

Exposition Of Gender Awareness In Primary Textbooks Of Punjab: Gendered Content Analysis

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Abstract

Gender is a socially constructed phenomenon through which a society assigns certain roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes to men and women. Usually children develop their gender identities and learn what being male or female meant, between the ages of 3 to 7 years. These concepts been taught by society through socialization which includes various agents of socialization and learning. After parents schools are most influential agents of socialization where students learn from peers, teachers and books. Text books have a long-lasting impact on students' interpersonal development and provide role models for children in defining standards for feminine and masculine behaviors. Considering the impact of textbooks on child development; this study was designed to review how gender is represented in the texts and how the themes of stories and pictures in text books are presenting gender awareness? The sample of the research was Urdu textbooks of primary level (1-5) being taught in schools of the Punjab. We used content analysis to find out the concepts about gender awareness and also calculated the frequencies of pictures presenting gender ratio in concepts of the textbooks. The results showed gender biases in the content of the textbooks and lack of the content that promote gender awareness among primary level students. Male gender is over represented and stereotypical beliefs prevail in pictorial representation as males being shown as doctors and females as housewives. It is suggested to involve gender specialists, school psychologists and educators in developing curriculum to integrate gender perspective and gender awareness at all levels and to eliminate gender biases in textbooks so that to develop an equitable society.

Keywords: Punjab Textbooks, Primary Level, Gender Awareness, Pictorial and Textual Concepts, Stereotypes, Gender Bias.

تلخیص

عورتوں اور مردوں کے رویوں، سرگرمیوں، مقاصد اور ذمہ داریوں کا تعین معاشرہ تسکین دیتا ہے۔ بچے عموماً 3 سے 7 سال کی عمر کے درمیان مرد اور عورت کی ذمہ داریوں اور ان کے کردار کو سمجھ لیتے ہیں۔ ماں باپ کی تربیت کے بعد اسکول ایک ایسا ادارہ ہے جہاں بچے تربیت لیتے ہیں اور اس کے ساتھ وہ سماجی تربیت اپنے ہم عمر ساتھیوں، اساتذہ اور کتابوں سے مدد لیتے ہیں۔ نصابی کتب بچوں کی انفرادی شخصیت کی تشکیل میں بہتر ثابت ہوتی ہیں، اور بچوں کو اپنے خاندان اور مرد و عورت کے معیار کو سمجھنے میں

مدد ملتی ہے۔ اس مطالعے کا مقصد یہ ہے کہ صنف کو کتابوں میں کس طرح پیش کیا جاتا ہے اور ان کہانیوں اور تصاویر میں صنفی پہچان کو کس طرح پیش کیا جاتا ہے۔ تحقیق میں پنجاب کے پرائمری اسکول میں جماعت پہلی سے پانچویں تک کی کتب کو شامل کیا گیا ہے۔ اس تحقیق میں صنفی آگاہی کے لئے ایک تحقیقی تجزیہ کیا گیا ہے، اس تحقیق میں نصابی کتب میں موجود تصاویر کے مجموعہ کو جدول کے ذریعے ظاہر کیا گیا ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: پنجاب کی نصابی کتب، پرائمری سطح، صنفی آگاہی، تصاویر اور تحریری نظریات، دقیناویں تصورات، صنفی تعصب

Introduction

This article is based on the exploration of gender awareness and gender inclusion in currently taught Punjab text book board primary curriculum. Before discussing the importance of gender awareness in curriculum, it is important to understand the concept and significance of gender and gender awareness. The meaning and expression of gender is based on a society's values, believes and preferred ways of organizing collective life (Holmes, 2008). It is also found that gender being a socially constructed phenomenon helps to assign certain roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes to men and women. It refers to the roles and responsibilities; that are created in our families, societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men (UNESCO, 2003). Gender matters as source of personal and collective identity and is also important to demonstrate structural inequalities between men and women that need explanation and redress (Woodward, 2011) whereas gender awareness is an understanding that there are socially determined differences between women and men based on learned behavior, which affect their ability to access and control resources. This awareness needs to be applied through gender analysis into programs, policies and evaluation (Justice Glossary, 2013). Now the question arises that how gender and gender roles are learned initially? The researchers analyzed that it is an established fact that, not only parents, teachers, peers and media but also the children's books contributed a lot to understand the gender relations; being a male and female and also played a vital role to shape children's thinking of their location in a gendered society (McCabe, et al. 2011; Fox, 1993; Skelton, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Different theories have analyzed that awareness about gender is primary aspect of learning, which then provides a solid foundation to understand complex relations

among gender. Kohlberg (1966) theorized that the child is an active and vital contributor in her own learning experience and she dynamically shapes and modifies knowledge which she learned.

He argued that learning about ‘gender identity’ is the first stage that children start to explore around the age of 2-3 years and ‘gender stability’ is the second stage to learn that gender is stable and cannot be changed in the age of 3-7 years. The final stage is ‘gender constancy’_ learning gender awareness, which starts from 7 and lasts till 12 years in which children have to understand that gender is fixed and never to be changed despite changing the behaviors, attitudes and appearance. Throughout this theory ‘gender stability’ appears to be a very crucial stage of learning gender awareness among children, which influences perceptions and behaviors towards their identities. Usually this is the stage when formal education of a child starts so if we inculcate gender awareness related concepts in the primary textbooks we would be in a position to create awareness and sensitivity about gender among children (UNESCO, 2003).

Second important theory in this regard is the gender schema theory, which explores how gender identity is developed through gender schemas. Schemas refer to a mental structure which contains general expectations and knowledge of the world. These schemas may include expectations and perceptions about people, social roles, events and behavior about a situation. According to Bem (1981), there are multiple schemas regarding gender which are associated with certain expectations, traits, and interactions among people that differentiate feminine and masculine characters. Apparently, these schemas are the product of those stereotypes which are mostly prevailed among the social group of any society. It is important to understand that these schemas and stereotypes are the by-product of any particular social environment as every society has its own diverse features about male and female such as anatomy, reproductive function, division of labor, and personality attributes, so societies assign these attributes to the people about their gender but also allocate them to shape that gender information and start to behave as feminine or masculine.

Gender is everywhere and can be learned from any society. Bem (1981) argued that child takes part in learning process of specific information that is mostly about behaviors and attributes of their identity in the form of schemas.

Campbell, (2004) further explains Bem’s theory and states that, the ability to recognize gender starts in infancy and the development of these mental schemes become rapid in the age of 2-3 years in which children first start to differentiate physical appearance of a boy and a girl, which include beginning of *awareness*(2-3years), *rigidity*(5-7years) and *flexibility* (around 7 year of age). In the beginning years, child has to learn gendered notions like characteristics, behaviors, and personality traits as schemas and this learning

process is speedy in the beginning age of 2-3 years. *Rigid* stage of gender learning starts in 5-7 years of age in which child begins to be fixed on the gender schemas which he/she have learned in the beginning and they have rigid insight about these gender notions and follow them i.e. only girls wear pink color and boys can be builders etc. Whereas the third stage is about *flexibility* of gender notions and the children have to learn that there is no issue if boys wear pink color and girls can be builder. Yet again, the second stage of rigidity is crucial in a child's life. If gender equitable schemas are learned in this stage, children can behave in more gender sensitive way towards others.

Gender Stereotypes and Curricula

Gender awareness is necessary for gender sensitivity. Gender awareness is the ability to analyze and understand the society from the perspective of gender roles and behaviors that affected women's needs in comparison to the needs of men (UNIFEM, 2005). Gender awareness is a learning process which is influenced by the stereotypes prevailed in a society; that are the products of societies where people accept the differences and generalities (Keefe, Marshall, & Robeson, 2003). These stereotypes are comparatively well developed by 5 years of age, and become rigidly defined between 5 and 7 years of age (Martin & Ruble, 2004) thus preschool years are vital to deal with gender stereotypes. These stereotypes are produced by schooling where boys are not encouraged to develop traditional feminine skills like caring for others, and they are also not encouraged to enter female traditional fields.

Noddings (2002) argued that education at all levels should prepare every one-- males and females to be responsible and caring family members. Nodding's ideal is schools that teach not only science, history, and math, but also how to care for others and build a satisfying family life. But unfortunately, gender stereotyped curricular material diminishes education for all students. When students learn primarily about straight, white, economically comfortable men and their experiences, perspectives, and accomplishments, they are deprived of understanding the majority of the population especially women and minorities. If analyze on the more personal level, biases in instructional contents encourage boys or men to see themselves as able to fulfill high ambitions and affects the course of events and discourage women from those self-perceptions (AAUW, 1998; Smith 2004b).

Keeping in view the partial effects of gender stereotyped curricula, it is analyzed that children between ages 3 to 5 have developed their gender identity and begin to understand what it meant to be male or female. Soon after getting gender identity awareness, children begin to develop stereotypes, which they apply to themselves and others. Preschool educators can help children to develop a positive sense of their own gender. Teachers who are familiar with the factors that influence gender identity and

stereotype development, and who understand the child's active role in gender identity formation, can more effectively counteract and even neutralize gender biases in their classrooms and attempt to prevent the formation of negative stereotypes among children (Zaman, 2007).

Moreover, gender is rapidly developed in primary school years, in which a child learn more actively because children began to participate outside and to learn social environment in formal schooling and practice their cognitive, social and physical skills in the new social environment. Mostly teachers, peer groups and literature including; textbooks, story books etc. are the sources of learning for primary school children. Books have created incredible impacts on young children (Narahara, 1998). The main characters mention in the books provide role models about masculinity and femininity for children because children are active reader of the books and the contents of the books (illustrations) presented a cultural resource for children to learn social norms (Jackson, 2007). The textbooks are considered imaginary especially for early primary school students from where they learn new concepts, attitudes and somehow relations as well. Textbooks play a vital role as 80 to 95% of students spend their time to learn through texts and tutors prepared instructs through textbooks (Sadker and Zittleman, et al., 2007). Therefore, textbooks are depicted a sex segregated world, where boys and girls are presented with different and specific roles and behaviors in the society (Dean, 2007).

Similarly, the pictures presented in the books provide role models for children with standards of masculine and feminine behaviors where sexism demonstrates through diverse ways in literature for children (Tsao, 2008). Moreover, the content and visual presentation of the knowledge in the textbooks transmits norms, values and social behaviors in generations. Therefore, writing a textbook in a sensitive way to choose the values, norms and representation is so important to maintain social cohesion and a harmonious relationship between men and women (UNESCO, 2005). So we can suggest that in primary schools, being the first formal stage of education, curriculum must naturally be well organized. At this stage the child shows signs of his intellectual need, capacity and interest. This is, in fact, an appropriate stage and time for formal introduction to knowledge through curriculum. Here moral education can impart moral sentiments and positive attitudes in the early personality of the child (Dash, 2010). Moreover, the literature presented in textbooks should be meaningful in gender perspective way to create gender awareness among students at early stage of learning.

Literature Review

So far as indigenous Pakistani literature in this context is concerned; very few researches were found in perspective of gender analysis in textbooks in Pakistan. These researches mainly analyzed biases in portrayal of gender in images and texts of curriculum (Jafri, 1994; Mirza, 2004; Mirza & Ranaa, 1999).

Some of these researches indicated that female characters have been portrayed in typical and traditional roles i.e. domestic; while male/young boys have been presented to enjoy more choices. Female characters are portrayed as having low abilities as compared to male counterparts (Anwar, 1998; Unnisa, 1989; Jafri, 1994; Mirza, 1999; Shafi).

Jafri (1994) analyzed the primary and middle school language, Pakistan Studies and English language books. She found that girls/women were underrepresented and portrayed in stereotypical roles in the textbooks. Women were shown domestic and men are presented in their professions like doctor, engineer, farmer, potter, policeman, postman etc.

A study conducted by UNESCO (2004) found that in curriculum from I to X grade in Pakistan showed very few references about gender equality and respect for women in textbooks.

Mirza, (2004), analyzed that in the development of curriculum, both in images and texts, male personalities are highlighted and a very few number of females are depicted in textbooks.

In Punjab curriculum, girls/ women are depicted in traditional and stereotypical roles and characters. Female illustration are biased and presented women with no choices both in personal life and workplace and are confined at home, on the other hand males/boys are presented in strong images with dominating roles and considered important for family (Farah & Shera, 2007).

Jabeen (2014) analyzed that gender stereotypes are present in textbooks through content and images, and she investigated that negative stereotypes about females were depicted frequently in the texts and images in curriculum.

Keeping in view above mentioned literature; it was attempted in present study to analyze gendered perspective in Punjab Urdu text books of primary level. The study intended to explore gender biases along with gender awareness in the content, pictures and texts of the textbooks.

Significance of the Study

The present study is significant for providing a view of gender awareness in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks; including contents, pictures and texts, which may help authors, writers; publishers, and educational policy makers to incorporate gender equitable information in primary curricula of Punjab. It is critical to explore these aspects because gender sensitivity in children can help promote a harmonious society.

Objectives of Study

The objectives of analyzing primary Urdu Punjab textbooks are to:

1. Examine the gender ratio of personals in constructing textbooks contents
2. Analyze gender notion/concept in the stories/lessons
3. Analyze the extent of gender representation in pictures and text
4. Evaluate stereotypical notion about gender

Method

Research Design

This is an archival study in which textbooks were analyzed with gender perspective in review of how gender is represented in the texts? How and to what extent the themes of stories and pictures in textbooks are presenting gender awareness?

Sample

The selected sample of the research was Urdu textbooks of primary level (1-5) published in 2016. The researchers belong to Punjab therefore selected the Punjab textbooks in Urdu. The focus of selecting Urdu textbooks was that Urdu language is most frequently spoken language in Punjab. However, the aim of selecting primary level textbooks was that students of primary level are between ages 4-7 years and this is the ripe age of gender identity formation (Campbell, 2004).

Procedure of the Study

Urdu Punjab textbooks were analyzed at four levels: 1. First, quantify the information about the authors/supervisors/editors of the Urdu textbooks; their gender ratio and educational background because, this it is an important aspect to further analyze the contents, pictures and text of the textbooks in gender perspective. 2. Secondly, quantify the frequency of gender representation in the pictures. 3. Third, interpret every story/lesson carefully to understand the concepts and assemble a list of themes to review

gender awareness in content. 4. Fourth, interpret all units of textbooks and list out gender stereotypes both positive and negative in contents, pictures and texts, respectively.

Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used to analyze data. For this purpose frequency of each category was calculated and compared.

Results

Results of the research are presented in the form of tables and charts as follows. Firstly we attempted to analyze the gender ratio of text book authors and results are depicted in figure below:

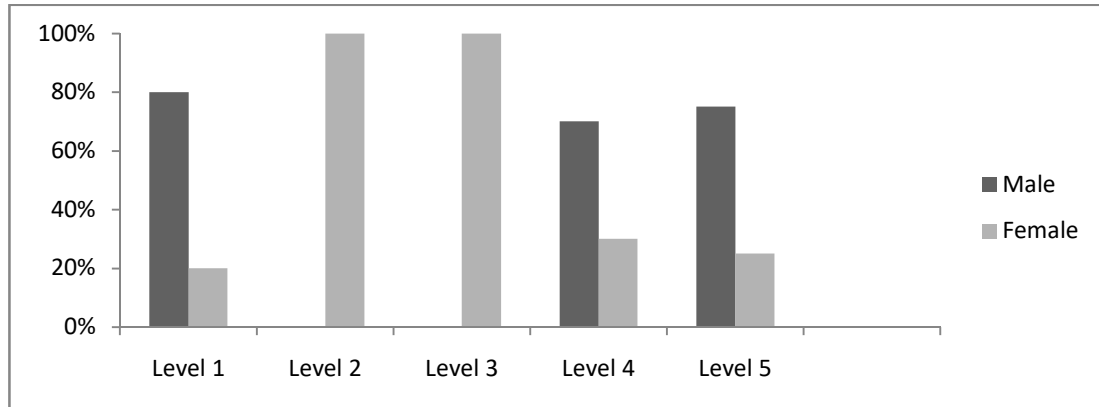


Figure 1: Frequencies of the gender ratio of the authors in Urdu Punjab textbooks (1-5) level.

This information can also be presented in table as follows:

Table: 1
Frequencies of the gender ratio of the authors in Urdu Punjab textbooks (1-5) level

Primary level (1-5)	Male (f)	%	Female (f)	%
Level 1	8	80%	2	20%
Level 2	0	00%	9	100%
Level 3	0	00%	9	100%
Level 4	7	70%	3	30%
Level 5	6	75%	2	25%

The above table 1 indicates sex-disaggregated data of authors/editors/supervisors/artists of primary (1-5) Punjab Urdu textbooks, which is an important aspect that influences the whole content formation in textbooks. It shows that primary Urdu textbooks of

levels (1, 4 and 5) showed sex segregated data in the part of book construction, where males are dominating with 80%, 70%, 75% and females are less represented respectively, 20%, 30% and 25%. On the other hand the textbooks of primary levels (2, 3) showed 100% female representation in text books construction.

Next we attempted to explore the educational background of textbooks authors and data revealed following:

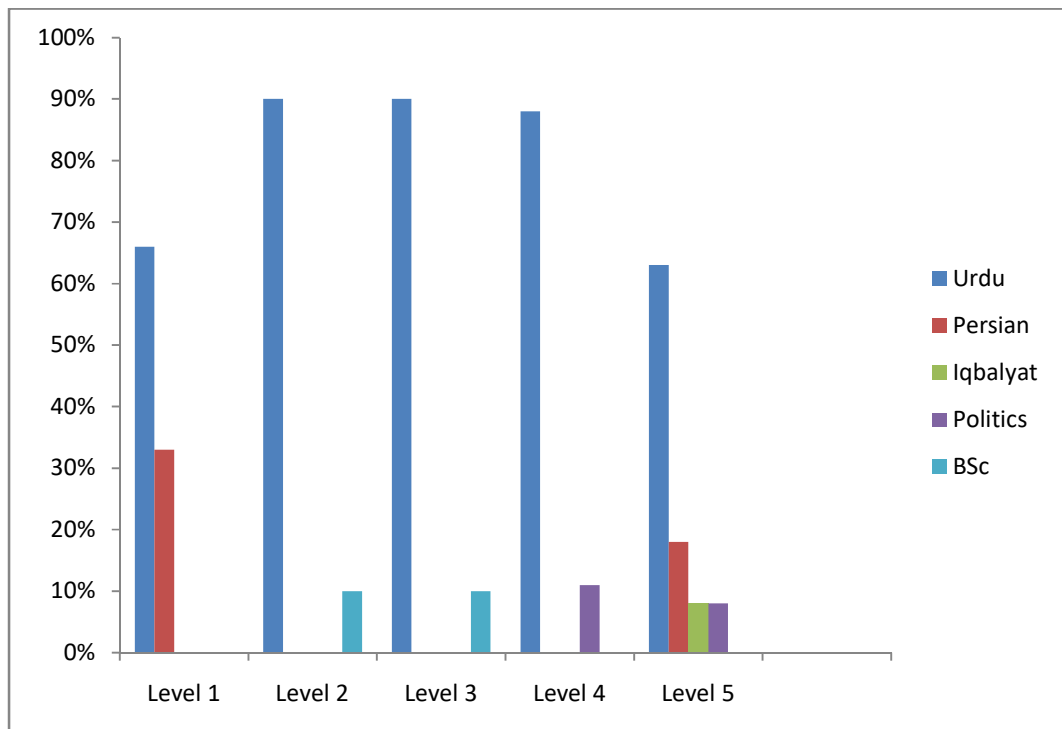


Figure 2: Frequencies of educational background of the authors in Urdu primary Punjab textbooks

This graph shows the educational status of the authors of the primary (1-5) Urdu Punjab textbooks. It is observed that almost 90% of authors of primary levels (2, 3, and 4) have higher education in Urdu while 10% have others. However the authors of primary levels(1, 5) have diversity in qualification, level 1 showed 66% have higher education in Urdu while 33% in Persian, similarly level 5 showed 63% have higher education in Urdu, 18% Persian, 8% respectively, Iqbalyat and Politics. It is analyzed that the books written by writers with education background other than Urdu showed diversity and awareness about gender issues in the content of textbooks while the books written by authors with higher education in Urdu showed more gender awareness in pictorial presentation rather than in content.

Our next objective was to find out the frequency of gender portrayal in all level books irrespective if this depiction is positive or negative.

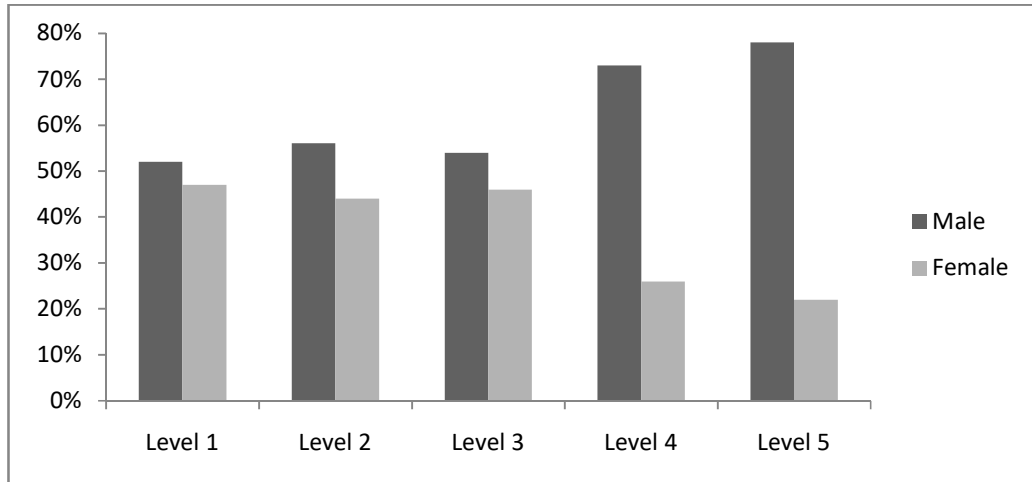


Figure 3: Frequencies of portrayal of gender representation in pictures in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks

Table: 2
Frequency of gender wise portrayal in text books

Primary Level (1-5)	Male (f)	%	Female (f)	%
Level 1	20	52%	18	48%
Level 2	218	56%	168	44%
Level 3	196	54%	168	46%
Level 4	25	73%	9	26%
Level 5	32	78%	9	22%

The above table indicates the sex-disaggregated data of gender portrayal in pictures in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks. It appears that male pictures (characters, illustration) dominate the books having 52% representation whereas female representation is 48% in primary level 1. Gender presentation in pictures in primary level 2 is 56% for males and 44% for females, while gender portrait in primary level 3 is 54% for males and 46% for females. Similarly, gender representation in primary level 4 is 73% for males and 26% for females, while in primary level 5 the males are depicted as 78% and females are presented 22% in pictures of textbooks. So overall male representation outscored female representation in all level books.

After pictures' analysis we analyzed themes of stories and results were as follows:

Table: 3
Frequencies of themes of stories in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks

Themes	Frequencies
Religion	22
Social issues	17
Moral stories	16
National solidarity	11
Technology	9
Environment	8
Political leadership	7
Cultural issues	7
Gender issues	7
Agriculture (rural life)	4

Table demonstrates the themes described in the primary Urdu Punjab textbooks. It is analyzed that the theme of 22 units of primary textbooks is religion and 17 units present the theme of social issues which included the following concepts (relationships, road ethics, leisure, health and hygiene, professions, and terrorism) while 16 units are presenting the theme of moral stories, 11 units shows the theme of national solidarity, while 9 units are presenting the theme of technology which include the following concepts (science, computer skills, communication skills, and globalization), 8 units are depicting the theme of environment, and 7 related to the theme of political leadership. The above table shows 7 units are presenting cultural issues which include the following concepts (inter-cultural harmony, national heroes, history, and national heritage) and 7 units of the primary Urdu textbooks of Punjab are presenting the theme of gender issues which include the following concepts (male gender identity, freedom of choice, active citizen, girls' education) while 4 units are on the theme of rural life and agriculture.

We were also interested to find out that in which professions males/females are depicted because professions have an important stereotypical segregation. Results indicated that men were prominent in leadership roles and physical work; whereas female were depicted as teachers.

Table: 4
Frequencies of sex segregated representation in professions

Themes	Males	Females
Political Leadership	9	2
Agriculture	4	1
Teaching	1	8

The above table shows the gender representation in different characters in units in primary levels (1-5) where eleven political leaders are depicted in which only two are women politicians and similarly out of five characters from agriculture, only one character of woman is mentioned. On the other hand, teaching is considered as stereotypical profession for women so for eight characters of female teachers are depicted where only one illustration is about male teacher.

Gender Biased Presentation in Pictures and Texts

Following illustration and texts are evaluated and were found gender biased:

Table: 5
Gender biased text and illustrations

•	The unit/lesson 6, (“Ashraf kaGanwoon”, page 16) from primary level 1 shows gender biases in representation both in picture and content. The lesson is about rural life in which only a man is represented as a farmer and his hard work and contribution is recognized. There is no rural woman depicted in this lesson.
•	The content of unit/lesson 19, (“AikKiran”, page 30) from primary level 1 is portrayed stereotypical image and text, about a girl and a boy in which a girl is represented as active and beautiful while a boy is depicted as passive, sleepy and lazy.
•	Image in lesson/unit 11, (“AlimkaShowk” page 66) from primary level 3 represents gender biases and depicted only men in it, while content of the lesson/ unit is gender sensitive that highlighted achievements of both gender in science and technology.
•	After analyzing unit/lesson 12 (“Mara Gawoon Mara Ghar”, page 46) from primary level 5, again the role of rural women is missing in the content of the lesson. The content of the lesson is gender biased and represented only men as a farmer and working in the field.
•	Image in lesson/unit 16 (“Humary Payshay”, page 66) from primary level 5 represented gender biases, only a man in it is represented as a professional while the content of the lesson is gender sensitive which highlighted both gender in different professions.
•	Image in lesson/unit 17 (“Main Scout BanooGa”, page 70) from primary level 5 indicates gender biases where a boy is depicted as a scout, while the content of the story is represented gender sensitive information about both gender.

Table 5 represents gender biased text and pictures in primary text books. Stereotypes and minimizing females’ role and efforts are apparent. Further we explored gender stereotypes in books and results were as follows:

Table: 6
Gender stereotypes depicted in primary (1-5) urdu punjab textbooks

Male Stereotypes	Female Stereotypes
Breadwinner	Leader
Leader	Achiever
Brave	Active
Explorer	Good Communicator
Learner	Learner
Decision maker	Professional
Confident	Wise
Task oriented	Confident
Thinker	Explorer
Achiever	Sport lover
Courageous	Partner
Head of the family	Aware
Active	Encouraging
Educated	Supportive
Hardworking	Sharing
Patience	Energetic
Adventurous	teacher
Aggressive	domestic
Lethargic	

The above table shows gender stereotypes depicted in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks. The content analysis of Urdu Punjab textbooks shows traditional male stereotypes with aggressive and lethargic as negative stereotypes. However, in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks, the female stereotypes are depicted in transition way, which are other than traditional stereotypes and represented only teacher and domestic as traditional stereotypes about female.

Discussion and Conclusions

The quantitative results revealed an interesting picture of gender awareness gaps in the existing text and images at primary level curricula of Punjab Urdu textbooks. Our very first analysis indicated the ratio of males and female authors of text books. There seemed an imbalance and disproportionate situation as there was sheer dominance of male authors in level 1, 4 and 5 books (80 %, 70% and 75% respectively), whereas in level 2 and 3 males were totally absent. It is also in congruence with Jabeen, et al., (2014), who

highlighted that Urdu Punjab textbooks construction is dominated by male authors (74.21%).

Secondly the analysis of authors' qualification revealed that Urdu remained major subject of most authors yet no book was written by authors with Urdu background only. Interestingly wherever there was diversity in authors' educational background there seemed more awareness about gender issues in content and where there authors were mainly with Urdu background, the books lacked diversity in content and pictures were used to create gender awareness, which might be an attempt on part of the government of Pakistan to launch programs to reduce inequality in educational sector (Ministry of Education, Pakistan, 2009). This finding is our unique contribution because as per our knowledge no one attempted to analyze books in this context.

Next we attempted to evaluate books in terms of portrayal of gender (irrespective of its being positive or negative portrayal) and found out that male characters and illustrations outsourced female characters and illustrations at all five levels. This was specifically prominent in level 4 and 5 books where there was just 22 and 26% representation of female characters and illustration respectively. One reason for this underrepresentation might be the dominance of male authors in 4 and 5th level books. In level 4 there were 7 male authors and 3 females whereas in level 5 there were 6 male authors and 2 females. This finding is also in line with Jafri (1994) who highlighted underrepresentation of females in primary and middle level books.

Further we analyzed data qualitatively and the textual and content analyses of concepts and themes of stories showed that religious units are more frequently included in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks. Religion is one of the most influencing means of socialization in one's life where gender roles and responsibilities are adequately defined; this can be a reason for inclusion of Islam in primary Urdu Punjab textbooks. Moreover, it is a part and parcel of Pakistan education policy to include standard Islamic narratives in text books, for example a major objective of national education policy 1998-2010 was to include "the Quranic principles and Islamic practices as an integral part of education system" (Sajid, 2016). So it seemed justified that religion is most frequent theme of primary text books. Secondly, social issues and moral stories appeared to be illustrated more in textbooks; it can be a good source of transforming gender awareness among students through ethical expression. It is also in line with previous research which explored that the major themes in Pakistani text books were the gender representation, cultural issues like nationalism, inclusion of the target culture, inclusion of social attributes and inclusion of religious diversity (Essays, UK, 2013).

Moreover, we also explored that text in primary books also included themes on technological advancement, intercultural harmony, freedom of choice and globalization

which is again a reflection of government policies to update education in science and technology (MOE, 2017p.12) and to promote social cohesion and inclusion of the deprived sector which has been excluded on the basis of religion, class or creed. As stated in the educational policy 2009: "To promote national cohesion by respecting each other's faith and religion and cultural and ethnic diversity" (MOE, 2009 p.17-18).

Further we analyzed the text in terms of gender representation in professions and gender biases (if any). Results revealed that there exists gender bias in the texts at various places. For example (See Table 5): political leadership is male dominated, woman is missing in agriculture, and women are presented in stereotypical profession of teaching. This is also in line with Mirza (2004) who indicated gender bias in text books and Farah and Shera (2007) who claimed that males/boys are presented in strong images with dominating roles and considered important for family. This is also against the education policy which claims to eliminate discrimination based on gender (MOE, 2017).

Next we attempted to analyze the text to explore any gender stereotypes in text books. Results indicated an unfortunate picture; because text was loaded with gender stereotypes (See Table 5). The existence of stereotypical material in texts leads to a distorted image of gender roles as Dean (2007) emphasized that the writers show a gendered picture of world in stereotypical situations and thus learners are persuaded to opt it. Similarly, UNESCO, (1997) analyzed negative stereotypes and descriptions about gender in transcripts and images of Pakistani curriculum.

But there also appeared a ray of hope as we explored a transition in stereotypes about girls/woman in a positive way, they are depicted as (active, good communicator, professional, wise, confident, supportive, energetic, aware etc.), but on the other hand traditional stereotypes about masculinity are still the part of texts. Early studies explored that women are presented in unusual and traditional ways i.e. domestic worker while boys/men are presented more benefited in preferences. Girls/ females are shown with inferior status as compare to male counterpart (Anwar, 1998; Unnisa, 1989; Jafri, 1994; Mirza, 1999; Shafi) but our finding revealed betterment in situation. It appeared that new writers and authors are improving the content and depicting females in better roles as compared to previous texts. So we can conclude that no doubt gender biases are still a part of content and images of the primary Urdu Punjab textbooks, but there also appears some gender parity in images and texts now.

So we can conclude that in Pakistan textbooks are the central source of information and they are also designed to reflect the values and aims of the nation. There seems a strong influence of government policies in designing the content of books. It can also be interpreted in the following words that the textbooks tell children what their elders want them to know (Kalmus, 2004). But unfortunately, it is not through government control

only but there also exist certain pressure groups which somehow succeed to influence government (Essays UK, 2013). Yet new education policy (2017) inculcates certain positive issues but implementation on these too is required. There is a need to write gender balanced books specially at primary level because gendered learning starts in 5-7 years of age in which child start to be fixed on the gender schemas which he/she learned in beginning and they have rigid insight about gender notions and follow them (Bem, 1981). This stage of rigidity is crucial in a child life; therefore, if he/she learns gender equitable behavior or schemas in this stage, they can behave in more sensitive way towards society.

On the other hand not just content but pictures also inspire children's insight of learning; researches repeatedly conclude that subliminal messages impact our rational, intentional and conscious behavior (Ruch, Züst & Henke, 2016). Thus the pictures which presented gender awareness will be more rewarding than pictures of gender without message. There is a need to present pictures that show gender equality messages and develop schemas of parity among students at early stage of learning, following examples may be included in pictures with messages, i.e. Woman is doing domestic work and man is helping her in domestic task, both man and woman are working in offices; rural men and women are equally working in the field, both boys and girls are studying in schools, no violence against women, etc. it will help in achieving gender stability. The learning content can stabilize the gender notion; therefore gender equitable/sensitive knowledge is required at primary level that further helps to accept gender equality later on.

Gender awareness at primary level may incorporate the sense of equality among students that may prove fruitful to promote parity among gender relations, roles and responsibilities in future. The transition of stereotypes about female could be productive to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education and achieve gender equality by ensuring girls' full and equal access to, and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Limitations and Future Suggestions

The study is limited in scope as it caters Urdu text books only; other books like English, Pakistan studies etc. can also be included in future research. It is recommended to include gender sensitive people in books construction team; so that better books can be obtained. For this purpose including gender experts and psychologists in editorial boards is expected to be beneficial.

There is a need to incorporate gender awareness in the contents of the text books that may enhance gender identity, human rights, gender equality; women empowerment and reduced violence against women. Socio-cultural taboos can be highlighted through

pictures and texts, which may include child marriage, child abuse, child labor and beggary etc. to create awareness about contemporary gender issues among students of primary level. It is proposed that gender analysis of curricula is essential in every coming year so that to make textbooks more gender sensitive which help to create gender awareness among students off all levels and further for society development on the basis of equality.

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