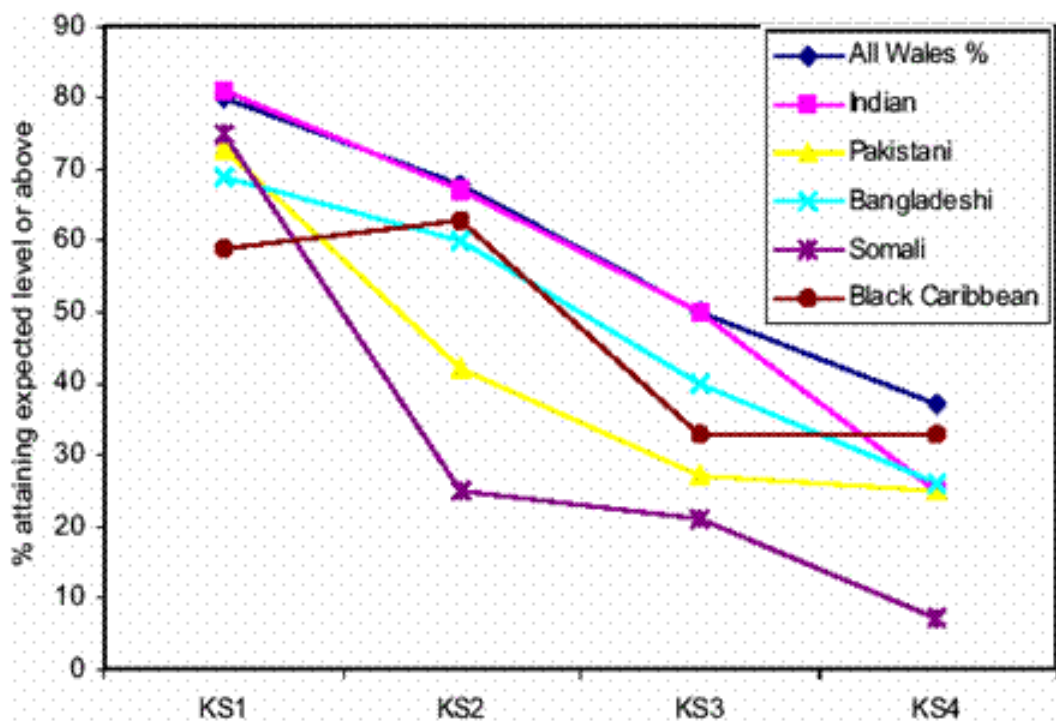


Fig-3.1: Specific ethnic groups Core Subject Indicator comparison.

Source, EALAW

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## Lack of role model

- There is an acute shortage of adult role models for Somali students in schools
- Many educated adults are unemployed
- The qualifications they gained outside UK and their previous experiences were not recognized
- The situation may discourage or create doubts on the benefit of going to the school

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# Residential mobility

- Sometimes people are put into bed and breakfasts because of housing shortage and because of the waiting lists etc. Then they are moved from B&B to temporary accommodation for one, two or three years. After that, when the lease expires, then they need to move to another accommodation, (female, professional).

Nasir Warfa, Kamaldeep Bhui, Tom Craig, Sarah Curtis, Salaad Mohamud, Stephen Stansfeld, Paul McCrone, Graham Thornicroft. Post-migration geographical mobility, mental health and health service utilisation among Somali refugees in the UK: A qualitative study. Available at [www.elsevier.com/locate/healthplace](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/healthplace)



# Low expectations from schools

- *stereotypes* : some teachers may label Somali pupils unfairly as having aggressive behaviors or post-traumatic disorder as a result of their experiences in the civil war.



# Poverty and attainment

- There is evidence of a strong relationship between parental income and early childhood educational attainment. Early age test scores are positively correlated with subsequent economic success.

*Machin S, Childhood Disadvantage and Intergenerational Transmissions of Economic Status in Atkinson A B and Hills J, 1998, Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity, CASE paper 4, LSE.*

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# Indicators

UK Government figures show that the following children are at greatest risk of being poor:

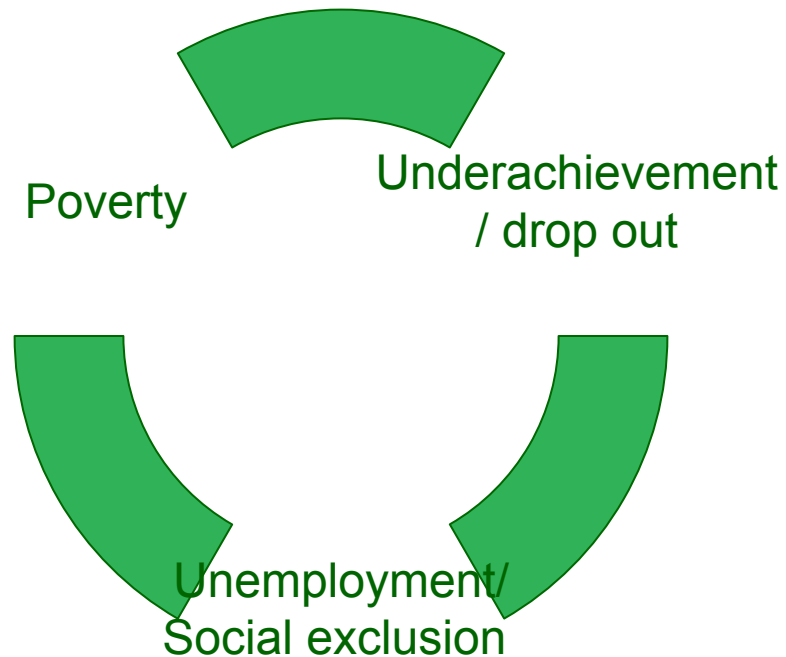
- Children of lone-parent families
- Children in large families (more than three children)
- Children growing up in households where there is no-one in full-time employment
- Children from families of some minority ethnic groups
- Children in households with a disabled child or adult

Department for Work and Pensions, “Households Below Average Income (HBAI) statistics 1994/5-2003/04”, Sixteenth Edition 2005

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# Vicious Circle



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# Way Forward

- Raise parent awareness
- Supplementary classes
- Training Somali mentors/assistant teachers
- Skills training /refreshment training to increase the employability level within community

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