Vol. 24(1), 2024, pp.53-72, ISSN: 2072-0394(Print), ISSN: 2663-8886(Online)

A Comparative Study of English and Urdu Single National Curriculum Textbooks of Primary Level: A Feminist Perspective

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Abstract

The paper aims to explore the depiction of gender and their roles in textbooks of Oxford University Press in Pakistan. The objectives are to explore the gender roles and representation of male and female characters within the English and Urdu textbooks of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan. A descriptive-qualitative approach is used and data collected is analyzed thematically. Beauvoir's feminist theory is employed for the analysis of the textbooks. The research reveals that the feminist agenda of equity has been fulfilled in that women should be given an equal place in society, where women are portrayed as strong, engaged individuals who wish to play a part in changing society. Besides, this study supports the notion that children ought to be allowed to follow their passions and abilities without hindrance from gender-based societal norms. Since children of both sexes should be treated equally, the feminist perspective's comparative analysis of the two textbooks will help the authors carefully design the course curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum, Oxford University Press, Single National Curriculum, Feminist Theory, English, Urdu, Textbook

Introduction

Education plays an important role in shaping students' attitudes and behavior and in this regard, textbooks enhance knowledge and information (Chaudhary, 2021). Williams asserts that the primary instructional tool that plays a critical role in the teaching and learning process is the textbook (1983). Alan CunningsWorth (2008) holds that the teacher lacks the necessary training; the textbook plays a very involved role in language instruction. In addition, textbooks must meet the guidelines of the Ministry of Education (Lee, 2013) and be appropriate for the interests of the students, abilities, and, backgrounds. Finally, textbooks must be integrated with the relevant curriculum values to foster students' abilities. Textbooks contain such content that enables the learners to learn

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and comprehend what is going on in society and the learners acquire that knowledge. Therefore, the textbook is regarded as the working instrument for both the instructor and the learner. Textbooks play a crucial role in developing and expanding language skills, problem-solving, cognitive and critical thinking skills. At a primary level, the behavior and thinking ability skills develop in the students, and their development of behavior changes with time. Students learn and try to adopt what they see around them and what they learn in their course (Blackstone, 2003).

English instruction for preschoolers aims to enhance students' oral communication skills in the language (Munir & Warmansyah, 2023). In addition, English is used for international communication and collaboration and is the scientific language for current affairs research. These factors make teaching English to young children essential in today's world. Instructors should understand materials and curriculum, teaching strategy and method, and must create a joyful learning environment (Wulandani et al., 2022; Pransiska, 2016; Amelinda & Widya, 2023) The ideal textbook would satisfy the visual image postulate, which states that children learn from illustrations to formulate meaning. Even though images are regarded as decoration, they can influence children to provide cultural literacy. Additionally, an existing study asserts that visual images help children to motivate them to speak and to create a context (Konomi, 2013). Besides, visual images in textbooks make them more interesting as well (Porter & Margaret, 1992). However, teaching English to preschoolers should be fun, active, and stress-free (Verner, 2015).
However, it is claimed by Paul (2014) that Pakistani English textbooks promote aggressive behavior among students of different ideologies in a manner that is not any different from that of other textbooks. English textbooks are known to differ from other syllabus books quite a little. Nonetheless, Pakistan Studies, Urdu, Sindhi, and Social Studies textbooks all start nearly the same as English textbooks do. There are also teachings on Islam or patriotism in the introduction. But we choose to begin with the teachings of Islam because it forms the basis of our ideology. English is not only a language; it is also a symbol of a specific philosophy of ideas. Worldwide, English textbook content is dominated by a single ideology (Seargeant, 2008). The fundamental problem is not just how individuals interpret gender in general but also how each gender is viewed in the context of society.

According to the existing study, gender roles are socially manufactured, although gender is mostly about sex differences (Darni & Abida, 2017). These kinds of behavioral and social standards start to emerge in society, establishing what people consider to be suitable social behavior for each particular sex. Students are more readily recognized in the educational setting based on their gender differences than on their commonalities as students, this behavior is acknowledged as gender bias (Ariyanto, 2018). The concept of gender begins as a severe issue in many societies and the inequality in gender roles differs concerning time and place (Sahin & Acikalin, 2021). As it is observed that gender

inconsistency and discrimination may appear in less developed countries, many nations of the world have not yet been able to eradicate it. This unequal representation of gender abounds in educational programs including textbooks.

Significance of the Current Study

Textbooks play an important role in transmitting knowledge and beliefs and it is also a powerful instrument for socialization. The comparative analysis of both textbooks will assist the curriculum developers in carefully designing the academic modules. Curriculum designers can evaluate how well various teaching resources match the intended curriculum objectives and standards by comparing textbooks. This analysis contributes to ensuring consistency and coherence among instructional resources. Curriculum designers can assess how different gender perspectives, cultures, and identities are portrayed in textbooks by analyzing the texts. It makes it easier to spot any biases or gaps in the content and makes it possible for creators to include a wider variety of experiences and perspectives.

Oxford University Press's curriculum revision, viewed through the prisms of feminist theory and the Single National Curriculum (SNC), offers a rare chance to conduct a thorough assessment of the curriculum's instructional content. The goal of the Single National Curriculum review is to make sure that the national standards, competencies, and learning objectives set forth by Pakistani educational authorities are followed. This analysis makes sure that the materials sufficiently prepare students for national assessments and educational benchmarks by evaluating the coverage of subjects, themes, and pedagogical approaches by the Single National Curriculum requirements. Concurrently, incorporating a feminist viewpoint into the curriculum explores gender representation in greater detail, questions established conventions and prejudices, and promotes greater inclusivity and equality. By using this lens, language use, the examination of intersectional issues, and the representation of male and female characters all become focal points, to encourage students to think critically and become aware of gender dynamics. Combining knowledge from the two viewpoints allows recommendations to be developed to improve the curriculum and support social justice and equity in education in addition to academic excellence.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the gender representation and roles that are included in the English and Urdu textbooks of the Single National Curriculum at the primary level (V-class). The objective of the study is to explore how gender is represented through various themes and characters in the English and Urdu Single National Curriculum textbooks of grade V.

Novelty of the Study

Various researches have been done on the comparative analysis of textbooks from the feminist perspective. However, the course curriculum was revised in Pakistan in 2021. The curriculum of Oxford University Press is revised from the perspective of a Single National Curriculum (SNC) and the feminist point of view; it has not been analyzed yet. Examining Oxford University Press's curriculum from the aspects of feminism and the Single National Curriculum (SNC) provides a chance to consider how well educational resources adhere to inclusive and gendered equality as well as national standards.

Review of the Literature

In the process of teaching and learning, the roles of two modules are significantly important i.e. the instructor and the learner (Robert, 2021). Apart from both, some other elements are also involved and perform many different functions, the main goal and aim is to build up the connection between the instructor and the learner. Textbooks are believed to create a link to this network and also, assist the teachers in the process of teaching and learning. It is assumed that the textbooks assist the students in achieving their specific goals set by their respected authors. Textbooks serve as a powerful source to convey the body of knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the next generation collected over the years. Moreover, they are a significant tool for communication with others. They shape the attitudes and skills at an elementary and primary level that students should acquire.

Namatende-Sakwa (2018), Carlson and Kanci (2017), Lee (2019), Pakuła et al. (2015), Li (2016), and other scholars have carried out noteworthy research studies on gender issues in diverse contexts within their respective fields of expertise. However, they can uncover the covert agenda supporting gender inequality in the teaching materials. Regretfully, despite the length of time that has passed, no significant progress has been made to address this issue. The study by Ahmadi & Derakhshan (2016) illustrates that curriculum developers try to discover the strong and weak points of textbooks and offer the opportunity to use English lessons as a way to prepare students for the future. Therefore, it may be helpful for teachers to use appropriate textbooks according to the student's needs. Investigators have also raised implicit evidence that English textbooks currently taught in Iran's high schools meet students' expectations. Moreover, this type of research assists textbook developers in paying more attention to vocabulary and grammar, skills of language, and methods of language teaching. Researchers offer some suggestions on how authors of textbooks can improve or update their readers' needs. The study conducted by Ahmadi & Derakhshan (2016) discusses different issues with teachers' views on different books. Additionally, it helps teachers discover their goals and language class objectives. Additionally, teachers need to know how well textbooks are suitable for different classes with different student numbers and genders.

A textbook is an effective tool designed to achieve specific goals in economic, social, or cultural domains (Crawford, 2019). Mustapha (2013) holds that gender bias influences children's development and that the systemic injustice depiction which is gender bias itself causes the marginalization of one particular gender, particularly women, this could have more detrimental effects on students' perceptions than beneficial ones. According to Blackstone (2003) and Lorber (2001), gender roles are closely related to cultural factors and the relative power that men and women hold in a society where gender norms and behaviors are constructed and men and women's lives are lived by them. Gender bias is the way that people perceive other people's abilities and interests primarily based on their sex and how they believe and set expectations toward a particular sex in society (Stitt and Erekson, 1988).

Furthermore, gender stereotypes and bias expressed in written text and visual aids negatively impact female students (Lesikin, 2001). Textbook has a great role and impact in bringing and solving problems (Santosa, 2020). However, textbooks have long-lasting effects on the youngest learners at a specific moment. They are regarded as a powerful tool that is designed to meet, especially social, economic, and cultural goals. As a consignment tool, the textbook plays a political role in showing interest in capitalism and patriarchy. Santosa (2020) argued that the presence of a male character exceeds the number of the female character. The comparison is 40% and 31%. The dominance of the male gender reveals that there is no gender equality in the textbook. Moreover, surprisingly, the amount considered excluded is slightly lower by 29%. In addition, the character selection in the book is governed by the first name and appearance of 98 male and 82 female characters (Santosa, 2020). The distribution of work varies depending on the gender of the character. In the case of office work, the male, too, exceeds the female category. However, there are a small number of women in this category. The male status, however, is high. So, the representation of the male gender is dominant in the high school EFL textbook.

In addition to this, gender-biased language in textbooks can hurt students and help them imagine a world run by tyranny because it is typically illogical and biased (Cameron, 1990). The issue of gender equality changes students' perceptions. It can also create intolerance due to an unfair situation based on adult bias (Santosa, 2020). In his research, Mustapha found that gender bias shaped the development of children and it is a manifestation of systematic injustices that lead to marginalizing the female gender. Also, Malmsjo and Johansson (2009) explain that gender bias refers to a situation in which one sex is treated unfairly or one sex (male) is considered superior to the other (female). However, gender bias is the inequality that occurs between men and women in the education system where one gender is marginalized compared to the other gender due to limited access to equal education. Hence, it emphasizes the importance of gender equality in educating boys and girls. In addition, Vahdatinejad (2017) examined the gender

language in the book. Later, the result revealed a lack of, inadequacy, and exposure to women in the textbook.

Through textbooks, sexual bias has been maintained and strengthened. Pakistani textbooks generally depict traditional roles and those associated with a culturally fragile situation of the female gender. Not only are female actors portrayed in roles as law-abiding and submissive, but they also occupy much less space in textbooks than males. Sexual representation and sexism have long been the focus of researchers. Interestingly, some researchers have suggested that even in research on sexual orientation, there is bias, and also, Language reflects the general attitude of the society that what is going on in the society is depicted through the course books. Discrimination and sexism in language can be attributed to a patriarchal society. These books could be considered sexist or they contained sexual harassment if they portrayed men and women in an imaginary role. The study says that using words of encouragement for women or painting them in subdued colors can also be considered sexist (Qayyum et al., 2021).

The study by Qayyum et al., (2021) portrayed that gender selections in Pakistani textbooks are not limited to text content. The pictures also show the same pattern both in terms of numbers and representations. Their study found female actors who are often portrayed in traditional roles, doing household chores or small jobs. It was not only the numbers of female characters that reflected male dominance; but also the importance given to images. It clearly shows the great brilliance given by an image with a male character rather than a female. These findings indicate that the situation has not improved significantly since previous studies. Textbooks promote male domination, subjugation, and discrimination against women. Even teachers have never read those academic guidelines or curriculum frameworks and they just rely heavily on textbooks and activities. Students are strongly influenced by the portrayal of women in textbooks and often take them for granted and real (Qayyum et al., 2021). If policymakers want to promote gender equality in society, women should be given equal and respectful roles in textbooks so that younger students can read and view them with dignity and equality.

Pakistan is concerned about gender issues, especially in education (Noreen, 2020). Pakistan is a post-colonial country with a long and difficult history of colonial rule and imperialism and still struggles to eradicate the remnants of fraud and power. There is a need to hold citizens accountable. Since its inception, policymakers in Pakistan regarded education as nation-building, staff-building, and morality. This has been demonstrated many times over in the five-year plans introduced by various governments. Gender equality is often linked to access to education for women; the concept of Education for All recognizes that gender equality plays an important part in education (Noreen, 2020). In March 2021, the course curriculum was revised in Pakistan. The curriculum of Oxford University Press is revised from the perspective of a Single National Curriculum (SNC). Their main goal is to provide all students with an equitable and quality education and it was important to promote

coherence in textbooks. In Pakistan, there have been many studies conducted from the feminist perspective but the comparison of English and Urdu textbooks of Oxford University Press has not been discussed and analyzed yet. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to compare the established ideas related to gender and content within these textbooks. While considering these points, this study will examine how gender representation influences the mental development of students at a primary level.

Theoretical framework

Beauvoir's Feminist theory is adopted to analyze the textbooks. According to feminist theory, people of all genders are equal (Crossman, 2020). There should not be any exclusion or discrimination based on gender. Moreover, feminist theory focuses on objectivity, exclusion economic and structural inequality, stereotypes, and oppression against women. Feminists claim that women should be given the same power as men but in society, women are treated unequally and their position is different from men. The patriarchal society denied women to express and practice their views and this discrimination excludes them from fully participating in public life. Therefore, this theory is employed to examine the depiction of gender and gender roles in the English and Urdu Textbooks (V-class) of Pakistan.

Research Methodology

Selection of Research Methodology

A Qualitative Research Approach is used to analyze the English and Urdu textbooks of Oxford University Press. The representation of gender affects the mental development of the students, so in this regard, a descriptive-qualitative method is more appropriate to examine the gender and gender roles in the textbooks. The transcription key of Rasul (2006) is used in the current study.

Sources of Data Collection and Tools of Research

By using Purposive sampling, the data is collected from the primary level (V class) English and Urdu textbooks of OUP in Pakistan and it is based on the Single National Curriculum (2020). The first edition (SNC) of the English textbook was published in 2021 and the first edition (SNC) of the Urdu textbook was published in March 2021, the second edition (SNC) was published in July 2021 and the third edition (SNC) has been published in August 2021.

Data Analysis

The study is focused on the gender roles and representation in the English and Urdu textbooks of OUP in Pakistan at a primary level (V-Class). The comparative analysis is done which has analyzed and interpreted all the lessons and poems in OUP textbooks. An analysis of this study data is divided into 2 categories i.e., analysis of external and internal

aspects of the textbook, and these categories are further divided into different sub-categories.

Analysis of the External Aspects of English and Urdu Textbooks

Cover Page of the Textbooks

While observing the title page of both textbooks, it is noted that the cover page of the English textbook (Image 1) contains the image reveals the scenario of the garden where two girls are smiling while staring at each other and from these two girls, one girl is elder than the other. The two girls appear to have a supportive and happy relationship based on their smiles. This emphasizes the value of female friendships in feminist discourse by highlighting how crucial it is for women to encourage and support one another in a society where they may frequently be put against one another. Rather than adhering to conventional beliefs that could prescribe women's behavior or interactions, the picture offers a more genuine and varied portrayal of female experiences and bonds. For the girls, the garden setting can stand for a place of release and freedom where they can be who they are without fear of criticism or limitations. This is in line with feminist goals of establishing environments free from patriarchal expectations and constraints so that women can flourish and express themselves authentically.

Whereas, the cover page of the Urdu textbook (Image 2) contains the image reveals the scenario of the study room where two boys and two girls are drawing and cutting something. This implies that it has fulfilled the agenda of feminism that women should be treated equally as men. The picture implies that learning opportunities and educational resources are available to both boys and girls. This emphasizes the significance of creating supportive environments where kids can thrive and follow their interests, and it is in line with feminist goals of promoting equal access to education for all children, regardless of gender. Cooperative and teamwork values are fostered by the activity's collaborative nature, which involves boys and girls working together in the study room. Gender stereotypes that dictate particular interests or abilities based on gender are challenged by this image. It challenges the idea that some activities are better suited to one gender over another by showing both boys and girls engaged in creative, hands-on activities like cutting and drawing. This supports the notion that kids ought to be allowed to follow their passions and abilities without hindrance from gender-based societal norms.

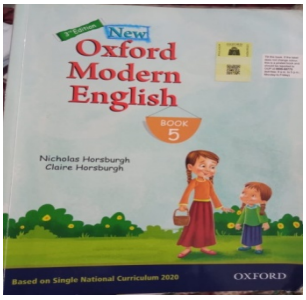




Image 1 *Image 2*

Organization of the Chapters

The investigation of the organization of both textbooks reveals that the English textbook contains 14 lessons along with 7 poems, and various letters, paragraphs, and posters. Whereas, the lessons in the Urdu textbook are divided into 3 parts i.e. the first part contains 6 lessons which are further classified into 2 poems and 4 chapters, the second part contains 11 lessons which are further classified into 4 poems and 7 chapters and the third part contains 6 lessons which are further classified into 2 poems and 4 chapters.

Titles of the Lessons

While exploring the titles of the lessons, it is noted that the titles of lessons of the English textbook represent masculine gender i.e., *"Does He Remember", "Shabir Sharif and the Nishān-æ-Haider", "Robinson Crusoe", "Bahlol",* and *"Uncle Shams".* While the titles of lessons of the Urdu textbook represents both masculine and feminine gender i.e.,"*Hawā Chali", "Meri Pehchān Hai Tū", "Hamaray Pæshay", "Æk Gāye Aūr Bakri", "Hazrat Usman Ghani", "Hum Phool Aek Chaman kay", "Āo Bacho! Sūno Kahāni", "Āyen Madad Karayn", "Rakhæn Mera Khyāl", "Kaha Iqbal nay",* and *"Toot battoot Kay Mūrghay"*

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Analysis of the Internal Aspects of English and Urdu Textbooks

Representation of Genders in the Text

While exploring the representation of gender in English and Urdu textbooks, the representation of the female gender represents the patriarchal society. In the English textbook, the traditional roles of women are represented as they are portrayed as mothers and household ladies. For instance; Extract 1 is taken from the lesson *"The World in a War",* she is represented as a caring mother who wants their son to be a noble person. As it is stated in the text:

Extract 1

"You are running wild again. It is high time you received a little more education,' she said. 'I'm getting you a tutor'."

In the lesson *"Uncle Shams"*, the scenario of the living room is represented where a man is trying to put up a picture on the wall at the back and Mr. and Mrs. Malik are guiding him. Throughout the text, the wife is mentioned with reference to her husband i.e., Mrs. Malik and she is portrayed as very curious and worried about the mess, her daughter's

marriage, and the guest. In this lesson, Uncle Shams is depicted as a noble being because he listened to what Mrs. Malik said against him but despite the fact, he gave precious gifts to Samina. Extract 2 is taken from the lesson "The Problem with Plastic", and portrays the audacity of the female gender to do something valuable and she wants to become an engineer, not a teacher. For instance, it is mentioned in the text that:

Extract 2

"When she grew up, Zara hoped to be an engineer, like her older cousin. Engineers found solutions to problems. She would keep working hard at school and become an engineer."

In the Urdu Textbook, the female gender is represented from a new perspective. For instance, she is represented as a brilliant lady in the lesson *"Aye Watan! Tū Salāmat Rahay*". The lessons start from the female gender i.e. Sara Bāji who has shown the documentary film to the children. The equal representation of gender is observed in various lessons where the female gender is treated equally as the male gender. For instance; in the lesson "Qūmi Tehwār" Raza and *Amna* are represented as two children and both are interested in gaining knowledge regarding different national days, they ask various questions from their grandfather and he calmly responds to them. Extract 3 shows that Raza and Amna are shown as being curious and actively involved in their education, as evidenced by the questions they ask their grandfather. The lesson tackles assumptions that claim boys are inherently more interested or intellectually inclined than girls by showing both genders as eager to learn and curious. This upholds the feminist ideal of supporting and fostering girls' agency and intellectual curiosity. The lesson helps to normalize gender equality by showing Raza and Amna as equal participants in the learning process without drawing attention to their differences in gender. This aids in challenging and destroying damaging gender norms and prejudices that may restrict children's chances and aspirations due to their gender. Encouraging these kinds of portrayals in educational materials is essential to building a society that is more egalitarian and inclusive.

Extract 3

Amna: *Pakistan kay qyām ka maqsad kia hai?*
Dada Jān: *Aamna tūmhāra sawāl bhūt œhm hai. Pakistan kay qyām ka maqsad ayk Islami falahi ryasat k itashkeel tha jahān hum Islami ūsloonon kay mūtābiq zindagi gūzār sakayn. Mūsalmān-œ-hind nay is maqsad ko ayk nāaray mœn samœt dya tha keh Pakistan ka matlab kia? LaIlāhaIla Allah*

Similarly, Extract 4 is taken from the lesson *"Meri Pehchān Hai Tū"*. Sara and Ahmad are represented as two children and they both want to enhance their knowledge of the National Anthem of Pakistan. And their father enhances their knowledge in a very lovely way. The scenario emphasizes the empowering role that education plays in challenging gender norms and fostering children's confidence and agency by showing Sara and Ahmad's interest in learning about the National Anthem and their father's positive reinforcement of their curiosity. Feminist theory holds that empowering children, regardless of gender, through encouragement and education helps to dismantle barriers and advance gender equality in society. By actively participating in his children's interests and giving them information in a kind and supportive way, the father upholds the belief that education and intellectual development are worthwhile endeavors for both boys and girls. This goes against gender norms that could restrict fathers' ability to support their children's academic growth or give preference to sons' education over daughters'.

Extract 4

Sara: *Abū Jān āp sub kyūn kharay hogay thay?*

AbūJān: *jab bhi qomi tarana parha ja raha ho is kay æhtarām mæn kharay ho jāna chahiye*

Sara: *AbūJān! Aysa tou sirf school mæn kartay hæn. Jab sūbha assembly mæn parha jata hai.*

AbūJān: *pyāri bayti! Phir tou āp nay tarānay ka asal maqsad hi nahi samjha. Āj mæn āpko qomi tarānay kay baray mæn kūch æhm aūr dilchasp batayn bataūn ga.*

The lesson *"Dūnya āpki mūthi mæn"* represents the innovative woman i.e., Sidra who has the technical knowledge and informs her parents that an email has been received from her elder brother "Hamid" who studies in London. Sidra's technical expertise in Extract 5 shows that she is competent and proficient in a profession that is frequently seen as belonging to men. Sidra's knowledge dispels the myth that men are naturally better in technical subjects, which is prevalent in many societies. Sidra is claiming her agency and participating actively in family communication and decision-making by alerting her parents about the email from her older brother. This questions gender norms that could define women's responsibilities as obedient information consumers or as the only ones handling household chores. Sidra's technological expertise empowers her in the family dynamic while also dispelling gender stereotypes.

Extract 5

"Yeh daykhye! Sidra nay jesay hi computer on kya.
Is nay ammi abū koawāz di keh Hamid Bhai ka
payghām aūr tasveeray āi hæn"

The lesson *"Aayen! Madad Karyn"* demonstrates the equality of both genders. Extract 6 asserts that when Shazia asked her father about the scouts, he told her that scouting is not only a male profession but females can take part in this field. Shazia and Ali showed their concern about being a part of the scouting group and their father appreciated them. Shazia and Ali's involvement in scouting, their father's encouragement, and their defiance of conventional gender stereotypes all help to create a more accepting and empowering atmosphere that values each person's autonomy regardless of gender. Their father's admiration for their involvement in the scouting group points to a nurturing atmosphere where gender norms may be less strict. Their father is questioning gender norms that could restrict some hobbies to one gender or the other by supporting both Shazia and Ali. This is in line with feminism's goals of eradicating gender stereotypes and advancing equity for all.

Extract 6

Shazia: *Aba Jān! Mæn bhi girl guide ki tarbyat hāsil karūn gi aūr apnay mūlk ki khidmat karūn gi.*
Ali bhi jaldi say bola: "mæn bhi."
Aba Jān mūskūra dye.

Representation of Genders in the Images

The in-depth analysis of the textbooks revealed that many images represent gender. Image 3 is taken from the lesson of "Uncle Shams" in the English textbook of the Oxford University Press. Here, the image portrays four people; three of them are male while one of them is female. This represents the scenario of a house where one male person is hanging the picture and the other three are guiding him. The portrayal of the woman reveals that she is a housewife; wearing a simple dress and her facial expressions represent that she is worried about the mess. The traditional role of women is represented in the image. One male person holding luggage in his hands represents that he is a guest, and all male persons are well-dressed. The picture seems to support stereotypical ideas of gender roles by portraying women as being good hosts and taking care of the home. This entails extending a warm greeting to visitors and perhaps taking care of their requirements, like setting up lodging or providing refreshments.



Image 3

Image 4 is taken from the lesson "Karate Parrot" in the English textbook of the Oxford University Press. Here, the image portrays two people i.e. one male and one female. The scenario of the image represents the little pet shop where the female is asking about the parrot. The portrayal of the woman reveals that she is a housewife; wearing a simple dress and her facial expressions show that she wants to buy the parrot. The non-traditional role of a woman is represented in the image i.e. she is not limited to the household activities, and she knows what to buy. The picture dispels the popular misconception that women's jobs are limited to taking care of the home, cooking, and cleaning. It departs from the conventional view of women as exclusively in charge of household duties by showcasing a woman working on a task involving decision-making and shopping. The image of the woman making decisions about what to buy implies independence and agency when it comes to making purchases for the home. This disproves the idea that women engage in economic activity passively and emphasizes their capacity for autonomous decision-making. The image encourages equality in household dynamics by showcasing a woman who actively participates in decision-making regarding household purchases. It implies that rather than strict gender roles, household responsibilities should be divided according to abilities and preferences.



Image 4

Image 5 is taken from the lesson "Meri Pehchān Hai Tū" in the Urdu textbook of the Oxford University Press. Here, the image portrays four people standing in front of a TV screen i.e. one elder male, one young boy, and two young girls. The scenario of the image represents the room, and the TV screen displays the flag of Pakistan. Here, the assumption can be made that they are standing in respect to pay respect to the national anthem. The portrayal of two young girls and one young boy represents that the young girls are treated

equally as young boys; they are also given knowledge about the nation. The picture of two young girls and a young boy paying respect to the national anthem implies that knowledge about the country is transmitted equally. This goes against gender norms that may prioritize or view boys as more relevant when it comes to matters of national significance. It supports the notion that education about one's country, its history, and its symbols is something that both boys and girls can and should do and that taking part in national customs like paying homage to the anthem is not gender-specific.



Image 5

Image 6 is taken from the lesson “Hamāray Pæshay" in the Urdu textbook of the Oxford University Press. Here, the image portrays the professional roles of the male and female genders. In image 6, three different roles of the male gender are represented, i.e., armed forces, electrician, and pilot. Three different roles of the female gender are represented, i.e., teacher, tailor, and chemist. Stereotypes related to particular professions and conventional gender norms are reflected in the image. In the past, jobs like pilot, electrician, and military personnel have typically been held by men, whereas teacher and tailor have historically been linked with women. This upholds preconceived notions about the division of labor based on gender and the roles that are thought to be more appropriate for men than for women. The image's portrayal of these gendered professions emphasizes how crucial it is to acknowledge and publicize the variety of experiences and contributions that people have to offer. However, the representation of women working in the laboratory goes beyond the traditional roles of women. This implies that if opportunities are given to women, they will avail themselves of them and put in all their efforts to achieve whatever they want.

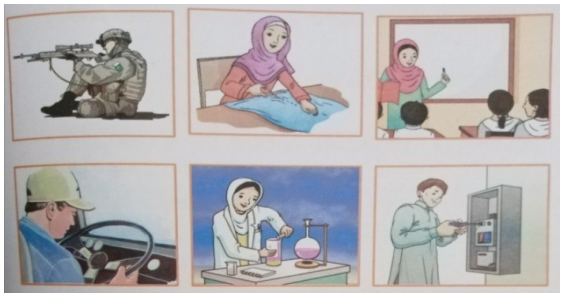


Image 6

Image 7 is taken from the lesson "*Āyen! Madad Karyn*" from the Urdu textbook of Oxford University Press. Here, the image portrays two boys and two girls. The dresses of both portray that they belong to the scouts. The purpose of scouting is to shape young people's identities, promote their physical, mental, and spiritual development, and make them morally responsible. Traditional gender roles and expectations are challenged by the inclusion of both boys and girls in the image. The two girls' presence in the picture emphasizes how crucial it is for women and girls to be represented and made visible in settings that are typically dominated by men. It implies that females should be included and represented in such circumstances and that they have a legitimate position in activities like scouting. The photograph defies traditional stereotypes by showing both boys and girls in the setting, implying that girls are just as interested in and capable of engaging in "boys' activities." The representation of the female gender in scouting groups is a good initiation for young girls.



Image 7

Image 8 is taken from the lesson "Hūsn-æ-Sūlook" from the Urdu textbook of the Oxford University Press. Here, the image represents four boys. The scenario of the image represents a street where three boys are playing cricket while one blind boy is just sitting aside. Cricket is the most common sport for boys to play. At an early age, they usually start to play cricket with their friends. Besides, inclusion and exclusion are depicted in this image. The blind boy's condition prevents him from directly participating in the game, even though the sighted guys are actively engaged. The blind boy's presence on the sidelines makes people think about compassion and empathy. The sighted boys might show empathy by involving him in some way, like changing the game to allow him to play or coming up with different methods to interact with him. It emphasizes how crucial it is to recognize and accept people with varying talents in social situations. In addition, the picture captures broader societal processes and perspectives on disability.



Image 8

Discussion

The comparative analysis of the English and Urdu textbooks of OUP represents Pakistani society in various aspects. Apart from that, the representation of gender is one of the major aspects. In the new textbook of Single National Curriculum, many innovations have been added. Gender equality is essential for the attainment of a peaceful nation and it is one of the fundamental human rights. Equal representation of gender can be seen on the cover page of the Urdu textbook of Oxford University Press where two male and two female students are drawing and cutting something in their study room. Whereas, the cover page of the English textbook also contains images of two female girls. Thus, the feminist agenda of equity has been fulfilled that women should be given equal place in society.

In addition to this, in the English textbook, the female gender is described as energetic and dreamed of becoming an engineer. Similarly, in the Urdu textbook, various professions for women are present i.e., chemist, scouts, tailor, and teacher. Hence, it can bring positive change in society that there should be no barrier for women to realize and fulfill their dreams and they should be given equal opportunities to choose their professional careers. This innovation assists and encourages female students to realize their interests and aptitudes and to understand what educational and professional careers are most appropriate for them. Students are strongly influenced by the portrayal of women in textbooks and often take them for granted and real. To eliminate gender prejudice and bias, policymakers, curriculum developers, and authors need to design textbooks according to the curriculum framework.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the curriculum of English textbooks was revised in Pakistan in March 2021. The representation of gender and gender roles in textbooks plays an important role in the mental development of students. Textbooks provide the lens through

which to view the world, so the representation of gender can positively and negatively impact the mindset of the learner. A descriptive-qualitative approach is used, and the data is analyzed qualitatively. Beauvoir's feminist theory is used for the analysis of the textbooks. Hence, women should be given equal and respectful roles in textbooks, and policymakers, curriculum developers, and authors need to design textbooks according to the curriculum framework to eliminate gender prejudice and bias. Children of both sexes should be treated equally; the comparative analysis of both textbooks from a feminist perspective will assist the authors in designing the course curriculum with great care.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study is limited to the English and Urdu textbooks of Oxford University Press, and it is limited to the Single National Curriculum of the 5th grade in Pakistan. Moreover, it only focuses on how gender representation is depicted in English and Urdu textbooks. However, future studies can be conducted on other grades of the Oxford University Press English Textbook by changing the perspective.

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