

Interpretation of Gender Perspective in Punjab English Textbook 8

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Abstract

Gender is a socially assigned phenomenon that includes all the societal expectations, values and content of identity formation which are associated with men and women. Gender has a great importance in the process of identity formation in the children. From the age of seven, children try to create the gender notion fixed in their mind. They tend to learn that a person's outward form can be changed however masculinity or femininity remains fixed. So, they are inclined to form their own perception regarding gender. Formal education in the age can help a child to associate himself and others with the information he receives through education. Considering the impact of education, the study was conducted to observe the gender portrayal in the pictures and text of English textbook of class 8th. The study calculated the frequency of the representation of gender in the text and pictures as well as the notions associated with genders were observed through the content analysis. The themes were derived to grasp the main ideas discussed in the book. The study revealed the gender disparity in the content of the textbook. An underrepresentation of female was observed in both pictures and text of the textbook. The theme of women empowerment was not well supported in the content of textbook as the active inclusion of females is made only once in it. It is suggested that in order to construct the gender sensitized content, curriculum must be composed with the inclusion of gender experts in the team of book construction

Keywords: Gender; Identity; Impact; Textbook; Pictures; Disparity

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Introduction

The study aimed to analyze the gender representation in the curriculum of 8th class Punjab text book of English. It attempted to find out the gender incorporated notions and

gender portrayal in the text and pictures of the book. The term gender tends to include all the societal expectations, values and content of identity formation which are associated with men and women. It is a socially constructed term that suggests social

and cultural activities to be assigned for both genders in respect to the masculinity and femininity (Holmes, 2008).

Gender identity in this regard contains a lot of importance as it suggests a whole life pattern for a person. In regard with gender identity, Kohlberg (1966) proposes the age of gender constancy that starts from age 7 till the age of 12. This age creates the notion of gender fixed in the children's mind. Child tends to learn that a person's actions, outward form and ways can be changed, however, masculinity or femininity remains fixed. The external feedback in the socialization of gender perspective results in creating the perceptions of gender in their mind. In this aspect, a child is inclined to form his own perception regarding gender for his identity formation. So, the formal education in the age can help a child associate himself and others with the information he receives through the education. Gender sensitization, at this age, can be a fruitful lesson for children to alter their behavior accordingly (UNESCO, 2004).

Analysis of gender discrimination in the field of employment dates back to the World War I. Pink collared jobs were introduced after the consequences of WWI when there emerged a need of women participation in workforce. Maximum male participation in the war and numerous deaths of male counterparts of the ladies, left them with no other option than working outside their homes to make both ends

meet. The term Pink Ghetto and Glass Ceiling effect was then implemented on a broader term to keep the male chauvinism enforced. The prejudice of males to prevent females in achieving higher positions and be in the leading places worked in greater strength. The limited job offers as teachers, domestic workers, assistants, librarians and administrative supporters as receptionist were encouraged to keep females restrained from leading a company or work at other significant positions. So, this misogynist approach towards women employment made female subordinated to males even in workforce (Ganpule, n.d.).

Gender sensitization is crucial to be attained. It is necessary for both genders to discard gender related biasness for economic and societal growth. Education in this prospect is an excellent medium to throw off gender inequalities (Iyengar, 2016). Education tends to be the initial and most influencing factor to deliver the normalities of society in a formal way. In this view, education helps people create a categorized view of different things influenced by the lessons that have been taught. As the result, people create mental images of right and wrong in respect to human rights, gender representation, values and norms (Sabir, 2008).

The need of changing a curriculum must be accompanied with the change in orientation system applied to teachers. The traditional approach of teaching used in past by teachers was less gender sensitized. The gender stereotypes are deeply

rooted in the brains that it is not possible to impart gender sensitized content effectively by teachers. So, training of teachers is crucial to effectively deliver the gender sensitized content (Mulwabanda, 2003). Gender stereotypical curriculum that supports categorized fixed views based on unoriginal and overused stances directly effects a child development in formation of its identity. In this way, a child might adopt certain ways that it finds suitable for their genders. Teachers, in this regard, remain helpful to assist children to nullify the gender biases in the atmosphere of classroom (Zaman, 2007).

Previous studies have suggested that there is a large ratio of gender insensitive content in the curricula of Punjab textbook. Females are not presented in the pictures and their presence is notably limited in the content as well. The productive role of female is discriminated in comparison with males. However, there is a distinction in the way females are portrayed in English and Urdu textbook of secondary school level. In Urdu textbooks, the role of females portrayed is related to their involvement in domestic chores. In English textbooks, females are portrayed through religious context. However, their practical or societal role in both the scenarios is missing in the content (Khurshaid, Gul & Amir, 2010).

In primary level textbooks of Urdu, most of the girls are presented being involved in indoor environment. They are presented playing with dolls and helping mothers in households.

Male gender is portrayed in professional manner, i.e., as a doctor, farmer and lawyer. Females, however, are only portrayed being teachers alone. The basic theme of the stories remains as being male specific (Jabeen, Chaudhary & Omar, 2014). A lot of gender disparities have been found in the textbooks of Punjab Textbook Board. For example, in the subjects of English, Urdu, Science, Maths, Social Studies and Islamiyat of 1 to 10 classes, the ratio of female representation is 23.1%. However, there is a major involvement of gender disparities and gender stereotypes (UNESCO, 2004).

Male representation has been dominant in the textbook of the board. So many instances are found on the basis of lesser representation of females in comparison with males. In the four books of 9th and 10th in English & Urdu 26.6% females and 73.3% males were presented in English books. In Urdu textbooks, the ratio of representation of males and females is 25% vs 75% (Sadya, Saleem & Mahmood, 2019). The behaviours of the people imparting education is also important to be observed. Educationists of both genders have presented the male characters proving them having more of leadership qualities than females. Males have also been seen more empowered in their decision-making sense than the females (Aziz, Kulsoom, Quraishi & Hassan, 2017).

Significance of the study

The study is important in the prospect of describing the content with the gender lenses. The study may help

to explore the gender disparities in content, pictures and texts which can assist the authors and board officials to integrate the gender subsume and gender sensitized data in the syllabus & modules.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- To evaluate the gender inclusion ratio in compiling of the book
- To discover the gender ratio in the content and pictures
- To explore the gender related concepts in the stories and lessons
- To analyze the gender categorized/gender stereotypical concept

Research Methodology

Research Design

The basic research design of the study was quantitative. The grounded theory was used to find the answers of the questions which involved the reading of the textbook, observing the representation of gender in the content: text and pictures and presenting the data in tables accordingly. The themes of the stories were observed in the evaluation process and examined of its equal gender inclusion or specific gender exclusion.

Sample

The study selected 8th class English textbook of Punjab Textbook Board as a sample to review the gender disparities in the context. The age

reaching the level of 8th class is the age about 12-14 years. It's the time period that is regarded as significant for development of physical, mental and emotional state in children.

At the time of this age, children have developed their own strategies of thinking related to the matters. So, children have their own accessibilities of recognizing strengths and negativities in them (Morin, 2019).

Procedure of the study

The English textbook was analyzed in different ways. First, the authors of the book and the gender ratio in compiling of the book was tabulated. Secondly, the ratio of the gender representation in pictures was tabulated. Thirdly, the stories were read and their themes were observed. In the content of the lesson, the female inclusion and exclusion was monitored. In the process, the gender stereotypical notions were also calculated.

Results and Analysis

The results of the study reveal that there are gender disparities in the compiling of the text book. The results have been presented in the form of tables to show the ratio of gender disparities.

Table 1: Ratio of Male/ Female gender writers of the book

Name of writers	Males	Females
Rafique Mahmood	1	0
B.A Chishty	1	0
Z.I Farooqui	1	0
Muhammad Aslam	1	0
Mrs Sabiha Saleem	0	1
Total	4	1

The data in the above table show that there is a male dominance in the authorship of the book. As there are five personnel involved in the writing of the book out of which four are males and only one is female. So the aspect of the calculation of gender ratio of the

composers doesn't mark the area as gender sensitized and gender equitable.

The presentation of pictures of the male and female characters in the book has been given in the following table.

Table 2: Frequency of gender representation in textbook through pictures

CLASS-8 th	Male (m)	%	Female (f)	%
Chapter 2	2	100%	0	00%
Chapter 4	6	75%	2	25%
Chapter 5	4	100%	0	00%
Chapter 6	2	100%	0	00%
Chapter 7	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Chapter 8	1	50%	1	50%
Chapter 9	0	00%	1	100%
Chapter 11	6	86%	1	14%
Chapter 13	1	100%	0	00%

The book comprises 14 chapters out of them nine contains male and females. The above table reveals that there is a major portrayal of male representativeness in the pictures presented in the book and the frequency of females is less than males. In chapter 2, Dialogue, there is representation of males only and no female picture is given in it. The chapter has two pictures of an uncle and his nephew who are having a dialogue regarding the study of Qasim who had missed some of his lectures. Similarly in chapter 5, 6 and 13, the gender ratio of male picture is 100% and no female picture is found. Chapter 5 has three pictures of a magician performing a magic trick

along with a picture of his male helper. Chapter 6 is a poem depicting the form and features of twin. It has two pictures of twin brothers. Whereas, chapter 13 has only one male picture of Mr. Alexander Graham Bell who invented the telephone in the chapter "The Invention and Functions of a Telephone".

Chapter 7 has eight pictures of the members of the family of Mirchu, a clever small boy who leads his four brothers to their home. Among the pictures, there are pictures of woodcutter, his wife and six sons. The percentage of male pictures in this chapter is 87.5% against the female

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picture which is merely 12.5%. The ratio of male and female representation is 86% vs 14%. The chapter 11 “A Great Virtue” has seven pictures of the strangers belonging to different professions who seek shelter in a stormy night and out of them one is female. In chapter 4, the ratio of female pictures increases to 25% as compared to the male pictures that are 75% of the total. This chapter is basically a discussion among the students and a male teacher who had visited an exhibition. This chapter has eight

pictures and out of them two pictures are of female students.

Chapter 8 has equal representation of male and female pictures. This chapter is related to hockey and has two pictures of hockey players, i.e., one male and one female player. The presentation of female pictures in chapter 9 is 100%. Chapter “Prayer” has one picture of a female who is sitting on a prayer mat and praying to Allah.

Table 3: Ratio of themes of stories in the textbook

Themes	Occurrence ratio
Social theme	7
Religious theme	3
Moralistic theme	3
Environmental theme	2
Sport and physical fitness	1
National association	1
Women active participation	1
Scientific knowledge	1

The table shows the discussed themes of the textbook. The most discussed themes in the book are social in nature. Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 14 are related to social themes. These chapters discuss social issues, educational concerns, relationships in society and virtue of helping others. However, the figures associated to these themes are all males.

Another prominent theme in the book is religion. Chapters 1, 9 and 10

discuss the moralistic themes. Topics regarding forbearance, patience and justice have been discussed in these chapters. Chapter 1 teaches the virtues preached and practiced by our Holy Prophet (PBUH). Chapter 10 relates the life of Hazrat Umar (RA), the second Caliph of Islam. Chapter 9 is a request to Allah Almighty for showing the right path. Again, the figures associated to religion in chapter 1 and 10 are males.

Environmental theme is yet

another important theme discussed in chapters 3 and 12. These chapters comprise the importance of water and difficulties of voyage at ocean. Chapter 8 discusses the theme of sports, national hockey team's history and a stance of female hockey team in its content. Chapter 13 discusses the origin of telephone thus comprising of the theme of scientific knowledge.

To find out the disparities in division of employment, the gender representation in book according to the entitled occupations for both genders as frequency of occupations is also observed in the research. Table 4 presents the frequency of occupations discussed in the book.

Table 4: Frequency of occupations in given in the book.

Occupations	Males	Females
Teacher	2	0
Magician	1	0
Wood cutter	1	0
Hockey player	1	1
Hunter	1	0
Farmer	1	0
Scientist	1	0

The above table shows the professions discussed in the various chapters of the book. In the chapters, males have been portrayed as teacher, magician, wood-cutter, hockey player, hunter, farmer and scientist. Whereas, female has been depicted as a wife, sister and a hockey player.

The instances of discussing female's presence in chapters seem presented in a passive manner. The roles of females discussed in the book are also weak. For example, the sister of Kashif in chapter 4 has a collection of dolls (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Text from chapter 04 of the textbook

Kashif: "My sister has a big collection of dolls. She has been collecting dolls from other countries and has been making dolls herself. I would like to bring some of those dolls to this exhibition."

Who wants to bring collection of dolls for school exhibition?

The wife of woodcutter in chapter 7 has also been presented as a weak character who “cried and cried” at the decision of her husband but eventually agrees to his plan. This

represents the submissive role of females to be subordinated by their male counterparts in the decision making acts. The idea is supported in the text of the book as shown below,

Figure 2

5 The poor wife cried and cried. She was so full of sorrow to hear this. But, at last, as the night **wore on**, she agreed to her husband's plan. After all, she could not see her children die of hunger. She thought and thought, but no other plan came to her mind. She wished, she had only three children instead of seven. They could have been fed well and brought up nicely.

What did the woodcutter's wife wish for?

The character of female in chapter 8 as a hockey player just provides information about the women

hockey team which participated in the International Hockey Tournament.

Figure 3

6 Women also actively take part in the game. An international Women Hockey tournament was held in Lahore in 1996. Pakistani women hockey team participated in it. Pakistan women hockey is still thriving and making its way to the international level.



Where and when was an international women hockey tournament held?

The above results show that female representation in the book is not prominent. There is no chapter in the book that presents a female as a protagonist in it. Only active inclusion is made on the behalf of hockey team of Pakistan.

Discussion and Conclusions

There is an evident gender awareness gap in the text book. The book has neglected the presence of female character in their text. However, males have been presented in a prominent way as compared to their counter genders both in the text and

pictures. The initial page of the book shows gender disparity as there is only one female writer as compared to the male writers. In the rest of the book male dominance is prevalent as well. The gender portrayal in pictures also reveals disparity. Even the professions mentioned in the book reveals male dominance. The underrepresentation of female might be due to the involvement of a greater number of male authors in the composition of the book.

The study (2006) shows that students can cope up with the wickedness and evil activities of social systems through textbook. Although the problems can't be changed through the persistent expression in the books yet the potential of coping and problem solving can be developed through it. The most prominent themes mentioned in the book also reveal the male authority because the characters associated with themes are males. The themes discussed in the book are the social issues, educational concerns, relationships in society and values of helping others. The dialogue between uncle and Qasim decision of leaving the son in jungle by the poor woodcutter, the teacher asking the students about their visit to the exhibition, the persons seeking shelter in the stormy night and offering the shelter are all male.

Pakistan is an Islamic country and its official religion is Islam. Education related to religion is advised by the government of Pakistan as a way of building a state of integrate power consisting of commonwealth, patience and fair society (GOP, 1970). Other prominent themes in text book are

religious and moralistic. Again the personnel involved in the stories are male. The other minor themes discussed in the book are about environmental safeguards, physical fitness, and technological world. These themes are also a part of the policy of government of Pakistan to include the content related to the technological needs and vocational education in new disciplines (MOE, 2017). The results show that the characters presented relating to these themes are again males.

National Educational Policy (2017) states that the content of the textbook must be supported by gender equity and equality perspectives. However, the theme of women empowerment has not been well supported in the content of textbook. The active inclusion of a female is made once in the textbook. Therefore, the content doesn't support the idea by not representing the content through equalizing the representation of both genders. Females were minimally represented in comparison with the males. According to the Punjab curriculum and text book board (2014) the greater problem in the textbook of Punjab remained as representing women in a passive manner which resulted as reinforcement of traditional roles of females. Females' participation is passively presented in the textbook as compared to the male active characters.

The text analysis of the professions of both genders mentioned in the book reveals greater gender disparity. Males have been presented as teachers, magician, woodcutter,

hockey player, hunter, farmer and scientist. On the contrary, female characters are very limited. The female active representation is made on the behalf of hockey team of Pakistan.

The Millennium development goal 3 (WHO, 2019) demands the promotion of gender equality and equity. The unrecognized contribution of females in the development of a society is an unfair phenomenon. The female's recognition is repressed due to the gender biases. Furthermore, the policies also disregard the gender segregated strategies which additionally make females' contributions unacknowledged (Yasmeen & Begum, 2011). The exclusion of female gender as a part of workforce may help in encouragement of stereotypical role of a female as a housewife. The study reveals that the goal was not well supported in the textbook.

It is not only the content but also the pictures help in getting the accurate and deeper understanding with regards to learning. The previous researches suggest that not only the explicit but also the implicit ideas effect the conscious and subconscious of our mind that alters the behaviors (Ruch, Zust & Hunke, 2016). Therefore, if the content is incorporated with the meaningful pictures that promote gender sensitization it would help create a more harmonious view in student's mind. The content of the text books must also be gender equitable that may help in bringing the notion of gender equality. Gender inclusion of both gender is hence important to

promote the contribution of both genders in the society.

Limitations and suggestions

The research is limited in its approach for dealing with only English subject however more subjects can be included to expand the research on 8th class curriculum. It is suggested to construct the curriculum through gender lenses for which gender experts might be included in the team of book construction.

In order to reach the goals of sustainable society, the curriculum must be created free of gender biases and stereotypes to achieve equality and equity in genders. Curriculum can be a great source of preaching human rights, gender equality and equity. Therefore, inclusion of content that create gender awareness and enable women empowerment would help remove the gender biasness in the society. It would help both genders to be independent and improve their status by being self-sufficient that may result into the emergence of a stronger nation.

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