

BURAAANBUR: CULTURAL BEAUTY, PEACE PROMOTION AND TRIBAL PREJUDICE



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Introduction

This paper explores *buraanbur* which is Somali poetry exclusively for women. Somali men do not compose nor do they perform *buraanbur*. The report summarises the literature, starting with the definition of the key words, followed by a description of the research method used. Survey findings being presented have been organized into three themes. This report highlights the importance of *buraanbur* in Somali culture and how damaging it can be if it is not composed mindfully. Other aspects, both positive and negative include but are not limited to; the role of *buraanbur* in the cultural preservation of the Somali women living in the UK alongside the tribalism that can be embedded in *buraanbur* that actively reinforces prejudice. The paper draws links between *buraanbur* and similar art-forms used by different cultures who use those art-forms to propagate messages to the masses. Finally, the paper gives brief examples showing the dynamics of *buraanbur* in addressing global issues and wraps up with conclusion and recommendations for changing the topic for *buraanbur* and moving towards a more progressive and inclusive style of *buraanbur*.

Key words

Aroos(yo): wedding(s).

Buraanbur: A Somali poem, exclusively for women includes dancing and music.

Buufis: Depression.

Dardaaran: Hopes/last wishes.

Dirac: A traditional Somali dress, typically worn at celebrations and gatherings.

Duco: Prayer.

Dunta: Characteristics.

Gabay(o): Poem(s).

Halaal: Permissible.

Qabil: Tribe.

Qabyaalad: Tribalism and prejudice.

Literature review

*Humanity universally expresses itself in dance.
(Monteiro and Wall, 2011, p.237)*

There is a plethora of literature that has explored the relationship between women, dance and political movements. The *buraanbur* is an expression of self-hood for Somali women that has been used for both spiritual and social development. Monteiro and Wall (2011, pp. 237 - 238) agree that dance in African cultures 'represents a symbol of the personal, communal and social narrative of these societies' and that it 'serves as a more effective medium than verbal language in revealing ones needs and desires'. This style of dance that incorporates story-telling and drumming 'fosters[s] a sense of familiarity... and reduce[s] social isolation and increases comfort with the process of talking about trauma and other problems' in regards to refugee women (Monteiro and Wall, 2011, p. 249; Akinsulure-Smith, Ghiglione and Wollmershauser).

Though *buraanbur* is often highly politicised with tribalism, its main function has always been to not only celebrate but for self-expression which has previously worked positively in influencing history for Somali women. In other communities, forms of art similar to *buraanbur* have been politicised for feminist movements. A key example of this would be in Chile where a protest chant became a feminist national anthem for several Spanish speaking countries. This protest aimed to highlight the plight of women uprising against inequality (Guardian News, 2016). Similar to the women protesting in Chile, Somali women have effectively used *buraanbur* to 'raise concerns and grievances through composing poems'. It has shaped history for women in Somalia and 'many women employed counter-argumentative discourses to challenge men's hegemonic setting' (Ingiriis, 2015, p.378).

Buraanbur has worked in creating a common consciousness and has had a role in 'determining Somali society, conveying messages in political and social affairs and raising consciousness among the public' (Jama, 1994, p.210). *Buraanbur* has been portrayed as an integral aspect of the women's movement which 'has deep roots in Somali history' (Adan, 1981, p.140). An example of this is the case of Faduma Alim who was the first Somali woman to obtain a university degree in Italy in 1962. When she arrived back to Somalia, she was not permitted a seat in parliament. In response to this, her mother chanted a *buraanbur* for women to express their anguish at not being recognised and valued as citizens despite their achievements and sacrifices. The translated version of the *buraanbur* is shown below:

*Sisters, you sold your jewellery
Depriving yourselves
Enriching the struggle
Sisters, you stayed as one
United, even when your brothers [men]
Divided and deceived our nation
Sisters, we were forgotten
We did not taste the fruits of success
Even the lowest positions
Were not offered
And our degrees were cast aside as dirt
Sisters; was this what we struggled for?*

(Duale, 1981, p.30)

This *buraanbur* was so influential that Faduma Alim was then appointed as the Director of Women's section at Ministry of Education. Throughout history '*buraanbur* constituted a last resort of resistance for women' (Ingiriis, 2015, p.389). This is supported by Kapteijns and Ali (1993, p.9) who state that '*buraanbur* deals with the ways in which women experienced and commented upon the society in which they lived'. They propose *buraanbur* as a 'form of literary self-expression' that provides a 'continuous and varied social commentary on the status quo' (Kapteijns and Ali, 1993, p.10).

Buraanbur is traditional poetry composed by Somali women through which Somali women can express their joys and sorrows particularly during weddings (Miller, 2017; Dhabo et al., 1995), welcome and farewell parties as well as other community events (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 17). Women's *buraanbur* songs are a spontaneous response to their lives and realities. It is not just pre-prepared stanzas by poets, but also in sync with a beat that depends on how the dancers choose to move. *Buraanbur* can be fluid and words can change depending on audience reception. There are countless variations of *buraanbur* across Somali regions - each with their own rhythms and unique chants. Farah et al. (1995, p.171) claims that 'It has been identified as one of the highest literacy genres' for women but could be considered to be one of the highest forms generally'. *Buraanbur* should be recognised as one of the most complex Somali poetry form as it resembles the form of epic poetry which is a 'long narrative poem recounting heroic deeds... in literary usage, the term encompasses both oral and written compositions' (Yoshida, 2019). The primary function of an epic is to 'educate rather than record' (Yoshida, 2019) and this form is encapsulated in the *buraanbur* insofar as it captures the most extreme and valiant praises of two families and presents them to an audience for a shared appreciation and recognition.

Though this could be dangerous when false or prejudiced messages are spread due to the eminent influence of *buraanbur* on the Somali community. Much of Somalia's culture relies heavily on oral literature, this is because Somalia only established its alphabet in 1972. This was done under the rule of the Supreme Revolutionary Council which aimed to rapidly improve literacy rates with the adoption of a national campaign introducing Latin as the official writing script. Before this, Somalia did not have an official writing system and:

had an authentic oral tradition that found its voice in a rich oral literature. This was well and truly oral in that it was composed, memorized, and passed on without having to resort to any type of writing or other means of communication or recording... The most highly evolved and highly considered form of oral arts is poetry.

(Mansur, 1998, p.91)

Buraanbur is a genre of poetry that not only upholds the history of rich oral literature but also continues to contribute to it.

Macfarlane, (2011, pp.16-17) provides an accurate description of *buraanbur* stating:

Buraanbur refers not only to reciting poetry but to all of the simultaneous parts that contribute to the whole- singing, or reciting poetry, dancing the *buraanbur* steps, drumming and clapping, rhythm and various other acts of participation that the women involved contribute... *Buraanbur* is recited solo or to drummed accompaniment and has its own... jump dance steps where the movements are jumped in time to the rhythm with the strongest gestures being made on the final beat of a phrase...The *buraanbur* is done in a centre of a circle made of spectator women where two women at a time 'challenge' or 'out do' one another in dance...the poet and drummer [are] also part of the circle. The spectator women clap rhythmic accompaniment, and singing phrases of encouragement to the dancers that sound like a chorus. They [ululate] *alasaaso* when they or their family, clan or region are identified in a poem, in agreement with the words of a poem or as encouragement to the dancers and shake their scarves over the heads of dancers they consider good...everyone's participation contribut[ion] to the whole...*buraanbur* [is essential].

Buraanbur and *aroosyo* (weddings) constitute the main platform/space for Somali women of all ages, a place where they can meet, interact, socialise and share their stories and experiences through *buraanbur*. In Somali weddings, it is customary to arrange a separate party for women where they may wear a *dirac* (transparent dresses) and make up. *Buraanbur* provides a safe space for women where they are able to perform their *buraanbur* however they choose. 'Tired women dance like crazy. You see an old woman who barely walks and she dances all night' (Bjork, 2017).

The party customarily starts with traditional *buraanbur* songs and dances, where women stand in a circle and one or two women at a time enter into the middle of the circle (the ritual space) to dance energetically and enthusiastically. Participating women support with clapping to the rhythm of the music, accompanied with a drum or a plastic container drummed with a stick or a tambourine. *Buraanbur* is not restricted to only one poet at a time, there can sometimes be a group of them - some acting as 'hype-women' to get the crowd excited with each praise, some acting as drummers and dancers.

Somali women's *buraanbur* in the diaspora is an effort to perpetuate and continue clan ties in the diaspora similar to the Somali community organisations run by the older men in ways that are an obvious continuation of clan engagement in the diaspora (Bjork, 2017). At times, the *buraanbur* could also echo indirectly the richness of the women from bride's or groom's tribes who attend the wedding wearing expensive dresses such as *dirac*. A Somali woman in Minneapolis complained about the high cost of *dirac* saying:

All their resources are exhausted for having a new *dirac* for each wedding. They don't usually wear again the one they wore for a former event. To have a new one for every wedding ceremony is detrimental to their economy. Even if she can't afford a lady has to borrow a new *dirac* from a shop or Somali woman vendor.

(Mohamed, 2008)

Methodology

This paper employs a triangulation method combining descriptive, analytical, and qualitative/quantitative survey in which both open-ended and multi-choice questions were included. Literature relevant to the topic was reviewed. Prior to distributing the survey, the author consulted with a small group of women, which helped the author form and design the survey questions.

All participants were females of Somali origin aged 16 and above who live in the United Kingdom. The total number of participants was 41 females. All participants were given pseudonyms. The majority of the participants were in the age group 16-30. The medium used in this survey was English and therefore all responses were in English. Only a few respondents included Somali words in their responses. The survey was distributed in the Somali community task force WhatsApp group established during COVID 19 of which the researcher is a member. The researcher also shared the survey with other women whom he knows, who then shared it with their networks. This is an example of snowball sampling:

Snowball sampling method involves primary data sources nominating another potential primary data source to be used in research. In other words, snowball sampling method is based on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects.

(Dudovskiy, 2018)

At the beginning of the study, the survey was aimed at both men and women. However, only two to three men responded with very limited information, therefore, it was decided to limit the participants to only women. Due to the size of the sample, the findings cannot be generalised to all Somali women in the diaspora or even in the UK or any age group let alone those who live in Africa. However, the findings give a strong foundation and robust picture of the Somali-British women's experiences and perspectives on the role of *buraanbur* in tribalism, cultural preservation, and wellbeing. Further research can be built on the foundation of these findings.

This small research is the first of its kind to be conducted with regards to *buraanbur* – literature that centres around *buraanbur* is extremely limited. The author combated this by seeking help from an online Somali research network, where many scholars who either specialise or are interested in Somali studies are members. This online research network is managed and based in Finland. The network was originally established to be a platform for Somali Studies International Congress held once every three years. A few female members from this network responded to the request and offered some suggestions. Amongst them was a woman in Melbourne named Ms. Madeleine Macfarlane who completed her honours almost 10 years ago on performing identity: Somali women's wedding celebration in Melbourne at University of Melbourne. Madeleine sent a copy of her thesis. The hard copy of her thesis is currently held at the University of Melbourne's library but has not been published.

Findings

The findings have been categorised into four relevant themes that discuss both the positive and negative impacts of *buraanbur* in different aspects of life using both the responses received from participants and relevant literature. The themes are; Ancestry and History, Society and Politics, Religion and Prayers.

Ancestry and History

*Sisters, you stayed as one
United, even when your brothers [men]
Divided and deceived our nation
(Duale, 1981)*

An Identity Maker

A significant number of the participants particularly the age group 16-30 believe that *buraanbur* is a powerful identity maker. This is because it introduces them to their ancestors, lineage, roots, and the way of life of the Somali society. In their understanding, this is in line with the Islamic teachings. It was found that participants from different age groups differ in opinions regarding the idea that *buraanbur* only defines and describes what *qabiil*(tribe) is in positive ways and that it promotes *qabyaalad* (tribalism and prejudice). Many women accept *buraanbur* that explains *qabiil* (tribe) as it is perceived as an identity maker and a method of knowing and recognising each other but simultaneously reject *qabyaalad* (tribalism and prejudice) which they attribute to a source of social division and community problems.

Sagal: Buraanbur is to recognise our lineage.

Samsam: Tribalism (Qabyaalad) is wrong and immoral but tribes and the mentioning of them is simply an identity and isn't inherently wrong. We have been created [by Allah] and made into nations and tribes to know one another. Buraanbur is to my knowledge just a poetic praise of a person(s)'s lineage and family. As far as I've witnessed, it never included insults of other tribes.

Maryama: It introduces your lineage.

Our participants' belief of *buraanbur* as an identity maker is similar to Miller's (2017) findings who worked closely with a *buraanbur* project in Minneapolis, USA. Miller (2017) acknowledges that *buraanbur* helps young Somali women in the diaspora understand their identity, belonging, and preserve their heritage. This is because this cultural practice has been handed down through generations of Somali women. This cultural tradition continues to influence young diaspora women of Somali origin to know their identity and origins. Similarly, Guerin et al. (2006) acknowledged that *aroosyada* and *buraanbur* have strengthened young Somali women's identity and feelings of belonging to their cultural heritage.

More importantly, *buraanbur* narrows the generational gap between the older and younger women and facilitates healthy relationships through its various artistic mediums such as transmitting cultural knowledge through word of mouth, dancing, interaction, wearing traditional dress, as well as having side-line engagements perhaps in small groups where younger and older women can share their stories and encouraging the youth learn more about their cultural tradition (Miller, 2017).

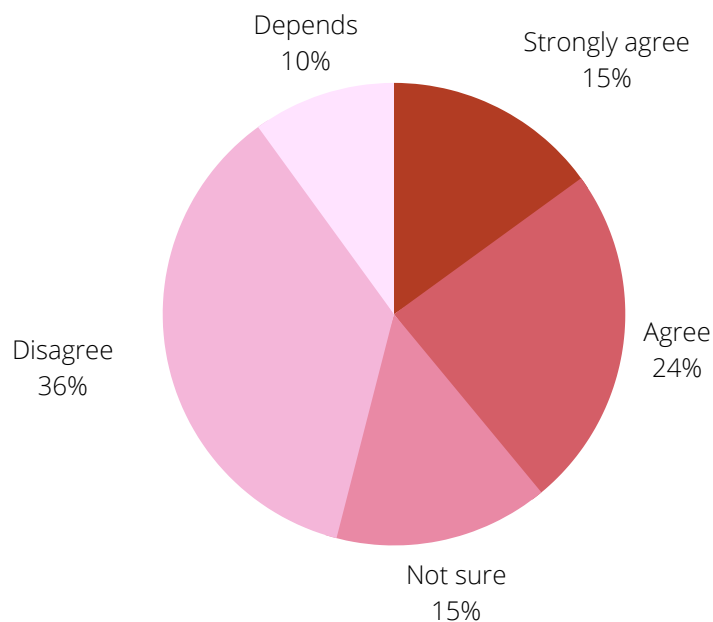
Ubox: I think that whilst it's very important to preserve the practice of creative expression and identity, the lyrical expression can and should be altered to be more inclusive.

Udgoon: [It is an] expression of thoughts and feelings about what you're passionate about at that moment.

Participants acknowledge that *buraanbur* can work in positively shaping identities and understand its influential impact on the Somali community. However, other participants notice that *buraanbur* could similarly contradict this and work in negatively shaping identities when prejudiced *buraanbur* is performed.

Buraanbur and Tribalism

Chart 1: Buraanbur promotes tribalism



As you can see in chart 1, when respondents were asked about the role of *buraanbur* in promoting tribalism, their responses were divided. 39% either agreed or strongly agreed that *buraanbur* promotes tribalism and community conflict within the community. They emphasized that *buraanbur* is widely used negatively during *aroosyada* (weddings). In contrast, 36 % disagreed that *buraanbur* promotes or instigates tribalism while 15% were not sure. The smallest number 10% was in the grey area explaining that it depends on how *buraanbur* is used. Interestingly, none strongly disagree that *buraanbur* instigates tribalism and conflict during *aroosyada*. This is because *buraanbur* plays a fundamental role in Somali communities worldwide, it can be one of the most effective way to promote tribalism if used in that way. After the multiple choices, participants were given an opportunity to write down their understanding about the negative aspects of *buraanbur* in order to canvass the correlation between multiple choice answers and open-ended survey question responses.

Linking buraanbur to tribalism

As mentioned above, several respondents linked buraanbur directly to tribalism. The following are a few selected quotes:

Shamsa: Buraanbur is linked to tribalism.

Sahra: It can use tribes in a negative way.

Deeqa: It always is tribal biased.

A young woman expressed her disappointment about the use of *buraanbur* to promote tribalism suggesting such *buraanbur* should not be tolerated and allowed to happen in *aroosyada* (weddings).

Sacdia: I hate when they mention qabil (tribe) in weddings. That should be scrapped.

Promoting tribalism

According to the information gleaned from our survey, the vast majority of participants agreed that *buraanbur* publicly promotes, encourages and praises tribes during *aroosayada* (weddings). Such promotion of tribalism often leads to prejudice and entrenches tribalism within the Somali community in the UK and in the diaspora in general. A few participants emphasised particularly the role of the *buraanbur* in political tribalism in the diaspora during fundraising for candidates.

Suleekha: Buraanbur definitely promotes political tribalism - as most political events (where fundraising takes place) uses buraanbur as an art form to praise the candidate, his region, his clan and so on.

Bjork's (2017) studies on the Somali-Finnish affiliation with tribes found that *buraanbur* spreads clan propaganda and emphasises clan's social capital, and commends the prestige, fame, and power, which may diminish indirectly the status of other

Haboon: It can encourage people to use as tribalism.

Ruun: It promotes tribalism by praising tribes.

Ubox: It reinforces tribal divisions...At weddings, buraanbur is often used to express tribal superiority.

Samiya: Boasting about how [a] certain tribe is better than any other one.

Sacdiya: The poetry could be used to for the praise of any tribe.

Saharla: I only come across buraanbur in weddings when they [women] boast about the bride and groom's qabiil (tribe) which is wrong.

Ruun: It promotes tribalism if one is not careful about it.

Fadumo: I don't see any negative with buraanbur unless when they overuse in praise for a qabiil.

A significant number of women who participated in the survey stressed that during *aroosyada* (weddings) *buraanbur* often overpraises specific clan lineage, ancestors. Clan individuals are portrayed as clan heroes without considering members of the other clans attending the wedding. As a result, *buraanbur* may alienate other clans and send the wrong message indicating that clan 'x's' lineage, and roots or *dunta* (characteristics) are much better than other clans.

Suleekha: names were used to praise former figures of the dictatorship without any regard for the other side who had many victims of this regime...buraanbur can add fuel to an already raging fire... So, it creates unnecessary tension at a ceremony intended to bring two families together.

Muna: Buraanbur glamourises the qabiil [tribe] backgrounds.

Interestingly, participant Sareedo enjoys and appreciates promoting tribes during *buraanbur* as she disagrees with the other respondents listed above and states that she:

... appreciate[s] the mentioning of tribes, but I personally have never felt it induces superiority of tribes etc. Mostly a way of listing families and promoting them etc.

Similar to the findings of Bjork (2017), women who recite *buraanbur* may brag, boast and praise a specific clan's ancestors, famous kinsmen, clan history and its alleged special position amongst Somali clans, clan skills, achievements and clan characteristics. At that point other clan members may walk out in anger and leave the event. Such praise of a specific clan(s) may also instigate other clans to respond to and claim they have a better history and roots than the other side. Such actions and counteractions could be interpreted as claiming superiority over other clans, or seeing other clans as inferiors. However, a few women commented on *buraanbur* explaining that there is no problem to praise families, relatives and tribes as long as other families and tribes are not insulted:

Deeqa: It tells you the good things about you and your family.

Raaxo: Buraanbur is [an] amazing way to vocalise our culture pride for each tribe [in] a celebration especially at weddings where people celebrate their families.

A source of social division, lies and clan hierarchies

Several participants argued that *buraanbur* can be a source of social division and clan hierarchies. For that reason, some clan member attending the wedding may feel offended, belittled and left out. This increases clan tension, igniting fumes of hatred, causes misunderstanding, upset, and conflict between the bride's family, friends and tribe on one side and the groom's family, friends and tribe on the other. This happens when *buraanbur* praises one side more than the other side.

The findings are in line with Bjork's (2017) who observed that bride's clan or groom's clan may attempt to dominate and monopolise the event through *buraanbur* which is a strategy to legitimise the status of their clan's claim. This is an indirect marginalisation of the other side. The other side then reacts and that causes tribal clash and war of mouth and hatred (Bjork, 2017).

On the other hand, *buraanbur* can allude to false assumptions, spread lies, and negative messages:

Hani: It is a source of division and clan hierarchy among Somalis. It gives people [a] false narrative and an illusion of what they are not.

Suleekha: A lot of false history is propagated through buraanbur.

Safiya: People misunderstand its purpose and become offended and feel left out.

Caasha: It creates conflict between the two families of the newlyweds.

Muna: It spreads lies.

Hibo: Buraanbur gives people false narrative and an illusion of what they are not.

Ruqiya: Buraanbur is used in a way that sends negative messages.

Raaxo: When people use it to belittle each other.

Muna: I heard of so many tribal buraanbur so many times at weddings where you could see how some family members are upset at the unfairness of the buraanbur, [the] lady [was] mostly saying good about one side of the two families.

Sagal: It can create tension especially when it's about qabiil.

Tusmo: Sometimes it can be used to insult others.

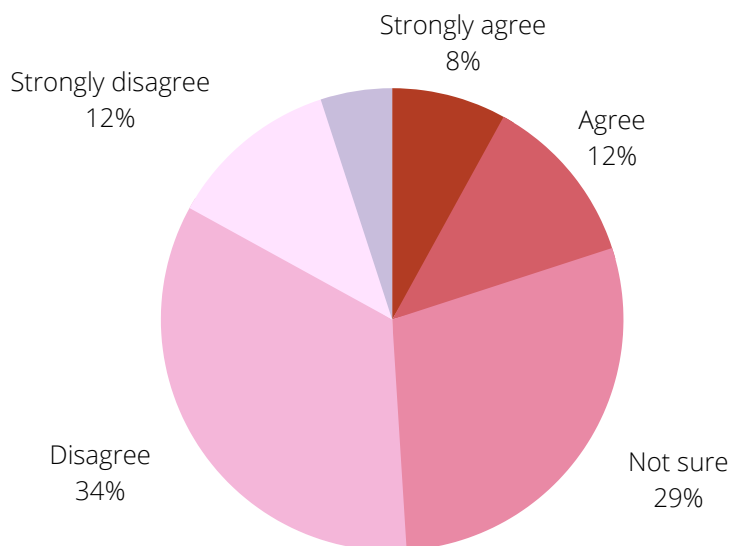
Abshiro: It is considered bad if there is an insult regarding a specific family.

A biased *buraanbur* performance does not only create unequal power structures between two families but also isolates guests who do not belong to either of the clans being discussed and could make guests feel marginalised by certain comments or references made during the *buraanbur* which can fuel tribal tensions. This completely takes away from the essence of these space; these social tensions are unfolding in spaces designed to celebrate and embrace love and joy. This then creates an uneasy atmosphere where people are anticipating conflict.

Fueling Civil War in Somalia

Chart 2 shows that nearly half of the respondents (46%) either disagreed and strongly disagreed that *buraanbur* perpetuates the Somalia's civil war while only 20% agreed or strongly agreed. A significant number (29%) were hesitant. In contrast, in chart 2 a significant number (39%) either agreed or strongly agree that the *buraanbur* promotes tribalism and community conflict.

Chart 2: Buraanbur contributes to Somalis' civil war



Suleekha: Buraanbur promotes tribalism but I don't think it promotes conflict in the global north. I am speaking from a UK perspective - however this could be different in Somali regions where localised clan conflict is more common...[Additionally] many forms of poetry contributed to civil war and violence more broadly buraanbur is just one of them but shouldn't be singled out.

Literature also highlights that *buraanbur* can sometime echo clan conflict and civil war unfolding back home in Somalia, and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa. It creates tension and discomfort which may lead to a clan warfare (Bjork, 2017). Recent studies on Somali women, conflict and peace in Kismayo found that women contribute to Somalia's civil war in different ways including singing which encourages men at clan warfare's to rise up and defend their clan honour (Life & Peace Institute, 2018).

An effective communication method

A number of participants in this survey highlighted that *buraanbur* can be used as an effective communication method to spread both positive and negative messages. This is because some consider *buraanbur* to be poetry composed in very simple language which allows audiences to memorise it easily along with the ability to share its message with their family members, friends and colleagues.

Nafisa: It sends message to the masses.

Nadiifo: It gets across a message to people.

Deeqa: It sends positive and negative messages to the wider society.

Compared to the *gabay*(poem), it may seem that the language used in *buraanbur* is very simple, due to the metaphorical language and long lines that *gabayo* carry. However, when taking all aspects of *buraanbur* into consideration – it can be argued that it is in fact the most creative form of Somali poetry. Those who chant, those who dance, those who clap and use instruments are all improvising. *Gabayo* are usually written for one intended audience, whereas *buraanbur* can be recycled for any group. *Buraanbur* is not limited to a particular audience, it has been used historically to spread positive messages to the masses and to support feminist movements in Somalia (Ingiriis, 2015). It has had such a great influence in raising consciousness amongst the public and has previously worked in changing things for the better especially in the case of Faduma Alim (Jama, 1994). Before the introduction to social media and streaming platforms, Somali communities would only rely on the word of mouth to spread messages and ideas to the masses. Back then, *buraanbur* was a very convenient and reliable method in communicating a message as there could be up to hundreds of women in a single space who would circulate the messages and ideas to others.

Society and Politics

*Perennial rivers and vast oceans,
Our land is also endowed with abundant wild game and domestic animals*

(Bryden and Steiner, 1998)

A platform for networking

Many participants expressed the view that *buraanbur* and *aroosyo*(weddings) are excellent social and cultural platforms where women of all ages come together, network, connect, socialise and share their experiences, stories, aspirations and future collaboration.

Sacdiya: It beautifies family value and connects families to one another. It compliments friends and family, brings people together.

Nadiifo: It is representing your family.

Canbaro: [It is] for people to socialise.

Muna: [Buraanbur] can bring families/community together.

Maryama:[It is] a community building.

Xaliimo: It is a social activity that brings people of all ages together.

Creativity and self-esteem

A few young women argued that that *buraanbur* is an encouragement and showcase of Somali women's creative thinking and talents. It also enhances their self-esteem and confidence:

Xaliimo: It highlights and encourages creative thinking and celebrates talented local poets.

Deeqa: It can boost self-confidence.

Ubax: Creative expression of culture, identity, belonging.

A healing environment, safe space and entertainment for women

Approximately half of the participants in this study argued that *buraanbur* gives women a safe space in which they can relax and escape from the stresses posed by the new environment and life challenges. It also gives them peace of mind, sense of excitement along with a comfortable environment.

Suleekha:[It is a] safe space for women to dance, let loose and be carefree.

Shankaroon: [It] brings sense of excitement.

Muna: It was ways to keep healthy/happy family.

Bilan: Buraanbur helps women feel good about themselves and forget about their problems.

Shamsa: Its...an excellent form of entertainment during weddings.

Xaliimo: It is an enjoyable way to keep young people outside [of trouble].

Sareedo: You feel so connected to the people around you.

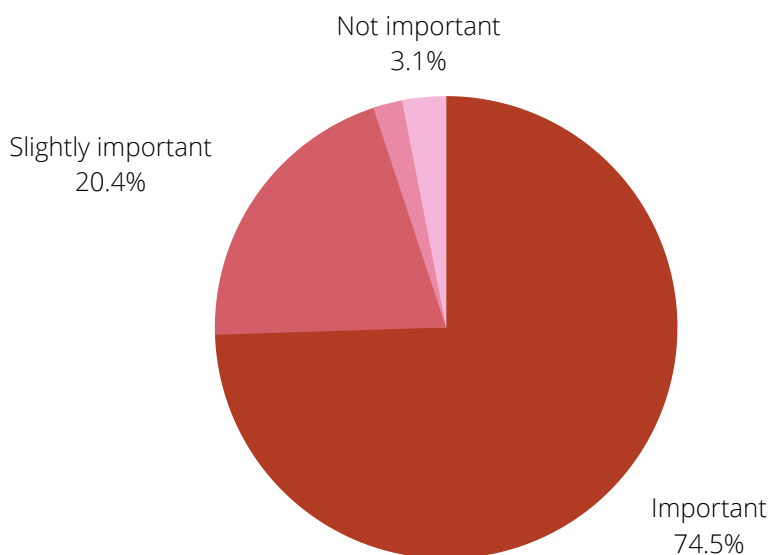
Macfarlane (2011, p.17) stated in her studies that some Somali women in Melbourne described *aroosyada*(weddings) and *buraanbur* events as *buufis*(depression) prevention parties for Somali women because when people get together 'buufis(depression) will go' (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 17). Similarly, Guerin, et al. (2006, p.4) argued that the *aroosyada*(weddings) events and *buraanbur* dancing are clear intervention, artistic and communal activities that prevent mental illness, and emotional difficulties 'among in incredibly high-risk group': the Somali women. Guerin et al. (2006, p.4) draw links between *buraanbur* and talk therapy in the Western sense and mindset. They explain that activities in which the Somali women engage in, before, during and after *aroosyada* and the fact that *buraanbur* events are highly social, and involve a variety of women in the Somali community.

This correlated with Miller's (2017) proposal that *buraanbur* can be a healing mechanism for Somali women through exercise, laughing together and sharing their experiences and stories. The drum rhythm in *buraanbur* is an organic element of the dancing and heals hearts and minds of the present women. Monteiro and Wall (2011, pp. 238-9) support this and claimed that not only does 'dance also represent a physical instrument or symbol for feeling', but it incorporates emotions such as aggression, anxiety, fear and love.... 'expressing these emotions through dance can comfortably aid women in relieving trauma' (Akinsulure- Smith, Ghiglione, and Wollmershauser, 2009).

The role of buraanbur in cultural preservation

Participants were asked to rate the importance of the role of *buraanbur* in cultural preservation on a scale of: important, slightly important, not sure, and not important. Chart 3 shows that the vast majority (75%) emphasised the importance of *buraanbur* for the preservation and promotion of Somalis' cultural heritage, language, arts, and values whilst only 20% believed it was slightly important for cultural preservation.

Chart 3: Buraanbur & cultural preservation



Alongside the significance of *buraanbur* in the preservation of the Somali culture, participants acknowledged that *buraanbur* demonstrates Somali women's imagination, and uniqueness in terms of creativity, talent and dress code.

Safiya: [I like] the way it teaches us about our culture and give[s] life to [Somali] language.

Suleekha: It is a way for younger generations to get in touch with their culture... [particularly] for young people who are disconnected from their heritage (e.g. speak poor Somali, do not visit home often) sometimes they connect to their culture through dance... When I was younger I understood nothing that was being said, over the years as I have attended more weddings/watched videos on YouTube I understand the praises better and I am able to enjoy watching.

Sacdiya: It has a deep meaning to [me]...it makes our culture still alive especially here in the West.

Nafisa: It is our pride.

Hibo: It's our [cultural] beauty.

Introducing young women to the land of their country of origin

Some participants stated that *buraanbur* introduces them to the land and geography of their country of origin.

Hibo: Some positive aspects [of buraanbur] would be [understanding] the richness of the land [back home].

Haboon: [And] understanding of different parts of the [Somali] country.

The following lines explaining Somalia's land were excerpted from a *buraanbur* composed by a Somali woman named Adar Abdi Fiidow.

English	Somali
<i>Perennial rivers and vast oceans, Our land is also endowed with abundant wild game and domestic animals</i>	<i>Webiga duraayo badaheena dulucda weyn, Dalkeena duurjoogto iyo duunyadaba camiran</i>

Buraanbur and clan accent

It is obvious that many Somali clans are concentrated in specific territories in the Somali regions in the Horn of Africa. With that being said, Bjork (2017) identified that using clan-specific jargon is a demonstration of clan uniqueness, its sub-cultural capital and competence. Though this diversity can be identified as a positive thing that enriches *buraanbur* and the Somali culture in general, some women who attend such events performed *buraanbur* through a clan vernacular may feel excluded. These misunderstandings could widen clan divisions during wedding ceremonies and create tension.

Religion and Prayers

*In the name of Allah, and prayers I start your page
O your quality is above a hundred women*

(Gawle 2012)

Celebration for the new marriage

Almost all participants in the survey agreed that *buraanbur* is one of the main sources of cultural pride for Somali women and that it is a cultural treasure that fosters excellent cultural practices through which women celebrate, inspire, praise and essentially bless the life of the new couple, their families and relatives during *aroosyada*(weddings). It is a morale boost for the bride and groom.

Hodan: The hallmark [of] cultural practice, it inspires by praising the couples in weddings and encouraging them to perfect their marriage and family.

Baxsan: [It is a] sign of something big being celebrated for the new family etc.

Ruqiya: [It is] celebrating and praising the wedding family.

Fatumo: Buraanbur is...a celebration where especially at weddings, people celebrate their families.

Shamsa: Its... a great opportunity to add dua [prayers] into the festivities.

A problem for marriage seekers

Below is an excerpt from a *buraanbur* composed by a woman named Maryan Gawle, in London. It is entitled *Duco iyo Dardaraan*(Prayers and Wishes) for a newly married couple. Alongside this is its translation in English, which was done by the researcher. However, though the translation gives the general meaning it may not necessarily capture the powerful meaning of the original Somali version. This is because any translation of poetry cannot be the same as the original work as it is difficult to 'transfer cultural values and traditions and to make them understandable and adapted without altering them' (Sathisha 2020, p.180).

Gawle starts her *buraanbur* with prayers for the bride named Rahma highlighting her unique qualities that exceed other women and advising her to treat her new husband's relatives and anyone who visits her house nicely. She wishes the new family righteous, religious and respectful children to their parents who live in an alienating and challenging foreign environment. Subsequently, she talks to the groom named Mohamed advising him to treat his new wife and her relatives kindly and to not harm her in any way. She then strongly recommends him to respect his wife's choice; protect her from a harsh life and malnutrition. Because life in the diaspora is not easy, she advises him to take her on holidays should she complain from fatigue and apathy. She concludes that Mohamed should be aware that women are diamonds that should not be neglected. (See appendix 1 for full *buraanbur*

English	Somali
<i>Greetings beautiful Rahma (the bride), I open this page for you</i>	<i>Webiga duraayo badaheena dulucda weyn, Rahmaay bilaneey adaan page-ka kuu furaa</i>
<i>In the name of Allah, and prayers I start your page</i>	
<i>Oh your quality is above a hundred women</i>	<i>Ee bisinka ka bilaabay ducaan page-ka kuugu furay</i>
<i>May Allah bless your beautiful marriage</i>	<i>Boqol ka rooney Allow guurku kuu bulaa</i>
<i>May Allah make a prince the gentleman you have chosen</i>	<i>Alla ha barakeeyo guurkiina bilicda wacan</i>
	<i>Oo Princes ka yeel boqorka aad is doorateen</i>

(Gawle 2012)

A few participants mentioned that *buraanbur* can determine your future partnership on clan bases. This is because you may be exposed early in your childhood to some *buraanbur* explaining whom members of a clan can and cannot get married to. These ideas can then be internalised and influence decision making for the future. A participant of middle-age argued

Raaxo: While growing up we were taught that we could only get married to our clan. This was contributed by buraanbur narrated by the elders.

Few participants described *buraanbur* in the *aroosyada*(weddings) as time consuming. This could be because it takes up a big portion of the entire event (at least 2 hours or so) which signifies that it is of central importance to the *aroos*(wedding) ceremony, as well as the fact that it could influence who is thought to be 'good enough' to marry.

Cawrala: It is time consuming.

Samsam: It can go on for far too long.

An instrument for peace and harmony

Somalis are nation of poets and can easily be influenced by the power of poetry and the word of mouth. Participants acknowledged its great influenced and advised that should *buraanbur* be channelled in positive ways, it would serve as a powerful tool for peace and harmony.

Hodan: It should be used to promote peace to bring people together, and eliminate the tribe promoting buraanbur.

Deeqa: Buraanbur should be used positively to bring our community together.

Bilan: Overall Buraanbur can be good and positive if channelled in the right way.

Similar to the participants' views, Bjork (2017) describes *buraanbur* and weddings as significant community events in both the West and Somali territories in Africa. Therefore, if handled positively, *buraanbur* can be a platform for clan dialogue, dispute resolution, and improvements of healthy relationships in the presence of representatives from different clans. Depending on the quality of the *buraanbur* and the reputation of the reciter.

Suleekha: [Buraanbur] encourages collective embracing of different tribes and backgrounds... I think buraanbur has redeeming qualities to promote peace and understanding.

The following section of *buraanbur* is an excerpt from a long *buraanbur* composed by Ms. Adar Abdi Fiidow. She urges Somalis through her *buraanbur* to promote peace and stop violent conflict; to leave tribalism; disarm clan militias; resolve their differences by meaning of dialogue; and unite to rebuilding their destroyed country. She also encourages women to stop their husbands and sons from participating in the civil war. (See appendix 2 for full *buraanbur*).

English	Somali
<p><i>'Clannism' can neither replace state and nationhood nor succor somebody in the other world.</i></p> <p><i>May God help the resurrection of past glory and unity of Somali nation under one state.</i></p> <p><i>Disarm now, discard and bury divisive 'clannism' for the sake of peace;</i></p>	<p><i>Qabiil qaran maaha qabrigana laguma tago</i></p> <p><i>Ee qaranka Somali rabbiyow mid qura ka yeel</i></p> <p><i>Qoriga hala dhaafo qabiil meel ha lagu qariyo</i></p> <p><i>Ee Qalinka ku dhameey qaladaaka meesha yaal</i></p>

Some participants believe that the contribution of *buraanbur* to tribalism or to the Somalia’s civil war depends on how it is used. Please refer to charts 2 and 3. However, many of the participants elaborated in their writings that the effect of *buraanbur*, either negative or positive depends on how it is used. The following are some selected quotes from the survey:

Nadifo: I would say it's okay as long as it's only used in the right way and for the right purposes.

Falis: Buraanbur is a part of our culture and a major part at that. We must therefore preserve it and ensure it is not used negatively.

Cibaado: The intention of the person doing the Buraanbur is vital it could be negative and positive.

Buraanbur is a significant tool in which women can express their views on global matters and promote peace. Another example of this can be this peace promoting *buraanbur* that was composed in support of the Black Lives Matter movement in honour of George Floyd. George Floyd was an unarmed African American man who was unjustly slaughtered at the hands of Minnesota police on 25 May 2020. Bystanders recorded this fatal altercation which went viral and sparked protests worldwide. The following, is an excerpt and begins with sadness felt by the composer upon watching the heart wrenching video of his murder. She quotes his words that have chanted globally in protests ‘I can’t breathe’. She then talks about the historical racial discrimination faced by African Americans in the USA. (See appendix 3 for full *buraanbur*).

English	Somali
<p><i>I am crying and I feel being saddened because, Our lovely George Floyd was overpowered. We want permanent peace and useful life. "I can't breathe" he begged the policeman who humiliated him. All Somalis said "sorry" George. This unresolved discrimination has persisted over hundreds of years.</i></p>	<p><i>Waxa aan la ooyi oo uuxumada nabaday Awooda loo sheegtay George oo indhaha u roon Peace iyo life baan rabnaa baaqi oo wax tara I can't breathe buu lahaa [police-ka bahdalay] Idilba Soomaaliwyeen I am sorry tiri Ilaa boqolaal sanuu buuqu taaganaa</i></p>

Another example of a creative *buraanbur* that does not take the route of fuelling tribal tensions is this *buraanbur* composed in response to the global pandemic. In the beginning, it describes coronavirus as something tiny and mysterious, that cannot be seen by eyes or touched by hands. It explains how fast the virus has spread globally and kept people in their houses causing them on-going fear and anxiety. The composer believes that the virus has been sent by God as a punishment for mankind’s sins. Therefore, she urges people to seek God’s forgiveness since only God can cure the disease. The first is the Somali version followed by its translation into English that was done by the researcher. (See appendix 4 for full *buraanbur*).

English	Somali
<p><i>I am crying and I feel being saddened because, Our lovely George Floyd was overpowered. We want permanent peace and useful life. "I can't breathe" he begged the policeman who humiliated him. All Somalis said "sorry" George. This unresolved discrimination has persisted over hundreds of years.</i></p>	<p><i>Waxa aan la ooyi oo uuxumada nabaday Awooda loo sheegtay George oo indhaha u roon Peace iyo life baan rabnaa baaqi oo wax tara I can't breathe buu lahaa [police-ka bahdalay] Idilba Soomaaliwayen I am sorry tiri Ilaa boqolaal sanuu buuqu taaganaa</i></p>

Buraanbur is usually practiced with social political ramifications and the fantastic facets of it are ignored, these excerpts aim to elevate women and reinforce the social harmony and the beauty, creativity and uniqueness within *buraanbur*. Participant Suleekha eloquently explained the double effect of *buraanbur* saying:

In my opinion, there are times where tribes are praised during buraanbur and it is not problematic... rather it encourages collective embracing of different tribes and backgrounds and it can be quite fun to watch individuals participate in the friendly competitive dancing to see which 'group' has the best dancers. This is no different to a "dance-off" in any other culture. However, I have seen events where there is an extreme celebration of the tribal identity to a point where it is quite uncomfortable. Women will run, wave shawls (shalmads) and record segments of buraanbur that praise their clan and share this on social media. It is then shared across social media and sometimes becomes viral. Another negative, is that if buraanbur is performed poorly for a clan/tribe then they could be ridiculed on social media and that encourages online vitriol... sometimes this is playful but often it can descend into nasty attacks.

Like any medium of communication, the *buraanbur* is open to diverging interpretations depending on who is listening, watching and feeling the impact of the poetry recited. What is clear from the responses from participants is that there is no clear verdict on the *buraanbur* itself as a force for good or evil - but rather a general consensus that it is a powerful tool that can be welded for both positive or negative ideological purposes that could either bring communities together or dissect them further on the grounds of their clan, tribe or ancestral homes. This is why practising *buraanbur* that avoids the discussion of tribes and clans tends to bring communities together rather than promoting *buraanbur* that welcome this metric division of clans.

Conclusion

This research was indeed a useful process of learning about the positive and negatives influences of *buraanbur*. The biggest challenge encountered was the scarcity of credible sources regarding this topic. While a lot has been written about Somali classical poetry predominantly of those were composed by men, *buraanbur*, has been side-lined. In fact, the author – a poet himself – realised during this research that *buraanbur* could be more important than men’s classical poetry in the process of social change, and community engagement particularly in the diaspora. This is because *buraanbur* is composed in language that is easily understood. More importantly, our participants underlined that *buraanbur* delivers living stories in experiential, and artistic ways tailored with dancing and physical performance.

Because of the shortage of the literature about *buraanbur*, the author utilised survey questionnaires as the primary data collection. By definition *buraanbur* is characterised as poetry composed and chanted exclusively by Somali women and performed in the big ceremonies particularly during weddings. The paper discovered that in the perspectives of the female participants, the *buraanbur* is an impactful expression in many life aspects of the community particularly women. The paper found out that *buraanbur* is used primarily for *aroosyda*(weddings) in order to encourage and boost the morale of the bride and groom, celebrate for their new life and offer them *duas*(prayers). Almost all participants agreed that *buraanbur* is an important method for cultural preservation as it is an identity maker particularly for the young women.

It is also a source of cultural pride for Somali women that proves their talents, creativity, and cultural uniqueness. Essentially, *buraanbur* offers Somali women a networking platform, a sense of fun and entertainment, a cosy atmosphere, and a safe and feminine space where they can dress loosely, dance freely, and enjoy themselves. Such activities can improve women’s emotional and social wellbeing.

Furthermore, several participants believe that *buraanbur* is an effective communication means that can be used as peace-building, public awareness and the spread of love, of respect and social harmony. Though *buraanbur* has been and still is an extremely effective communication method, it can be problematic if the wrong messages are spread. A significant number of participants stated that *buraanbur* has a dark side that promotes tribalism, clan hierarchies, and a sense of superiority for some clans whilst marginalising other clans. This entails social divisions, and community conflict to the point some women who attend weddings may leave event in anger since their tribes have been left out or tacitly offended. In addition to that, some participants were on the view that the *buraanbur* is full of lies, false information, assumptions and exaggeration. Throughout history, popular culture has always been used to propagate messages to the masses. In Somali culture, poetry has been used to weaponise conflict and promote peace, therefore *buraanbur* sits within a wider pantheon of war and peacetime literature/art. This report does not aim to place blame on *buraanbur* alone for contributing to social issues but rather provide a detailed analysis of the art-form for wider research. Due to the magnitude of *buraanbur*’s influence in Somali culture, the Somali community would benefit greatly if more positive *buraanbur*’s were composed.

Finally, the paper offers some practical recommendations in order to strengthen the positive role of *buraanbur* in the community to improve *buraanbur* and rid it of the negatives that are often associated with it.

Recommendations

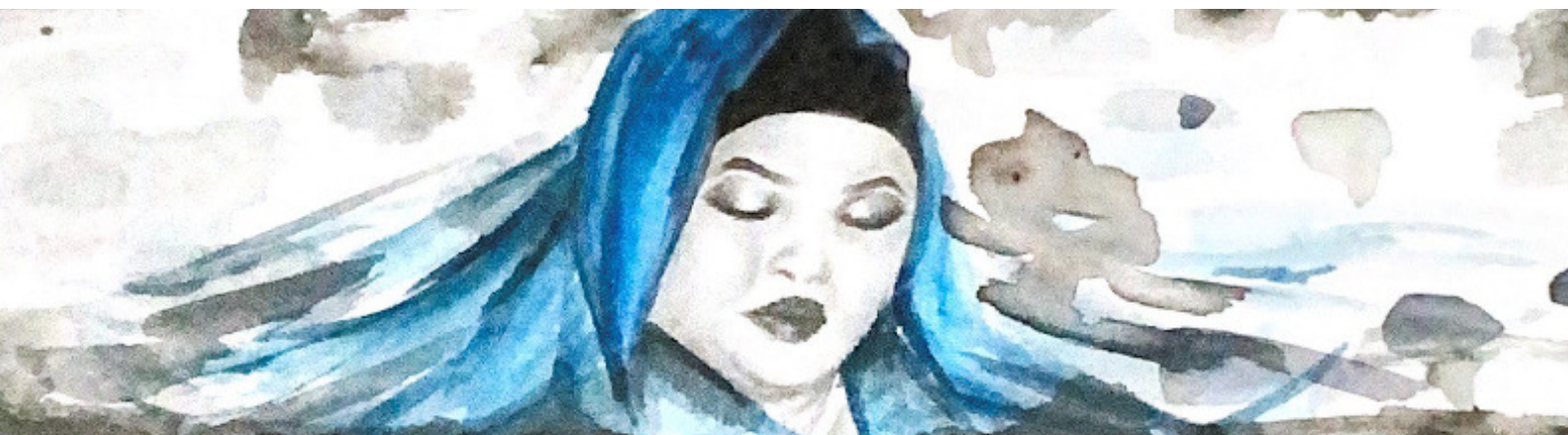
1.The Somali community should develop tribal sensitive-approach during wedding events and other ceremonies. Examples of this can be, instead of mentioning family names, *buraanbur* should focus on praising specific areas in the West where the diaspora community grew up, or praising the bride and groom's success or even prayers for the newlyweds. The Anti-Tribalism Movement (ATM) ethos is to promote a world where individuals are recognised by their personal merit as opposed to their clan affiliations or tribal lineage. This underpins our work which works under a framework of promoting fairness and equity for the most vulnerable members of our community.

2.Almost all participants agreed that *buraanbur* is an important for cultural preservation particularly for the young generations. Therefore, community leaders should consider developing and running purposefully designed programmes, that include critical appreciation of the possible social impacts, in order to introduce *buraanbur* to the Somali girls in UK in the early ages.

3.Community organisations, and most particularly women's organisations should develop online and offline public forums to discuss the best ways *buraanbur* can be used and minimise its negative impacts. Exposure to culture outside of political and tribally charged setting allows people to embrace nuance and improve their judgement of what is worth feeling proud of and what should be questioned further in regard to.

4.The autonomy given to poets to independently write the *buraanbur* poem and improvise at the wedding ceremony should be reformed. The bride and groom should be able to review a draft of the proposed poem before the ceremony takes place in line with their personal values. Secondly, improvisations at the ceremony which could turn ugly should be curbed with swift action taking place to stop any poetry that could be deemed tribalistic.

5. Political *buraanbur* has no place at a wedding ceremony. There is a contemporary trend to praise the regional governments in Somalia which are often formulated along clan lines. This promotes political divisiveness at wedding ceremonies.



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Appendices

Appendix 1

English

Greetings beautiful Rahma (the bride), I open this page for
you

In the name of Allah, and prayers I start your page

Oh your quality is above a hundred women

May Allah bless your beautiful marriage

May Allah make a prince the gentleman you have chosen

Please welcome his relatives and consider the whole
community

Anyone who visits you, should spread the good treatment
you have shown

Like the care of your mother, be kind to the society

Those who loved you, have gathered tonight

Be prosperous the new couple who have chosen of each
other

May your new house become kingdom

May Allah create from you both righteous children who will
spread the religion

May Allah create from you both kind children not rebellious
and disobedient

May Allah create from you both children who can unite the
society

May Allah give you children who will educate others

We are in a foreign country and the situation is not easy

So may Allah bestow you peaceful children not harmful to the
society

May Allah give you children who will not be lost to the street

Hi Mohamed (the groom) I advise you, so be diligent and
kind

Keep in mind that women are treated kindly and honestly

They should not be harmed physically too

Deny not what she chooses, and loves

Welcome her relatives and multiply your kind effort

Say no words that harm her emotionally and psychologically

I advise you to keep her away from a rough life

Take her on holidays when should say to you "I am
exhausted"

Take care of her until her shining like gold, be observed by all

And until your neighbours talk about your kindness to his
family

You should not say "I reject" if you and your wife discuss

Be patient, there are always challenges in this life

Women are silver and diamond that cannot be neglected

So, my cousin, be cautious and ready for any situation.

Somali

Rahmaay bilaneey adaan page-ka kuu furaa
Ee bisinka ka bilaabay ducaan page-ka kuugu furay
Boqol ka rooneey Allow guurku kuu bulaa
Alla ha barakeeyo guurkiina bilicda wacan
Oo Princes ka yeel boqorka aad is doorateen
Ee bahdiisana soo dhawee oo bulshada tixgeli
Qofkii ku soo booqda waa inuu baafiyaa wanaag
Oo sidii bilan hooyadaa tii bulshada u roon
Bulshada intii idin jeclayd soo banana baxeen
Labada boroq ee is-doortow barwaaqo hella
Allow baytkiina boqor tooyo laga dhaxlaa
Owlaad diinta baafinasa Alle idinka beer
Oo barri aan caasi noqon eebbe idinka beer
Bulshada ku wii midayn lahaa eebbe idinka beer
Oo culluumta dadka bari alaa eebbe idinka beer
Balad qurbaan joognaa oo baabku culus yahee
Ee bulshada kuwa aan dhibeyn eebbe idinka beer
Oo kuwo aan beerta gelin badankii laga abuur

Maxamed waan kula dardaarmi haay ee dadaali haay
Dumarka waa la daa-dahshaa oo daacad loo noqdaa
Dushooda la ilaaliyaa oon dagaal la barin
In aadan u diidin dooqeedu wuxuu dalbado
Dadkeedana soo dhawee oo dadaalka badi
Hadallo damqinaya waligaa dibnaha ka dhowr
In aysan diif yeelan baan kaa dardaarmayaa
Dalxiis u kaxee markay daalay kugu tiraah
Oo sidii dahabka u hilaacdoo la daawadaa
Oo darisku isku sheego in aad duul ducaysan tahay
Haddii la doodana anaa diiday aysan dhicin
Oo dunidu way dhib-badan tahee uu dulqaad jiraa
Dumarku waa xariil aan duur cidla ah la dhigin
Ee digtoonow oo ina adeerow diyaar garow..

Appendix 2

English

*Our blessed land rich with precious gold and vast natural
wealth;
To be unheeded, neglected and abandoned in limbo;
All of us flee abroad and appeal for welfare support;
I wonder if that is the national interest of Somalis!
'Clannism' can neither replace state and nationhood nor
succour somebody in the other world.
May God help the resurrection of past glory and unity of
Somali nation under one state.
Disarm now, discard and bury divisive 'clannism' for the
sake of peace;
Seek to resolve existing differences peacefully and
intelligently with the pen and not the sword.
Somalis, bury the hatchet, let there be no more
slaughtering, and ordain peace as a priority issue for
deliberation.
Anti-peace elements and belligerent men who are yet
unprepared for it –
We are ready to challenge them and convince them to join
the peace process.
Somali womenfolk, strive to keep your war-mongering men
in the bounds of morality.
Wives should preach peace and reconciliation to their
partners at home.
Where are the writers and university professors, and why
don't they produce peace literature?
Why don't you propagate and consolidate peace regardless
of your clan origin?
Why don't you call a comprehensive peace and
reconciliation for the entire Somali society?
The mother as the symbol for peace forum under the cool
soothing shade of a large tree.
Is an oral tradition, which the people still honour and value.
We are determined and all set in restoring peace and
stability.*

Somali

*Ee dulkeenii dahabka iyo deeqda noogu jirayIn
la daneyn waayo looga tago daleel
Ee dawarsi wada aadno Somali ma u danbaa?
Qabiil qaran maaha qabrigana laguma tago
Ee qaranka Somali rabbiyow mid qura ka yeel
Qoriga hala dhaafo qabiil meel ha lagu qariyo*

*Ee Qalinka ku dhameey qaladaaka meesha yaal
Ee Somaaleey ha is qalina nabad qowlka hore ku dara
Nabadda kii diidanoo aan diyaar ahayn
Ragga aan soo dunaa baan u nahay diyaar
Ee haweenow dalkastoo jirtiin taa dareensanaw
Haweenka Soomaliyeedey Ragaada hano
Ee nabadda ku hanuuni midkaad hoyga wada gashaan
Aweeya barfasooradii buugag maala qora
Oo nabadda maad baahisiin beel kastoo tihiin
Oo bulshada Soomali maa loogu baaqo nabad
Ee hooyada geed harweeynoo lawada harsado*

Appendix 3

English

*I am crying and I feel being saddened because,
Our lovely George Floyd was overpowered.
We want permanent peace and useful life.*

*"I can't breathe" he begged the policeman who humiliated
him.*

All Somalis said "sorry" George.

*This unresolved discrimination has persisted over hundreds of
years.*

Why our [black] boys are so humiliated?

*You those men who kneeled on his [George's] neck and body
Know, he [George] was a best human being created by God.
The police who killed George entrapped him into any criminal
involvement.*

Somali

*Waxa aan la ooyi oo uurxumada nabaday
Awooda loo sheegtay George oo indhaha u roon
Peace iyo life baan rabnaa baaqi oo wax tara
I can't breathe buu lahaa [police-ka bahdalay]
Idilba Soomaaliwyyen I am sorry tiri
ILLAA boqolaal sanuu buuqu taaganaa
Maxaa loosheegan wiilashena power-ka leh
Badanka iyo laabta wiilashii ku baahsanaa
Bashar Ilaah uumayoo best buu ahaa
Police-ka dillay George baa xumaanta baday.*

Appendix 4

English

*Corona is a disease that has spread over the world
It affects everyone: Non-Muslims and Muslims
It locked us down in the houses and denied us livelihood
Inflicted us with fear, and ongoing worries
It is a curse and wrath sent down by God
The mysterious lesson to reflect on it, is
How tiny virus is that has shaken the world
That cannot be seen by eyes or touched by hands
It is a punishment caused by our sins
So, please beg our mighty God to forgive us
Oh my God your power is unstoppable
No one else can cure but only you [God]
We are your slaves who were disobedient but have now
repented
So please remove this disease that has fallen upon us*

Somali

*Korona cudur weeye oo caalamkii ku fiday
cid uu dhaafihayo aysan jirin gaal iyo Islaam
Guryaha nagu celiyay oo ceeshkii naga xarimay
Cabsiyo nagu beeray walaac aan kala go'ayn
Cadho Ilaah soo dajiyo waa cuquubo culus
Waxaase cajiib ahooy cibro noogu filan
Cayayaanka yar-yaree caalamkii gilgilay
Wax aan ishu qaban karayn oo aan la taaban karin
Ciqaab weeye oo dunuubteenu sabab u tahay
Ee cafis nooga tuuga casiiskayaga
Caliimow aday awoodaadu tahay mid culus
Cid aan adi ahayna caafimaad ma keeni karo
Ee adoomo caasiyoobay oo soo noqdaa nahee
Cudurka nagu habsaday culeyskiisa naga dulqaad.*

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Supported by The Anti-Tribalism Movement

