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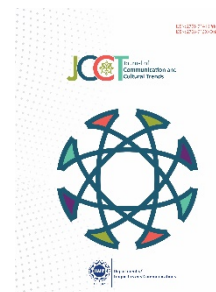|	
Title:	**Gender Representation: A Survey of Public Sector English Textbooks of Grades 7 and 8, KP, Pakistan**
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Gender Representation: A Survey of Public Sector English Textbooks of Grades 7 and 8, KP, Pakistan

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Abstract

Gender representation in textbooks helps to develop the students' perceptions of gender construction. It gradually becomes ingrained in students, and they develop their perspectives on gender in society with the help of these textbooks. The represented yardsticks of masculinity and femininity directly impact the gender conception of both male and female students. The current study analyzed gender representation in the newly designed English textbooks taught in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP's) government schools. Using a mixed-method approach, the study analyzed two textbooks, one from grade 7 and the other from grade 8. The linguistic (nouns, noun phrases, pronouns, verbs, verb phrases, adjectives, and adjective phrases associated with male and female constructions) and non-linguistic (invisibility and association of roles with males and females) data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted using textual analysis. The results confirmed the androcentric portrayal of gender in the recently designed English textbooks, which mostly associate females with emotional, friendly, indoor, and dependent activities. On the contrary, it tends to associate males with heroic, intellectual, strong, brave, dominating, decisive, outdoor, and independent qualities. Apart from addressing the issue of education and gender equality, this study has implications for the concerned research community, educational institutions, and the social science disciplines along with the humanities.

Keywords: androcentric, gender construction, gender representation, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), English textbooks

Introduction

Language and gender are increasingly developing fields of linguistics, sociology, and gender studies, having both academic and popular appeal.

The interdisciplinary nature of linguistics, particularly with social sciences and humanities, and the impact of critical discourse analysis reconsidered the issue of language and gender. The questions on language and gender are reframed. The term 'gender' refers to the social category and not the biological one. It refers to an association of roles, behaviors, attitudes, and expectations between males and females (Litosseliti, 2013). Wodak (1997) stated that sex is binary, however, the roles, expectations, and other traits related to sex are socially and culturally constructed. Gender and gender identity are both individual and social and vary from one context to another, generation to generation, and individual to individual. For instance, someone who is from a different community, age, race, culture, class, society, gender, occupation, and linguistic background.

The feminist movement brought a revolution in social sciences and humanities including linguistics. This movement shifted its focus at different times of its development and considered women's roles, identity, professions, and combated for women's rights. Linguistic research runs parallel with these issues at different stages and has been preoccupied with gender differences for a long time. The research on language and gender is cross-disciplinary, that is, it covers both ways. For instance, how men and women use language and how language is used to represent them. Earlier researchers focused on variations found in the language of men and women. Since language is considered a social practice, recent research accentuates how language constructs gender (Litosseliti, 2013).

As mentioned above, earlier researchers focused on variations in men's and women's language from structural perspectives and perceived language as a closed system influenced by external factors. Recent approaches emphasize investigating meanings constructed in sociocultural contexts and within a community of practice, the centrality of discourse, and discursive practices for the construction of gender identity. The role of context, that is, both linguistic and non-linguistic is central to the notion of language and gender (Litosseliti, 2013). The current study aims to analyze the issue of language and gender in the educational context of Pakistan.

Joan Swann termed language in an educational context as 'schooled language'. Schooled language, both spoken and written, is a language that pervades schools and classrooms in various guises. It is a language used for classroom settings and school disciplines, taught and evaluated, and a part of the curriculum. Boys and girls participate in diverse educational language

events and develop different ways to use language. Gender in an academic context is performed through language. Gendered language affects and develops boys' and girls' perceptions in multiple ways (Swann, 2003).

The research on language and gender in an educational context mostly documents differences and inequality in class. Boys and girls convey different speaking and writing styles along with different reading behaviors. Boys tend to dominate class interaction with their speaking style. Whereas, due to limited opportunities, girls participate less in classroom interaction. Books and other materials taught in schools and colleges comprise more male characters than female (Ullah & Haque, 2016). Females in books, particularly in stories, are represented as less active, weaker, fragile, and more restrictive characters. Males, on the other hand, are represented as more active, braver, stronger, and less restrictive. The contribution of females to society is usually neglected in informative books. It is argued that girls' achievements and success in literacy do not help them, however, it rather hinders their success in practical life, particularly in their choice of a good career. Equal opportunity initiatives, designed to address the issues related to inequalities in educational contexts, encouraged girls to participate in classroom interaction along with developing collaboration between boys and girls. Such initiatives also encouraged materials written by girls, books/materials containing a less stereotyped representation of females, and helped to broaden the range of reading and writing carried out by boys and girls (Swann, 1992). Research scholars observed the issue of language and gender in educational settings from different perspectives. The current study is delimited to the representation of males and females in English textbooks taught at middle levels in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan.

Problem Statement

The issue of gender discrimination is not new, as scholars and educationists have formulated approaches at various times to investigate it and the discriminative depiction of males and females in textbooks. The published literature on gender representation reveals that in textbooks women are represented as weak, passive, emotive, dependent, and second-class characters in different contexts. It was further argued that such gender-biased representation may result in inferring the sense of superiority of one sex over another in students. The issue of language and gender has been analyzed by different scholars at different times in different contexts.

However, according to Ullah and Haque (2016), this issue needs to be examined continuously in order to sensitize the authorities concerned, such as policymakers and textbook authors for taking appropriate steps to eliminate gender biasness from textbooks. The current study aims to analyze gender representation in new English textbooks designed by KP textbook boards for grade 7th and 8th government schools.

Objectives of the Study

The current study aims:

1. To analyze the representation of males and females in grade 7th and grade 8th English textbooks of KP

2. To examine various roles assigned to males and females in grade 7th and grade 8th English textbooks of KP.

Research Questions

1. How are male and female characters portrayed differently in KP's newly designed grade 7th and grade 8th English textbooks?

2. What type of roles are assigned to males and females in the grade 7th and grade 8th English textbooks of KP?

Theoretical Underpinnings

Post-structural feminism is one of the branches of feminism that delineates gendered subjectivities constructed socially, the identities of different groups together with the exercise and deployment of power in patriarchal social systems (Randall, 2016). The ideas of post-structural feminists are similar to radical and critical feminists, discussing the rights of women in different cultures and societies across the globe (Tandon, 2008). This theory offers insight into the construction of social reality through language, discourse, and gender (Wooldridge, 2015). It focuses on the suppression of women in particular and accentuates the need to change socially and culturally structured definitions of gender. It also attempts to unmask different tiers of imposed power in patriarchal societies and reconstructs the world in less repressive and dictatorial ways (Davies et al., 2006). Moreover, post-structural feminism also emphasizes the frail and transitory nature of gender phenomenon which is socially constructed rather than natural. It encourages one to rethink social construction through discursive practices. This theory props up the post-structural notions of

subjectivity, language, power, and social organization to understand the different societal relations held by women which manipulate their interests in different ways and in various cultures (Cairns, 2013). Post-structural feminism offers researchers to analyze the discursive practices collectively rather than individually going beyond liberal feminists' attention in order to provide social justice to women and to end patriarchy. Furthermore, this theory explains the unequal distribution of power in both genders with its subsequent effects on both genders. Moreover, it helps the researchers to explore this complex phenomenon from different perspectives and gazes. Through the application of post-structural feminism, the socially constructed notion of gender may be rethought for equal distribution of power and bringing harmony in society to reduce oppressive practices across the globe (Brooks, 2002).

The concepts and tenets of post-structural feminism theory are promising on the theoretical and conceptual grounds to explore gendered representation in textbooks taught in 7th and 8th grade in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa schools. Through the application of this theory, researchers uncover the representation of gender as a social and discursive practice rather than a biological categorization of human beings into men and women together with moving away from the binaries of male and female. Additionally, this theory is helpful to understand the exercise of power and subjectivity represented through language against women in the textbooks, subordinating their interests and enduring social relations in a patriarchal society.

Literature Review

The relationship between language and gender has been the focus of scholars since the 1960s, the era of early feminism. The work of Labov (1966) is noteworthy among the earlier research studies. At that time, the emphasis was on the speech styles of men and women, their behaviors and actions along with how they differed in spoken and written language. Earlier works employed quantitative variationism methodology, emphasizing sociolinguistic patterns. This phase was followed by another phase with the second wave of feminism. The relationship between language and gender was problematized in texts from male and female writers' perspectives. Literary texts were analyzed from women's perspectives as the theoretical background was provided by feminists. Feminism itself is a very complex term as problematized from different perspectives, such as women's

political, social, and economic rights and unequal distribution of power among both genders (Hameed, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the relationship between language and gender is also one of the dominant aspects of feminism. The current study focused on this dimension of feminism, the participation, and representation of women in English textbooks taught at the middle level in KP.

Swann (2003), in her essay 'Schooled Language', documented the issue of language and gender in the educational context from various perspectives. Her emphasis was on various shifts in the conception of language planning and practices at various stages and contexts. Swann's major concern was the variations and inequalities found in boys' and girls' language in educational contexts. For instance, the varying speech styles, domination, or control of classroom discussions through speech styles, cooperative and competitive speech styles, boys' and girls' choices of reading and writing, and gender-biased representations in a school textbook. According to Swann, women are invisible in school textbooks and other documents, whereas male characters are represented more than females. In stories, men are assigned active and independent roles, while females are represented as passive, weak, and dependent characters. Swann suggested that there is a need to address the issues of inequalities, imbalances, and stereotypical images. This can be done by encouraging cooperative styles among male and female students, introducing textbooks and documents containing non-stereotyped images and widening the range of reading and writing carried out by boys and girls.

The issue of participation and representation of women in textbooks has been analyzed by researchers in different contexts at different times. Gupta and Yin (2009) analyzed gender representation in English language books taught at the primary level in Singapore. The findings of the study revealed that there was an imbalance between the role representation and the amount of speech given to the characters. Islam and Assadullah (2018) reviewed different studies conducted in developing Muslim countries, such as Syria, Iran, Nigeria, Jordan, and Palestine. They claimed that women exclusion and misrepresentation are far higher in textbooks in these countries and a similar pattern is followed by a majority of non-Muslim countries, such as India and Zambia. They analyzed gender representation in school textbooks of English, Physics, Biology, and Mathematics, taught at middle and secondary levels in Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, using

quantitative content analysis. The results revealed that exclusion or invisibility or underrepresentation of women was there in all the books as women are 40.4 % less represented than men. Another result that their study found was variation across these countries. The percentage of women exclusion was higher in Bangladesh and Pakistan than in Indonesia and Malaysia. Afzal (2021) examined gender representation in primary textbooks based on the Single National Curriculum (2020). It was concluded that women are underrepresented in outdoor settings and public spaces. Moreover, their characters are influenced by patriarchal and nationalist values and religious ideologies. Mahmood et al. (2022) analyzed the representation of males and females in grade 10th English language textbooks. Prastikawati and Yonata (2022) analyzed English textbooks used at primary Islamic schools in Indonesia. The results of this quantitative study showed that women are underrepresented. Women are portrayed as sensitive, introvert, and involved in family careers, and low-risk activities. As mentioned earlier, Ullah and Haque are of the view that a considerable amount of research has been published on 'gender biases in textbooks'. However, in developing countries, such as Pakistan, the issue needs to be examined continuously in order to sensitize the concerned authorities (policymakers and textbook authors) so that they may take appropriate steps for the elimination of gender biases in textbooks.

The issues pertaining to language and gender are not new as ample research has been conducted on the same in the context of Pakistan. According to Hameed (2014), Pakistan has highly hierarchal and patriarchal ideologies and relationships regarding gender construction. Females are bound by a particular social and cultural notion of gender, that is, they are marginalized in all aspects of the rigidly patriarchal society. The unequal distribution of power is firmly a part of Pakistani culture as men are powerful, while women are marginalized. The typical, conservative, and rigid norms and ideology of gender exists in many forms in the male dominant society of Pakistan. The dominance of males exists in the educational context too. There are many perspectives of the discussion about male dominance in educational context, however, the discussion here is delimited to the reflection of the patriarchal notion of gender in textbooks. The notion and ideologies about gender are obvious from the gender biases in the school textbooks.

Zeenutunisa ([1989](#)), Jafri ([1993](#)), Mirza ([1999](#)), Ambreen and Uzma ([2001](#)), Mirza ([2014](#)), Hameed ([2014](#)), Ullah ([2016](#)), Islam and Assadullah ([2018](#)), Afzal ([2021](#)) and Mahmood et al. ([2022](#)) conducted studies on gender representation in textbooks. As mentioned in introduction, the studies revealed that women are excluded from textbooks both as an author and the contents, represented as passive, weak, fragile, and objects of beauty, associated with household activities, lacking decision power, and participating in low-risk activities. On the other hand, men are described in textbooks both as authors and in the contents. They are represented as being active, brave, heroic, bread earners, and more decisive.

The issue of gender discrimination in textbooks is addressed frequently. Moreover, ample research is published on gender discrimination in different textbooks taught at different levels at different times in Pakistan. Research on gender discrimination recommends policymakers and textbook boards to change and revisit the curriculum and introduce a new curriculum that is free of gender biases. It is observed that mostly newly designed textbooks remain the same in terms of gender representation despite these efforts. Ullah ([2016](#)) believes that textbooks and curricula need to be analyzed at different times, particularly when new textbooks are introduced to sensitize the concerned authorities about the issue of gender discrimination in school textbooks. Recent scholarship in language and gender research also accentuates the need of analyzing newly designed textbooks. Thus, the current study aims to analyze new English textbooks designed for grade 7th and grade 8th government schools in KP, Pakistan.

Methodology

The focus of the current study was to investigate gender biases in English textbooks for which the researchers analyzed new English textbooks, designed by the KP textbook board for grades 7th and 8th. The text of both books was analyzed through thematic textual analysis in two ways, that is, linguistic analysis and non-linguistic analysis. Multiple close readings were given to the text of chapters and exercises. In the first phase of readings, the aim was non-linguistic analysis to assess the invisibility/exclusion of a particular gender from the textbooks and the image or representation of both genders. In the second reading, the aim was linguistic analysis. It focused on the lexical choices of the authors, particularly adjectives used with different genders, use of universal nouns and pronouns, that is, the use of men and he for both genders, the order of the noun and pronoun used for

both genders (he and she, man and woman, etc.), and verbs associated with different genders.

Data Analysis and Results

Non-linguistic

Gender Visibility and Invisibility (Exclusion)

Table. 1 presents the visibility of both genders as the author, poet, and content. The invisibility of women in terms of poetess and content is obvious from table 1. The authors of both textbooks are Aamna, Ammad, and Mujeeb Rahman. There are 15 chapters and 4 poems in the book for class 7th. Out of 15 chapters, 10 chapters are about males, only two chapters are about females, and one chapter is about both genders, whereas two chapters are about nature. The percentage of men visibility in class 7th book is 66 for males, 13 for females, and 6 percent for both genders. There are 4 poems in the books and three of the poems are written by females and only one poem is penned down by a male. The percentage of poems by female writers is 75% and 25% for males.

The visibility of both genders is presented in the table. There are 17 chapters and 3 poems in the grade 8th book. Out of 17 chapters, seven chapters are about males, two about females, one chapter is about both genders, and rest of the chapters are about nature and other themes. The percentage for male visibility in the textbook of 8th class is 41, 5.8 for females, and 5.8 for both genders. All the poems in class 8th book are written by males, thus the percentage of visibility as a poet for a male is 100% and 00 % for females. Table 1. shows the total percentage of males and females' visibility in terms of author, poem, and content. The authors of the book are a male and a female. The percentage of the author is 50 % for males and 50% for females. In terms of poems written by males and females, the percentage is 57 for males and 43 for females. Gender discrimination is more obvious from the content of the book, as 53 percent of the chapters are about males, 9.3 % about females, and 6.25 % about both genders.

Table 1

Visibility of both Genders as Authors, Poets, and Contents

Textbooks			Males' visibility			Females' visibility			Both genders visibility		
			Author	Poets	content	Author	Poets	content	Author	Poets/ poetess	Content
Grade 7	15	04	01	01	10	01	03	02	02	00	01
Percentage	-	-	50%	25%	66.6%	50%	75%	13 %	100	00 %	6.6%
				Total chapters	No of Poems						
Grade 8	17	03	01	03	07	01	00	01	02	00	01
Percentage	-	-	50%	100%	41%	50%	00%	5.8%	100	00 %	5.8%
Total	32	07	02	04	17	02	03	03	04	00	02
Percentage			50%	57%	53%	50%	43%	9.3%	100%	00%	6.25%

Table 2

Nouns and Noun Phrases and Word Order Used with Both Genders

Grade 7				Grade 8			
Nouns and NPS used with males and females		Instances of Words order (Nouns Pronouns)		Nouns and NPS used with males and females		Instances of words order Nouns Pronouns	
Males	Females	Nouns	Pronouns	Male	Females	Nouns	Pronouns
Warriors, invaders, caliphs, scholars, great scholars, ideological founders, thinkers, bread earners, and planners, in charge,	Athlete, best friends	Male and female	He and she	Sailor, hero, man of great achievement, lawyer, leader, man of determination, devoted person, scientist, philosopher, physician, boss, carpenter, impossible man, product of civilization, earner, farmer	Obedient wife, Caring mother	No instance	He and she She and he

Roles Associated with Males and Females

The first chapters of both books discussed Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Most of the chapters are about males therefore, females are invisible in both books. Males are represented as great warriors who invaded different parts of South Asia. Men are represented as honest and religious-minded whereas, boys are portrayed as honest, obedient, and intelligent characters.

There is also a discussion about some Muslim scientists who are represented as great scholars having wisdom and their services for religion are also discussed. Females are discussed only in two chapters. Chapter 15 'Role of Women in Sports' is about a Pakistani female athlete named Naseem Hamid. She is represented as having a unique character who bears lots of troubles and her mother is quoted in the chapter saying, "Naseem is like a son to me, she is so brave that she overcomes a lot of troubles and never gives up". Similarly, there is a chapter about child labor. In this chapter, the portrayed pictures show boys working in different places and are associated with outdoor activities along with fulfilling their responsibility to earn since their childhood. In the last part of the book, there is a chapter about boys' scouts. Boys are assigned different roles, such as planners, decision-makers, and fonder of adventurous and high-risk activities.

In grade 8th textbook, women are invisible, and men are represented in the same way as represented in the class 7th textbook. In a chapter about an old woman who sells fruits, men are represented as bread earners and associated with outdoor activities, for instance, office duties. Women are represented as dependent on their sons and husbands. Men are represented as brave, intelligent, heroic, adventurous, powerful, decisive, thinkers, punctual, distinguished, devoted, intelligent, hardworking, confident, a man of determination, brave, and kind. Conclusively, women are represented as kindhearted, careful, and sincere friends.

Linguistic Analysis

Table 2. presents nouns and noun phrases used by males and females and the order of words used for both genders. Different nouns and noun phrases used by both genders depict how different roles are assigned to females and males in secondary-level textbooks taught in the government schools in KP. Females are excluded to a great extent from both books,

while males are represented more in the books. Females are associated with indoor activities and males with outdoor activities. Males are represented as heroes, invaders, bread earners, carpenters, bosses, farmers, thinkers, and leaders. While females are represented as mothers and wives. In a chapter about females' participation in sports, an athlete was represented as having the qualities of males. Discussing the order of nouns and pronouns, it is clear that the salient words are placed first. The word 'male' and pronoun 'he' is placed first, while the terms 'female' and 'she' are placed later except in one sentence in the class 8th book. This practice of word order is very limited in the books, however, there are a few instances. While reading the text, the researchers could not find the use of universal nouns and pronouns for both genders in the textbooks. The discrimination against women in the textbooks is obvious from the noun and noun phrases associated with males and word order for nouns and pronouns used for different genders.

Table 3

Use of Adjectives and Adjective Phrases with Males and Females in Both Textbooks

Males Class 7	Females Class 7	Males Class 8	Females Class 8
Honest, obedient, wise, handsome, careless, deeply concerned, clear in thoughts, rich, selfish, arrogant,	Careful, patient, kind, emotive, fastest, brave, cooperative	Brave, punctual, disciplined, distinguished, devoted, great, intelligent, hardworking, caring, sincere, knowledgeable, gifted, unkind	Kind-hearted, helpful, emotional

Table 3. shows the use of adjectives and adjective phrases with males and females from chapter 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 of grade 7th textbook and chapter no 2, 6,9,11, 13, 14, and 17 of grade 8th book. Men are represented as honest, obedient, wise, handsome, careless, deeply concerned about youth, clear in thoughts, rich, selfish, arrogant, brave, punctual, disciplined, distinguished, devoted, great, intelligent, hardworking, caring, sincere, knowledgeable, gifted, and unkind. While women are represented as careful, patient, kind, emotional, brave, cooperative, kind-hearted, and helpful. The adjectives used for males show men as strong and decisive, while women are represented as kind and emotional. The representation of women as sentimental and men as brave

depict discrimination against the former in the textbooks and are obvious from the use of adjectives with both genders.

Table 4. shows verb phrases used with males and females from chapter no 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 of grade 7th textbook and chapter no 2, 6,9,11, 13, 14, and 17 of grade 8th book. Women are mostly invisible in the textbooks thus, very few verb phrases have been used with women. Males are associated with outdoor and adventurous activities, while females are associated with indoor activities. The number of verb phrases used by males is greater than the number of verb phrases used by females. Males are mostly represented as active and independent, while females are represented as passive and dependent.

Table 4

Verb Phrases used with Males and Females

Males Class 7	Female Class 7	Males Class 8	Female Class 8
Invaded South Asia, made great achievements, advises his son, respect his father, cares for his parent, serve the religion of Islam, promoted peace and harmony, earn for his family, planned for going on a trip	Overcomes a lot of troubles, never gave up, won trophies	Visit magic places, encounter supernatural power, and guides, stood like a rock against an opponent, never gives up, never compromise on principle, used tricks to get rid of beasts, made remarkable contributions, have great knowledge, learned all branches of knowledge, plant trees, riding a bicycle, working in the fields	Asked for bananas, helps her husband

Discussion

The results revealed that women are excluded from textbooks to a large extent as compared to men. Women are represented as emotional, sentimental, dependent, and kindhearted who are responsible for household chores. The language of textbooks, taught at the middle level in government schools in KP, is gender biased. The use of nouns, verbs, and adjectives with men and women in the textbooks revealed that females are weak,

fragile, emotional, passive, and dependent, while males are shown as strong, active, independent, and responsible for earning and are associated with outdoor activities. Men are represented as brave and adventurous, taking part in high-risk and outdoor activities, while women are associated with indoor activities. Men are associated with different roles, however, women are included in a few chapters having a dialogue with one another about health and other issues. A chapter about a female athlete in the seventh class book discusses women's participation in sports, however, the athlete is depicted as having the qualities of a man. Her mother is quoted as saying that, "she is like a son to me". It depicts that sports and games are activities meant for males rather than females.

In a chapter about an old woman who sells fruits, the old woman is shown as having no male member in her family and that is the reason why she is earning for herself by selling fruits. In the same chapter, the narrator of the story is a man who works in an office and his wife is asking him to bring her bananas. Both females in the chapter are associated with household chores. In the class 8th book, there is a chapter about a farmer and his wife. The wife is shown helping her husband on the farm. Instead of using the term 'work' the term 'help' is used which shows that women are not supposed to work in fields or on farms, however, are assigned household chores. The poems in the textbooks are mostly about nature but there is a poem about a mother in a grade 7th book, showing the role of a mother as a kindhearted, caring, and loving mother.

Hameed (2014) claimed that Pakistani society has a highly patriarchal and hierarchal structure of ideology and relationships between each gender. Textbooks are the tools used to preserve hierarchal and patriarchal values and ideologies associated with genders. The findings of the study are similar to the studies conducted on the representation of women in textbooks since 1990s. The studies conducted in Pakistan and cited in this research have the same findings. Different approaches were made at different times to address the issue of gender biases in textbooks, however, the pattern of the textbooks remained the same without mere changes. Ample research is conducted on the issue of gender discrimination in textbooks, but no obvious change is observed in the textbooks. It reflects that the patriarchal and hierarchical structure of gender relationships and ideology is so rigid and deeply rooted in all aspects of society that it cannot be changed easily. The research on gender discrimination, despite several recommendations

for the authorities concerned, has no practical application in the context of Pakistan.

Conclusion

The issue of gender discrimination in textbooks has been problematized with the developments in feminism. Textbooks play a vital role in formulating students' perceptions of different phenomena in the external world. Textbooks play a strong role in the dissemination of culture. Gender, a socially constructed phenomenon, is one of the dominant aspects of culture. Textbooks play a key role in formulating students' gender perceptions. The current study aimed to observe gender representation in English textbooks taught at the middle level in government schools of KP, Pakistan. Two English textbooks (grade 7th and grade 8th) designed by KP Textbook Board were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The researcher performed a linguistic and non-linguistic analysis of the text. The non-linguistic analysis was delimited to invisibility and role association with males and females, while linguistic analysis was delimited to words and phrases associated with males and females. In words and phrases, the analysis was delimited to nouns and noun phrases, pronouns, verbs, and verb phrases along with adjectives and adjective phrases only. The results of the study revealed that women are invisible to a large extent, represented as emotional, friendly, dependent, and associated with indoor activities. On the other hand, men are represented as warriors, heroes, scientists, thinkers, strong, brave, decisive, intellectual, and associated with outdoor activities. Finally, suggestions are given to policymakers and authors to introduce textbooks with neutral content and language. It is recommended that future researchers conduct research on the issue of gender discrimination in textbooks designed by textbook boards in Pakistan to sensitize authorities concerned about the issues of gender discrimination in textbooks.

Recommendations

Textbooks play a vital role in the transmission of culture from generation to generation. As gender is one of the dominant aspects of culture, gender representation in books helps to develop and formulate students' perceptions of gender construction. Reading enables the students to identify and associate themselves with the characters of their own gender, therefore the standards of masculinity and femininity are provided by books to male and female students. As compared to other elements in schools,

textbooks having a direct relationship with students play a dominant role to build students' concepts of gender (Hameed, 2012). Research scholars exposed that gender bias in textbooks is an obstacle in the way of gender equality. Policymakers, curriculum designers, and authors need to recognize the issue of gender discrimination in textbooks and change the textbooks by introducing textbooks with neutral content and language from gender perspectives. Future researchers also need to conduct studies on issues of gender discrimination in textbooks, particularly analyzing newly introduced textbooks taught at different levels, to sensitize authorities concerned frequently about the issues of gender discrimination.

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