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Global Citizenship Education and Gender Equality in English and Islamiat Textbooks

by Punjab Board

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Abstract

This research highlights that gender equality as an educational approach can become a means for the country's soft image yet on the part of curriculum makers and writers of the under-study textbooks, there is a dire need to understand its importance in a global perspective. Moreover, the idea of postcolonial feminism as being related to gender equality also needs a clearer perspective on their part. The findings communicate that curriculum makers should rethink the idea as to how postcolonial feminism has impacted gender equality in our part of the world which is seriously lacking in some of these textbooks by Punjab Board.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Textbooks, Postcolonial Feminism

Introduction

Gender equality has always been taken as the prospects and access to female education; EFA (Education for All) identifies that gender equality holds a significant part in quality education (UNESCO, 2007). According to UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, “in 2007, the net enrolment ratio is 86%, the gender parity index is 0.96. In 2007, there were an estimated 18 million children out of school, 58% of whom were girls, an improvement on figures for 1999 when there were 39 million children out of school, 63% of which were girls”. (UNESCO, 2019)

It is imperative to invest in female education as it can improve their standard of living, job opportunities, pay packet and position in society (Peters et al., 2008). Education Policy by UNESCO focuses upon human rights, democracy, and gender equality. It supports skills, education, and inclusion while putting emphasis on female education. Education for All by UNESCO targets on educating everyone irrespective of their age by 2015. UNESCO is being given responsibility of leading and directing the endeavors to make education for all a possibility. (UNESCO, 2019)

Postcolonial Feminism

Postcolonial feminism came as a reaction to colonialism, feminism. Postcolonial Feminism defies Euro-American feminists' predisposition to universalize the kinds of oppression they face in their own lives. It ignores the essential differences between the women belonging to varied nationalities, religious and ethnic groups. Postcolonial feminism contends that equality has different meaning for women belonging to various regions of the world. (Kamran, 2017)

Postcolonial feminists are of the view that feminisms should appear locally from regions instead of being forced by Euro-American school of thought. (Kamran, 2017)

Postcolonial feminism decolonizes feminist activism — claiming it to be much more than a blind pursuit of the western world. Postcolonial feminist writings seek to understand and interpret day to day experiences of a woman through postcolonial perspective, de-centering the white, western, Eurocentric experience. (McClintock, 1995)

Gender Equality and Pakistani Curriculum

According to UNESCO (2007), gender discrimination in education is a major concern in South Asia especially Pakistan. The World Economic Forum states that Pakistan is on 56 number among 58 countries who have made significant progress towards gender equality, despite equal rights and equal working conditions for males and females in legislation. There are two approaches towards gender

equality in Pakistan, one that marginalizes women and the other one that asks for a balanced position for them. (Kabeer, 2005)

Pakistan has two categories of schools one is with male students and male teachers and the other one is female students and female teachers. At secondary level, educational institutes in Pakistan are single gendered and this is preferred by parents. Very small number of private educational institutes have co-education at secondary school level, but they have separate sections for boys and girls even in the same class (Bishop, 2002). Current studies about female teaching and learning in Pakistan demonstrate significant progress in having equality in gender in educational sphere. But still there are certain disparities and the procedure being quite slow as stated on the Ministry of Women's Development Pakistan website. (Ministry of Education, 2009)

Course books are an important part of syllabuses, being a significant and powerful instrument by which young learners have exposure to gender equality (Aikman & Rao, 2010). For instance, in Pakistan, in an interview, many females revealed that textbook images are taken as models for them. Since 1970s research on the inclusion of notions about gender in textbooks is going on. There are many studies that have evaluated textbooks across many countries have found the results to be steady as far as the representation of gender is concerned. (Malik & Hussain, 1985)

A strategy is needed for inclusion of gender and gender roles into the mainstream curriculum. Many European countries openly maintain in policy documents that curriculum should reflect gender perspective throughout. The Maltese National Minimum Curriculum maintains that sexual characteristics and equity as subject matter must not be taken in segregation. It should be treated as idea connecting all the disciplines, developed in the framework of a specific theme, while curbing bias by using more gender-inclusive options. (Mohindra & Nikiema, 2010)

Overall Research Approach and Design

This article is mainly based on a qualitative research framework coupled with the content analysis strategy of the prescribed secondary school compulsory textbooks of English and Islamiyat from Punjab Textbook Board. A thematic analysis has been done, keeping the concept of gender equality mentioned in UNESCO's target 4.7 for Global Citizenship Education as main theme.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze gender inequalities as depicted in the textbooks content
2. To explore the extent of gender depiction as revealed in the textbooks content

Sample

1. English Compulsory for grade 9 (by Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board), year 2018-19, b Ruhi Zaka Malik, Fatima Dar and Zarqa Bashir. Tag PB2019Eng9
2. English Compulsory for grade 10 (by Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board), year 2018-19, by Sobia Kiyani. Tag PB2019Eng10
3. Islamiyat Compulsory for grade 9 & 10 (by Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board), year 2018-19, by Dr. Ehsan-ul-Haq, Dr. Saeed Ullah Qazi (Late), Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Azhar, Dr. Zia-ul-Haq Yousaf Zai, Prof. Iftikhar Ahmed Bhatta, Dr. Muhammed Ishaq Qureshi, Dr. Shabbir Ahmed Mansoori, Prof. Ameena Nasira, Abdul Sattar Ghori (Late), Muhammed Nazim Ali Khan Matalvi, Dr. Muhammed Tahir Mustafa, Qari Syed Sharif Al Hashmi (Late). Tag PB2019Is9-10

Literature Review

The globalised world offers many opportunities as well as challenges to the young. They should be given such education that will enable them to seek new opportunities and face challenges to make a congenial world with the type of education which supports in their growth as global citizens. By participatory methods used in Global Citizenship Education, the learners know that how things decided at other part of the world influence them and vice versa. Learners are motivated in Global Citizenship Education to take active part in decision making and learning procedures. (Brysk & Sharif, 2004). While there is so much significance which is given to the aspects of training students into global citizens, the engendered treatment of the textbooks content itself has called for attention of curriculum evaluators. Issues of gender inequality as well as of gender impartiality find their refuge and representation in educational evaluations of curriculum content. Main ideas in this structure center on performance and potential, where performance becomes many things that a person does, and potential is what is feasible for that person (Achyut et al., 2011). For accomplishing gender equality in

education, the freedom of all no matter what the gender along with any other type of inequity while choosing their dealings, goals, and traits, should be kept in mind. (Aikman and Rao, 2010)

Gender partiality can also be taught completely through the materials selected for teaching in classroom. Use of materials which exclude aid of females, knowledge, and skill of women, or typecast gender responsibilities, highlight gender predisposition in curricula and this should not be done. While research manifest that by using works suitable for both genders, learners tend to gain equitable and unbiased information. They have supple attitudes as regards gender roles, and copy actions shared in the resources. (Cross & Mkwanazi-Twala, 1998)

Statistical measures used to show gender equality in education do have some representational issues as that does not show prejudices and disparities present in an educational environment that usually comprise of societal and cultural patterns of behavior and stereotypes associated with the idea of gender. As Aikman and Rao (2010) maintain, suppositions for being suitable for a lad and suitable for a lass to study frequently destabilizes objectives of equity in the science of teaching. Conventional societies frequently support the male point of view. This should be highly understood that gender equality should be a part of education, for adding up value in it, and considered as a bigger communal set up to maintain a dialogism-based communication among the outliers and the conventional powers where underlying suppositions can be confronted. (Waage et al., 2010)

Postcolonial feminism is about decolonizing feminist involvement — and to redo it as more than just a blind chase of the western world and its inhabitants. Postcolonial feminists seek “to understand and interpret everyday lived experiences through a postcolonial perspective, de-centring the white, western, Eurocentric experience.” (McClintock, 1995)

Postcolonial feminism encompasses the possibility for varied, organic feminisms that try to put an end to the implications of sexism, racism, capitalism, and imperialism overall. “It reminds us of the united front of “sisterhood” is less in the spirit of feminism than are solidarity and awareness of the multitude of global experiences that comprise womanhood.” (Kamran, 2017)

Spivak argues that “the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the axioms of imperialism.” (Spivak, 1985: 243)

“White feminism tells us that equality is fixed and looks the same everywhere. Postcolonial feminism reminds us that while western feminism might advocate for, as an example, equal pay, that same concern may not be forefront for women outside of Europe and America.” (McClintock, 1995)

Curriculum is a connector of the objectives of a nation’s educational policy and its deliverance in educational scenario. The curricula define what should be added and why. It also determines the procedures for teaching and assessment. It can enforce the elimination of gender inequalities and stereotypes by having a check at the content and procedure of educational materials also keeping the assessment criteria in focus. Social inequalities, gender biases along with stereotyping and diversification of learning process and materials should be the focus. The curriculum should, in short, be a source of spreading positivity, gender equality and upholding of human rights. Dealing with sexual predispositions in the field of textbooks along with curricula should be central to gaining educational equity. (Baldo & Fumiss, 1998)

Textbook reform evaluation in several countries has been mainly of second-generation textbooks. By these calculations, initiatives taken for textbook reforms show some level of success but at the same time manifest although more overt sexism has been curbed but there are still subtle representations in later grades (Hogg & Smith, 2007). There should be studies to calculate the impact factor regarding gender biases along with reform initiatives on teachers and students.

Theme of Gender Equality has been discussed under these sub-themes:

- Gender Inequalities
- Lack of Female Representation

Discussion

Gender based discriminations are very common in the textbooks despite the claims made by the curriculum writers regarding equal education for women. As with the passage of time, more women are coming in decisive roles in all spheres of life along with working in the front line for the recognition of their rights, these textbooks define the ways in which women are perceived by the society, which not only shows a serious lapse in the implementation of educational policies regarding women but also raises a lot of questions regarding the validity of these texts. After reading the under-discussion textbooks (with some exceptions), most obvious points are these, firstly the people

engaged in the making of textbooks do not take educational policies regarding women on a serious level and consider them only rhetoric. Secondly, the patriarchal mindsets prevailing in the society are so strong that even policy makers and academics while working on these curriculums, do not realize and recognize a social order that takes men and women alike. Thirdly, very clear guidelines are needed for the content of textbooks regarding women representation. Fourthly, even when guidelines are given but the people involved in choosing and developing these texts fail to make the difference between a stereotypical or a negative representation of a gender with the effects that these stereotypes can have on impressionable young minds. Fifthly, the editors and writers of these texts are comfortable with these gender binaries and stereotypes as they have been doing it for years and becomes a matter of habit. Sixthly, the makers of these texts seem to be believing in preserving the status quo.

In English grade 9 (PB2019Eng9), except the editor every other person is a female in the writing committee. In Unit three, a female is introduced as a teacher discussing the role of media with students. Unit four is on a prominent woman in the history of Islam Hazrat Asma (RAA) and her services for Islam and Prophet (PBUH). Unit nine “All is not Lost” is the story of a female nurse and her untiring commitment to her cause and her patients, especially a female patient who got the courage to stand upon her feet once again due to the unrelenting efforts of this nurse. Unit twelve “Three Days to See” by Helen Keller is the story of a woman who is losing her sight and the ability to listen with every passing day. “Western feminists have not only failed to read gender issues at the cross sections of race and class, but they have also ignored the importance of socio-historical and cultural context in examining the condition of “Third World” women” (Tyagi, 2014). As is evident from the choice of topics for this book, these topics are grounded in the social, cultural, and religious context which western feminists will be unable to perceive.

In English for grade 10 (PB2019Eng10), there is only one author of this book and that is a female, also it is being supervised by a female which initially seems to be very enlightening but in the whole book there is only one time when a female’s name is taken i.e. in Unit 11 “Great Expectations” where main character Pip’s sister is shown as a very cruel and hard hearted person otherwise no reference to any female real or fictional is made throughout this book. Chandra Mohanty in her article “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” disapproves of hegemonic Western colonialism in Western feminist scholarship. In several Western radical and liberal feminist writings, Mohanty identifies the “colonialist move” which comprises of making the “Third World” woman as a singular and monolithic subject. (Mohanty, 1984)

In contrast to these, Islamiyat textbooks for Secondary School (Punjab Board) with varied content and thematically, are closer to UNESCO’s SDG target 4.7 as these have content about women, minorities, social standards to be followed, tolerance, diversity, and peace. The book is compiled and written under the supervision of a female. There is a good representation of women in writers’ and review board of this book. In Lesson Four, part 1, some verses from the Holy Quran are shared regarding women. Similarly in Lesson Five part 1 and 2, again some verses from the Holy Quran are shared about the sanctity and responsibilities of the women. Lesson Five part 3, and Lesson 6 part 1, is about the rights granted to Muslim women by their religion. Lesson 6 part 2, is about the duties of women as good Muslims. Lesson 7 part 2, is about the rights that are given to women as Muslims. Section Two of this textbook is about Ahadith. In Hadith 2 there is an insistence about female education, and it is insisted in the light of Hadees that it is as important as education of any male. Unit 7 of Section 3 is again about the rights of women that are due upon the male members of their families. In Unit 8 and (of Section 3, again some more rights of females are mentioned. Hence Islamiyat textbook (Punjab Textbook Board, Secondary Level) has a very good female representation both in content and in writers and editorial board. Fatima Mernissi argues, “there is an ideological divide in Muslim society between the public world of the umma, coded as male and secluded world of the home and harem, coded as female and familial. This separation is preserved by the veil which allows women to pass through the spaces of the public without losing the security of seclusion. Islam differs from the West in seeing female sexuality as dangerously active (rather than as intrinsically passive) and thus as something in need of control.” (Mernissi, 1995)

Mohanty says, “the production of the image of the third world woman “as always and everywhere oppressed is what sustains the illusion of first world women’s autonomy: the assumption that they are secular, liberated, and hav[e] control over their own lives.” (Mohanty, 1984: 353)

As postcolonial theorists work hard against the initial colonial discourse that seeks to show him as secondary, the job of a postcolonial feminist is much more difficult. There is “double colonization”. She must withstand the influence of colonial power not only as a subject, but also as a woman. In this fight against the colonizer, the indigenous male also exploits her by distorting her image in national discourse. Moreover, she suffers at the hands of “Western feminists from the colonizer countries who misrepresent their colonized counterparts by imposing silence on their racial, cultural, social, and political specificities, and in so doing, act as potential oppressors of their sisters.” (Tyagi, 2014)

Derived from the discussion above, this research work implies that there is partiality and discrimination towards women and the textbook material is selected in such a way as to give minimum possible representation to women. Punjab Textbook board’s books for English grade 10 is example of this. According to Action Aid International (2013), gender partiality can also be taught completely through the materials selected for teaching in classroom. Use of materials which exclude aid of females, knowledge, and skill of women, or typecast gender responsibilities, highlight gender predisposition in curricula and this should not be done. According to Action Aid International (2013), by using works suitable for both genders, learners tend to gain equitable and unbiased information. They have supple attitudes as regards gender roles, and copy actions shared in the resources.

Table Gender Equality

Theme	Sub-Themes	Categories	Codes	Meaning of Units
Gender Equality	gender inequalities	Gender based stereo types	Roles of male and female	One and only author of book is a female, gender inequality (PB2019Eng10) Only one time name of a female is mentioned(PB2019Eng10)
	Issues of female representation	Absence or presence of representation	Social Order	Lack of female representation both in content and context (PB2019 Eng10) Good representation of women in editorial board and content (PB2019Is9-10) Women rights and responsibilities are given equal weightage (PB2019Is9-10) Representation of women in idealistic roles (PB2019Eng9)

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on textbooks of Punjab Textbook Board

Conclusion

The females who do not conform to the norms, stand as outcasts in the society and hence have no representation in the textbooks. This image stands contrary to UNESCO’s global citizenship agenda where women are given equal opportunities and strengths. The absence of female representation in English textbook grade ten is quite contrary to the reality as more and more women are entering the fields hitherto only known to the men, but this reality check does not affect the curriculum makers who are insistent upon producing texts based upon patriarchal myths that no longer exist. While in contrast, Islamiat textbook by Punjab Textbook Board for Secondary level has very good female representation both in content and writing board. English textbook for grade 9 by Punjab Board also does justice to the theme of gender equality given in SDG target 4.7 by UNESCO.

Recommendations

1. Gender biases are social constructions and by changing the stereotypes, global citizenship will be a step closer.
2. Human potential is God-gifted and not a gender-construct and to acknowledge the gift of God, one needs to grow out of these stereotypes.

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