



Gender Education Trends in Somalia from 2016-2026

“A Forecasting Study on Gross Enrolment, Net Enrolment Rates, and Gender Parity Index for Primary and Secondary Education”

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Abstract

This study examines gender education trends in Somalia from 2016 to 2026 by forecasting gross enrolment, net enrolment rates, and gender parity index for primary and secondary education. Official statistical documents from the Somali Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education for primary and secondary schools from the academic years 2015/2016 to 2020/2021 were analyzed using SPSS and Excel. The findings revealed a significant gender education gap, with boys having higher enrolment rates than girls at both levels due to poverty, child labor, poor security, and lack of community awareness. The Somali Ministry of Education has formulated a five-year plan to increase enrolment rates and promote gender equity in education. Finally, the study provides recommendations for policymakers to improve gender equity in education in Somalia.

Keywords: Gender, Education, Somalia, Forecasting, Gross Enrolment, Net Enrolment, Gender Parity.

1. Introduction

Gender refers to the traits and characteristics that distinguish masculinity and femininity. This can include biological sex, social structures such as gender roles, and gender identity. Many cultures (like Somali culture) have a gender binary system, which recognizes only two genders.¹ Therefore, the gender term used in this study is intended for the gender binary system; male and female.

¹. <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/33283>

According to the data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 61 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010. The global out-of-school figure had been on a decline over the previous 15 years, falling from 105 million in 1990. Progress was greatest immediately after the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 (Global & Report, 2014).

Globally, there exists a gender disparity in education, where girls are disproportionately excluded from school compared to boys. Particularly, girls from impoverished backgrounds and rural areas face greater barriers to accessing education and tend to have lower levels of educational attainment. This is mainly due to social hierarchies and cultural expectations that have been constructed to favor males and limit the opportunities available to females (Christina, 2017).

As the academic year commences in various regions across the globe, recent statistics from UNESCO reveal that there are still 244 million children and adolescents aged 6 to 18 who remain deprived of formal education.² According to a UNESCO report in 2019, there were 258 million school-aged children and adolescents who were not attending school worldwide. Of that number, Somalia accounted for over 3 million children (Republic, 2020)

Globally, there are 129 million girls who are not receiving formal education, with 32 million being of primary school age, 30 million of lower-secondary school age, and 67 million of upper-secondary school age. In countries that are impacted by conflicts, girls are over twice as likely to be out of school compared to their counterparts residing in countries that are not affected by conflicts.³

Gender concerns have been a prominent topic of discussion at international conferences for more than 30 years. Despite notable advancements in recent years, gender disparities continue to persist in numerous aspects of life, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and other regions across the world (Dominic & Amodu, 2017). The Sub-Saharan region of Africa accounts for 50% of the global percentage of children out of school (Global & Report, 2014).

The factors for the unequal treatment and opportunities for genders in education, which will be elaborated on later, are influenced by socio-economic and political factors, such as political instability and aggression, poverty, and economic challenges, as well as negative cultural attitudes and values (Victor & Ombati, 2012).

Somalia Enrollment of Public or publicly supported schools were attended by 4 in 10 learners at primary level and 1 in 4 at secondary level (UNESCO, 2022). The access rate and gender equality in Somalia is very low especially for the girl child at 43.3% and a gender parity of

0.91 (Republic, 2020). According to the 2021 EMIS data, Somalia's primary gross enrolment rate (GER) remains low at 24%. Whilst the GER for secondary education has improved substantially in recent years, it remains low at 26% in 2021. (Ministry of Education, 2022). The percentage of children who were not attending school in 2016, 2017, and 2020 was estimated to be relatively constant, ranging from 85.4% to 85.7%. However, in 2020, this percentage increased significantly to 88.5% (UNESCO, 2022).

The education policy in Somalia aims to provide equal opportunities for both male and female students across all levels of education. The Ministry places particular emphasis on

² . <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/>

³ UNICEF Girls' education: *Gender equality in education benefits every child.* <https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>.

promoting equitable access to education, with a focus on ensuring that girls' education is prioritized. The policy aims to minimize the differences in knowledge attainment between male and female students and encourages girls to pursue higher education (Republic & Education, 2020). The primary objective of this policy is to create a strong structure that includes distinct approaches for execution, with the aim of guaranteeing that quality education and employment opportunities are provided to all individuals in the education sector, regardless of their location, ethnicity, gender, age, or disability. The policy strives to promote gender equality, fairness, and inclusivity, without any prejudice or unfair treatment toward men, women, boys, or girls (Republic, 2020)

The trend in enrollment levels during the five-year period between 2016 and 2020 in Somalia has been characterized by phases of expansion and improvement, which have been observed since the country experienced a state collapse in 1991 (UNESCO, 2022). Table(1) depicts the Overall Enrolment Trends by Gender (Republic, 2020).

Table 1. The Overall Enrolment Trends by Gender

	<i>Male</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
2016	156845	56.6	120049	43.4	276894
2017	177677	55.6	141362	44.4	319039
2018	185881	56	146961	44	332841
2019	194083	56	152559	44	346642
2020	280015	56.7	213664	43.3	493679

1.1 Problem Statement

Education for girls has become a crucial topic in the contemporary world due to its various benefits for the individual, society, and the economy. Educating girls not only provides them with knowledge and skills but also empowers them to become independent, confident, and contributing members of society. It also leads to a more secure and resilient society, allowing everyone to reach their full potential. However, education for girls goes beyond just attending school. It also involves ensuring that girls feel safe and encouraged to pursue courses and careers in which they are underrepresented. Despite efforts to improve access to education in Somalia, gender disparities persist, particularly in terms of gross enrolment rate, net enrolment rate, and gender parity index. These disparities have serious consequences for individual well-being, as well as for the economy and society as a whole. Therefore, there is a need to understand the current gender education trends in Somalia and forecast their trajectory from 2016-2026 to identify areas for improvement and inform policy decisions.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to analyze the gender education trends in Somalia from 2016- 2026 based on gross enrolment rate, net enrolment rate, and gender parity index. Specifically, the research aims to:

- Examine the current gender disparities in enrolment rates and gender parity in Somalia.
- Forecast the gross enrolment rate, net enrolment rate, and gender parity index for the period 2016-2026.
- Identify factors that contribute to gender disparities in enrolment rates and gender parity in Somalia.
- Provide recommendations for policymakers and educators to improve gender equity in education in Somalia.

1.3 Research Questions

- What is the current state of gender disparities in enrolment rates and gender parity in

- Somalia?
- What is the forecasted trajectory of gross enrolment rate, net enrolment rate, and gender parity index in Somalia from 2016-2026?
- What factors contribute to gender disparities in enrolment rates and gender parity in Somalia?
- What recommendations can be made to policymakers and educators to improve gender equity in education in Somalia?

2. Methodology

The study is an analytical descriptive approach to investigate gender education trends in Somalia from the academic year 2016 to 2026. The study was designed to forecast gross enrolment, net enrolment rates, and gender parity index for primary and secondary education. Official statistical documents from the Somali Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education for primary and secondary schools in Benadir and the Federal Member States (Jubaland, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, and Southwest) from the academic year 2015/2016 to 2020/2021 were used as the data source for this study. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Excel, with percentages and forecasting analysis was examined to determine the level of gender education in Somalia. The formula used in the study to determine the level of the Gross, Net Enrolment Rates, and Gender Parity index are illustrated below:

- Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): Total number of students enrolled in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.
- $GER = \text{Number of students at level year } t / \text{Population of school age in year } t \times 100$
- Net Enrolment Rate (NER): Enrolment of the official age group for a given cycle of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.
- $NER = \text{Number of students at specific age at a level in year } t / \text{Population of related school age in year } t \times 100.$
- Gender Parity Index (GPI): A given indicator's female-to-male ratio. It measures the relative access to education of girls and boys at a level of education.

3. Results

3.1 Primary Education

Table 2. Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for the Primary Education in %

Academic Year	Male	Female	Total
2015/2016	22.2	17.9	20.1
2016/2017	23	19	21
2017/2018	-	-	-
2018/2019	25	21	23
2019/2020	21	17	19
2020/2021	27	22	24

* All data of the study for academic years from (2015/2016 to 2020/2021) are derived from these sources :

2015/2016(Federal Government of Somalia Education Statistics Yearbook , 2015/2016) ,
 2016/2017(Federal Government of Somalia Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education.
 Education Statistics Yearbook , 2016 / 17), 2018/2019(federal government of somalia ministry
 of education, culture and higher education - moeche annual education statistics yearbook ,
 2018/2019), 2019/2020(federal government of Somalia ministry of education culture and higher
 education -- moeche -- Annual Education Statistic Yearbook ,

2019-2020), 2020/2021(Federal Government of Somalia Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education Annual Statistics Yearbook , 2020-2021)

Table (2) shows the total Gross Enrolment Rate in primary education for the districts in the ten regions of Central South Somalia from the academic years 2015/2016 to 2020/2021. The total gross enrolment rate of primary education for the academic year 2019/2020 is the lowest at 19%, while the rate for the academic year 2020/2021 is the highest at 24%. This indicates that the capacity of the primary education system to enrol students in the primary age group is very poor. That means 76.0% of children of primary school age are not in the primary education system.

Table 3. Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for Primary Education in %

Academic Year	Male	Female	Total
2015/2016	15.7	12.6	14.1
2016/2017	18	15	17
2017/2018	-	-	-
2018/2019	17.6	14.9	16.3
2019/2020	12	10	11
2020/2021	17	15	16

The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) is a more detailed enrolment coverage measure that explains the proportion of pupils enrolled by the official school age group (6–13). Table (3) illustrates the net enrolment rate for Somali primary education in academic years from 2015/2016 to 2020/2021. All total results show a low rate that ranges from 11% in the academic year 2019/2020 as a minimum to 16% in the academic year 2020/2021 as a maximum. This means 16% of Somali children of school age are enrolled in primary education and 84% are not enrolled.

Table 4. Primary Gender parity index

Academic Year	GPI
2015/2016	0.81
2016/2017	0.82
2017/2018	0.8
2018/2019	0.91
2019/2020	0.8
2020/2021	0.81

Table (4) reveals the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for formal primary education from the academic years 2015/2016 to 2020/21. The GPI index ranges from 0.8 to 0.91, suggesting that boys are more likely than girls to attend formal primary school.

3.2 Secondary Education

Table 5. Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for Secondary Education in %

Academic Year	Male	Female	Total
2015/2016	15.5	10.9	13.3
2016/2017	20.3	15.8	18.1
2017/2018	-	-	-
2018/2019	20.1	14.2	17.2
2019/2020	23.3	15.2	19.2
2020/2021	26	18	22

Table (5) shows that the secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) within six years, from the academic year 2015/2016 to the academic year 2020/2021 ranged from 13.3% to 22%,

showing that over 80% of the secondary school age population is out of formal secondary education. Furthermore, boys had a GER of 26% in the academic year 2020/2021, but girls only had a GER of 18%.

Table 6 . Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for Secondary Education in %

Academic Year	Male	Female	Total
2015/2016	8.3	6	7.2
2016/2017	8.5	6.2	7.4
2017/2018	-	-	-
2018/2019	13.2	9.6	11.5
2019/2020	12.3	9.5	11
2020/2021	15.6	12.8	14.2

The total secondary net enrolment rate shown in table (6) is 14.2% for the academic year 2020/2021 the highest rate, 11.5% for 2018/2019 the second highest rate, and 7.2% and 7.4% for the academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 reached third rank respectively. However, this implies that almost 85.8% of youth of secondary school age (14–18) are not enrolled in formal secondary school.

Table 7. Secondary Gender parity index

Academic Year	GPI
2015/2016	0.7
2016/2017	-
2017/2018	-
2018/2019	0.83
2019/2020	0.65
2020/2021	0.68

Table (7) depicts the secondary gender parity index (GPI), which ranges from 0.65 to 0.83. This means boys are more likely than girls to attend formal primary school.

Table 8. A Comparative Results between Primary and Secondary Education Enrolments for Academic Year 2020/2021

	Gross Enrolment Rate	Net Enrolment Rate	Gender Parity Index
Primary Education	24	16	0.81
Secondary Education	22	14.2	0.68

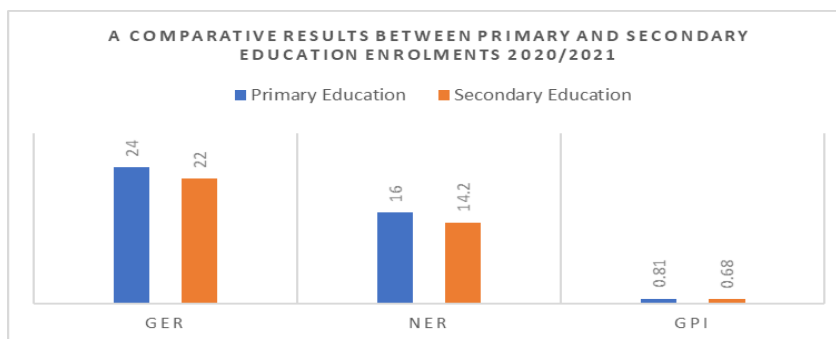


Figure (1) A Comparative Results between Primary and Secondary Education Enrolments 2020/2021
3.3 Forecasting Results of Somali Gender Education Trends from 2016 to 2026

3.3.1 Forecasting General Enrolment by Gender

Table 9. Results of Forecasting General Enrolment by Gender

Timeline	Values	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2016	43.4			
2017	44.4			
2018	44			
2019	44			
2020	43.3	43.3	43.30	43.30
2021		43.435686	42.30	44.58
2022		43.356703	42.18	44.53
2023		43.277721	42.07	44.49
2024		43.198738	41.96	44.44
2025		43.119755	41.84	44.40
2026		43.040772	41.73	44.35

Results shown in table (9), and figure (2) indicate that the proportion forecasted general education enrolment by gender from 2016 to 2026 will hit 43.040, with 43.73 as the lower confidence bound, and 44.35 as the upper confidence bound. Since the percentage in 2020 was 43.4, this percentage is a negligible indicator rate. Thus, we could determine no progress will be expected in 2026.

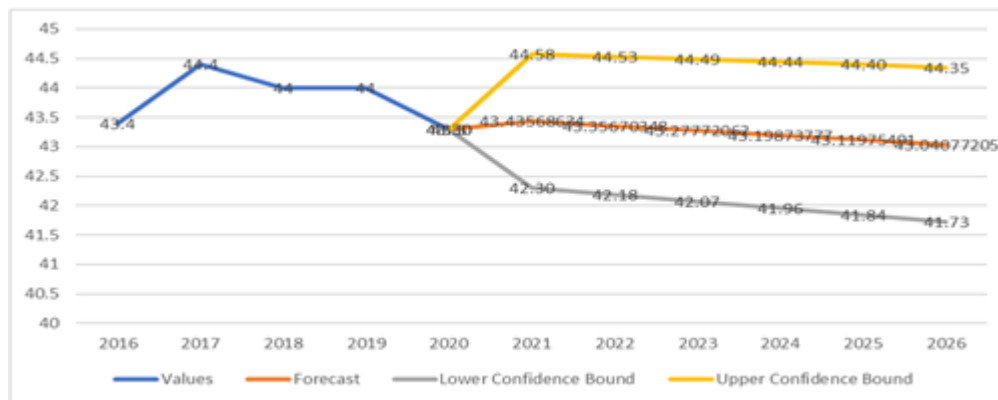


Figure (2) Results of Forecasting General Enrolment by Gender

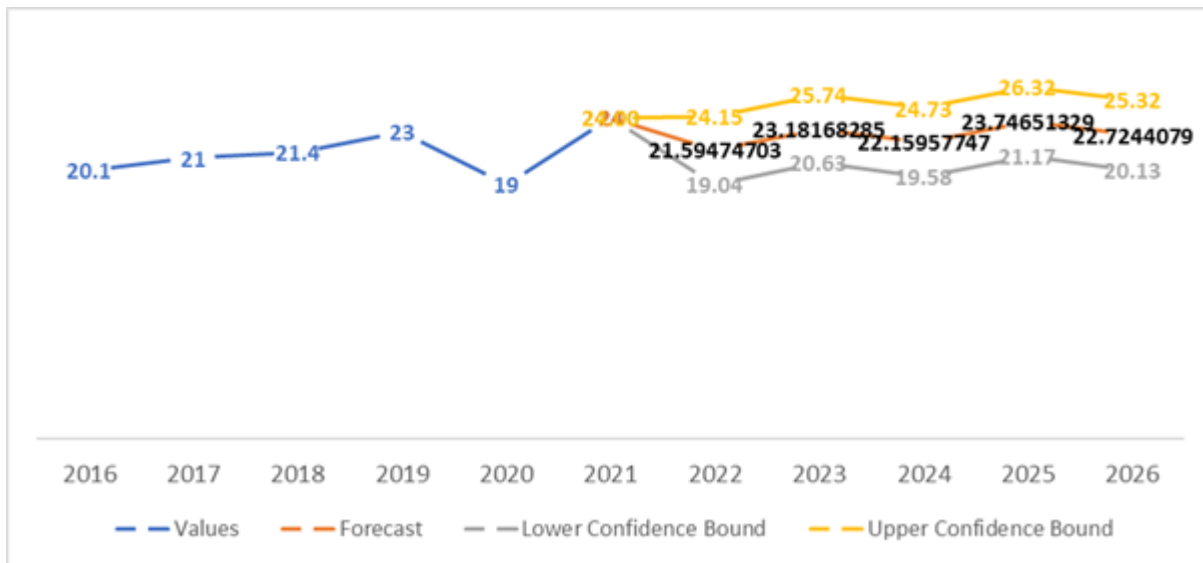
3.3.2 Forecasting Primary Education

Table 10. Results of Forecasting Primary Education Gross Enrolment Rate by Gender

Timeline	Value	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2016	20.1			
2017	21			
2018	21.4			
2019	23			
2020	19			

2021	24	24	24.00	24.00
2022		21.594747	19.04	24.15
2023		23.181683	20.63	25.74
2024		22.159577	19.58	24.73
2025		23.746513	21.17	26.32
2026		22.724408	20.13	25.32

Data of the academic year 2017/2018 was missing for all primary education data on gross, net, and gender parity enrolment rates as illustrated in previous tables. To adjust all academic years to be forecasted comprehensively, the researcher conducted replacing missing values in SPSS as displayed in the tables, and the figures. If we look at the output of the forecasted percentage in table (10), and figure (3) for the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in the year 2026, we observe the forecast (22.7), the lower confidence bound (20.1), and the upper confidence bound (25.32). Thus, we could determine that there will be decrease for both the forecast, and lower bound. However, It will be increasing 1% for upper bound.



Figure(3) Results of Forecasting Primary Education Gross Enrolment Rate by Gender

Table 11. Results of Forecasting Primary Education Net Enrolment Rate by Gender

Timeline	Values	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2016	14.1			
2017	17			
2018	14.9			
2019	16.3			
2020	11			
2021	16	16	16.00	16.00
2022		11.30655	8.96	13.65
2023		13.5349	11.17	15.90
2024		10.233105	7.85	12.62
2025		12.461456	10.06	14.87

2026	9.1596605	6.74	11.58
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Results shown in table (11), and figure (4) revealed the forecasting primary education net enrolment rate. The forecasted net enrolment rate will decrease in 2026 from (16) to (9.1), to (6.7) for the lower confidence bound, and (16) to (11.58) for the upper confidence bound.

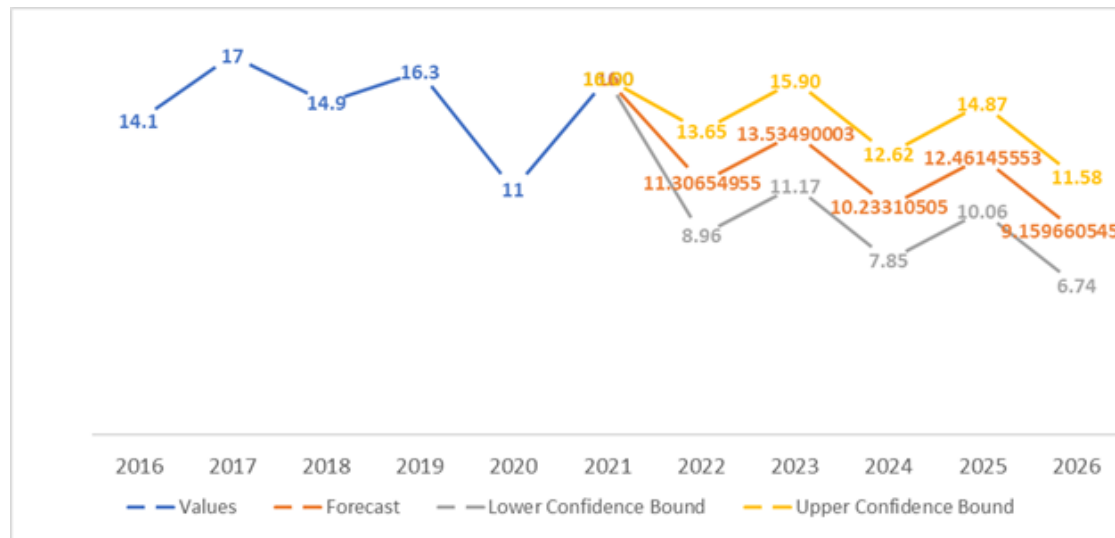


Figure (4) Results of Forecasting Primary Education Net Enrolment Rate by Gender

Table 12. Results of Forecasting Primary Education Gender Parity Index

Timeline	Values	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2016	0.81			
2017	0.82			
2018	0.865			
2019	0.91			
2020	0.8			
2021	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81
2022		0.8182228	0.72	0.91
2023		0.815022	0.72	0.91
2024		0.8118212	0.71	0.91
2025		0.8086204	0.71	0.91
2026		0.8054196	0.70	0.91

According to the results presented in table(12), and figure (5) there will not be progress forthe gender parity rate of primary education in 2026 on the forecast, but the lower confidence will decrease by 10%, and the upper bounds will increase 10%.

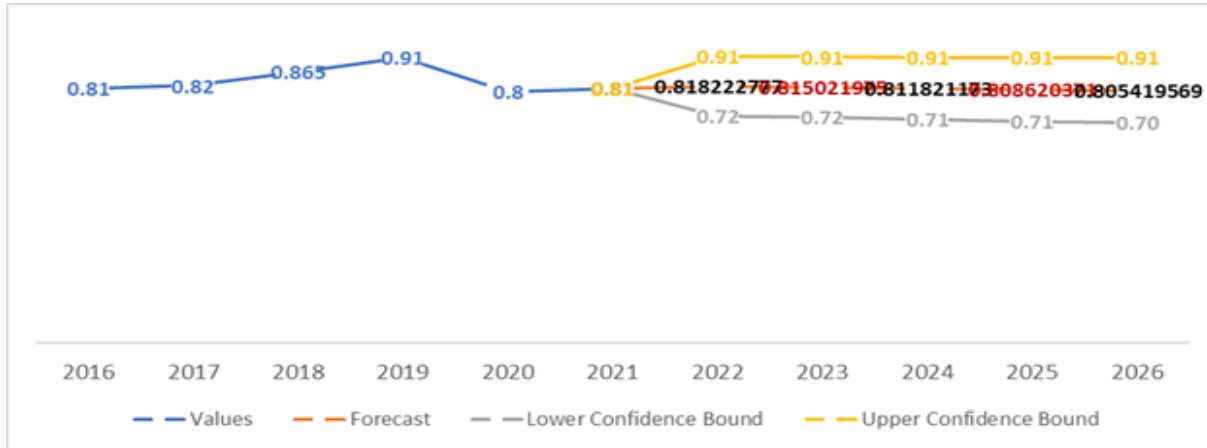


Figure (5) Results of Forecasting Primary Education Gender Parity Index

3.3.3 Forecasting Secondary Education

As the Primary Education, the data of academic year 2017/2018 was missing for the secondary education. To adjust all academic years to be forecasted comprehensively, the researcher also conducted replacing missing values in SPSS as displayed in tables, and figures of forecasting secondary education gross, net enrolment rate by gender as well as gender parity index. If we look at the output of the forecasted percentage in table (13) ,and figure (6) in the year 2026 on Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at secondary education , we perceive the forecast (26.5), the lower confidence bound (22.6), and the upper confidence bound (30.47). Thus, we could conclude that there will be 4% or 8% as maximum of increasing secondary enrolment in 2026.

Table 13. Results of Forecasting Secondary Education Gross Enrolment Rate by Gender

Timeline	Values	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2016	13.3			
2017	18.1			
2018	18			
2019	17.2			
2020	19.2			
2021	22	22	22.00	22.00
2022		21.855143	18.35	25.36
2023		23.027605	19.41	26.64
2024		24.200066	20.48	27.92
2025		25.372527	21.55	29.20
2026		26.544989	22.62	30.47

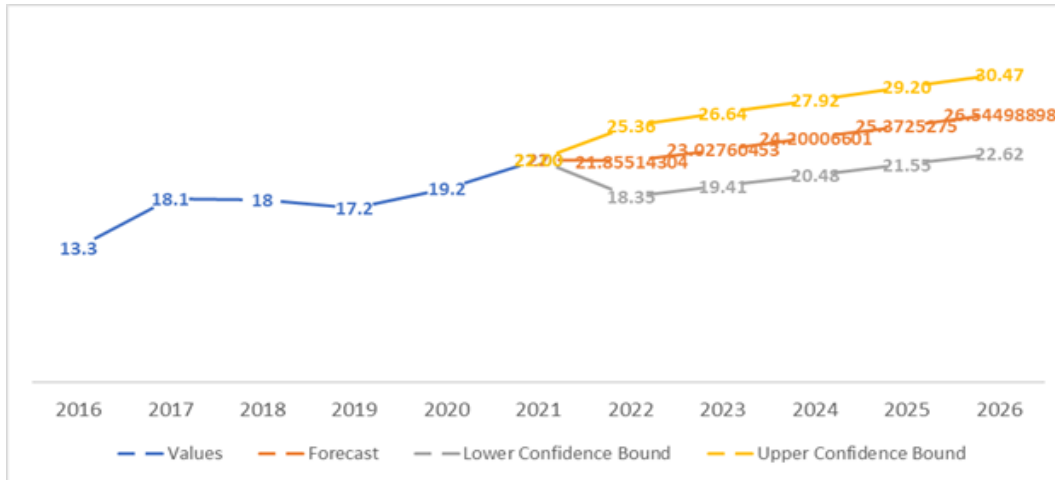


Figure (6) Forecasting Secondary Education Gross Enrolment Rate by Gender

Table 14. Results of Forecasting Secondary Education Net Enrolment Rate by Gender

Timeline	Value s	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2016	7.2			
2017	7.4			
2018	0			
2019	11.5			
2020	11			
2021	14.2	14.2	14.20	14.20
2022		15.840628	7.07	24.61
2023		17.76006	8.72	26.80
2024		19.679492	10.37	28.99
2025		21.598924	12.03	31.17
2026		23.518356	13.69	33.34

By looking at the output of the forecasted percentage in table (14), and figure (7) in the year 2026 on net enrolment rate (NET) at secondary education, we can find the forecast(23.5), the lower confidence bound (13.7), and the upper confidence bound (33.34). Thus, we determine that there will be a maximum increase of 9% or 19% in secondary enrolment in 2026.

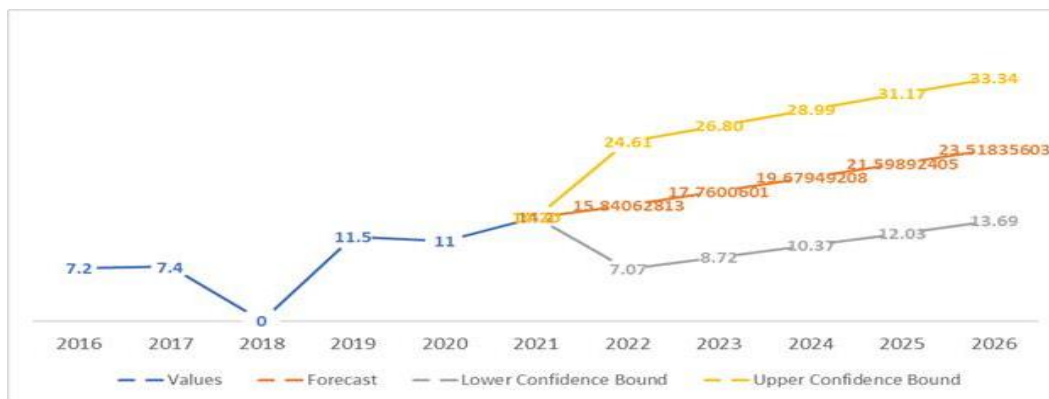


Figure (7) Forecasting Secondary Education Net Enrolment Rate by Gender

Table 15. Results of Forecasting Secondary Education Gender Parity Index

Timeline	Values	Forecast	Lower Confidence Bound	Upper Confidence Bound
2019	0.83			
2020	0.65			
2021	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68
2022		0.5778681	0.46	0.70
2023		0.4945417	0.37	0.62
2024		0.4112153	0.28	0.54
2025		0.3278889	0.19	0.47
2026		0.2445625	0.09	0.39

The timeline for forecasting starts from 2019 due to the sequential academic years before this year is incomplete. Based on that, the results depicted in table (15), and figure (8) for the gender parity index for secondary education show there will be decline percentage of gender parity for all indicators forecast, the low confidence, and the upper confidence bounds.

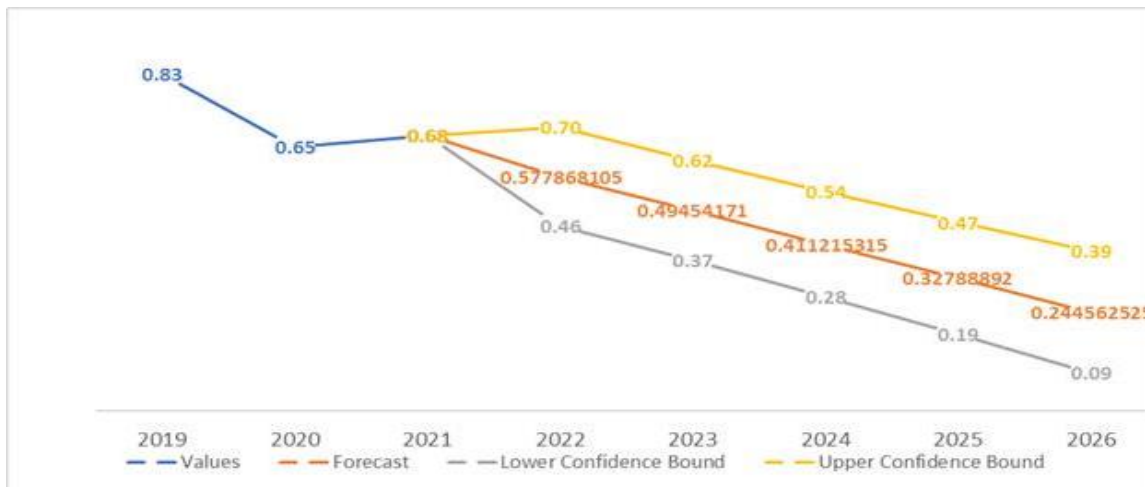


Figure (8) Forecasting Secondary Education Gender Parity Index

4. Discussion

The study found that in 2020, male Somali students accounted for 56.7% and female students accounted for 43.3%. For the academic year 2020/2021, the gross primary enrolment rate was 24%, indicating that 76% of primary school-age children were not enrolled in the education system. In the preceding academic year, the net enrolment rate was 16%, with boys more likely than girls to attend formal primary school. However, 84% of students were not enrolled, and the gender parity index was low ranging from 0.8 to 0.9. The secondary education, gross enrolment rate from the academic year 2015/2016 to 2020/2021 ranged from 13% to 22% for academic years from 2015/2016 to 2020/2021, with boys more likely than girls to attend formal secondary school. %. The total secondary net enrolment rate was 14.2%

for the academic year 2020/2021 The gender parity index for secondary education ranged from 0.65 to 0.83. These findings suggest that access to education in Somalia is weak for both genders and may be attributed to various factors. The Somali Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education has identified various obstacles to accessing education in Somalia, including negative community perceptions and cultural practices, lack of quality educational facilities for all learners, poor safety and security, poverty for many parents, lack of community ownership and resources, high rural illiteracy, and child labor, as well as long distance to the school. All these challenges make it difficult for children, particularly girls, to attend school and receive a quality education (Republic, 2020). These results are in line with findings of (Suleman et al., 2015) who found out that financial status of parents, lack of basic facilities, early marriage, lack of parental attention, negative attitudes towards girls' education, illiteracy of parents, lack of security, and long distance to school are factors that affect gender education. Yano (2013), opined that the declining enrolment rate in primary schools can be attributed to various factors such as child labor, which is prevalent among children from low economic backgrounds. Additionally, the social-cultural norms and traditions, as well as early marriage practices, are also factors that contribute to the lower participation of girls in primary education (Yano, 2013). However, Bol Elijah Bul (2019) found out the main factors that affect female enrollment are negative attitudes towards female education and lack of awareness about government policies encouraging female education. (Bol Elijah Bul, 2019). Drawing on 30-year experience in formal education across all levels in Somalia, the author identifies lack of security, poverty, and insufficient parental awareness as the key factors contributing to the gender education gap in the country. The civil war between clans has forced families to constantly relocate in order to survive, which undermines the security necessary for education. Poverty is also widespread in Somalia, with many families unable to afford school fees. As a result, child labor is rampant in the country. Finally, negative attitudes towards girls' education among parents have resulted in boys being prioritized for schooling due to their perceived earning potential in the future.

According to the author's knowledge, previous studies on primary education enrollment in Somalia have overlooked the significant role played by Quranic schools, which are the non-formal primary education providers for children in the country. Classically, Somali families send their children to these schools at the age of six to learn the Quran before starting formal education. This means that many primary schools don't have grades one and two, as children join in grades three or four after spending several years in Quranic schools. Thus, the author concludes that Quranic schools are a crucial factor contributing to the low net enrollment rate in formal primary education in Somalia.

The results of the prediction for Somali gender education indicate that there is expected to be a slight decrease in the overall enrollment proportion by gender, from 43.4 to 43.040 in 2026. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for primary education is also projected to decrease from 24 to 22.7, while the net enrollment rate is expected to drop from 16 to 9.1 by 2026. The Gender Parity Index, on the other hand, is predicted to remain the same at a baseline of 0.81, with a forecasted rate of 0.80. Overall, these rates suggest that there will be no progress made in primary education, and enrollment rates are expected to either remain the same or decrease.

The forecasted results for gender education in Somalia suggest that there will be more progress in secondary education than in primary education. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) is expected to increase from a baseline of 22 to a forecasted score of 26.5 in 2026, while the Net Enrollment Rate is predicted to increase from a baseline of 14.2 to a forecasted score of 23.5 in 2026. However, the Gender Parity Index is expected to decrease

from a baseline of 0.68 to a forecasted score of 0.24 in 2026. When compared to the five-year strategy of the Somali Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education from 2022 to 2026, there are some areas of agreement and disagreement as outlined below:

The Somali Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education's five-year strategy plan from 2022 to 2026 aimed at improving access to primary and secondary education in an equitable manner. As part of this plan, the Ministry aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of primary education from 24% (F22%) to 34% (F28%) by the year 2026. Additionally, the Net Enrolment (NER) of primary education is expected to increase from 16% (F15%) to 25%, while the Gender Parity Index (GPI) of primary education is targeted to reach 0.95 from 0.8 by the year 2026. The plan is also aiming to improve access to secondary education in a fair and equitable way. It includes increasing the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of secondary schools from 22% (18%F) to 30% (F30%) and boosting the Net Enrolment (NER) from 14.2% (F12.8%) to 28% (F18%), and also targeting an improvement in the Gender Parity (GPI) of secondary education from 0.68 to 0.8 by 2026 (Ministry of Education, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The study reveals that access to education in Somalia is weak for both genders, with a significant proportion of primary, and secondary school-age children not enrolled in the education system. The low net enrolment rate in formal primary education can be attributed to various factors, including negative community perceptions and cultural practices, poverty, lack of quality educational facilities, poor safety and security, child labor, and long distance to schools. Additionally, negative attitudes towards girls' education and lack of awareness about government policies encouraging female education are the key factors affecting female enrolment in Somalia. The prediction for Somali gender education indicates that there will be no progress made in primary education, and enrollment rates are expected to either remain the same or decrease. However, there will be more progress in secondary education, with an increase in the gross and net enrolment rates. The gender parity index, however, is expected to decrease.

The Somali Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education's five-year strategy plan from 2022 to 2026 aims to improve access to primary and secondary education in an equitable manner, with a focus on increasing the gross and net enrolment rates and improving the gender parity index. While there are areas of agreement and disagreement between the study's findings and the ministry's plan, both highlight the need to address the significant challenges facing education in Somalia, particularly for girls, and to work towards providing access to quality education for all children in the country.

6. Recommendations

To address the gender education gap in Somalia, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Increase access to education: The government needs to prioritize increasing access to education, particularly for girls, by investing in quality educational facilities, promoting community ownership and resources, and increasing awareness about the importance of education.
2. Address poverty: Poverty is a significant factor contributing to the gender education gap in Somalia. The government needs to focus on poverty alleviation programs to ensure that families can afford to send their children to school.
3. Change negative attitudes towards girls' education: Negative attitudes towards girls' education among parents need to be addressed through awareness-raising campaigns

- and education programs.
4. Ensure safety and security: The government needs to prioritize ensuring safety and security in schools to encourage parents to send their children, especially girls, to school.
 5. Address rural illiteracy: High rural illiteracy rates are contributing to the gender education gap in Somalia. The government needs to prioritize addressing this issue by investing in literacy programs and improving access to education in rural areas.
 6. Address child labor: Child labor is prevalent in Somalia, and many children are unable to attend school due to work. The government needs to prioritize addressing child labor by enforcing child labor laws and investing in programs to provide alternatives to work for children.
 7. As most school-aged children attend Qur'an schools, there is a shortage of enrollment in the first and second grades of formal schools. To address this issue, it is recommended to connect Qur'an schools with formal schools to offer literacy and numeracy programs. These programs will assist students in transitioning smoothly into formal education.

Conflict Interest

The author declares no competing financial interests in relation to this research project.

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