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Gender Stereotypes and Education: A Multi-Country Content Analysis Study of Secondary School Textbooks

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Abstract: School education, which is widely assumed to eliminate gender gap in the society, can also reinforce and reproduce gender inequality through hidden curriculum. However, gender stereotype in school textbooks remains a largely overlooked issue in the ongoing global debate on the elimination of wider socioeconomic gender gap through improved educational access. This dissertation therefore uses textbooks of public secondary schools of four Muslim countries -- Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh- with the primary objective of critically reviewing textbook content with a focus on gender stereotypes. This is a descriptive cross-country research using quantitative content analysis technique. A total of 21 categories are used in order to identify gender stereotypes in the form of exclusion and misrepresentation in the textbook. Our analysis of 792 pages of the four textbooks confirms systematic pro- male bias -- only 37% of all characters used in the text are female. Systematic exclusion/underrepresentation of females is evident regardless of whether we look at text or picture. When assessing category wise representation, we additionally find clear evidence of significant exclusion in all four countries. Furthermore, the selection of occupations, personal attributes, and activities ascribed show a high degree of misrepresentation of women. Female occupations are mostly traditional and lower in social prestige. Female characters used are predominantly introvert and passive in terms of personality traits. They are also shown to be mostly involved in in-door as opposed to outdoor activities when compared to their male counterparts. Country-wise analysis of the data reveals important variations. Female presence in characters is balanced in Southeast Asian textbooks (47% and 45% in Malaysia and Indonesia respectively) while the distribution of male and female characters in South Asian textbooks is lopsided -- females account for only 18% and 40% of all characters in Pakistani and Bangladeshi textbooks respectively. However, misrepresentation is less pronounced in occupational and relational attributes in Bangladeshi textbooks compared to the other three countries. Overall, Pakistani textbooks show highest gender inequality in terms of exclusion and misrepresentation. We conclude by commenting on how the above patterns correlate with wider socio-economic indicators of development across the four countries.

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1. Introduction

Despite growing presence in the labor force and educational institutions in last few decades, women remain socially marginalized and underrepresented within/outside households in low income countries.¹ According to UN Women (2015), worldwide more than 700 million women are still married off before they reach their 18th birthday. One in every three women experience physical violence by their intimate partners (ibid). Women participating in the labor force worldwide are paid significantly lower wages.² A part of these inequalities can be traced to gender inequality in early-life investment choices. For instance, of 63 million children who were out of school in 2010, 53 percent were girls (UN Chronicle, 2015). Unsurprisingly, women account for almost two thirds of 775 million illiterate populations today (ibid). As a matter of fact, a key explanation for gender economic inequality is that male-female gap in educational opportunities still significant in a wide range of countries (Blumberg, 2007; UNESCO, 2006). Gender inequality in education and social indicators is relatively large in Muslim countries, particularly in South Asia (Asadullah, 2014; Dollar & Gatti, 1999).

Formal education is widely believed to benefit society through both economic and non-economic channels. In particular, higher female literacy rate is negatively associated with lower gender bias. According to Murthi et al. (1995), “the only important force that may reduce gender bias is the expansion of female literacy”. In addition, female education positively impacts lower fertility (Abadian, 1996; Jain, 1981), better child health (Sen, 2001), economic growth (Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Klasen & Lamanna, 2009) as well as health and poverty reduction (Jimenez & Patrinos, 20008). Given the growing evidence on the private and social returns to female education, Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 set forth goals to close gender gap in both primary and secondary education by 2005. Given these international agendas and national campaigns, inequality in school enrolment reduced in many developing countries around the world. In developing countries, the mean year of schooling has increased from 2.2 years to 7.2 years between 1970-2009 (Gakidou et al., 2010). In the last eight years alone, the female net enrollment in primary education increased from 86% to 88%, while in secondary level it increased from 57% in 2006 to 65% in 2013 (World Bank, 2015). Significant enrolment jump is also noted in rural communities where mainstream media has weak presence. In such settings, schools serve as the dominant institution for transmitting social knowledge and attitude, thereby facilitating social change (Nonaka et al., 2012). According to social cognitive theory, school plays important role in gender development (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). For all these reasons, rising school enrolment of girls is expected to reduce gender inequality in the society in a broad range of indicators by shifting traditional social attitudes and views towards women.

¹ According to the World’s Women report of United Nation, worldwide female labor force participation rate was only 30% in 1970 (UN, 1991, p.83). That figure is now 50% (Human Development Report 2015, p.11).

² According to US Census Bureau (2011), women received 77 percent of the wage received by men in the previous year, which requires them to work two months more to have an equal share each year. Global Gender Gap report 2015 shows that today women are paid equal to what men were paid in 2006 (11 USD per day) and the gap between the two genders increased from 5 USD (in 2006) to 10 USD (GGG, 2015).

Nevertheless, exposure to institutional education may not be enough to alter gender attitudes and address gender stereotypes.³ According to the proponents of hidden curriculum theory, the classroom can also become a place for nurturing gender bias and stereotypes within the school setting (Blumberg, 2007, Stromquist et al., 1998, Kabeer, 2005). It can be a negative experience for a variety of reasons. For instance, religious orientation can lead to constraints on learning opportunities that particularly disadvantage girls (Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2010). Other possibilities include pro-male attitudes among teachers (Bailey, 1992)⁴ and gender imbalance in the teaching staff, subject choice (Abot & Wallace, 1995) and lastly, the use of overly masculine textbooks (Banda, 2014; Bailey, 1992; Alrabaa, 1985).

According to Blumberg (2007), gender bias in the textbook is one of the “hardest budge rocks in the road to gender equality in education”. It is geographically more widespread than gender gap (in school enrolment)⁵. Textbook stereotypes not only limit women’s lifestyle and career choice, they also distort their self-image and image of the opposite groups (Brittton & Lumpkin (1977). This is even though studies show that students spent majority of their classroom time (80-95%) on textbooks (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007). Majority of the teachers also rely on textbooks for delivering, organizing and assigning homework for the students (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1992). While textbooks play important role for their cognitive development, therefore what they learn from textbook (i.e. the content) matters in shaping their attitudes towards gender and other aspects of life through hidden curriculum. Yet, compared to other school specific drivers of gender inequality, textbook content is less researched and frequently overlooked in the policy debate.

Our study therefore examines the presence of gender stereotypes in school textbooks in four countries in South and South-East Asia, namely, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These countries are chosen because of the available evidence documenting relatively higher gender inequality in Muslim countries (see Dollar & Gatti, 1999). At the same time, despite being predominantly Muslim, the sample countries belong to different levels of socio-economic development and vary significantly in terms of progress in female schooling. This therefore provides a diverse cross-country context in which the relationship between gender bias in textbooks and gender inequality in the wider society can be understood. Our analysis exclusively focuses on textbooks used in public secondary schools. In terms of methodology, Content Analysis technique is applied to examine gender imbalances in textbooks using a multi-disciplinary approach. Our research objectives are to document the extent of (a) gender exclusion

3 According to United Nations Human Rights, gender stereotype refers to “a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women’s and men’s capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans. Harmful stereotypes can be both hostile/negative (e.g., women are irrational) or seemingly benign (e.g., women are nurturing)”-

4 For instance, in Africa, it is often the maxim in the classroom by teachers that “boys need career and girls need husbands” (Kabeer, 2005, p.17).

5 The writer used example of India, Syria and Romania who have different Gender Parity Index (GPI) and Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), yet all have higher gender bias in the textbook that reveal convergence over space and time (Blumberg, 2007, pp.7-11).

in the texts and images of the textbooks; (b) gender misrepresentation in the texts and images of the textbooks and (c) variation of gender stereotypes and inequality (i.e. exclusion and misrepresentation) across countries. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first comparative study on gender stereotypes in textbooks used in the three most populous Muslim countries in the world.⁶

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the study context, reviewing the state of girls' education in Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This section also discusses the major policy initiatives undertaken to improve girls' schooling and an extensive review of the literature on textbook content analysis. Section 3 discusses the theoretical framework, methodology and data. Section 4 presents the main results. Section 5 is conclusion.

2. Study Background

2.1 Women's Schooling, Literacy and Economic Status in Sample Countries

Women in South and South-East Asia face a multitude of social and economic problems. Their participation in the labor market is not only low, they are also less likely to be employed compared to men (see Table 1). One reason why women don't do well in terms of labor market participation is that they lack human capital. The gender gap in education is a serious challenge in South Asia. Gender inequality in education is recognized to be one of the causes of slower economic growth in many countries (Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Balatchandirane, 2007; Klasen & Lamanna, 2009).⁷ Female education has many non-economic direct and indirect impacts not only for females, but also for males as well (Dreze and Sen 2013)⁸. Kabir et al. (2005) for instance found positive relation between women's education and fewer numbers of children in Bangladesh. Besides, female schooling is reported to delay marriage in South and South-East Asian countries (Field and Ambrus 2008; Peng, 2007).⁹ In addition, schooling also matters for labour market performance of women in South and South-East Asia. According to Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002), the return to education for male and female is 5.3% and 8.2% respectively in Malaysia, 11% and 16% respectively (at secondary education?) in Indonesia. In Pakistan, the overall return to secondary education is higher compared to return in primary education for both the genders. For Bangladesh, return to secondary education for female (9.6) is three times higher than return to male (3.2) education at same level (Asadullah, 2006).

⁶ For a review of the existing evidence, see Blumberg, 2007; 2014).

⁷ In their study on 100 countries, Dollar & Gatti (1999) found that 1 percent increase in female secondary education can increase per capita income growth by 0.3 percent.

⁸ Drèze, J., & Sen, A. (2013). *An uncertain glory: India and its contradictions*. Princeton University Press.

⁹ A multi country study by Blumberg (1989, cited in Blumberg, 2007), the authors found out 8 direct benefits of girl's education such as "1) delayed marriage; (2) increased contraceptive usage; (3) lower fertility [itself]; (4) dramatically reduced infant and child mortality; (5) improved child nutrition and general family health; (6) greater participation in the waged, modern sector labor force; (7) higher earnings, and (8) increased national development as measured by GNP" (Blumberg 1989 as cited in Blumberg 2007, p.3).

Table 1: Women's development indicators and policy provision

Indicators	Malaysia	Indonesia	Pakistan	Bangladesh
Development ranking				
1. Human Development Index (HDI)	62	110	147	142
2. Gender Related Development Index (GDI)	91	98	145	107
3. Global Gender Gap ranking	111	92	144	64
Educational attainment				
4. Literacy rate (female)	93	92	46	58
5. Literacy rate, youth female (% between age 15-24)	98.4	98.7	64.4	83.0
6. Secondary school enrollment (total gross)	70.0	83.0	38.0	53.0
7. Secondary school enrollment (girls to boys ratio)	0.94	0.98	0.73	1.12
8. Female teachers in secondary school	69.0	52.0	58.0	25.0
Economic participation				
9. GNI per capita, (current US\$)	10,760	3,630	1,410	1,080
10. Female-male labor participation ratio	0.59	0.62	0.30	0.70
11. Female-male employer ratio (for every 100 male)	11.1	20.5	2.1	12.8
12. Employment to population ratio, 15+, female (%)	42.9	47.5	22.2	54.5
13. Wage difference (female wage as % of male)	58.0	49.0	19.0	52.0
Health/demographic status				
14. Total fertility rate	1.9	2.3	3.1	2.1
15. Contraceptive prevalence rate	49.0	63.0	35.0	62.0
Political Empowerment				
16. Women in the parliament (%)	10.4	18.6	20.7	20.0
17. Women in ministerial position (%)	6.0	23.0	0.0	7.0
Constitutional Articles/Rights				
1. Equality and Non discrimination	8,135	28I	Preamble, 25	28
2. Public authority, institution and services	12	31	37	19
3. Education	12	28D	38	17
4. Political participation	12	28D	32,34 (60 reserved seat)	38 (50 reserved seat)
5. Employment	8	28D	27	29
6. Equal before law	8	27	25	27

Source: (a) The World Bank Development Indicators; (b) Human Development Report 2015; (c) Global Gender Gap report 2015; (d) UN Women. Constitutional Database, UNWOMEN. Retrieved from: <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en>

In recent decades, governments have responded to the gender gap in poverty and labor market by enacting new laws that improves women's access to education as well as jobs and other social opportunities. In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, financial incentives are being provided to girls for continuing in secondary school and/or delaying marriage (Asadullah and Chaudhury 2009). Constitutions in our four sample countries ensure equality, non-discrimination, right to education and political participation for women (See Table 1). National Women policies also ensure equal right for women in the socio-economic domain.

However, social norms (such as traditional practices and patriarchy) often lead to opposite practices than what policies expound. The virginity test for female police recruitment in Indonesia (HRW, 2014)¹⁰, incessant early marriage for girls at secondary school level in Bangladesh (Asadullah & Wahhaj, 2014)¹¹, discriminatory application of Family law that denouncing Malaysian women, as second class citizens similar to the Black Africans under apartheid South African government (Kent, 2006)¹² or the practice of honor killing of female family members evident in male bias Pakistani society (Londergan, 2013)¹³ are examples of discrimination women face even after high achievements in schooling. All these incidences indicate that enrolment of females in schools (primary, secondary or even higher) does not guarantee empowerment or equality given the implicit social practices dominated by males. Comparing South Asian countries with the Southeast Asian counterparts, Mason and Smith (2003)¹⁴ found that community characteristics are better predictor of female empowerment than personal trait of women (such as education, age etc.). Besides, economic empowerment was found lowest in Pakistan and they are also the highest in getting beaten by husband. While Malaysia was found second highest in freedom of movement scale (but Muslim women were found to have limited freedom than non-Muslim women) (ibid).

Mason and Smith (2003) additionally note that female empowerment is a reflection of social system than an atomized individual trait of females. Even in the school system (in presence of hidden curriculum) undermines the guarantee of equality or non-discrimination explicated by formal curriculum. As a result of this, women with even post primary education fail to advance in personal and professional endeavors and fail to reap the fruit of their education in these countries. Similarly, the enrolment into the school that assumed to have empowered women and reduce inequality, often breeds this and one way to do this is stereotyped male bias textbooks used in the classrooms. This is the hypothesis we intend to examine in this paper.

2.2 Literature Review: Country Studies on Textbook Content Analysis

Access to education which is assumed to remove all kinds of discriminations can turn out as source of discrimination in the schools; often through teaching system, classroom environment and the curriculum (Kabeer, 2005). Kelly & Nihlen (1982, pp.40-41) state that, “*The schools are*

10 Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2014). Indonesia: Virginity test for female police. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/17/indonesia-virginity-tests-female-police>

11 Asadullah, M.N. and Wahhaj, J. (2014). No magic bullet for closing the gender gap in developing countries. World Bank blog. Retrieved from: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/no-magic-bullet-closing-gender-gap-developing-countries>

12 Kent, J. (2006). Malaysia Women suffer ‘apartheid’. BBC. March 8. Retrieved from. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4784784.stm>

13 Londergan, B. (2013). Fighting honor killing in Pakistan with fashion. Huffington Post. June 2. Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/betty-londergan/honor-killings-pakistan_b_2619597.html

14 Mason, K. O., & Smith, H. L. (2003). Women’s empowerment and social context: Results from five Asian countries. Gender and Development Group, World Bank, Washington, DC.

static because they are a microcosm of the society, rather than agent for change". And it reproduces division of labor in the society by maintaining gender, race and class inequalities. In Pakistan chairman and director of textbook boards believe that gender portrayal of the textbooks are confirmatory to the status quo and it should be so (Mirza, 2004). Therefore, the social inequalities are often passed and repeated through the school system. For instance in India, the children of *Dalit* are often treated differently (sit separately, verbally abused and even have to run menial errands) than the children of other castes (Kabeer, 2005, p.17). In classroom teachers not only pay less attention to girls, but also degrade their enthusiasm. In Africa for instance, it is often the maxim of teachers that "boys need career and girls need husbands" (ibid, p.17). Similarly, a number of other studies show negative experience of women in the school (e.g. Bailey, 1992; Jacob, 1996; Blumberg, 2007, 2014).

The content analysis of textbooks is one of the most common practices in studies dealing with gender stereotypes in curriculum in both developing countries (e.g. Alrabaa, 1985, Hamid et al., 2008, Zeenatunnisa, 1989, Hall, 2014, Blumberg, 2007, 2014) as well as developed countries (e.g. Mineshima 2008, Lee & Collins 2008, 2010, Hellinger 1980, McCabe et al. 2011, Blumberg, 2007, 2014). According to Blumberg (2007), gender bias in textbooks geographically more widespread than the gender gap, i.e. school enrolment gap between two genders (which exist mostly in South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa and the Middle East). Textbook stereotype is an almost invisible obstacle to equality in education and realizing full potential of the girls (Blumberg, 2014, p.1). This eventually pushes back any progress towards achieving gender equality in the outcomes for women in many sectors.

Researchers have used different materials such as content of television (Tuchman et al., 1978), animated cartoon (Klein & Shiffman, 2009), website (Kyriacou et al., 2010) and textbooks (Blumberg 2007, 2014) to analyze relative representation of marginalized groups. Textbooks are often used as a means to disseminate the hidden curriculum among the students that cultivates development of gender stereotyped attitude. Smith (1985) states two ways which education materials can instill value and attitude in the minds of young students. First students accept authority of these materials as well as are less critical about it and secondly they use maximum time to learn them and they will pay attention to the messages conveyed through these texts. In absence of mainstream media, school plays an effective way to transmit information (Nonaka et al., 2012, p.2). For instance in Cambodia, after the inclusion of life skill on nutrition, hygiene and disease prevention, the malaria disease case has decreased by more than 50% in some parts of the country between 2000-2010 (ibid, p.6). Similarly, Li (2000) evaluated math textbooks of China and USA and showed connection between the quality of textbooks and performance of the students in the two countries.

Textbook content research focusing on developing countries has grown in the past two decades. Among studies on non-Muslim countries, Ellis (2002) analyzed primary school's history and geography textbooks used in the state of West Bengal (India). Findings show that the textbooks had 83 percent male pictures and 17 percent female pictures. Similar to India, studies in African countries reflect relative under representation and well as misrepresentation of females. In Zambia for instance, the content analysis of secondary school textbook shows that 73.94% examples were used for males and they were shown as hard working as well as involved in wage earning sectors (Banda, 2014). Etim (1988) analyzed 15 most frequently taught novels from 15

English literature textbooks used in Nigeria. The study found that all the stories were male centered and out of 273 characters, 212 were male and only 61 were female (ratio of 1:4). In China as well, study of primary school textbook show overrepresentation of males in all the categories and the most stereotyped category was occupational role where ratio 3.97 was in favor for male roles (Wang, 1998).

Among early studies in Muslim countries, study of Alrabaa (1985) found that textbooks in Syria portrayed males for a bustling world while conditioning females in the background as servitude, often derogated and victimized. Alyan and Khalidi (2010) made comparative analysis of gender stereotypes in the textbooks of two Arab countries, i.e. Palestine and Jordan¹⁵. The finding of this study shows that textbooks in Jordan featured 20.8 percent female characters compared to almost zero or no mention of achievements of women in Palestine. The study concluded that, even though stereotype varies by grade and subject, yet there is obvious bias in favor of men in two countries. Likewise in Iran, a number of studies have pointed out female exclusion and misrepresentation in the textbooks (e.g. Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Hall, 2014; Amini & Parviz, 2012 and Roohani & Zarei, 2013). Bahman & Rahimi, (2010) examined different aspects of gender bias in 3 volumes of English textbooks taught in secondary schools in Iran. They found out that, these textbooks contained 70-80% male name, noun, pronoun, adjective and presence.

Among the sample countries, studies in Malaysia found passive and derogatory attributes for females and their involvement in indoor activities (e.g. Siraj, 1990; Balakrishnan, 1998; Hamid et al., 2008; and Jasmani et al., 2009). Jasmani et al. (2009) studied six secondary school English textbooks from linguistic stereotype point of view. They found overall male-female share was 66% and 34% respectively in all the verbs used in the textbooks (ibid, pp. 66-70). Hamid et al (2008) addressed linguistic sexism and their findings show that presence of male was almost double or 50% more than female. The study concluded that “*Textbooks indirectly and unconsciously function as conduits for the indoctrination and enforcement of sexism and sex role conformity among young Malaysian*” (ibid, p.49). In Indonesia, Ena (2013) studied English textbooks of grade 10-12 with reference to cultural diversity. She found that women were underrepresented in the textbook and men were given a wider range of roles (37.2% roles to women and 62.4% to men). Chandrawati et al. (2014) also confirmed such gender stereotypes using 12th grade English textbook in Indonesia where they recognized 1,098 (77%) units of men and only 321 (23%) units of women.

In Pakistan, Zeenatunnisa (1989) studied 7 English and Urdu language textbooks of secondary level. She found that women were presented around only 15-20% in leading characters, normal character and in the subject of biography. Besides, of 50 occupations mentioned in the textbooks, women were only assigned to 8. Their activities were service oriented, whereas men were in power-oriented activities. Mirza (2004) conducted the most comprehensive study on textbook content in Pakistan. It included 194 textbooks from 4 provinces, from grades 1 to 10. The study finds that women were in only 26.5% central character, 15% professional characters (9.8% in secondary level). Only 6 attributes were exclusively used for females and 59 for male, that too using passive attributes for female (e.g. modest, noble, dear etc.) and bold for male (brave, truthful etc.).

15 In her comparative discussion of gender stereotypes in textbooks of different regions, Blumberg (2014) identified this study as the only comparative analysis between two Arab countries.

Even after two and half decades since the study of Zeenatunnisa (1989) and one decade since the study of Mirza (2004), the recent studies also recognized similar evidence of gender stereotypes in Pakistani school textbooks. For instance, Jabeen & Ilyas (2012) found that 60% of the stories are male biased and 76% male image in the textbooks of Sindh. In Punjab, the content analysis of Urdu and English (language book only) textbooks of primary school reveals similar gender stereotype (male showiness) and gender apartheid picture (Jabeen et al., 2014). Srivastava (2006) conducted a comparative study among three South Asian countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The study found overall under representation of women and this was relatively higher in Pakistani textbooks than the other two countries (ibid). This is also the only reference so far that used Bangladeshi textbook for analyzing gender representation.

The overall findings from developing countries demonstrate almost similar pattern of gender stereotypes over the time and across countries. Blumberg (2007, p.11) mentioned that gender bias is more wide spread than gender gap (enrolment) and, it converges both time and space. The literatures in developing countries upheld this view where all the countries have higher gender stereotypes regardless of their being Muslim or non-Muslim, Arab or non-Arab, Asian or African origin. Besides, exclusion and misrepresentation is almost unchanged in recent studies compared to studies conducted in one or two decades ago. This is unlike the developed countries where recent studies have shown more balanced portrayal of gender in textbooks compared to studies in 1970s and 1980s.

2.3 Theories of Gender Stereotypes

There are two theories that can help to describe development of gender stereotypes within educational institution, namely, social cognitive theory and hidden curriculum theory. The *social cognitive theory* distinguishes three types of environmental structures (i.e. imposed, selected and constructed). In imposed environmental situation, the child does not have any leeway for choosing, rather forced upon regardless of whether she/he likes it or not. Teaching in the classroom, curriculum and textbook content, and class environment are things that are imposed on a child regardless of her/his personal preference (ibid, p.690). Therefore in this imposed environment they develop gender perception based on what the school teaches them through its curriculum, teachers and other mechanisms. The *hidden curriculum theory* explains how gender stereotyped attitude is reproduced in such imposed environment in schools. Kelly & Nihlen (1982) show that school has two curriculums, formal and informal (i.e. explicit and hidden curriculum). The latter also called *noise* of the school. Textbook, authority structure, staffing pattern, the way the curriculum is transmitted, and the system of reward and correction all contribute in promoting gender stereotypes in the school. Hidden curriculum theory shows that school curriculum teaches something beyond the scope of the existing curriculum, which is often implied and delivered through textbooks, teachers or other instruments. In feminist perspective of hidden curriculum theory, Abot and Wallace (1995) identified four instruments of hidden curriculum that cause disadvantages for the girls and male bias textbook is one of them. According to Kabeer (2005, p.17):

“The hidden curriculum of school practice reinforces messages about girls’ inferior status on a daily basis and provides them with a negative learning experience, thus creating a culture of low self-esteem and low aspirations”.

Jones et al. (1997, p.473-474) discussed both cognitive and pedagogical implications of gender imbalance in the textbook dialogues. Firstly, if example of dialogue between a particular sex is less in the book, then the silenced sex students will definitely have poorer practice opportunity as dialogue participants. Secondly, if one sex initiates conversation most of the time, then the other sex will have inactive/passive participation in the dialogue. Finally, the negative cognitive impact of this is that female students consciously or unconsciously become demotivated to play roles that are restricted linguistically as well as occupationally. Therefore, this marginalization (i.e. biased gender modeling through hidden curriculum) indirectly shapes female students' expectation for disempowered roles.¹⁶

3. Research design, sample and data

This is a descriptive cross-country research using quantitative content analysis technique. One of the benefits of choosing content analysis is that the data is in a permanent form (texts and pictures) and verifiable as well as replicable through reanalysis (Cohen et al. 2007, p.475). In this study four English language textbooks of grade 9 from Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh are used for analyzing gender stereotypes in the textbooks. To simplify, this study follows four Cs of Cohen et al (2007, p.476) which are, coding, categorizing (creating meaningful categories where suitable units of analysis are placed), comparing and concluding. A total of 792 pages from sample textbooks are analyzed based on categories of gender stereotypes.

The population (i.e. the domain of analysis) of this study is secondary school textbooks. Four English language textbooks for the academic year 2015 are chosen purposively. There are two reasons for restricting analysis to English language textbooks. Firstly, as this is a cross-country analysis, only English language textbooks can be analyzed in a comparative manner and the researcher faces no language barrier in studying textbooks collected (regardless of the language difference in the sampled countries). Secondly, English language textbooks are widely used in gender stereotype and other socio-cultural content analysis studies for single country (Sandrova 2014, Jasmani, et al. 2009, Siddiqie 2011, Hamid et al. 2008, Mineshima 2008, Hellinger 1980, Lee & Collins 2008, Etim 1988, Jabeen et al 2014, Hameed 2014, Zeenatunissa 1989, Ena 2013, Amini & Parviz 2012, Bahman & Rahimi 2010, Shah et al. 2013, Hall 2014) as well as cross country comparison (Lee & Collins 2010).

We focus on secondary school textbooks (i.e. grade 9) for several reasons. Firstly, it is identified that even though children learn about sexual identity at an early age, it takes time for them to grow gender constancy¹⁷. Referring to Cognitive Development Theory, Martin et al (2002, p.910) state that “*just because children are aware of the connection between genitals and sex does not mean that they understand constancy*”. Secondly, in practice a number of studies used secondary level textbooks for analyzing gender stereotypes (e.g. Alayan & Al-khalidi, 2010; Hameed, 2014; Banda, 2014; Jasmani et al., 2009; Lee & Collins, 2008; 2010; 2014; Etim, 1988; Zeenatunnisa,

¹⁶ In Hong Kong, the survey of Women's Commission (2009, p.4) discovers that 25.6% and 24.7% respondents respectively consider textbook and school life for shaping their attitude towards gender stereotyping.

¹⁷ Gender constancy has three steps; a) gender identity (related to realization of being girl or boy), b) gender stability and c) gender consistency (Slaby & Frey, 1975 cited in Martin et al., 2002). Studies show both rigidity and flexibility to social norm with higher level of constancy (ibid, p.910).

1989; Hall, 2014; Ena, 2013; Mineshima, 2008; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010). Besides, this is the stage after which students further their academic career in higher studies, or end their academic life¹⁸ and enter job market (especially boys), or get married off (especially girls¹⁹). In either of the ways, they become active agents to act upon gender roles they play themselves or played around them. The stereotypical gender knowledge that they gain through school hidden curriculum influences their behavior with regards to same or opposite gender.

The units of analysis are word (e.g. name, noun, pronoun, attributes), dialogue (e.g. between female-male, male-male, female-female), sentence (e.g. firstness or order of mention), story (e.g. centeredness of the story, leading characters) and pictures (e.g. individual and their activities).

In this study, the analysis of gender stereotypes in textbooks is based on two broader frameworks, i.e. misrepresentation and exclusion. 21 sub categories are selected from earlier studies based on the two frameworks: ‘Misrepresentation’ refers to incorrect portrayal or biased portrayal of one gender over the other and ‘exclusion’ which refers to lack of presence of a particular gender. (see Table 2).

Table 2: Breakdown of selected categories for content analysis

Text	Picture
Names (range)	Visual representation (total picture)
Names (total)	Centeredness (of the picture)
Nouns	Indoor activity (in the picture)
Pronoun	Outdoor activity (in the picture)
Firstness	
Centeredness of the story	
Attributes (total)	
Attributes (range)	
Author	
Character	
Leading character	
Social role	
Domestic role	
Occupation (range)	
Dialogue	
Activities (range)	
Terms/ Address (Mrs/Ms)	

Notes: “Range” refers to unrepeatable variable (such as names, occupation) and “Total” refers to repeated variable in the textbook. This extra precaution (including both total and range) is taken only for the category ‘name’, but for occupation or activities, only range is considered. If same name is mentioned 5 times in a page, that is considered 1

¹⁸ The enrollment data shows drastic fall after secondary level in our four sample countries. For instance, the gross enrollment in Malaysia is 70% at secondary level and only 37% at tertiary level. Similarly in Indonesia it is 83% and 32%, in Pakistan 38% and 10%, and in Bangladesh 53% and 13% respectively for secondary level and tertiary level (World Bank, 2015).

¹⁹ In Bangladesh, 66% girls are married before they are 18 years of age (ICRW, 2015).

in names (range) category and 5 in names (total) category. For occupation and activity categories, ‘total’ does not tell us the scope or range given to particular gender. Therefore, if same occupation (such as doctor or nurse) is mentioned 10 times in the textbook for particular gender, the range of occupation category only counts it as 1 occupation. It helps to understand different types (range) of occupations assigned for two genders.

In order to ensure reliability of content analysis, we used two strategies. Firstly, small sample of the textbooks (20%) was initially analyzed to check the strength of categorization (as suggested by Weber, 1990 and Cohen et al., 2007 in their books). Secondly, crosschecking is done after few weeks of primary analysis to ensure inter-coder reliability (as proposed by Milne & Adler, 1999)

Since the findings are centered upon two broad categories, i.e. misrepresentation and exclusion, the 21 categories are fit into these two broad categories. The data is collected based on the 21 categories mentioned above. Each of the 792 pages of four textbooks is analyzed with reference to these categories and inserted in the excel sheet using simple codes to make the data entry quicker and easier. After frequencies and range of the categories are identified from the textbooks, data analysis was done at individual level (i.e. gender wise analysis) as well as aggregate level (i.e. country wise analysis). The data are analyzed in order to identify trends, pattern and differences between the genders and countries. Based on findings from each category, Gender Equality Index (GEI) is formulated and each country is ranked according to that index. In addition, we will use of Five Factor Model (FFM) in order to identify personality trait of female and male characters in the textbooks.

4. Main Findings

Our objective is to assess gender stereotypes using two broad categories, i.e. exclusion and misrepresentation. This section first discusses results relating to under representation in sub-section 4.1 while results relating to misrepresentation is discussed in sub-section 4.2.

4.1 Gender visibility: Exclusion or inclusion

Exclusion or invisibility/non-recognition/under representation of one gender in the textbook is one form of gender stereotype. Except from few studies (e.g. Mineshima 2008, Clarke & Nunes 2008, Jones et al. 1997), findings from most of the previous studies indicate certain form of female exclusion compared to male counterparts in the textbooks. Similarly in this study, the overall findings show that female face exclusion (i.e. underrepresented) in the secondary school English language textbooks in our sample countries (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Overall presence of female and male in the textbooks

	Malaysia	Indonesia	Pakistan	Bangladesh
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Categories	Malaysia			Indonesia			Pakistan			Bangladesh		
	Female, %	Male, %	Total frequency	Female, %	Male, %	Total frequency	Female, %	Male, %	Total frequency	Female, %	Male, %	Total frequency
Names (range)	45	55	447	48	52	232	12	88	147	40	60	274
Names (total)	51	49	781	43	57	407	6	94	300	37	63	713
Nouns	47	53	622	33	67	224	27	73	369	34	66	513
Pronouns	47	53	1682	40	60	625	20	80	801	35	65	1509
Firstness	20	80	45	28	72	18	0	100	3	26	74	35
Centeredness	56	44	39	45	55	20	15	85	13	37	63	35
No. Attributes	55	45	455	33	67	147	29	71	157	47	53	242
Attributes range	44	56	147	31	69	54	22	78	113	30	70	136
Author	61	39	28	36	64	22	21	79	14	44	56	16
Character	48	52	674	46	54	303	26	74	296	36	64	351
Leading character	43	57	238	49	51	174	14	86	79	43	57	155
Social role	44	56	215	44	56	59	16	84	141	43	57	254
Domestic role	85	15	23	63	37	8	71	29	18	73	27	15
Occupation	35	65	55	15	85	26	19	81	48	23	77	80
Dialogue	69	31	16	68	32	22				62	38	8
Activities range	41	59	75	48	52	31	25	75	60	47	53	70
Picture (total)	41	59	376	56	44	168	3	97	124	29	71	140
Picture (centeredness)	35	65	152	55	45	44	9	91	22	31	69	45
Picture (indoor)	28	72	33	67	33	6	0	100	2	55	45	11
Picture (outdoor)	38	62	168	55	45	80	0	100	14	27	73	63

The table shows that overall representation of female is almost half (37 percent) of that of male (63 percent) in the textbooks. The aggregate finding of 20 categories also shows high share of male in male-female distribution in Malaysian (53:47), Indonesian (55:45), Pakistani (82:18) and Bangladeshi (60:40) textbooks. Even though the male presence dominates in all four countries, the gap between the two genders varies by country with lowest gap of 6 percentage point in Malaysia to highest gap of 66 percentage point in Pakistan between male and female in the textbook. Moreover, female exclusion exists in both texts as well as in pictures (see Table 4). However, overall female underrepresentation is lower in texts (39 percent) than in pictures (33 percent).

Table 4: Female-male presence in the texts and pictures

	Malaysia		Indonesia		Pakistan		Bangladesh	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Text	51	49	58	42	78	22	59	41
Picture	64	36	42	58	97	3	64	36

Note: The result of this table is appropriated from Table 4.1. The first 16 categories of Table 4.1 represent result obtained from text and last four categories from pictures. This table distinctively presents the overall share of female-male presence in both text and picture in the sample countries.

In addition, high male bias is evident in categories like ‘names’, ‘nouns’, ‘pronouns’, ‘firstness’, ‘attributes range’, ‘character’, ‘leading character’, ‘social role’ and ‘activities range’ where the share of female characters are lower in all the four countries (see Table 3). Of the 20 categories, high female share is only visible in ‘domestic role’ category in four countries together.

To better understand exclusion in the context of previous studies, the table below summarizes findings of female-male visibility in previous studies of 5 developed non-Muslim majority countries and 5 developing Muslim majority countries (see Table 5). The findings of this study resembles with all the recent studies conducted in developing countries as well as findings from study and textbooks used in developed countries that dates back to two/three decades. All these studies identified share of male presence between 65-75 percent and share of female presence between 25-35 percent in the textbook.

However, country specific finding of this study reveals surprising facts about exclusion. It shows that the degree of exclusion for Malaysia and Indonesia is quite different from degree of exclusion in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The former two countries resemble the findings of recent studies in developed countries (i.e. more balanced gender representation) and disapprove general findings of developing countries. On the other hand between Pakistan and Bangladesh, the degree of exclusion also varies but resembles findings of developing countries in general. While Bangladeshi textbook almost resemble the overall finding of this study, the Pakistani textbook represents much higher female exclusion that corresponds with previous studies in Pakistan.

Table 5: Overall representation of both the genders in different studies (in percentage)

Studies	Country	Male	Female	
This study		63	37	
	Malaysia	53	47	
	Indonesia	55	46	
	Pakistan	80	17	
	Bangladesh	60	40	
Developed country (non-Muslim majority) studies	Hellinger (1980)	Germany	93	7
	Farrel & Hall (1990)	USA	64	36
	Kolbe & La Voice (1981)	USA	55	45
	Clarke & Nunes (2008)	USA	50	50
	Mineshima (2008)	Japan	50	50
	Lee & Collins (2008)/old books	Hong Kong	63	37
	Lee & Collins (2008)/new books	Hong Kong	49	51
	Blankenship (2011)	USA	54	46
Developing country (Muslim majority) studies	Kaya (2003)	Turkey	63	37
	Mirza (2004)	Pakistan	75-80	20-25
	Jasmani et al. (2009)	Malaysia	66	34
	Jabeen & Ilyas (2012)	Pakistan	69	31
	Ena (2013)	Indonesia	63	37

Chandrawati (2014)	Indonesia	77	23
Hall (2014)	Iran	69	31

Note: Many studies do not present the overall share of female and male; rather they explain indicator wise findings of gender stereotypes in textbooks. However, this table includes previous studies from 5 countries of each region that have overall share of two genders. Besides, many studies present results in ratio form or in frequency numbers. For comparability, those ratio and frequency numbers are converted in percentage wise share of both the genders.

4.2 Female-male characterization: Misrepresentation or true representation

Similar to female-male ‘exclusion’ in the textbooks, ‘misrepresentation’ or false portrayal of one gender is also one form of gender stereotype. As former one focuses more on quantitative aspect (relative presence in proportion to other gender), while latter one focus both quantitative and qualitative aspects of representation. The following section tries to identify ‘misrepresentation’ using categories such as: ‘terms/address’, ‘professional roles’, and ‘attributes’ (see Table 6-Table 9).

Misrepresentation in term/address used

When someone is addressed ‘Mrs’, it indicates their relationship and identity with reference to male counterpart. On the other hand when someone is addressed ‘Miss/Ms’ then it indicates their individual identity. The use of ‘Mrs’ And ‘Miss’ is important category in linguistic sexism and used in previous content analysis studies (Lee & Collins, 2008). In this study, the use of ‘Miss’ is 67.6 percent in three countries compared to only 32.3 percent use of ‘Mrs’ (see Table 6). This show a promising trend of shifting the use of terms or addressing female characters from the point of view of their marital identity (i.e. Mrs) to independent identity (i.e. Miss/Ms).

Table 6: Terms/ Address (Miss/Mrs.) for female characters

	Malaysia		Indonesia		Pakistan		Bangladesh	
	Miss	Mrs.	Miss	Mrs.	Miss	Mrs.	Miss	Mrs.
Frequency	28	8	4	12	0	0	11	0
%	78	22	25	75	0	0	100	0

Misrepresentation in occupation or professional roles

The table below shows the five most stated professions for both the genders (see Table 7). Among the top five most stated professions for females, all the countries have one common profession, which is ‘teacher’. This is the most stated profession for females in Malaysia and Bangladesh. The overall findings show that professions attached to female characters are traditional, lower in prestige and income. This finding corresponds with previous studies in Pakistan, Germany and other countries (Zeenatunnisa, 1989; Hellinger, 1980; Banda, 2014; Kolbe & La Voice, 1981). Moreover surprisingly in Bangladesh, the professional roles are more prestigious and demanding than any other countries (such as lawyer, social scientist or even TV anchor).

Table 7: Five most stated professional roles by gender

	Malaysia	Indonesia	Pakistan	Bangladesh
Female professions	Teacher (2)	Singer (3)	Nurse (4)	Teacher (13)
	Maid (2)	Dancer (2)	Midwife (4)	Lawyer (3)
	Nurse (1)	Teacher (1)	Poetess (3)	TV anchor (3)
	Dancer (1)	Secretary (1)	Author (2)	Social Scientist (2)
	Waitress (1)		Teacher (1)	Queen (2)
Male professions	Doctor (8)	King (4)	Poet (11)	Custom officer (9)
	Poet (5)	Musician (4)	Writer (10)	Smuggler (6)
	Manager (4)	Firefighter (2)	President (6)	Sprinter (4)
	Drover (4)	Postman (2)	Author (5)	Poet (4)
	Actor (2)	Singer (2)	King (4)	President (4)

Misrepresentation in personality trait

Women are often portrayed in the textbooks as personalities who are weaker and passive (Lee & Collins 2010), victims than resisters (Wright 1995) and, passive and subordinate than active agents (Etim 1988, Mirza 2004, Zeenatunnisa 1989). On the other hand, image of male characters reflect quite opposite personality who are bold, brave and active agents of society. Like many other studies before, this study has also recognized that the range of attributes in the textbooks of four sample countries differ between male and female characters (see Table 3). Unlike previous studies, this study uses Five Factor Model (FFM) in order to identify personality trait for female and male characters in the textbooks (see Table 8 and 9). Five Factor Model (FFM) is a popular method used in studies dealing with personality traits. Five Factor Model recognizes five personality traits (such as ‘Extraversion’, ‘Openness’, ‘Conscientiousness’, ‘Neuroticism’ and ‘Agreeableness’) to fit individuals according to prerequisite criteria of attributes (John & Srivastava, 1999).

This study uses a list of adjectives developed by John (1990, cited in John & Srivastava, 1999) for each of the five personality traits. For each of the five personality traits, adjectives are divided into two groups, i.e. high and low. Based on this list, an individual can be either high or low in certain personality traits. Besides, being high in Extraversion (E), Openness (O) and Conscientiousness (C) is quite opposite of being high in Neuroticism (N) and Agreeableness (A). For instance being low in the former three is having personality of introversion, closedness and lack of direction (Costa & McCrae, 1992 cited in John & Srivastava, 1999, p.60). Whereas being low in the latter two is equal to being emotionally stable and antagonism or analytical (ibid).

The overall findings from textbooks show female characters having introvert and passive personality, while male characters having extrovert and active personality in four countries. However, except for Malaysia, findings from all the other countries have problem of female exclusion²⁰, which means lower share of female attributes affect the outcome for each country at

²⁰ In case of Indonesia 10 male attributes matched with the list of Jones (1990), compared to only 2 for female attributes. Similarly this is also in case of Pakistan (26:5) and Bangladesh (35:10) where female attributes have less presence. Only for Malaysia, both males and females had equal attributes (22:22).

each trait (especially when converted to percentage format). Nevertheless taking Malaysia as ideal (where equal number of male-female attributes were found), male characters still have personality traits of extroverts and active, while females as introvert and passive. This corresponds with the findings from previous studies (Lee & Collins, 2010; Wright, 1995; Arabaa, 1985; Etim, 1985; Mirza, 2004; Jesmani et al., 2009).

Table 8: Country wise attributes of two genders at each indicator of FFM (High)

High	Malaysia		Indonesia		Pakistan		Bangladesh	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
E	33	67	100	0	100	0	87	13
O	60	40	80	20	83	17	84	16
C	67	33	0	0	0	100	71	29
N	43	57	0	0	100	0		100
A	37	63	100	0	77	23	67	33

Table 9: Country wise attributes of two genders at each indicator of FFM (Low)

Low	Malaysia		Indonesia		Pakistan		Bangladesh	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
E	80	20	0	0	100	0	100	0
O	0	100	100	0	0	0	100	0
C	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	100
N	0	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
A	50	50	50	50	83	17	100	0

Note: Extrovert and active personality= high in E, O, C and, low in N and A. Introvert and passive personality= low in E, O, C and, high in N and A.

4.3 Relation between textbook stereotypes and development indicators

As mentioned earlier, aggregated (over 21 categories) assessment of stereotypes vary among the four study countries. However, this ignores across category variation within each sample country. Therefore, we have generated Gender Equality Index (GEI) in order to show degree of inclusion/exclusion among four countries (See Table 10).

Table 10: Gender Equality Index (GEI)

Categories	Malaysia	Indonesia	Pakistan	Bangladesh
Names range	0	0	0	0
Total names	1	0	0	0
Nouns	0	0	0	0
Pronouns	0	0	0	0
Firstness	0	0	0	0
Centeredness	1	0	0	0
No. Attributes	1	0	0	0
Attributes range	0	0	0	0
Author	1	0	0	0
Character	0	0	0	0
Leading character	0	0	0	0

Social role	0	0	0	0
Domestic role	1	1	1	1
Occupation	0	0	0	0
Dialogue	1	1	0	1
Activities range	0	0	0	0
Terms/address	1	0	0	1
Visual representation	0	1	0	0
Centeredness	0	1	0	0
Indoor	0	1	0	1
Outdoor	0	1	0	0
GE Index value**	33	29	5	19

Note: **Gender Equality Index (GEI): if female share of any indicator (in Table 3) is equal or over 50% then it is given the value of 1 and if female share is less than 50%, then it is 0. The overall estimation of for GEI is calculated

using this formula:
$$\frac{\sum GE_i}{21} \times 100 = \text{GE Index. (Here 'i' is the sum of the value of each of the 21 indicators}$$

either 1 or 0).

Categories in Table 10 that have higher female share are coded 1 and 0 otherwise. Then the overall outcome of 21 categories is divided by 21 and multiplied by 100. The outcome of Gender Equality Index (GEI) range from 0 to 100. However, both the extremes are considered stereotype. For instance if overall outcome of GEI is 0 for a country, then it is purely male stereotyped and if vice versa (GEI =100) then it is purely female stereotyped. Anything below point 50 is male stereotype and anything above point 50 is female stereotype. The result from 21 categories shows that GEI for Malaysia is the highest (GEI=33) followed by Indonesia (GEI=29), Bangladesh (GEI=19) and Pakistan (GEI=5) (see Table 10). This ranking corresponds with the ranking of our aggregate result (see Table 3). However, Malaysian textbook that has almost egalitarian share of females (47 percent) in aggregate findings, category wise assessment in GEI shows that it still has good amount of stereotypes. Similar result was found for rest of the three sample countries.

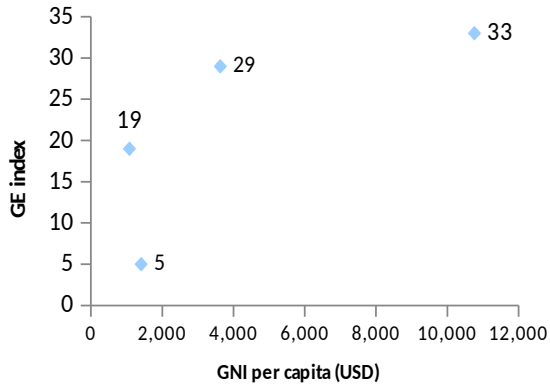
Country specific data on selected indicators from Table 1 are plotted against GE Index in order to explore the correlation between gender stereotypes in textbooks and the overall level of development across the four countries (see Figure 1-6)²¹. The relation between GEI and GNI per capita shows positive relationship (see Figure 1). However for Pakistan, this relation does not occur where high GEI score exist even with better GNI than Bangladesh (Bangladesh, scores better in GEI than Pakistan with smaller GNI). The Figure 2 and Figure 3 show positive relationship of higher Gender Development Index (GDI) and Human Development Index (HDI) with better Gender Equality Index (GEI). For Pakistan where both GDI and HDI are low, the GEI also has lower score compared to the other three countries. The next figure (Figure 4) illustrate quite opposite result compared to last three figures where better GNI, HDI and GDI is positively linked with higher GEI. In this figure, of female share in parliament is negatively associated with GEI. For instance both Pakistan and Bangladesh has higher share of women in

²¹ In the brackets beside each point of the plots in Figure 2 and Figure 3 illustrate the GE index number and country ranking in that particular indicator. While from Figure 4 to Figure 6, the brackets illustrate the percentage of particular indicator.

parliament (21 percent and 20 percent respectively), but lower GEI and, vice versa for Malaysia and Indonesia.

This contradiction in the relationship can be explained by exploring the indicator itself. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the higher share of women in parliament is due to reserved seats for female candidates in Pakistan (60) and Bangladesh (50), which is not reflection of empowerment. If we eliminate this quota and consider only directly elected female candidates then share of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women drops to 4.4 percent and 6.6 percent respectively. Moving on, the percentage of female teachers in secondary school is positively associated with high GEI (see Figure 5). However, for Pakistan higher female presence in teaching profession is negatively associated with high GEI. This is may be explained with reference to other socio-cultural factors which is beyond the scope of this paper. The last figure shows positive relation between higher female participation in labor force and high GEI (see Figure 6). In this case lower female labor force participation in Pakistan is associated with lower GEI.

Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. Gross National Income per capita



Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. Gender Development Index

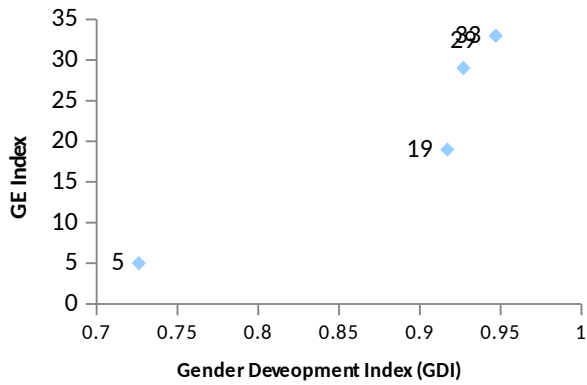
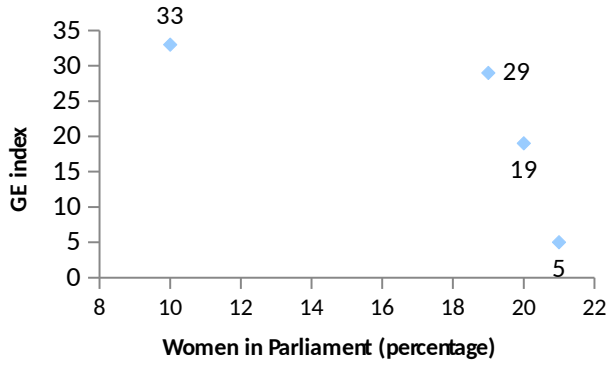


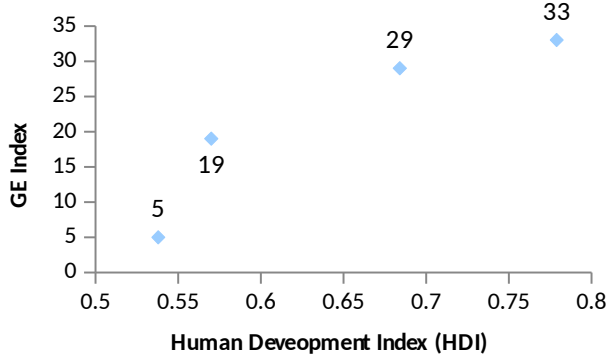
Figure 2: Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. GDI

Figure 1: Scatter Plot of GE index vs. GNI per capita

Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. Women in Parliament



Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. Human Development Index



Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. female labor force share



Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. Percentage of Female teacher

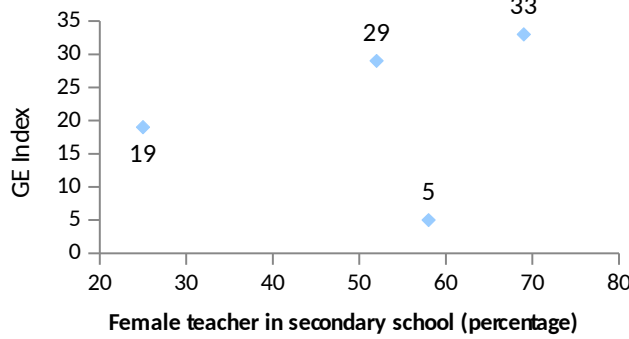


Figure 3: Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. HDI

Figure 4: Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. %, of women

Figure 5: Scatter Plot of GE Index vs. %, of Female teacher

5. Conclusion

Gender stereotype in school textbooks remains a largely overlooked issue in the ongoing debate on the elimination of wider socio-economic gender gap through education.. Our findings show that high degree of gender stereotypes in the form of ‘exclusion’ and ‘misrepresentation’ in all the sample textbooks. The ratio of female and male presence is 37:63. However, the extent of stereotypes varies by country with highest stereotypes in Pakistani textbook (in terms of exclusion) and lowest in Malaysian textbook. The Malaysian and Indonesian textbooks have more egalitarian representation of females than their South Asian counterparts Pakistan and Bangladesh. Moreover, female characters are associated with traditional and low wage occupations as well as personality traits that are introvert and passive. When considering category wise share of male-female representation, however, the patterns of stereotypes in textbook content corresponds to the country’s respective socio-economic level -- countries with better development indicators (e.g. women labor force participation) such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh show less gender stereotypes in school textbooks and, vice-versa.

Overall, our cross-country comparison of gender stereotypes is consistent with the available evidence on the extent of gender discrimination and disadvantage women face in South and South-East Asia. Pakistan consistently ranks below Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh in almost all gender indicators (Asadullah et al., 2014). As a matter of fact, relatively more gender balanced textbook in Bangladesh may be one of the reasons for growing status of women in the country vis-à-vis their counterpart in Pakistan. Indeed misrepresentation is less pronounced in occupational and relational attributes in Bangladeshi textbooks compared to Pakistan. While textbooks in South-East Asian countries like Indonesia and Malaysia have higher gender balance compared to Pakistan, our analysis also highlights areas where there is room for further improvement in gender content of textbooks in these countries. Our results therefore highlight the need to go beyond the current policy focus of improving access to education among girls. The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2015 rightly highlighted the need to revise textbook content and restore gender balance and encourage children to question gender stereotypes in the society. In case of Pakistan, the 2001–2015 Education for All (EFA) action plan has also acknowledged the need to free textbooks of gender bias. Besides removing supply-side barriers to girls’ schooling, governments in South and South-East Asia should prioritize elimination of stereotypes in school textbooks and classroom practices in order to attain the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of gender equality by 2030.

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