

Gender Inclusion: A Neglected Aspect of the English Textbooks in Pakistan

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Abstract

The research paper aims to investigate the gender inclusion in the textbooks used for teaching English language at the secondary level in Pakistan. The issue is important keeping in mind the central role played by the textbooks in the Pakistani education system. The approved textbooks have been called the 'pillars of quality' (Aly 2007, p.17), by the ministry of education Pakistan and the textbooks in the state schools are published by the government which are compulsory for all students. The findings of this research paper are based on the content analysis of the three English language textbooks published by the Punjab textbook board, questionnaire and interviews. The paper argues for a broader understanding of the issue and its importance in the Pakistani society as the results indicated that English teachers at the secondary level see the textbooks inclusive in gender terms, however the content analysis and interviews has portrayed a different picture. The curriculum of English language at the secondary level in Pakistan has stressed that along with the functional competency the inclusive aspects of education need to be reflected in the textbooks. As, the message delivered by the content of the textbooks shapes the opinions of the students in a subtle manner. Inclusive content in terms of gender will lead towards the development of the aware citizen where equality is celebrated and gender specific supremacy is deterred.

Keywords: Textbooks, gender, inclusion, English curriculum, Equality.