There is Many a Slip Betwixt Cup and Lip. An Inquiry to Dig Out Hurdles Faced by the Stakeholders in Gender Representation in English Textbooks of Pakistan

Dr Tahira Akbar
Assistant professor University of the
Punjab Lahore Pakistan
Tel= +923334521572 Email dr.tahirasial@gmail.com

Dr. Sahira Zamaan
Fatima Jinnah Women University
Rawalpindi, Pakistan
Tel= +92 3325263491 Email sahira_zb@hotmail.com

Qaiser Iqbal (Corresponding author)
Director, GIFT University
Gujranwala, Pakistan
Tel= +923338748673 Email iqbalq93@gmail.com

Abstract
Gender is an important aspect of life noticeably revealed through visuals in textbooks with a deep impression on recipients. School textbooks are made compulsory for the students to read and later on they develop some perceptions and ideals about a society based on these read texts. These textbooks are a combination of text and images through which different concepts are taught. This study aimed to assess the awareness about the sensitization level of visual representation of gender created through textbooks in the provincial curriculum of the English language of Pakistan. The study's objective is to find out issues involved on the side of the stakeholders in bookmaking and publishing regarding gender representation. A qualitative research design was used to collect data from four chairpersons of textbook boards and two authors of textbooks from each province of Pakistan. Twelve in-depth interviews were conducted through a semi-structured interview guideline. Findings showed an apparent unawareness of all stakeholders regarding gender and their social, political, and economic representation. It was found that some of the stakeholders even did not know the true concept of gender and thought that gender equality means only the equal number of visual representations of males and females without bothering that how are they being presented. They ignore that it is more important to see how both sexes are embodied rather than how many times. Text is not in the domain of this study; only the perspective of the stakeholders about the visual's representation is discussed here. The study brought issues into the limelight that must be resolved to make visuals complement the text and present latent meaning independently with a positive impact. This study will reveal how much is this important to make the stakeholders gender sensitized for the better and more positive gender representation.
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1. Introduction
Textbooks are the key source of inculcating information, culture, and ideology in the students within our formal public schooling system (Lee, 2010; Pandhiani et al., 2016). Textbooks also transmit gender roles and social values (Amerian & Esmaili, 2015) through verbal or non-verbal text it drive gender stereotyping and inequalities (Islam & Asadullah, 2018) and marked as less researched in Pakistani context with its stiff and inherently woven binary fabric of gender has a patriarchal structure with a set design of conduct and attitude for all genders (Hadi, 2017) with men as a principal authority (T. S. Ali et al., 2011). All optimistic superior traits consistent display (Weisberg, et al, 2011) attached with men and negative, static attributes with the woman (Hameed, 2014). Both genders inhabit diverse societal places with an obvious separation of private and public life and non-progressive attitude (Ashraf & Farah, 2007).

Textbooks with stereotyped gender roles promote the non-progressive attitude of the people, as books signify the societal attitude of a specific time period (Brower, 2017). A very robust, authoritative, and front-line male character succeeds mainly in the stories envisioned for children and fragile, compliant, young, and self-justifying roles defined for feminine characters (Tahira, et.al, 2018). Patterson (1980) commented that education is either for domestication or for freedom. Although it is customarily conceived as a conditioning process,

education can equally be an instrument for de-conditioning through an official education system by making gender a procedure of naturalization (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). It is an effective medium to shake off gender disparities and gender-insensitive curriculum can debilitate the predominant causes of gender differences in a society (Aljuaythin, 2018; Islam & Asadullah, 2018). Therefore, the present study is grounded on this ontology that in production of the course of naturalization, not the physical force but pushing a good number of the populace in one reception and refusal by scheming syllabus of prescribed education counts from people interacting. Teaching is important but the instructive material nurtures constructive and desirable identity indicators of gender in students (Paul et al., 2016) subsequently affect their perceptions about how women and men are presented and depicted in the instructional materials (Akay Şahİn & Açikalin, 2021).

Curriculum language presented verbal or nonverbal is customary agent embedding social roles, but pictures and visuals are ignored and considered secondary to support the words (Aftab, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Semiotics is a meaning-making source enabling an enhanced, thoughtful and insightful investigation of the visuals (Haider, 2009; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020) claims that students should be ready to develop visual language skills before verbal development. Students connect illustrations and images with their lives' practices and then generate meanings according to their prevailing schematics (Kasmaienezhadfard et al., 2015). Textbooks replicate societal, cultural, commercial, and political conditions within the setting of a culture where it is delivered and then made understood (Chiponda & Wassermann, 2015). Meanings of words and signs of a textbook do not differ arbitrarily rather they work very constantly and logically (Pikkarainen, 2011).

Semiotics in English textbooks are vital to be pragmatically detected and evaluated critically and give an idea about the country's social, economic, and cultural understanding (Chiponda & Wassermann, 2015). English is an international language and taught as a compulsory subject in Pakistani schools. Cultural norms and values are portrayed through the visuals in textbooks. In English textbooks, when language becomes a barrier to understanding words, visuals lend a hand in understanding the text and even the hidden ideology of the people involved in making these textbooks and favoured (Shabiralyani et al., 2015). The same instrument (textbooks) can change and modify the existing gender ideologies and conditions through stimulating gender-neutral notions by teachers and writers (Fox, 1993). The students' analytical thinking skills can be enhanced through visual learning strategies (Raiyn, 2016) because visuals are effective tools facilitating students to understand content and make students active, communicative, participative in communication through visuals, images, and pictures (Inaltekin & Goksu, 2019; Pateşan et al., 2018).

Weninger & Kiss, (2013) believe that pictures and scripts can overtly develop a critical and spontaneous understanding of culture, self, and others. However, the research conducted to analyze the presentation of gender visuals in textbooks in Pakistan (A. Ali et al., 2015; Fatima et al., 2015; Jabeen & Ilyas, 2012) do not include the brains working behind these textbooks as a unit of analysis which directly impacts the presentation of social values in textbooks. Therefore, the focus of current research is to include Authors and policymakers (chairpersons) of English textbooks in Pakistan warranting to fill the existing gap in this area of research.

Provincial Status of Textbook Development in Pakistan

Pakistan has four provinces. All provinces developed their own publication system and invited private publishers to bring books written by their authors at school levels. The submissions of the manuscripts by the publishers went through the assessment procedure, and then a committee discussed and finalized the book unanimously (Mahmood, 2010). Sindh Textbook Board (STB) and Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) published textbooks in 2015 and 2018 with the same content and visuals, but only some books' titles cover pages were changed. Textbook boards of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan changed some chapters in their English textbooks, but the rest of the things remained the same.

Many studies have been done to critically analyze the concept of gender presented through various images and pictures. However, it was never tried to unveil the social, political, financial, and religious obstacles faced by the stakeholders in the preparation and printing process of any textbook of the four provinces of Pakistan. To dig out the reasons which are apparently not obvious but have a significant impact, directly or indirectly, on the material presented in textbooks and then on the students.

2. Objectives

1. To investigate about the level of gender awareness and gender relations in Textbook Board Chairpersons and authors of English language textbooks of Pakistan.
2. To know the requirement of the cover page and gender depictions of textbooks according to their authors and chairpersons.
3. To identify the kinds of obstacles/problems in gender portrayal during the formulation of the English language Textbooks of all four provinces of Pakistan

3. Method

3.1 Participants and study locale

This study follows the exploratory qualitative research design. A total of 12 stakeholders were interviewed, including two authors and one chairperson from each province of Pakistan. These provinces include Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. All the chairpersons were men, and only men authors were available for the interviews, though the women authors' names were mentioned in the textbooks. Demographics are described in the table 1.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the study participants (N=12)

Province	Participants (all men)	Qualification	Age (yrs.)	Work Experience in current positions (yrs.)
Punjab	chairperson	Ph.D. (History)	65	06
	Author 1	M.A(English)	50	10
	Author 2	M.Phil. (English)	45	12
Sindh	chairperson	M.A (Political Science)	60	05
	Author 1	M.A(English)	55	07
	Author 2	M.Phil. (English)	50	09
Baluchistan	chairperson	Master's in Political science	60	04
	Author1	Ph.D. (English)	42	06
	Author2	M.Phil. (English)	50	10
Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa(KP)	chairperson	Economics	58	03
	Author 1	Ph.D. (English)	56	12
	Author 2	M.Phil. (English)	46	09

3.2 Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide developed to unwrap the participant's point of view directly involved and influenced the book publication process.

3.3 Procedure

Stakeholders of the four provinces of Pakistan were contacted telephonically, and their time was requested for the interviews. The chairpersons and authors of Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh gave the appointment to visit them in their offices. Interaction with the chairperson and author of Baluchistan was not made possible due to their busy schedule, so it was decided that their interviews would be conducted telephonically. Questions were asked according to the interview guide. Interviews were taken one on one.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Prior to conduct the formal interviews, the research purpose was discussed with the interviewees with the option to refuse the answer of any question if they feel any hesitation. All the participants showed no hesitancy in becoming the part of this study. The respondent's answers were coded with different identities.

3.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis technique presented by (Clark, et al., 2015)

4. RESULTS

4.1 Province Punjab

4.1.1 Awareness regarding gender and gender parity in textbooks of Punjab

Chairperson and the authors consistently exhibited their confidence in gender equity but self-confessed that gender stereotypes exist in the textbooks. They felt it happened due to many overpowering variables affecting the compilation of these textbooks with gender predispositions and consciously or unconsciously appearing in nonverbal parts of the textbooks. Chairperson of Punjab textbook Board emphasized that both women and men

are shown in the textbooks doing various jobs and activities which are very traditional in our society. They explain gender as,

> "*Gender is the presence of manlike and womanlike figures, though; gender biases appear when some male depiction is in a unit and there is a need to show someone weaving or doing home tasks than a female should be presented to have the equal representation of both sexes.*"

In response to gender labelling and its occurrence in textbooks, the stakeholders were very optimistic about the gender approach, shifting from stereotype to equity. The chairperson stated assuredly that "*this is reformed and will be rehabilitated further in the future in English textbooks of Punjab.*"

Author 2 also signifies both males and females alike in numbers in text and pictures, and gender responsiveness is part of the curriculum. He added, "*We consider   gender fairness in diagrams also. If in the text we present the hero from religion or history, we take a female also and make this consciousness part of the curriculum*".

4.1.2 Text and non-verbal gender illustration

Respondents were in favor of verbal and nonverbal communication. "*Nonverbal communication at the children's level becomes a helping hand for the teachers to clarify themes by making it a self-explanatory part of the information for the students*", said chairperson. However, he did not convey the true meaning visual literacy. He considered the images and visuals more for the decoration than for information or any didactic purpose as chairperson said, "*yes, images should be to fascinate the students but essentially be gender sensitized*".

4.1.3 Need//Importance of cover page and gender illustration

When the respondents thought that the cover page had great significance regarding readers. Chairperson enlightened, '*cover pages are prearranged by keeping in mind the students' phase, age, and understanding considering that cover page is an opening to get the attention of the student*". "*The initiative to design a cover page of textbook is to carry the book's main idea where gender should be presented with a neutral attitude, but this point is least concerned feature for the individuals involved*", Author 2 added.

They explained that a separate team is formed to discuss and finalize the cover page pictures and panache. He added that,

> "*Usually, two cover pages are designed, and after discussion one is finalized for the printing, but we think that true gender representation is not our priority*". Author 1 said, "Actually writers and the artist design more than one cover pages which are selected unanimously, but in this process, gender is usually not the focused area".

4.1.4 Perspective on pictorial presentation of characters in English textbooks

In reply to a pictographic depiction of characters about their color, magnitude, look, setup, costume, and the kinds like imageries, drawings, and artworks, the authors were found dependent. Author 2 said, "*We become helpless in finalizing illustrations due to many financial constraints*". When it was specified that many pictures were unclear and distorted, they defended themselves by stating it a policy matter. They explained that tackling policy matters is not an easy job.

> "*We all are answerable, but some persons become so stuck in a system and cannot apply any reasonable solution by themselves, so their heart bleeds. Here we can say that money makes the mare go*", said author 1.

About the policy of choosing the images and illustrations, the chairperson explained, "*it is tried that proper pictures of boys and girls are used instead of small cartoon-like faces, but government became obstacle by ordering to reduce the expenditures by reducing the size of paper and font, and then we take pictures and images for the sake of the pictures only.*"

All of the respondents were bound by social norms and religious values. chairperson said that "*I cannot dare to present something contrary to the societal rules and norms as if I show a woman mounting horse, I would be soon in a grave by the religious representatives*".

The existing syllabus was declared excellent and instructive. Author 1 appreciated the syllabus and said, "*the prevailing syllabus is very open-minded and informative*". In response to the status of visual literacy, all agreed that interest is enhanced due to the images and understanding of pictures, but it needs expenses that are not affordable. chairperson said, "*visuals should heighten the students' interest, but there we face monetary limitations. The better condition of books makes it expensive and more than the purchasing power of the students. That's why it is intended to deliver the best with the lowermost price and in this process equality in the images of gender portrayal is overlooked*".

4.1.5 Obstacles during the publication process of textbooks for gender portrayal

The stakeholders had reservations about the individual's interference in publishing textbooks and negating the unanimous decisions. Author 1 said, "*subjective approach overpowers the objective approach during the development of textbooks. Decisions must be taken with the help of a situational scrutiny of the schools and close investigation of the prescribed syllabus.*"

The chairperson and authors made a comparison between local publishers and the publishers of other

countries and expressed that here publishers lack basic facilities to produce good books and even proper subject specialists are not available. Author 1 said that *"Our publishers work with very old and outdated machinery. Moreover, the authors who are even not specialized are hired to prepare books."*. Author 2 spoke boldly that, *"With the impression of prominent and famous names the contracts are secured, but very ordinary and inexperienced people are actually engaged to write books and even are ill-informed about the gender type crucial issues and keep on offering labelled things"*.

Both authors believed that the Punjab textbook board should be developed independently as a welfare organization with some better package for the authors. Author 2 convincingly stated, *"the Board should pay his authors an attractive sum so that they work pleasingly to improve the overall image of textbooks"*. Regarding the positive and equality-based representation of gender, the respondents wanted the process of gender sensitization to negate the traditional way. Author 2 said,

"Exposure and refresher courses should be started for the stakeholders, facilitating them for gender sensitized portrayals instead of easily available stereotyped and biased visuals and properly meet the requirements mentioned in the style guide".

The respondents objected to the meetings held by policymakers as just a wastage of time and money as no rule is followed by them. The chairperson mentioned that *"there held lengthier, time-consuming, and costly meetings, all in vain, as all rules and procedure are known but nothing is done according to it. NOC's are delivered due to approaches and pressure, and resultantly books are enticed"*.

4.1.6 Awareness of stakeholders about gender and gender equality

Regarding gender awareness and equality, respondents explained Gender as conventional characters given to sex, as females are cooking and performing domestic work while menfolk are allocated outdoor jobs. Author 1 said, *"multifaceted and challenging jobs are typically kept for males, whereas easy works are for females"*.

The chairperson seconded the point of view of the authors and said,

"All of these   *stereotypes cannot be accepted or rejected always. Jobs related to physical toil, manual work, and forces are very hard and tough and not meant for women. Likewise, for bringing up families with softness, attention, care and love we can never rely on men"*.

Author 2 was in favor of equal opportunities for both genders according to their intelligence level and he said,

"In my view responsibilities must be given according to the ability of the person and requirement of the job. I had scrutinized textbooks from grades 1- 11 and did not witness any biased attitude about any gender in textbooks. I am an author and I feel that I must not give an edge to any gender regarding the tasks and roles in society. Gender consciousness is 100% in the prescribed English Textbook".

4.1.7 Gender illustration as non-verbal communication

Respondents clarified that gender represented through verbal and non-verbal communication. Author 1 clarified the importance of nonverbal communication as *"it occasionally balances and concludes the verbal communication as it is interrelated to the textual description of gender and is almost 50 percent of average conversation"*.

Author 2 commented that "*even occasionally, words cannot represent gender-related emotions and messages, which can be attractively expressed through non-verbal report in the form of images, pictures, and visual"*.

Even one of the respondents preferred nonverbal communication to verbal communication as the latent meaning is revealed.

Author 1 said,

"*Thoughtful understanding of gender-related illustrations is necessary to written learning"*.
Training of gender depicted signs and codes is semiotic. Icons and signs display various activities, and the roles played by males and females in textbooks, but nonstereotyped ideas are scarcely used. Gender-related vocabulary is used for literal meanings, mostly, but the connotation is present in the illustrations of the textbooks".

4.1.7 Importance of gender portraying images and cover pages

Respondents were in favor of the striking and catchy cover page to provoke curiosity in the reader (students) regarding the book's content. Authors said that "*generally, artists propose various cover pages to be selected by writers or compilers later on"*. Respondents admitted that proper gender representation was ignored and used irrelevant images due to financial issues. chairperson admitted that" *due to the ignorance of the importance of gender equality and cost constraints in book publication, some vague and cartoon-like figures are printed on cover pages"*.

4.1.8 Procedure of the pictorial representation of characters

The chairperson was very mindful about the policy related matters and expressed his feelings as: *"Creative writing, teaching and assessment techniques should be the expertise of the Textbook reviewers. Instead of taking guiding rules and SLOs (*student learning objectives*) in literal sense they should develop a broader vision of*

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meanings while evaluating a book".

The authors opined that a book might contain all SLOs but can't necessarily be appealing, as it is important for a book to make it student-friendly aiming to encourage lifelong learning.

chairperson added that *"Many matters like gender sensitization and books are reviewed for gender sensitization, discriminatory comments, observance of social and cultural customs, language adoption, appropriateness to the stage of students, response of the operators and proposals for more interpretations".* Author 1 further said that, *"an extensive procedure of detailed review of the document is completed prior to its confirmation".*

4.1.9 Price of publication process of gender sensitized textbooks

Respondents admitted that the price matter is the main obstacle in the process of textbook publication. Due to which new gender sensitized pictures are not taken; instead, typical old pictures are used with no social, economic, political, and educational equality of male and female and limited expression. This results in smaller number of pages and improper space given to visuals. Author 1 pointed out, *"Occasionally appropriate images are not drawn by artists that can foil the text due to financial restraints".* Author 2 remarked that: *"the management favors words over visuals because gender indicators are not very clear in text, but stereotypical gender impressions remain evident in visuals."*

Most of the respondents thought that only to suggest topics to add up in books is not enough. Something more than this is required. They complained that even they are not allowed to select new topics for books.

Authors confessed sadly that,

"Value education, character building, and nurturing decent habits are very important training and character-building components but are, unfortunately, completely left for the authors only. The subject with 19 themes and various sub-themes is introduced but without appropriately plotting the grade level. We need the experts to make books gender sensitized but unfortunately we don't have".

Author 1 spoke about his limitations that *"After all how many topics can be selected by the authors. An author chooses one or two themes which recur during the schooling years and many significant topics are left unattended and even gender like central societal issue is ignored".* Similar view expressed by author 2, *"author is given the responsibility of choosing and deciding several themes but he gets no guidance from the curriculum development board".*

4.2 Province Sindh

4.2.1 Awareness regarding gender and gender parity in textbooks of Sindh

Chairperson explained Gender as, *"Gender is a subclass of English syntax as a noun, pronoun, and adjective or a way to differentiates features like sex, manners or mode of being".* Most of the respondents defined gender as part of grammar or a way in which sex behaves. Author 1 described gender as, *"It is the variance of sex performance, temper, and mindset of man and woman".* Only one respondent considered gendered as socially constructed visions about male and female, *"gender is socially constructed roles via society",* said author 2.

Respondents considered gender equality a challenge for which efforts should be made at the level of education to remove the gender variance between, but in his opinion, it cannot be accomplished without appropriate teaching. The chairperson of the board believed that gender is entirely regarding the people's rights, and we cannot achieve gender parity through thinking or conduct. chairperson cited an exciting example of gender equality as,

"Two friends come to an eatery. One wanted grilled chicken, and the other wanted spice rice as both had dissimilar tastes as both had equal opportunity to order the things of their own choice. Later on, when they get the bill, they found the rate of chicken more than rice. At that moment the first one thought that they must pool equally, then the second one refused and took it as a biased way of proving equality".

Chairperson uttered, *"we can admire each other's wishes, likings, and opinion, but we cannot compute gender parity by any method or formula.*

Some respondents favored equal rights of education and progress for both males and females for the progress of a country. Author 1 said, *"Gender impartiality in fact is to give equal chances in education and professions with the opportunities of partaking in nation-building actions".*

4.2.2 Text and non-verbal gender illustration

Respondents demarcated verbal communication as a process of speaking, dialogue usage, and hearing of the individuals, while nonverbal communication is motions, signs, and figure language but they preferred words over images. chairperson clarified that *"verbal communication has clarity and explains things unambiguously. Therefore, verbal form is always preferred."* Author 1 said *"words give the impression of precision and are unbiased whereas nonverbal part differs in understanding and may confuse the receiver."*

Author 1 considers Gender equality a challenge to remove the gender difference, but cannot be achieved without proper education. However, the author 2 showed his deep interest in gender and commented

that "*Gender equality means equal opportunities in education and jobs along with the facilities of participation in nation-building activities".*

4.2.3 Importance of cover page and gender illustration

All responndents have the same opinion that the cover pages of textbooks should be designed keeping in mind the attractive aspect of the book. Author 2 stated:

> "*Illustrations on the cover pages enlightens the content and title of the book. In case of the illustrations of a textbook, there should be the equal representation of the boys and girls along with the things required to prove their studentship".*

4.2.4 Perspectives on the pictorial presentation of characters in English textbooks

 Chairperson very proudly discussed the policy issues and stated:

> "*The Sindh Text Book Board works as the mother organization with the responsibility of providing free Textbooks and additional material from pre-primary to class X for all public sector schools of the Sindh province. Sindh government took this step-in order to support the objective of Millennium Development goals which embraces gender equality".*

When they were asked that gender sensitization was one of the goals in MDG's, which is achieved or not, Author 1 and 2 respected the efforts of the board by saying,

> "*Though budget, and monetary limitations are there, but the board should be welcoming to novel ideas and proposals which need to be combined to meet the MDG's for gender sensitization, and we shall guarantee that the books have reached to the doors, free of cost and without any effort of the students with the illustrations of gender equality."*

4.2.4 Obstacles during the publication process of gender sensitized textbooks

Chairperson and authors were well aware regarding the problems faced during the publication procedure of textbooks and even make them stuck to manage the issues. "A*dministrative along with the monetary anomalies make this course a herculean task,"* author 1 said. Author 2 informed that "*diverse schools of thoughts, socio-political influences, religious parties and contributors, all pressurizes the publication of textbooks. In this confused and uncertain situation gender is ignored in its fair sense and is greatly affected under the notions of cost-saving and the process is ended up by using out dated stereotypical depictions deprived of gender sensitization."*

4.3 Province Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa(KP)

4.3.1 Stakeholders' consciousness of gender and gender parity in the textbooks of **Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa**

Respondents were quite aware of the term gender and defined it as the socio-culturally shaped characters of men and women. Author 1 said, *"such as customs, roles, and relationships of and among groups of womenfolk and menfolk is all-gender. It is not static or universal rather varies from society to society".*

They were gender sensitized and emphasized to make this social aspect part of the learning process. Author 2 said that "*this positive understanding needs to be made part of textbooks*". Respondents wanted to inculcate societal and ethical values among students. The chairperson said that *"to bring improvement in our learning with positive notions, the content of the textbooks must be revised. Not the individual's choice but universal values like harmony, gender, sympathy, and impartiality in rights amongst men and women must be encouraged especially for the development of the concept of the right to education. Due to the gender parity and more chances for girls to get education it is made possible to re-examine social righteousness and encourage democratic gender relationships".* Respondents believed bias should be at no level, neither in words and nor in pres. The chairperson asserted,

> "*Neither we have any tinge of gender bias in our national curriculum nor we ever try to make it a part of our textbooks. It is tried to represent personalities, relating to religion and history, both female and male. Similarly, the depiction of females in pictures is tried equal to men. It is always tried to use gender free language without any domination of him or her".*

Respondents declared the situations and settings unbiased through which females are presented in the KP textbooks. Chairperson said, "*We always try to present female icons not as destitute but easy-going, virtuous, and trained figures supportive for their families and raising their children, managing the domestic responsibilities along with their effective share, as cultured and self-governing professionals in the progress of society.*"

4.3.2 Text and nonverbal gender illustration

 KP textbooks faced an objection that in their new books, images showing Muslim tradition were made blurred by other cultures. The dresses of grown-ups and children were of western type and there was no reference of our national dress which is *shalwar qameez* and *dupatta*. Answering the query about the appearance of pictures and the related dogma, the chairperson clarified the policy matters as;

> "*It is of extreme importance that depictions of both genders must be keeping in mind the values and customs of any society or religion and we try to follow it".* Respondents wanted to present people semiotically

according to their ideological level. Author 1 believed that" *gender illustration must be unbiased and must show both male and female social, political and educational achievements to prove that intellect is above all other things"*. Author 2 said, *"I favor illustration according to acceptable ways in a society"*.

4.3.3 Importance of cover page and gender illustration

Respondents were not happy with the designs of the current cover pages of the books. All respondents favored educational cover pages along with the striking pages in the form of catchy pictures necessary for the students. Author 1 highlighted, "*gender illustration tried to be equal in number on the front pages"*. Author 2 said, "*I am unsatisfied with the scheming of cover pages as it must be giving some idea about the age group of the school children".* Author 2 added,

 "The true situation of gender roles and activities of males and females prevailing in the society must be depicted through the cover pages and our administration and management is working on it".

4.3.4 Policy regarding the pictorial representation of characters in textbooks

Respondents were not optimistic about the exclusion of gender-biased images from the curriculum. Both authors revealed, "*the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-led (PTI) government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has categorically declared to reevaluate the government school's syllabus to exclude such images of girls who have not covered their heads for the upcoming school sessions".*

The respondents revealed that governments remain involved in the textbooks' changing process, "*the governments changed the materials of textbooks to make a match with their party agenda therefore; only one person is not involved in this whole process. The syllabus conveyed at the levels of schools and even colleges since April 2012 is maintained by global donor agencies, including DFID, UK, and GIZ Germany,"* said chairperson. Respondents stated that many people are involved in policy making. Both authors said, "*One man can never make or regulate policies as it is a very multifaceted and complicated procedure. It is a helpless process, very tiring and sometimes all in vain."*

4.3.5 Obstacles during publication process of gender sensitized textbooks

The textbook publication was considered a very sensitive and technical issue by the respondents. Chairperson self-confessed that there are several hitches and said with a deep smile,

"It is an open secret that procedure about the publications of textbooks is very intricate and nerve wrecking. To finalize a textbook is a complex work with juris prudent handling".

The interference of the publisher was another problem highlighted by the respondents. Author 2 said, *"the intrusive behavior of publishers and the price of books results in a problematic situation and, occasionally to reduce the price, images or size of the manuscript is shortened which reduces the influence of the manuscript."*

4.4 Province Baluchistan

Importance of English textbooks of Baluchistan-a challenge. Authors 1 chairman shed light on importance of textbooks by saying,

"Baluchistan is a province of diverse and scattered population with limited educational resources available and in some areas of province the Textbooks are the only resource".

4.4.1 Stakeholders' awareness of gender and gender equality

Author 1 explained Gender as stereotypical roles that are assigned to a particular sex, as women are cooking and taking care of household and children while men are assigned to outdoor tasks like jobs and chores outside the home. Similarly, hard and demanding jobs are usually reserved for men while soft jobs are for women. The Chairperson second the point of views of author 1 and 2 and said,

"*These stereotypes are neither always wrong nor always right. Jobs such as physical labor, manual labor, and combat soldiers are not suited and are very hard for women. Similarly bringing up children with softness, care and love cannot be left to the men".*

Author 1 who was a seasoned person contributed as,

"I think roles should be assigned as per capacity and sustainability of the job. As I have been viewing textbooks for the same purpose for grades 1- 11, I found that there is very low discrimination against any gender in textbooks. As an author I specially take care not to give an edge to any gender for the roles in the society. Gender awareness is almost 100 percent in English Textbook".

The Chairperson, very confidently announced that Gender stereotypes is not evident or prescribed in English textbooks in Baluchistan, *"Gender equality may be an issue of far-off corners of the province. A respectable number of people ensure that the girls may get education and employment. They understand this monetary and social positive effects of female education and role they can play especially in fields of education and health."* Author 1 said, "*In field of education they are more suitable and adapt for small graders and male teachers are more suitable for high graders. They should be part of curriculum but not entirely stressed".*

4.4.2 Text and gender illustration (verbal and non- verbal communication)

Chairperson explained that verbal communication is part of communication which is entirely dependent on the word spoken and listened as on a telephone or in a formal letter while non-verbal communication is through physically body and tone of spoken words. About its importance he explained that, *"it sometimes complements and completes the verbal communication and is approximately 50 percent of everyday conversation"*. He further added that even sometimes words fail to express that emotions and message which can be very beautifully conveyed through nonverbal communication.

Author 1 said,

> "*Understanding language of illustrations is compulsory to textual literacy*". "*Study of signs and symbols is semiotic. Icons and symbols are used in textbooks to some extent but ideas are scarcely used. Words are used for denotations mainly. Very little evidence of connotation is present in textbooks*".

4.4.3 Importance of cover page and gender illustration

Respondents had this view that cover page should be attractive to catch attention and arouse curiosity in the students towards the content of the book. Author 1 and 2 told that usually artist design many cover pages and authors or compilers select one of them.

4.4.4 Policy about syllabus and pictorial presentation of characters

Chairperson was very conscious about the policy matters and expressed his feelings as: *"Textbook reviewers must have a handsome experience of teaching, assessing and creative writings. They must not only take guiding words and SLOs literally but they should have a vision and carry broad horizon of meanings while assessing a book"*.

Chairperson added,

"in addition these are reviewed for discrimination remarks, adherence to social and cultured norms, language appropriation, suitability to the age group, feedback to the users, suggestions for further readings, and range of literary forms and genre, in conclusion of native English authors (25%) at least". Author 1 also said that, "*a complete review and lengthy process of the manuscript is done before it is finalized"*.

4.4.5 Hurdles in the process of publishing textbooks

Chairperson confessed that the cost issue is the biggest hurdle in the process of book publication. Author 1 and 2 admitted about their limitations of expression as all images cannot be given according to their requirements. Author 2 attributed these hurdles to the smaller number of pages and improper space given to visuals and commented that: "*may the management prefer words over visuals*". Author 1 pointed out that, "*Sometimes proper pictures are not found which can complement the text due to financial constraints*".

He admitted sadly,

> "*the training component (value education, character building and fostering good habits) is entirely left to the whims of authors. Only a competency is devoted to the subject with 19 themes and a lot of sub themes without proper mapping of themes across grade level"*.

> Limitations of book authors stated as, "*author can select one or two themes which are repeated throughout schooling years and many important areas are left altogether*".

> "*the job of author is made very difficult to select theme for a grade and he does so in darkness without any guidance from the curriculum"*.

5. Pictorial depiction of data as provided by authors and chairpersons of English textbooks of Pakistan

Nvivo 12, software was the source to cater the research themes of in-depth interviews and later on to analyze the interviews in the form of mind map. To look at the theme 1, 2 and 3, word clouds are made whereas; themes 4 and 5 are analyzed with the help of trees. Theme 1 is answered with the help of question 1 and 2. Questions 3,4,5 and 6 come under theme 2. Theme 3 is made clear with the questions 7,8 and 9. Question numbers 10,11,12 and 13 are to satisfy theme 4 while theme 5 is answered through question no 14 of interview guide. To make the whole process clear, a mind map was made through Nvivo 12, which is shown in the following figure 1 as:
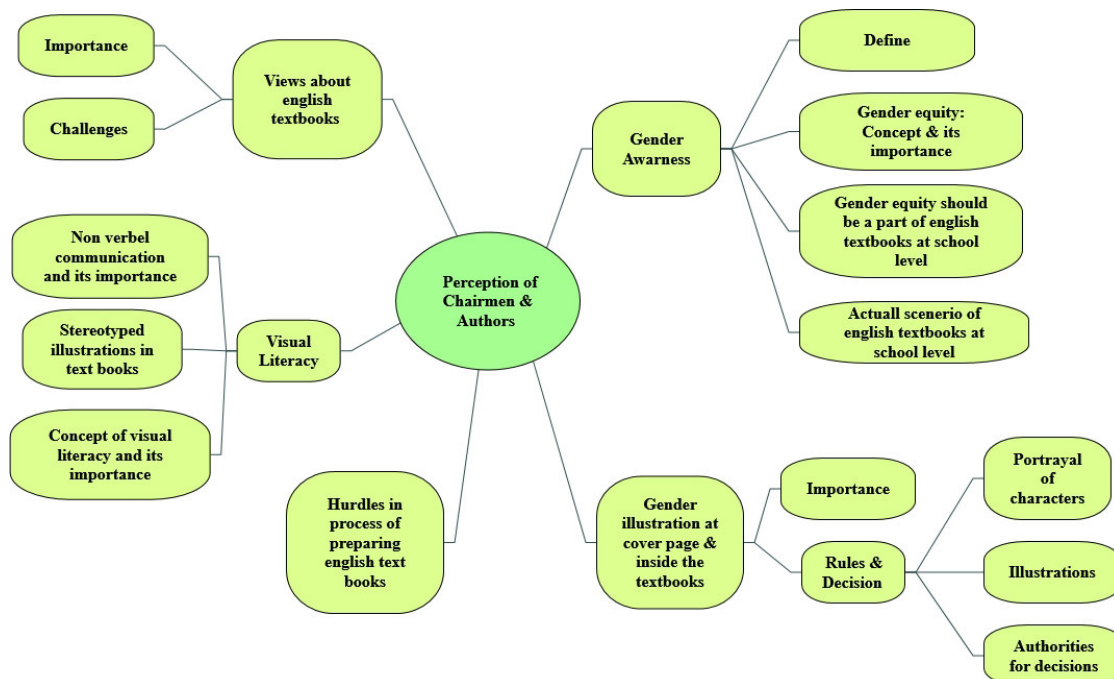
Figure 1 A comprehensive mind map of themes and questions

It was made clear with this map that the perception their concept of gender and its importance made their concept clear about the definition and representation of gender.

5.1 Similarities and differences of stakeholder's perceptions

The chairpersons and authors of all four provinces had the concept of word "gender" but unaware of the social construction processes. They even used sex and gender interchangeably. They approved that gender equity is vital to make a gender sensitized society but to reproduce it in text books is an admitted failure. It is perceived that gender is narrowed to the outdated depiction of women and men negating their representation in their existing diverse roles. One of the chairpersons remarked that it is a fact that females are actively participating in all fields of life but even then, I cannot present a lady mounting a horse because if I have a female rider in the textbooks, because of the dire consequences from religious fraternity in the society. Many books of all provinces lack pictorial depictions due to the non-availability of the artists. The members of the textbook boards debated over the identical limits and complaint for the non-availability of regular illustrators. Socio-political interferences were highlighted as momentous hurdles. Management consents and price barricades made either slows down or halt the publication process of textbooks. English was positioned an essential and mandatory language by the textbook authors and chairpersons and unanimously declared its importance owning to its global revelation, with carefully and meaningfully managed depictions. The chairperson of Baluchistan stated the importance of English as *"English is an umbrella under which comes all information and knowledge."* The importance of the cover page was emphasized but majority preferred the beautification of the cover pages which mean colors, imaginative things, and many descriptions of many things. Stakeholders of the Baluchistan board were more gender sensitized than the rest of the provinces.

6. DISCUSSION

The variations in the mindsets of the stakeholders which include officials, authors, and publishers can be seen with clarity in the above presented word clouds and trees of a text search query. They poured out their hearts and revealed their thoughts about the gender meaning and status of visual representation of the males and females. The discussions with the stakeholders clarify their positioning of outmoded concepts of gender regarding men and women. Along with other multiple sources of socialization, textbooks have appeared as an immediate source of gaining information about gender socialization. In case of a nation's assessment of socio-economic and educational circumstances at the international level, school textbooks remain in priority. This type of evaluation helps in finding the thinking pattern of the officials involved in the whole process. English textbooks as language books portray some specific culture with clear gender imageries as compared to other subjects. Furthermore, English has been declared a compulsory subject to be taught in all government schools of Pakistan, but still a challenging language for the students to understand. Consequently, they become disinclined viewers and do not make their sessions interactive ones. They do not resist listening what so ever is said to them. In this scenario, semiotics expressively influences the thoughts of the students more quickly even than the text.

To read textbooks is not only meant for the clarification of the coded perceptions existing in illustrations, but also to comprehend the obvious meaning along with the hidden communications done with the help of these pictures. This will initiate and lubricate the process of constructing, deconstructing and again constructing an innovative awareness regarding some subjects, due to the current material.

The stakeholders believe that the cover pages of any textbook are the introduction of the subject and its themes. However, the findings of visuals on cover pages do not match with this claim. Instead of making the cover pages welcoming, these present alienation and disinterest. All the chairpersons and authors wanted to make cover pages attractive by giving various colors and imaginary things without considering that cover pages reflect the inner themes of the books. Cover pages must have an actual accurate picture for students to develop an affiliation with books. Cartoon figures pictures of children doing academic activities and fairy tales like concepts on the cover pages of textbooks develop no rapport between the book and the student. Stakeholders have a never-ending blame game about the uncontrollable factors due to budgeting constraints and the non-availability of proper artists and designers.

Analyses of the interviews showed that the stakeholders had faith in equal depiction of the sexes but do not realize that the mere number of males and females is not enough, rather both should be represented in roles and activities based on their intellect and abilities. They ignore that it is more important to see that how both sexes are embodied rather than how many times. Pierce (1995) stated that the verbal text and societal roles, the students are exposed to, are critical mechanisms of the spoken and gestures-based language of the syllabus, which must be tackled judiciously.

Another impediment declared by respondents was the power pressures and financial limitations. One of the chairpersons explained out that donors offer to change the syllabus according to their wishes but spend nothing assessing the prevailing manuscripts. He also commented that teachers improve their education not to bring any radical change in their thinking pattern or the mindset of their students, and this fundamental flaw must be addressed. It is also noted that some authors felt due to no orientation to the intrinsic meanings of some topics and subjects, they could not be represented in their genuine sense for which workshops and courses should be conducted. Due to this less awareness, the curriculum designers pay less attention to gender issues in visuals. Despite balancing the gender roles, many publishers continue the traditional practice of showing women in their traditional roles. These books may have contrary effects on youth already experiencing gender inequality in society because gender representation in society in any form is multifaceted (Larsson, 2010). The curriculum certainly is a dynamic feature that significantly affects the educators and their belief systems (Haider, 2009). Unfortunately, the textbook stakeholders have made it a static and unimportant subject and deal with it stereotypically.

One chairperson remarked that instructors advance their education with no intention of having any fundamental modification in their rational strategy or the approach of their schoolchildren but only for their seniority promotions and financial incentives. This fundamental law must be addressed as some authors uttered that due to no orientation regarding the intrinsic meanings of some important subjects, the ideas could not be signified in their natural sense for which seminars and refresher courses must be conducted. Punjab, which is considered the most advanced and modern province, has more reservations than other provinces. Punjab has more social, political, and religious pressures due to which things are monopolized. KP and Baluchistan, considered backward provinces with more conservative norms, have shown much better and open-minded responses compared to Punjab and Sindh. It can be concluded that stakeholders of KP and Baluchistan are more concerned about gender equality with males and females in roles of working in all fields of life, negating the traditional roles of indoor activities for women and outdoor for males. Stakeholders of the Baluchistan textbook board understand that the active participation of women is essential for the economic and social uplift of society and the progress of the country. Stakeholders of Sindh and Punjab textbook boards were not daring enough to speak up for women's rights, declaring them an indispensable part of the society and country. Interviews have shown that stakeholders of Punjab and Sindh textbook boards are more confused about the meaning and importance of gender and keep on taking it in the sense of quantity. Stakeholders of Sindh considered words and text more important critical language which, they feel carries ambiguity.

7. Conclusion and Implications

The process of interpellation starts since the beginning of formal learning process of the students. This research work does not aim to count the number of manlike and womanlike appearances rathe how they are shown. However, regarding gender content, there is room for improvement regarding quality of representation (Islam & Asadullah, 2018). It is imperative to show males and females in modern and trendy roles according to the need of the time for keeping pace with the 21st century. Ground-breaking and stimulating roles will egg on the students to think great and work diligently. Teachers need the orientation to be gender sensitized (Riaz et al., 2021). An objective approach must replace the subjectively constructed gender images. A significant time is mandatory to integrate new attitudes in reading material as authors unenthusiastic to implement new attitudes

prior the society accepts them. They then expressed their reservations on portraying and representing anything contrary to the societal norms. Altering policymakers' approach remains a crucial task (Islam & Asadullah, 2018), and their mindset is a significant hurdle along with other social, political, and religious factors.

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