

A qualitative study of Gender Analysis in Curriculum at secondary level in Punjab Textbooks

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Abstract

Gender analysis is a process for understanding the differential place of women and men in society, as well as of girls and boys in the classroom. While it can be used for quantitative studies, gender analysis is particularly suited for qualitative research because it seeks answers to the “why and how” of gender inequality. This article is an example of using gender analysis in qualitative research at a macro-level for policy and programmes. The Status of Women in Pakistan, a government agency responsible for policy analysis and development on gender in country, developed an essentially qualitative gender-based analysis approach for assessing the existing situation. Content analyse of Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board (PCTB) of four books will show the current situation and for further line of action.

Key Words: Gender Analysis, Textbooks, Pakistan, Status of Women, Education in Pakistan

Introduction

The modern study was engaged to identify gender inequalities in the curricula and textbooks. Effort was also made to settle the place of the sources of gender inequality by analyzing the process of textbook development. The conception of many stakeholders of gender inequalities in the textbooks and its possible effect on students' achievements was explored.

Gender Equality in Education

The term 'education' refers to all types and levels of education and includes access to education, the standard and quality of education and the condition under which it is given (Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill, 2002). The issue of gender disparity in education has long been recognised by the policy makers in Pakistan, and has been addressed in various policies and plans. In fact the review shows that the problem was identified and addressed very properly by the National Commission on Education (1959) but the subsequent policies did not develop in the same spirit and this led to a long period of neglect of the issue.

Reasons for Gender Disparity

Among many other reasons the school itself has a negative authority. The most probably stated school factors that are responsible for dropout are the non-applicable of curriculum and school environment. This fact was also observed by the educational planners in Pakistan in 1959.

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The National Plan of Action, (2003), mentions this factor in a variety of contexts. For example; Parents and children are not concerned in education because they are not able to understand its benefits. They esteem education only as a means to get job for their children. When parents see many educated persons still jobless they lose their interest in education.

The curriculum is commonly urban - lustrous and is not related to the daily life of the rural-children.

An un-wanted school environment has resulted in poor memory and a high drop-out rate.

Curriculum and Gender Equality

The curriculum is the forcible tool to pass the culture, values and beliefs to the student. The curriculum is trained through the textbooks and learning material. Every society has its gender belief system. When children enter to the school environment, the images of male and female portrayed in books, to coat their concepts about gender. So that, the repeated gender images should not be in total contrast to the belief system. It will again put the students in conflict and danger. Most cases are seen in some societies such as American Indians.

Shultz (1998) has reported that out of ten books, one was written by women. He also stated that the academic progress for all students was linked to the use of multicultural material.

Literature review on Textbooks in Pakistan

The study conducted by Anwar (1982) of 105 textbooks for various grades. The popular books and supplementary books stated that 78% textbooks were written by males. The 6% books are written by females and the remaining had joint authorship. Of the three types of books, supplementary books governed by male characters. Between textbooks and famous books, there was not much difference. More than one half of the female characters were cooking, cleaning, child-rearing and caring skills. Anwar further cleared that in all the books male characters have been provided with a great choice of occupations to show their possibilities.

Zeenatunnisa (1989) in a study of school textbooks stated that of the total human characters, 16.87% were female .The basic idea showed a limited boundary and division of labour that was based on sex. Men were commonly described in the public domain as winners. Within the limits of family women play role as home-makers. Men have been apportioned a wide range of activities.

Najma, Mohynddin and Alia (1992) analysed class one to three books in Urdu and Social Studies. They stated that those portrayed the customary roles of boys, girls, men, women and occupational and social activities. Jafri (1994) stated the primary and middle school Urdu language, Pakistan Studies and English textbooks.

In Punjab province the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program 2003-05 and provincial plan for action on EFA 2003-2015 have focused on the areas of gender equality. But even after the introduction of education reforms, the changes have not been properly implemented and it also

lacks the support towards women rights and gender equality. The existing gender gap is 17.8 percent at primary level and it also indicates lower primary level enrollment in public schools (Zafar, 2005). But lack of proper implementation of these programs and nonexistence of proper guidelines for curriculum and textbook development for gender mainstreaming are the reason for existing gender stereotype in these books.

The gender equality and education has focused on promoting female education and creating gender sensitive approach in education sector. Revision of curricula has been done with special attention on gender issues (Ministry of Education, 2003). National Plan for Action for Women aims “to achieve gender equality and equity in education by 2013” in this regard GRAP in 2002 started policy implementation through positive interventions. “The revised curriculum includes perspectives that encourage prejudice, bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens, especially women and religious minorities and other nations”. This report only included a chapter on gender biases and stereotypes in school textbooks based on the revised national curriculum 2002 (Zafar, 2005).

Objectives

The present study was undertaken to identify and analyse the gender disparities in curricula and textbooks which may affect adversely the girls' participation and achievement at school level. The specific objectives were to:



1. To explore and analyse the policy environment relating to gender equity.
2. To identify the areas of gender bias in the present curriculum and textbooks.

Methodology

For the quest of present research, Punjab province was selected. Keeping in view the topic and objectives of the study content analysis method was employed for present research. In this regard, both latent and manifest analysis of the content was done.

An in-depth and comprehensive study was conducted using multiple sources of data including:

1. Education policies and documents.
2. International and in-country research studies and content analyses of textbooks.
3. Prevalent curriculum and textbooks with reference to the procedure of textbook development, production, and the nature of their content.
4. Opinion of various stakeholders on the process of textbook development, the content of textbooks, the relevance of content to female school participation and achievement and possible measures to improve the situation. The types and numbers of stakeholders contacted were:

-  Members of Textbook Boards
-  EDOs and DEOs from Punjab province

- ✚ Stakeholders from the 24 selected secondary girls' schools with equal distribution of rural and urban.
- i. Head teachers
 - ii. Teachers

Textbooks Analysis Procedure

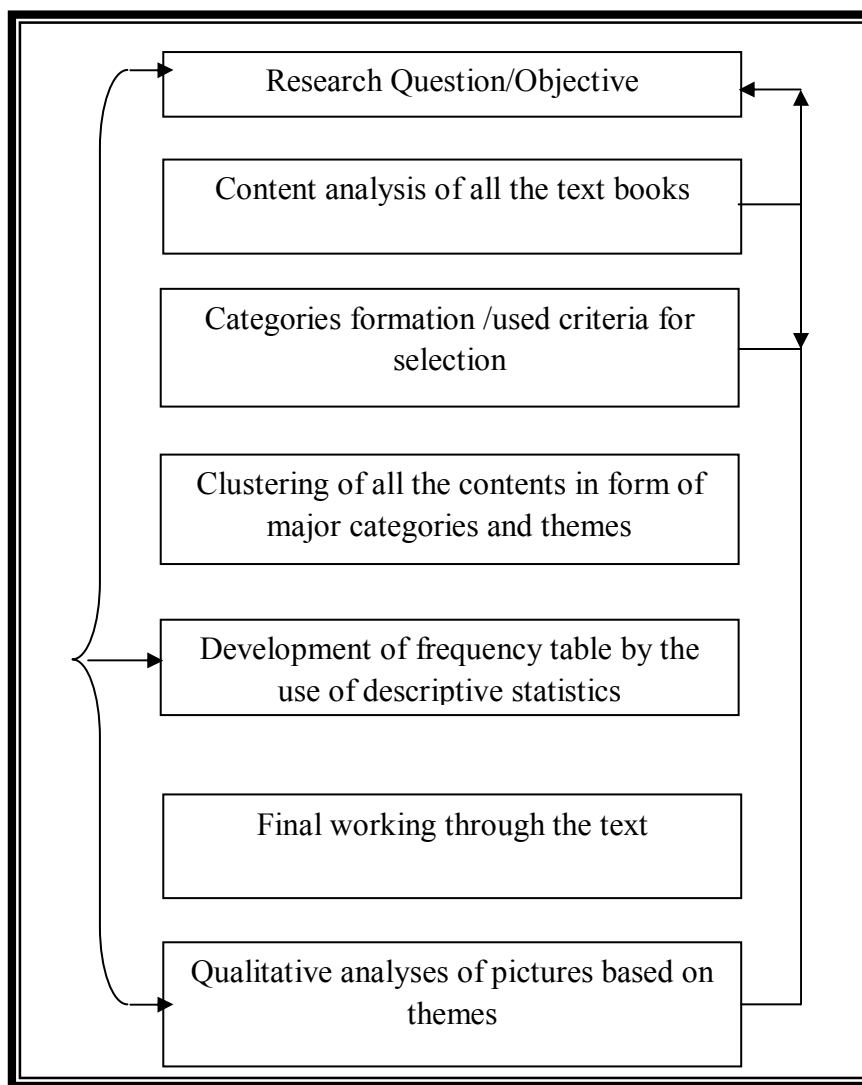


Figure: Textbooks Analysis Procedure

Strategies and Tools of Primary Data Collection

1. Content analysis

The data have been reported under various sections each focusing on one theme of the study. In order to make a readable and precise report, the primary data have been consolidated for the whole of Pakistan. Wherever necessary, 'by province' analyses have also been presented.

Similarly, 'by subject' analyses have been presented only where meaningful differences were observed.

A total number of 4 textbooks from the province Punjab for two selected subjects: English and Urdu, for grade IX and X, were analyzed to produce development. Content analyses of these books were made to consider the different gender level.

Equality is a combination of two concepts; analogy and quality. The concept of analogy is more quantitative. This implies the quantity of boys and girls relative to their age groups. They enter the education system and take part in the full elementary and secondary cycles. Gender equality offers the boys and girls the same chances to go to school. The quality becomes the catalyst to attain and retain analogy. The things that indicate the equality include length of schooling, and the perception and hopes of stakeholders regarding the treatment of boys and girls.

Pakistan has been an eminent to almost all international contracts and agreements on education including the most present i.e. the Dakar Framework for Action 2000. But the net participation rate for 5-9 years' girls and boys is 66% and 82%. The basic cycle completion rate is 54% for boys and 45% for girls (Govt. of Pakistan, 2003). According to international valuation, Pakistan is amongst the 25 countries at high danger of not attaining EFA goals.

The present study was follow to search and analyse the gender inequalities in curricula and textbooks. This may affect mainly the girls' participation and assessment at school level. The specific main points were to:

1. To search and analyse the policy environment that relates to gender equality.
2. Analyse earlier studies on gender portrayal in curriculum.
3. To search the areas of gender in the present curriculum and textbooks.
4. To evaluate the effect of curriculum and textbooks on girls' quitter from school.
5. To evaluate the factors which could inspire the girls to attend and perform better position in schools.

Analysis and Presentation of Data

The data have been analyzed under many sections. Every section gives attention on one theme of the study. In order to make a readable and short report, the main data have been united for the whole of Pakistan. After all necessary, 'by Punjab province' analyses have also been presented. Similarly, 'by subject' analyses have been presented only where meaningful differences were noted.

Categories for analysis

In this study the content of the textbooks from grade 9-10 of with main focus on gender stereotypes and inequality was studied. It was classified into different categories and their coverage, direction and metaphor were analyzed. The key categories were as following:

- A. The activities and roles of males and females

- B. Professional roles performed by men and women
- C. Direction of the story D. Male female personalities
- E. Personality attributes of males and females
- F. Number of male and female authors of the text
- G. Male Female Images H. Males Female characters

Curriculum development process in Pakistan

The following departments are working for the curriculum development process in Pakistan.

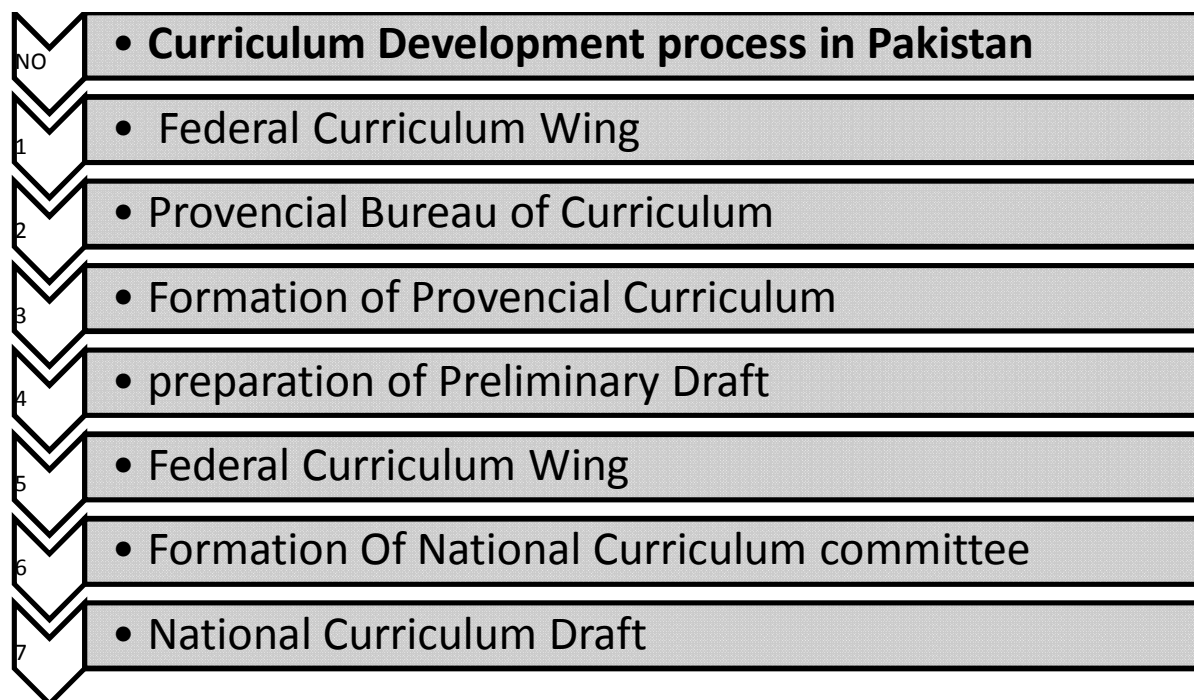


Figure 1. Curriculum development process in Pakistan.

Table 1: Male female personalities in National Curriculum grade 9th in English text book

Lesson name	M/F	Page No.	Representation as
The Saviour Of Mankind	Male	2	As a Caliph
Patriotism	Male	13	As a Builder and Guider
Media And Impact	Female	22	A class teacher
Hazrat Asma	Female	33	Daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakar
Sultan Ahmad Masjid	Male	74	As an Architect
All Is Not Lost	Female	94	A Nurse
Three Days to See	Female	124	A blind lady
The Quaid-e Azam vision and Pakistan	Male	63	Founder of Pakistan

Table 1: Male female personalities in National Curriculum grade 10 in English text book

Lesson name	M/F	Page No.	Representation as
Little By Little One Walks For	Male	80	As a Student
Selecting the Right Career	Male	108	As a Career Counselor
A World Without Books	Male	119	As an Irish Novelist
Great Expectations	Male	130	As an Orphan
Faithfulness	Male	151	As a Caliph
The Rain	Male	56	As a writer
Hazrat Muhammad an Embodiment of Justice	Male	03	As a Judge

Table 1: Male female personalities in National Curriculum grade 9th in Urdu text book

Lesson name	M/F	Page	Representation as
Mirza Galib k Adat-o-Khsail	Male	8	As a good man
Shairon k Latify	Male	21	As a Poet
Nasoh or Saleem ki guftgoo	Female	29	As a Mother
Punchait	Male	36	As a Friend
Aram-o-Sakoon	Female	47	As a Wife
Lahoo or Qaleen	Male	57	As a Servant
Examination	Male	70	As a Student
Qadre Ayaz	Male	87	As a Writer

Table 1: Male female personalities in National Curriculum grade 10th in Urdu text book

Lesson name in Urdu	M/F	Page	Representation as
Mirza Muhammad Saeed	Male	16	As a Good Man
Parstaan ki Shehzadi	Female	29	As a Princes
Mujy mery Doston sy Bchao	Male	48	As a Friend
Mulamma	Female	61	As a Passenger
Chugal khor	Male	71	As a liar
Nam Dev Malli	Male	80	As a Servant
Ali Bakhsh	Male	89	As a Servant
Istanbool	Male	95	As a Visitor

Classification	Male	Female	Total	%of Female	% of Male
English	11	4	15	26.6%	73.3%
Urdu	12	4	16	25%	75%

Conclusions

On the basis of any proof provided by this study, the following conclusions are made:

1. The knowledge to getting gender equality is reflected in the present educational policies and plans.
2. The textbooks are constructed based on the National Curriculum. This is provided by the Curriculum Wing of the Ministry of Education. The present curriculum is heavily moved toward the male both numerically and qualitatively.
3. The whole numeric representation of females in the textbooks was a little less than a quarter.

Recommendations

The textbook boards should make a policy to drive women to take part as authors and editors. Clear guidelines should be provided for the bodies. Professionals are also at all levels to make sure gender balance in number and quality. Such bodies include the NCDC, NRC, Textbook Boards, Writers and Art workers.

1. The changes in curriculum and textbooks should not be in acute contrast to the belief system. It may produce reaction among the public and confusion among students.
2. The textbooks are published every year. Before republishing, the book is sent to the author/s for reconsider. This year the authors should be honestly said to analyse and review the books with allusion to gender balance.

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