

Social Drift Excerpts:

Transcript Excerpt #20. The 13-year-old boy, who lives with his extended family, isn't doing well mentally. His parents have neglected him and left him with his grandparents—no one really checks on him, and there's barely any food at home. He's always hungry—talks about food constantly. He fights others and faces rejection. He's not keeping up with his learning, skips school regularly, and is falling behind. He has become lonelier and more aggressive, trapped in a cycle of learning poverty. Sometimes, I think it's either the parents' mental health or their distress that has led to this level of food insecurity. It's hard to tell which came first, but it all contributes to the same suffering. (Female teacher, 35 years)

Transcript Excerpt #21. The 10-year-old boy comes from a nuclear family. His father neglected him because of heavy drinking, and his mother, who used to provide, became mentally unstable. That's when things got worse—he suffered severe food insecurity, became very thin, pale, and weak, and often dozed off in class. His self-confidence and self-esteem dropped. He was always preoccupied and sometimes angry. Over time, his speech became uncoordinated, and he stopped opening up. He never had food or money for breakfast at school. Peers mocked him about his mother's mental illness, so he withdrew and sometimes lashed out when provoked. His language skills also deteriorated. Sometimes I wonder if it's the parents' mental health or his own struggles that made food so scarce for him. Either way, it's all connected. (Female teacher, 48 years)

Transcript Excerpt #22. The 13-year-old boy from a nuclear family initially lived with both parents, but after they separated due to domestic violence, he lost his father, who had been mentally unstable, drank heavily, and was violent. The boy felt guilty and traumatised, and the grief left him hopeless. He lost his appetite and often refused food from neighbours, always looking worried. Due to severe food insecurity at home, he could only bring small bits of cassava or sweet potatoes to school in a polythene bag. He became thin and weak. Peers mocked him, calling his family insane, so he avoided others, stopped making friends, and sometimes even refused to eat at all. He used to do well academically, but his performance dropped sharply afterwards. Sometimes it's hard to tell if it was the parents' mental health or his own distress that caused such hunger—but it's all interconnected. (Male teacher, 51 years)

Transcript Excerpt #23. The 8-year-old girl from a nuclear family once lived comfortably, but everything changed after her father sustained a head injury and developed mental illness. Her mother, who was a housewife, had to sell all their assets to cover his hospital bills, and the family became unstable. After her father died, the food she brought to school changed—no more biscuits or Safi; just boiled sweet potatoes and cassava. She began to feel self-hatred and shame. Other children mocked her, and she stopped eating in front of them. She was often hungry, dozed in class, and forgot to write notes. Even her language skills worsened. Sometimes I think it's the father's mental illness, or perhaps her distress, that caused all this hunger and hardship. It all seems linked. (Female teacher, 29 years)

Transcript Excerpt #27. The 13-year-old boy from a nuclear family was traumatised by his mother's mental illness and developed similar symptoms himself. His father expelled both of them to remarry a mentally stable woman. The emotional distress and family breakdown left the boy wandering the village, unable to access regular meals and surviving on discarded leftover food from neighbours. Persistent hunger and being mocked at school worsened his social withdrawal. When offered food, he tended to overeat, indicating a disrupted appetite linked to both emotional and physical deprivation. He was socially, physically, and emotionally

distressed, which impaired his concentration and participation in class. (Female teacher, 46 years)