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RESEARCH PAPER

Corpus based Investigation of Gender Representation in Education: A Content Analysis of Pakistani and Indian High Secondary Schools' Text Books

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ABSTRACT

Gender disparity in textbooks is one of the greatest obstacles to overcome on the path to gender's education equality. The present study focuses on to discover gender stereotypes in school instruction with the special focus on government secondary school English language textbooks from Pakistan and India. Quantitative content analysis is used in this research. The data supported the pro-male bias in textbooks, with a total female share of 23.4% across both textual and visual indices. According to a cross-country research, India has a 17.5% female representation in visual content, compared to Pakistan's 11.2%. The study showed that women are underrepresented in Pakistani textbooks, both qualitatively and quantitatively, holds true regardless of the grades, provinces, and subjects covered, as well as the variety and kind of categories utilized.

Introduction

Women continue to be socially excluded and underrepresented in low-income countries, even if female participation in the educational institutions and labor force has increased over the past few decades (Bhasin, 1994). This is true both inside and outside of homes. One in 3 women endure physical abuse by intimate relationships, and more than 700 million women around the world are married off before their 18th birthday each year (Brohi, 2006). Additionally, women earn much less money than males (Charania, 2007). Moreover, they comprise about two-thirds of the world's 775 million illiterate people today (Hasan, 2002). The persisting gender gap in educational chances along with in gender and social norms, which limits girls' and women's capacity to take advantage of opportunities in many developing countries, is a contributing reason to the lack of change in socioeconomic position of women (Iqbal, 1992).

It is widely acknowledged that supporting women's education has a number of advantageous consequences on society, either financially or socially (Jalal, 1991). It is not surprising that during the past several decades, gender inequality in school enrolment has reduced in many developing countries due to evidence of the economic and social advantages of female education, numerous international agreements, and national initiatives. The average number of years that women in developing countries spend in school increased from 2.2 to 7.2 between 1970 and 2009 (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1991).

Female net enrolment in secondary education grew from 57% to 65% during 2006 and 2013 (Khan, 1994). Schools are the primary institution for disseminating social attitudes and information, which supports social transformation (Khan, 1991). Therefore, some believe that enrolling females in higher education will, using a variety of measures, lessen gender disparity in society through modifying societal views in favor of women (Mahmood, 2005). Furthermore, it is not true that educational institutions are required or

meant to change social views toward women. It may take more than institutional education to confront gender stereotypes and change attitudes around gender. Some academics contend that gender prejudice and preconceptions might conversely be fostered in the classroom (Bhasin, 1994). For example, in Africa, instructors frequently recite the proverb "boys need a profession and girls need marriage" in the classroom (Brohi, 2006). Even bad educational experiences can occur in schools. For example, religious institutions frequently impose socialisation regulations that significantly harm girls (Charania, 2007). Additionally, there are teachers that have pro-male views (Bhasin, 1994) and a gender gap in the teaching staff. Last but not least, schools may use overtly masculine materials to educate girls (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1991).

Gender disparity in textbooks is one of the greatest obstacles to overcome on the path to gender's education equality and it is regionally supplementary prevalent than the gender dissimilarity in school enrollment, claims Blumberg (Charania, 2007). The Girl Education Initiative of the United Nations identified it as one of the five barriers to achieving gender equality in education (Hasan, 2002). Biased textbook content alters women's self-perceptions and their conception of the other gender group in addition to limiting their career alternatives and worldviews (Charania, 2007). However, textbook material is rarely studied and generally disregarded in the policy discussion contrasted to other school-specific determinants of gender disparity. Considering the fact that students use textbooks for the most (80%–95%) of their class time, this is a severe problem (Jalal, 1991).

The majority of teachers often use textbooks to give their pupils homework (Mahmood, 2005). According to studies on classroom methods in developing nations, instructors seldom dispute the stereotypes found in textbooks and instead reinforce them, which only serves to spread the issue and leaves pupils quietly taking in what they're instructed (Khan, 1991). Hence, the focus of our research is on Pakistan and India, two nations in South and South-East Asia, where gender stereotypes are present in text books.

These nations were selected as they represent various socioeconomic development levels and exhibit substantial differences in the advancement of female education while having patriarchal societal structures. The sampling states also contain a large Muslim population, therefore research into these nations can help explain why gender disparity in muslim nations is often larger in terms of social and educational indices (Bhasin, 1994). This is, as far as we are aware, the first comparative study on gender stereotypes in the school textbooks of these four significant Muslim nations. Our study's goals are to describe the degree of (a) gender exclusion and inadequate portrayal in textbook materials and illustrations, as well as (b) the diversity in gender stereotypes between nations. We only concentrate on government-approved English textbooks being used secondary schools as our research population (grade 9). Applying up to 21 indicators, the data analysis method is used to investigate gender disparities in textbooks.

Literature Review

In this part, we initially concentrate on theories of gender stereotypes that solely take into account variations in school curriculum. The second portion of this paragraph provides a summary of the research on textbook material analysis that has been done thus far, with an emphasis on studies conducted in developing nations.

The two theories of gender stereotypes in educational institutions are the hidden curriculum theory and the social cognitive theory. The three different forms of environmental structures in schools—imposed, chosen, and constructed—are highlighted by the social cognitive theory. In dictated diverse habitats, a kid is subjected to teachers, curriculum, textbook material, and the classroom atmosphere irrespective of his or her own preferences (Bhasin, 1994). They form gender views in this environment based about what

they acquire from the instructor, curriculum, and other school resources. The hidden curriculum idea enables us to comprehend how enforced environments in schools serve to reinforce gender stereotyped beliefs. It asserts that school curricula impart knowledge that goes beyond the confines of the conventional (formal) curriculum, knowledge that is frequently conveyed via textbooks, lecturers, or other means (Iqbal, 1992). As a result, staffing practices, textbooks, and the incentive system all support gender stereotypes at school, decreasing girls' self-confidence and discouraging their aspirations (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1991). There are two reasons, with relation to hidden curriculum, why educational materials are successful in ingraining attitudes and values in the brains of pupils. First, pupils become less skeptical of what is forced upon them and adopt it. Second, the majority of their study time is allocated to reading textbooks and focusing on the ideas presented in them (Charania, 2007).

Additionally, textbooks are crucial to the educational system in Asian nations. Most people believe that everything written in a textbook has to be put into practice (Bhasin, 1994).

Previous study has looked at instructional and learning materials to determine the scope of the issue, which was motivated by the social cognitive and hidden curriculum theories of gender stereotypes. One of the most popular methods for examining gender stereotypes in school textbooks is the content analysis methodology, which has been used in both developed and developing nations (e.g., Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1991). The most straightforward approach entails counting ideas, coding the text, words, and occurrences, then summarizing those results in tables (Khan, 1994). The essential steps entail choosing the sample text (the entire book or a specific chapter), deciding on the unit of analysis (words, sentences, etc.), developing categories, going over the text to classify it, tallying and going to log the instances of categories, and statistical analysis to facilitate comprehension (Brohi, 1994). Coding, classifying, comparing, and concluding were Cohen's four Cs for describing the process. Several academics have offered specific, methodical procedures for doing content analysis investigations (Mahmood, 2005). We used the 11 stages Cohen (Jalal, 1991) outlines in this paper.

One advantage of using content analysis is that the data is permanent (in the form of words and images) and may be verified and replicated by additional study (Jalal, 1991). In the past twenty years, there has been an increase in the body of work exploring gender prejudice utilizing the content analysis technique (Khan, 1994). Some of these research exclusively pay attention to image-based analysis, whereas others also examine text. The latter group differs as well in terms of how much it researches exclusion and the caliber of representation. The choice of subject- and grade-specific texts also varies among studies.

In India, males were assigned a broader range of responsibilities (62.4% as opposed to 37.2% in the case of women) (Jalal, 1991). Women were also neglected in the upper classes of secondary school English textbooks. A 12th year English textbook in Indonesia that has 1,098 (77%) masculine characters and just 321 (23%) female characters was used to further support the existence of gender stereotypes (Brohi, 2006). Zeenatunissa in Pakistan looked at seven secondary-level textbooks in both English and Urdu [60]. Only 15% to 20% of the times, according to her research, were women depicted as main protagonists, supporting characters, or the topic of biographies. Women were only assigned to 8 of the 50 professions included in the textbooks.

They engaged in service-oriented activities, as opposed to males who engaged in power-oriented ones. Mirza did the vast majority thorough analysis on Pakistani textbook material (Mahmood, 2005). Grades 1 through 10 were covered by as many as 194 textbooks from 4 regions. In her analysis, just 26.5% of the main characters were women. In basic level textbooks, just 15% of professional characters were female, and in secondary level textbooks, only 9.8%. In addition, just six traits were employed entirely for women, compared to 59 for men. Female characteristics were submissive (such as dear, humble,

noble, etc.), whereas masculine characteristics were assertive (truthful, brave, etc.). In a more recent study conducted in the Sindh region, it was discovered that 60% of the stories and 76% of all the photos included male characters (Hasan, 2002). Gender stereotypes and images of "gender inequality" were found in elementary school textbooks written in both English and Urdu in the Punjab area (Bhasin, 1994). The lack of representation of women, notably in Pakistani textbooks, is confirmed by a comparative study of three South Asian nations: Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh (Brohi, 2006).

Material and Methods

Research design, the sample, and data

The major research of the target population is the 9th grade English language textbooks for secondary schools utilized during the educational year 2020–2021 (Mahmood, 2005). Table 2 lists examples of textbooks. The study will only be conducted on textbooks written in English for 2 purposes. In order to compare textbooks without any issues because this is a cross-country study, only those published in the English language are permitted. Second, research on gender stereotypes and other sociocultural content analyses have frequently employed English language textbooks for both single-country analysis and cross-country comparability (Bhasi, 1994; Brohi, 2006; Charania, 2007). There are two reasons to concentrate on secondary school texts. First, several research (Jalal, 1991; Hasan, 2002) employed secondary level textbooks to analyze gender stereotypes. The second is that this is the time where students decide whether to continue their academic careers, get into the labor market (mainly for guys), or get married off (primarily girls).

The quality of portrayal and inclusion serve as the foundations for our examination of gender stereotypes in textbooks. Poor "degree of portrayal" relates to the inaccurate or biased portrayal of one gender over the other, whereas "exclusion" leads to the absence of a certain gender (see Table 3)

Four aspects of the textbook's material are principally used in our qualitative, though descriptive, study. The following are examples of different units of analysis: words (such as nouns, names, pronouns, roles, attributes, etc.), sentences (such as dialogues between 2 women vs. 2 men, firstness or the sequence of mentions in phrases), stories (such is the story's focus and the characters' prominence), and pictures (like the person and their practice s). Following Cohen's four Cs—coding, classifying (forming meaningful categories when appropriate units of analysis are employed), comparing, and concluding—we conduct our study. In a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, 713 pages from sample textbooks were manually examined using the 21 categories. We used two ways to make sure the content analysis was reliable.

To start, only a tiny portion (20%) of the textbook pages was first examined to see whether or not the classification given by Weber (Khan, 1991) and Cohen (2008) was accurate. Second, to guarantee inter-coder accuracy, overall outcome was cross-checked some weeks after the initial content analysis, as per Milne and Adler (2007).

The 21 groups are arranged to match these 2 wide-ranging contexts as our research of gender stereotypes is based on exclusion and the standard of portrayal. These categories are used to examine the data for each of the four textbooks' 713 pages, which are then entered into an excel spreadsheet via short codes. Data analysis was carried out at the individual level (i.e., gender analysis) in addition at the total level once the range and frequency of categories were found (i.e., cross-country analysis). In order to find trends and distinctions across genders and nations, the data was studied. It should be mentioned that we analyzed school textbooks by limiting the study to a single-subject textbook and from a single grade, identical to earlier research. This, nevertheless, is not desirable because the results, especially nation rankings, might be sensitive to sample makeup, as mentioned in section 3. Additionally, in nations with a federal government, textbook material might

differ from one region to another. We looked at various textbooks to check either our findings varied based on the type of textbook in order to allay these worries. In order to achieve this, we examine four subject-specific books used in grade 9 in Pakistan's Punjab region, five extra English textbooks from both elementary and secondary school levels, along with five further English textbooks. Furthermore, this sensitivity analysis solely uses visual indications. We replicated the whole content analysis (text and image) using the grade 9 English textbook from KPK, one of Pakistan's poorest areas, to see whether the results are unique to the Punjab province (see Table 2 for details).

Results and Discussion

Gender visibility: Exclusion vs. inclusion

One instance of gender inequality and stereotypes is the absence or underrepresentation of one gender in the textbook. Using both text and images, Table 4 displays our results for each group. The proportion of female presence for each indication is represented by the numbers in the table, and the amount in brackets is the total amount of the corresponding item in the textbook.

The average female participation across the nine word-related subgroups is 36.08%. (aggregating the four-country average). Indicators of firstness and dialogue show an average 42.4% exclusion of women in the sentence-related subgroup. We discovered that there were 40.4% more women in the 4 groups in the subgroup pertaining to tales. The female share is 42.8%, according to the subgroups of the graphic display. Table 4's results, which are based on data from 19 factors, showed that the existence of women is less common (40.4%) than the presence of men. Moreover, there are significant differences between nations when it comes to gender exclusion. In textbooks from Pakistan (24.4) and India (37.3), we observe significant female exclusion. This result is in line with the proportion of women in non-pictorial indicators. Moreover, the Pakistani and Indian textbooks have a 35.2% female proportion in visual indices. The Pakistani textbook has no pictures of human beings (from the Punjab board). When we look at specific markers, we discover a significant gender gap. Examples include the "Firstness" and "Professional employment" groups in Pakistani textbooks, as well as the "Nouns," "Attributes (variety)," "Professional Employment," "Firstness," and "Author" groups in Indonesian textbooks (see Table 4). Table 5 below summarizes the results of female-male exposure in prior research of five advanced non-Muslim bulky nations and five emerging Muslim majority countries in order to well comprehend exclusion in the framework of prior studies. Our study's conclusions are consistent with all recent investigations done in developing nations along with research and textbook results from two to three decades ago in wealthy nations. These investigations found that between 65 and 75 percent of the textbooks were occupied by men, and among 25 and 35 percent by women. The study's country-specific results, moreover, present startling information concerning exclusion. The level of exclusion differs between Indian and Pakistani textbooks. The Pakistani textbook reflects a substantially larger female exclusion, which is consistent with the results from other research utilizing Pakistani textbooks, even though the overall outcome of the study is practically identical to the Indian textbook.

Improper Representation

Gender stereotyped portrayals or the misleading portrayal of one gender are another form of gender stereotyping in addition to the lack of representation of one gender in textbooks. Using four categories—"terms used to confront females," "domestic roles," "professional roles," and "attributes" utilized for female and male characters—we examine the "quality of gender portrayal" in this part (see Tables 6–9). These four types cover both the quantitative and qualitative components of gender representation, in opposed to the types presented in Table 4, which are largely quantitative indicators of female exclusion.

Representation in Domestic Roles.

One of the prevalent kinds of gender-stereotypical portrayal in textbooks is the large proportion of female characters in household duties (Jalal, 1992; Charania, 2007). We discover that women are four times more frequently characterized in household roles than their male counterparts (see Table 6). The average percentage of women in various social roles across two countries is 31.2%. In the area of household roles, we see a significant proportion of women (85%). In contrast, there isn't a single male character in the Pakistani textbook who plays a household function.

Representation in Professional Roles or Occupations

The aggregate results demonstrate that the conventional, lower-status, and lower-paying vocations associated with female characteristics are prevalent. This result is consistent with other research utilizing textbooks from Pakistan, Germany, and other languages. Unexpectedly, the professional responsibilities are much more renowned and difficult in the Bangladeshi textbook than they are in any other textbook (such as a social scientist, lawyer or even a TV anchor).

Representation in Personality Traits

Women are frequently represented in textbooks as victimized, meek, weak, and submissive (Cohen, 2008; Brohi, 2006). The portrayal of male characters, to the contrary portrays quite opposite attitude; they are seen to be brash, courageous, and active members of society. We employed the five component model [110] in this research to pinpoint the personality attributes of both male and female textbook characters (see Table 9). The extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and agreeableness are the five qualities identified by the five component model (Jalal, 1992), a prominent approach utilized in personality trait studies.

The 5 personality qualities are described using a series of adjectives created by John (2000) in this research. There are two categories for the adjectives: high and low. An individual receives whether it's a high or a low score for each personality feature to use this list. A high extraversion (E), openness (O), and conscientiousness (C) score contrasts sharply with a high neuroticism (N) and agreeableness (A) score (A). For example, receiving a low score on the first three indicators introversion, closure, and lack of concentration [111, 113]. In contrast, a low score on the latter two measures mental stability and intellectual skills.

Table 9 displays the percentage split between men and women for each category of personality characteristics. We chose just those (n = 132) from a total of 349 characteristics range (see Table 4) that match John's criteria. Only 39 of the 132 chosen qualities (or 29.5%) were discovered for women, indicating that males are more often represented in the media. If one wishes to contrast gender-wise share for each of the five low and high qualities, a plain reading of the table may be deceiving. A girl who scores 0% on the "Low E" scale is not always less likely to be an introvert. Instead, we have 0% "Low E" as a result of their overall exclusion issue. Thus, a more accurate method of determining the male-female personality characteristic is to look at the male-to-female extrovert-to-introvert proportion for each of the five attributes in each nation (i.e. EOCNA).

By awarding one point to males or females if their proportion in any given category of the EOCNA is greater than 50%, we were able to compute the extrovert-introvert proportion. The extrovert-introvert proportion will thus be 5:0 for absolute extraversion and 0:5 for absolute introversion. According to our findings, the extrovert-introvert ratio for men in Pakistan and India is 4:3 and 5:3, correspondingly, whereas it is 1:0 and 0:2 for women. This indicates that, with the exception of Indonesia, men are more likely than women to exhibit both extroverted and introverted tendencies in the remaining three nations.

Likewise, only Pakistani textbooks encourage extroverted characteristics in females (that too is due to the exclusion problem). Additionally, this distinction may be seen in the way that male and female characters are depicted in textbooks. Men are frequently described as being very organized, rational, competent, and creative, while women are typically described as being nice, melancholy, untidy, sensitive, etc.

Conclusion

In all of the sample textbooks, we discovered a significant amount of gender stereotypes in the guise of "exclusion" and "the quality of portrayal." Additionally, female characters tended to have conventional, low-paying jobs and more submissive personality qualities. Moreover, there are differences in how prevalent stereotypes are in different nations' textbooks. In comparison to their South Asian counterparts, the textbooks from Pakistan and India depict men more equally. , in the contrast Bangladeshi textbooks, women are shown in a greater range of professional professions, such as teachers and attorneys, compared to the other three nations. Generally, the textbooks from Pakistan and India include the most stereotypical material (regarding exclusion).

For gender and education policy in developing nations, our conclusions have significant ramifications. Concerns about employment and income-generating programmers have dominated public interventions in South Asia that concentrate on the growth of women. By engaging students for the lab our market, this strategy tacitly presupposes that the educational system will empower women. Our findings demonstrate the need to move outside the existing policy's emphasis on enhancing girls' schooling opportunities. In that regard, our conclusions contribute to the growing body of recent research that cautions against just promoting gender equity via school-based programed. Regarding this, the Global Monitoring Report 2015 correctly emphasized the requirement to update textbook material, achieve gender parity, and inspire kids to challenge gender norms in society (Khan, 1991). Furthermore, not all countries have had the same degree of success in solving the issue. Pakistan's Education for All (EFA) action plan, which ran from 2001 to 2015, recognized the requirement to remove gender bias from textbooks. We discovered proof of gender stereotypes in all subject areas and grades in Pakistani school text books and regions amidst this governmental push and blatant evidence of gender bias in learning materials reported in academic studies undertaken in the 1990s and 2000sThe lack of alteration in textbook content in Pakistan is said to be due to the view held by the chairman and directors of textbook committees that gender representation in textbooks should be congruent with the status quo (Brohi, 2006). This shows that achieving the SDGs of gender equality by 2030 may need more than merely giving the removal of stereotypes in textbooks and teaching methods a higher priority in policy papers. A significant task is yet to shift the perspective of legislators.

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