

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

‘आफू धन कमाएर घर फर्किँदा आफ्नी श्रीमती पोइल गएपछि आफ्ना मनमा उठेका भावहरू समेटी एक मनोवाद लेख्नुहोस्’. Write a monologue depicting your state of mind when you find out that your wife has eloped, on your return. (<http://enayapatrika.com/coverstory/16725.html>)

This was the questions asked to the students of grade 10 appearing the examination for Nepali language subject, in the send-up test conducted by Public and Boarding Schools’ Organization, Nepal (PABSON)¹ in December 2014. The explicit bias evident in this question is enough to suggest how patriarchal and sexist idea of women being basically unreliable is being conveyed to school going children. When asked about why the question was judgmental and derogatory towards women, the concerned personal defended the question as just normal examination question, with no intention of giving gender biased ideas.

According to Constitution of Nepal 2015, “Every citizen shall have the right to compulsory and free basic education, and free education up to the secondary level (p. 11)”. Education has been identified not only as a basic right of every human being, but also as a social tool for human development in the country. Education is not just about knowledge and understanding but is also used as the mechanism to indoctrinate the dominant norms and values of the given society, especially in children and young generation. Despite significant improvement in the recent years, patriarchal values are still manifested in the several domains of social life in Nepal such as education, popular culture, politics and employment. In most Nepali schools, textbooks are the predominant medium used to impart knowledge to the students whereas other tools such as films, field visits and internet are seldom used. Unfortunately these textbooks are not free from sexist prejudices and gender biases against women.

¹ PABSON is the most renowned, active, largest and widespread umbrella organization of Private and Boarding Schools in Nepal.

In most school level textbooks, men and women are presented as two creatures, fundamentally different from each other. In most textbooks, the words used are male biased; stories, poems, biographies and other texts are mostly written by men and are about men. The Gender and Secondary Education Report (Dr. Sumon K. Tuladhar, Bijaya K. Thapa, 1998, p. 76) identified that textbooks were unable to avoid stereotyped gender roles. Likewise, it also pointed that ‘Selection of non-fiction stories and biographies is made heavily from the male than the female group.’

At least 70 countries fell short of gender parity in primary education by 2005 and 24 are considered unlikely to achieve gender parity in either primary or secondary school by 2015(UNESCO, 2006). In the textbooks, male are being presented more and female are being greatly underrepresented. And also the problem lies in depiction of both male and female in gender-stereotyped ways. Textbooks indirectly gives girls and boys the vision on who they are and constraining what they can become in the future. It has been seen that gender bias in curricula has led girls away from mathematics and science, and into gender-stereotyped course of study. Similarly boys are also disadvantaged and relatively unaided in reading and language skills.

- Sadker and Zittleman (2007:144) cite research “that students spend as much as 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks and that teachers make a majority of their instructional decisions based on the textbook.”
- And a Canadian study found that the average teacher uses textbooks for 70 to 90 percent of classroom time (Baldwin and Baldwin 1992). *Hence textbooks cannot be ignored.* (Blumberg, 2007)

My decision to choose the secondary level is, to some extent, rooted in the doubts and suspicions that I had in my school level regarding the fairness and accuracy of gender representation in the textbooks and curricula. I was in secondary level when I first noticed the discriminatory nature of the textbooks. This provoked me to raise questions about the legitimacy of the stereotyped role models represented in the textbooks, and if those were the sincere reflection of conditions of women and the lives they lived. Textbooks treated women as second-class citizens, through the sexist indications in both explicit and implicit forms. The right to freedom of expression has been and unfortunately continues to be violated in

schools, encouraging self-censorship on the part of students. I believe I was not the only one questioning the discriminatory instructions of the books and also that government of Nepal uses textbooks to transmit not only academic knowledge but also to indoctrinate children into its dominant state discourses and values, including patriarchy.

As cited by Anahita Abbas (2012), according to an international education organization- the National Middle School Association (2010), “young adolescents (aged 10 to 15) are in transitional state in terms of moral development, shifting their focus from self to others, displaying empathy for the oppressed. Moreover, middle school students increasingly examine adult moral judgements, and tend to build their own value systems, which are often influenced by the principles of their trusted adults.” Early adolescence is the period of identity development, a time when children are uncertain about who and what they are. Biological changes occur during early adolescence, so does gender socialisation, when many parents reinforce the gender related norms of the society. Children in the adolescence when searching for self and identity might display “gender-atypical” behavior or “gender-undesirable interests” (Finkenauer et al., 2002, p.37). Provided that students are progressively more aware of social issues at this age and dominant belief systems affect them easily and also the reliance of teachers and students primarily on textbooks, it cannot be denied that textbooks play an important role in socializing school students into dominant gender norms and reproducing the patriarchal belief of gender-roles and gender inequality.

Another factor that makes curriculum worthy of research is that once students pass the secondary school level in Nepal, students are tracked for their further studies at high school level. Students have four academic tracks to choose from, i.e. science, management, humanities and social sciences, and education. Usually trend in Nepal is that students with high scores in SLC² join the science stream and remaining join the others making education the least preferred subject. Similarly many girls enter into nursing field right after SLC limiting them to explore other fields so far defined as male domain. Once the student chooses a track, it is hard for him/her to change tracks. From this we can say that, by the time they are in grade 10, students have more or less clear perception of the paths and prospective careers

² School Leaving Certificate (SLC) is the examination students attend in Grade 10.

they want to be in. Nepalese students have to make an immanent decision regarding their future as it affects them for a lifetime. The fact that school education is highly influential in helping students determine their future choices makes this study more important.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Except for few notable exceptions, most writings on gender parity in Nepal have limited themselves to newspaper articles or opinion pieces. There are very few empirical studies that focus on analysis of gender in the content of the textbooks.

School level education and textbooks being indispensable media that communicate social values and knowledge, are key components of children's socialization, shaping how they think about themselves and the world around them. Blumberg (2008), in her UNESCO written report in 2007 claims that sexism in textbooks is "one of the best camouflaged-hardest to budge rocks in the road to gender equality in education," and maintains that such biases tend to discourage girls from pursuing mathematics and sciences (p.4). Government prescribed textbooks in Nepal too depict women mainly in subservient roles. Father/male figure is portrayed powerful, who makes the decision in the family. While doing this, women are relegated to the roles of homemakers and mothers, who are characterized not only as loving and caring but also submissive, weak and dumb. Instead of promoting gender equality and discouraging discrimination, textbooks are still reproducing and reinforcing patriarchal ideologies about gender.

Onta (2009S) in his article 'Ambivalence Denied' looks at the linkages between education, nationalism and social change. He discusses the role of school history textbooks in disseminating a particular version of national history (*Rastriya Itihas*). Through historical approach, Onta has shown the attempt of Panchayat system in Nepal (1960-1990) in creating "a virile image of the nation and produce Nepali people as one ethnicity by pruning any un-national elements to erase historical ambivalences" (Bhatta, 2009). Onta further establishes that textbooks were one of the fundamental instruments used by Panchayat system 'to fashion a collective memory of Nepali nationalism' and its survival even after the end of the system in 1990. Another study conducted by Subedi (2012) regarding the analysis of social studies

textbooks of Nepal through the critical thinking perspective discusses essential components of textbooks, qualities of textbook and its role in student learning. He, however, does not focus on gender in his analysis. Similarly content analysis of Primary and Secondary School Textbooks by Nonaka et al. 2012 focuses on the content relating to malaria control and their findings is that textbooks rarely included knowledge and skills that are crucial to protect schoolchildren and their families from malaria. Gender has not found any place in this research as well. Similarly Parajuli and Das (2013) conducted a macro level analysis of community schools in Nepal regarding their poor performance. They slightly raise issue of gender amongst other deeply rooted exclusion based on caste and marginalized groups. They discuss Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction' theory arguing that the school reproduces the culture and values of the dominant group in the society which would later on works as a form of violence which is called as "symbolic violence". However, here they talk about Dalit and Indigenous groups as dominated; gender is not their focus.

Although several researchers have analysed Nepali school textbooks, their focus hardly has been discrimination, be it general or focusing gender. Rather the focuses are on other issue than gender. I found the gender issues in textbooks still unexplored by scholars while analyzing textbooks in Nepal. There are very few studies in context of Nepal that addresses the issue of gender biases in text books. In most textbooks, women are underrepresented in words and illustrations. Textbooks also promote stereotypical gender roles and attitude. In addition to inadequate researches available regarding gender analysis of textbooks, former researches have neither inquired about the reactions of school teachers nor of students regarding the discrimination prevailing in the textbooks. In fact, textbooks can pave the way to socially just societies by changing the stereotyped perceptions relating to men and women. Therefore it is important to know how gender differences in the textbooks are reproduced and promoted or attempts has been made to mitigate such stereotypical gender roles. Likewise it is also necessary to analyze whether or not these textbooks are adequately gender sensitive; if the language used aims to motivate girls to go for further education, empowering and encourage them to become visible in the public sphere.

The research question of this study is to find out the extent of gender biases and patriarchal ideologies as manifested in contemporary school level text books. In order to address this question, following specific questions have been formulated:

1. What are the cases and patterns of gender disparity in textbooks taught in schools of grade 8 and 10 in Nepal?
2. How do students of these grades and their teachers perceive the implicit and explicit messages being delivered through representations of men and women in text books?
3. How have Nepalese girls (students) understood, adopted, negotiated and resisted gender inequalities they face in their school curriculum and textbooks?

1.3 Objectives of the research

The general objective of this research is to find out the extent of gender biases and patriarchal ideologies present in contemporary school level textbooks. In order to address the basic research problems raised above, following are the specific objectives of the research:

1. To comprehend how the government prescribed text books on English, Nepali and Social Studies of grade 8 and 10 are presenting the concept of male and female and how it is playing a leading role in socializing school level children to patriarchal norms and values about gender roles.
2. To find out the perspective of students of these grades and their teachers regarding the implicit and explicit messages being delivered through such representation of men and women in text books
3. To find out what roles teachers, school and family play in gender socialization

1.4 Rationale of the study

In Nepal, very less focus has been shed to study the discrimination prevalent in the textbooks. These discriminations present either implicitly or explicitly promote the ideology of the dominant group of the society. Nepal being a patriarchal society has always given less importance to women and their work is also not admired. Through this study, I aim to find

out what actually is being presented in the textbooks regarding gender, what cases and patterns of gender disparity are there in textbooks. Furthermore, this study will also explore opinion of teachers and students regarding their perception towards the gender disparity of textbooks and how they understand, adapt, negotiate and resist the gender inequalities in school. This research will try to find out if the state's "legitimate knowledge" is in real legitimate in the eyes of young generation of Nepal or if they use their agency to discard the teachings, and in practice challenge the very teachings of the textbooks, confidently exploring their capability in the public sphere.

According to Bourdieu, major role of education is cultural and social reproduction. And he maintains that it involves the transmission and reproduction of the culture of the dominant class. Hence this research will explore implicit and explicit patriarchal ideologies promoted and transmitted through school curriculum and textbooks. At the same time, focus will also be in exploring the truth in his claim as there is a scope for resistance and transformation within the group who is receiving this education and also who is involved in knowledge dissemination, as both teachers and students are active agents and learners. They are not just passive consumers who will blindly follow every lines in the text as they have the capacity to compare and rational what they are asked to belief. Moreover, this research will be helpful to those working for gender equality in education get a good grasp of existing state of gender relation presented in school level textbooks.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Examining gender in binary terms, femininity versus masculinity limits my research. A more comprehensive research would have looked at gender roles not just limited to male or female, masculine or feminine, but existing along a spectrum of sexual subjectivity. Homosexuality is an untouched topic in this research.

An inability to use probability sampling technique significantly limited the capacity to make broader generalizations from the findings of this research. The sample that I use in this research is small, containing only twelve girls who attend government school and live in a small town. Girls who grow up in large metropolises and study in private schools would have responded differently to research questions. Similarly, I did not attempt to examine intersection of gender with religion, class and caste.

In addition, this research is limited to analysis of English, Nepali and Social Studies books of only two grades. Inability to include text books from all grades and all subjects limits this study. Findings from this analysis of these six textbooks cannot be generalized to all textbooks at secondary school level and we cannot we assume that textbooks at secondary and high school levels contain same cases and patterns of gender disparity. Therefore, the generalisation made from this study might not be universally valid.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

2.1 Review of literature

Textbooks represent the everyday life for children. They offer varieties of identities, interests, attitudes, and experiences that determine the position of the children. They represent the reading world, and are also important links between the school, parents and students. They show what it means to be a child in a particular context, which also contains learning the gender identity through socialization. In that process children learn the particular behaviors related to their genders, therefore textbooks are important in their gender socialization. Elementary level textbooks are considered as particularly important, since they contain the basic factual knowledge and skills children are supposed to acquire, which strongly influence their view of life, their gender socialization, and also the reproduction of gender inequalities and stereotypes in the society. (Kereszty 2009)

Text is an important device in the educational process not just because it is used to instruct the teachers' work, but it also embodies the subjects, and holds the knowledge and norms preferred by the school. Even if the main aim of the textbook is to give a subject specific skill, it also has a part of 'hidden' curriculum, to give the worldview, expectations and values of the society. 'The 'hidden' curriculum has an identity forming role, since it mediates the gender-specific expectations, norms and behaviors, and therefore it contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities in the society. Thus as part of the 'hidden' curriculum textbooks might transform, strengthen or diminish the developed and developing power relations both in the classroom and in the society.' (Kereszty, 2009) Similarly, text book also plays as an important factor in establishing a general interest in the student towards the particular subject.

Textbooks refer complex power relations and battles among different groups with different competing interests and identities. Researches have shown that legitimate knowledge does not include the experiences and forms of expressions of those actors that have not been in powerful position throughout history, for example, women, or people of color, etc. (Apple, Christian-Smith, & Linda, 1991) Therefore the symbolic representations in the textbooks are

connected to real power relations, and they might also represent differentiated social relations as natural and unquestionable. (Grant & Sleeter, 1986)

Even if different policies and revisions have been done to make the text more gender sensitive, they are far from bias-free. There are different forms of biasness prevalent in the text books not only in K-12 textbooks, but also in college texts, in the media -in fact, they are all around us. Myra and David Sadker have pointed out seven forms of biasness in instructional materials- Invisibly, stereotyping, imbalance and selectivity, unreality, fragmentation and isolation, linguistic bias, and cosmetic bias (Sadker, 2002). Textbooks take up the lion's share of class time for both the teachers and students and reflect a nation's curricula. The gender bias in textbook is hidden in plain sight, where stereotypes of males and females are camouflaged by the taken-for-granted system of gender stratification and roles.

Gender bias in textbooks does matter and gender bias in textbooks is widespread geographically. In 1985, Alrabaa published "Sex Division of Labor in Syrian School Textbooks" where he talks about the presence of male-biased content and language based on the analysis of 28 textbooks used in grades 8-12. Females were derogated and victimized. The books' annual readership was over 500,000 students. The quantitative study of occupation assigned to male and female and also themes and images showed that males proved the leading characters in 75 percent of the 353 lessons analyzed; they also were 87 percent of those portrayed in 54 biographies. Regarding the division of labor, the analysis counted a total of 463 occupations: 391 (84 percent) were filled by males and 72 (16 percent) by females. 343 occupations were assigned exclusively to males and only 12 occupations were assigned to females: housewives (21) predominate, and teacher and nurse also proved common. All told, women almost invariably were shown as economically dependent domestic creatures. Concerning favorable images, brave was the most common for male (N=82), followed by popular (75). Other images used for males were strong, kind, achiever, innovative, adventurous, hardworking, generous and educated. Women were described as beautiful, kind, loving, faithful, motherly, compassionate, generous, loyal, educated and dependent. (Alrabaa 1985). Qualitative findings of the analysis was that language used was male-centered, masculine nouns like 'mankind' and pronouns like 'he' and male words served as all-inclusive terms for both males and females. Traditional gender roles were also

very visible, males depicted as ‘masters’ in their homes and women had no roles in any kinds of decision made for the family. According to Alrabaa, women often were portrayed as manipulative, jealous creatures; as “fussy do-nothing”; as weak, irrational, superstitious, or “despicable”.

According to gender analysis report of primary textbooks (NCERT 2013, p. 16), “Men are depicted in multiple professions – as pilots, artists, astronauts, magicians, rulers, postmen, vegetable sellers, newspaper sellers, cobblers, librarians, drivers, dramatists, musicians, athletes, scholars, wrestlers, grocers, policeman, sports persons and wood cutters. Whereas, women are shown as teachers, cook, doctors and nurses which reflects an extension of household work.” Gender stereotyping in textual material continue to be highly prevalent in the Indian textbooks even after the stress of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERTS) on removing gender disparities- specifically emphasizing the elimination of sex stereotypes and sex biases from the textbooks. “Be it a book on science, social studies, mathematics, English \or Hindi, and women can be seen fetching water, working in kitchens or cleaning the room.... [and that, consistently,} lessons....are male-centric (Ahmed, 2006).”

Jon Ellis in 2002 did comparative analysis of History and Geography texts published in 1992 and 1996. Part 1 has 71 pictures of males (76 percent) vs. 22 of females (24 percent). And part 2 shows far more extreme gender bias than part 1: it has 50 pictures of males (96 percent) vs. 2 of females (4 percent). Not a single woman is depicted in the chapter about “Main Ways of Earning a Living.” Nor, in another illustration, are any women shown as receiving land titles from a male government officer. Ellis claims that this “is a false view of reality since in West Bengal, numerous households have women as their heads, who hold [titles] in their own name.” (Ellis, 2002) He opposed this and said that “Gender bias against women found in the text and pictures of these books makes them unacceptable for use.” In case of Nepal too, this applies. Hence to see how the gender related issues are presented and addressed, I am interested in researching on this.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research is informed by the views of two theorists- Michael Apple and Pierre Bourdieu. I draw on Apple’s theories on the interconnections between the

state and the education system to explain the gender inequities of the Nepali school textbooks. Similarly I discuss Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction' and 'social reproduction' to justify the role of textbooks in transmission and reproduction of culture of the 'dominant classes', here-male, and their power to 'impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate.'

Institution sponsored by state are not neutral; nation state constantly use education to reproduce the status quo of social inequality. State which centrally controls the national curriculum often uses institution of education to promote its agenda. My content analysis of school curriculum of Nepali schools is highly influenced by Michael Apple (2004). He draws our attention to the political nature of education and contends that educational system "ultimately help produce the type of knowledge that is needed to maintain the dominant economic, political, and cultural arrangements that now exist" (p. x). Modifying Spencer's original question "what knowledge is of most worth", Apple asks, "Whose knowledge is of most worth" (2004, p. vii). The role of schools in economic and cultural reproduction of class, race, and gender structures is emphasized by Apple (2004). Making use of Apple's insights, I will analyse the chosen textbooks wearing a feminist theoretical lens to reveal the stereotypical gender roles. Nepali school textbooks often stress the duties of women in the domestic sphere and advice women to take on traditional and stereotypical roles. Textbooks mainly assign traditional roles to men and women and also aims to justify the existing discriminatory practices of the society and maintain them.

To explain the reproduction of patriarchal domination, I will use Bourdieu's role of education in "cultural reproduction and social reproduction". According to Bourdieu, major role of educational system is "cultural reproduction". This involves the transmission and reproduction of the culture of the "dominant classes". Quoting Bourdieu, Haralambos and Heald (1980) state that these groups have the power to "impose meaning and to impose them as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1973). They claim that the dominant classes are able to define their own culture as "worthy of being sought and possessed" and to establish it as the basis of knowledge in the educational system. Here in this research, dominant class is of the male who using their power to legitimate the meaning and controlling the attitude of students, use textbooks to reproduce the male ideology.

Summing up, Apple's and Bourdieu's insights on the role of state-sponsored education in reproducing social inequalities and promotion of patriarchy, helps in both content analysis of the textbooks and also in studying the reaction of teachers and students towards the gender biasness present and promoted in the school textbooks, which highly influences the attitude of the students.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Study site description and rationale for the selection of the study site

To answer the second research question, for data collection, I went to two government schools in Nawalparasi district namely- Shree Devchuli Higher Secondary School (hereafter referred as Devchuli School) located in Rajahar and Shree Nepal High School (hereafter Nepal School) located in Keurani, which is in Devchuli municipality in the Western Development Region of Nepal. The reason behind selecting the research site was my familiarity with the place. The research site has population from diverse culture and there are two government schools, with large number of students. If the study is conducted out of Kathmandu valley, I believe the research will be able to represent the other remote areas of Nepal too.

3.2 Research design

This research adopted descriptive for content analysis of the textbooks. Similarly, explanatory research design has been used to understand the perspective of students and teachers using those textbooks in teaching-learning process. This is a qualitative research examining the why and how of the ideology being promoted by the textbooks, and not just what, where, when, or "who". This research attempts to explain the reasons for the ideological biases in textbooks rather than just describing them.

3.3 Nature and sources of data

The nature of the collected data is largely qualitative with occasional uses of quantitative data from primary sources i.e. textbooks analysed and interpretation of content of those books is done to establish the claims. The research also has made an ample use of both primary and occasionally some use of secondary data. Primary data was gathered through close reading of textbooks as well as semi-structured interviews with the teachers and students of two schools in Nawalparasi district. Additionally classroom observation was another source which helped to gather information regarding seating arrangement and classroom participation.

3.4 Sampling procedure

Purposive samplings, a non-probability sampling technique was used to select interview population. A purposive sample, also commonly called a judgmental sample, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. Smaller but focused samples are used than large samples in qualitative research. The purpose of selecting Nepali, English and Social Studies **was** because these books are the compulsory subjects taught to all students studying all over Nepal. Additionally these books are highly used to inculcate the values the government wants to promote. Similarly the **classes** were selected based on the level of examination students attend- district and school leaving certificate examination. Although the sampling was not a statistically accurate simple random sampling, the researcher avoided all purposive and biased elements while selecting the interviewee. The **students** selected were the girls holding first three roll number among the girls, excluding boys'. The **teachers** interviewed were the ones teaching Nepali, English and Social Studies in Grade 8 and 10.

3.5 Data collection techniques and instruments

The primary data for content analysis was collected through close reading of written texts and images of all six textbooks taken as samples. Participatory observation and semi-structured interview was another technique used for data collection. For the quantitative data, I tallied the number of female versus male in various forms like in pictures, characters of the stories, names, text about male or female. And I used different sets of questions to interview teachers and students. I recorded the interviews taking consent of the interviewees. At the same time I also maintained notes. The qualitative analysis included the interpretation of the above data, and the interviews that determine the responses and reactions of teachers and students to the gender disparities of the books. These books are published by the Ministry of Education. Community schools are under the jurisdiction of the ministry of education and sports, and are required to use a national curriculum, which is uniform across the country.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

Content analysis and interpretation were the most important methods used during the course of data analysis. Content analysis was used to assess forms of discrimination against women in textbooks. Neuendorf (2001), a specialist in the field of content analysis, affirms that content analysis has been widely used to study gender roles, and to compare men and women's attitudes not only in textbooks, but also in films, new coverage, children's books, comic books, and music.

Based on the research questions, I analysed six textbooks of grade 8 and 10 in terms of gender representation. For this purpose, I conducted content analysis of written texts and images of Nepali, English and Social Studies textbooks, while focusing on factors like family, employment, socio-political roles of male and female. Before data collection, variables were identified and the data was collected accordingly. The quantitative data collected for these variables are presented in tables. On the basis of data collected, qualitative interpretations are carried out.

To answer the second research question, I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interview with twelve school going girls and six teachers. Palys and Atchison (2007), emphasize the importance of person-to-person interviews in social sciences, to give voice to women whose ideas and experiences have rarely been reflected in history. Appendix A and B contains questions that I asked during the interviews to students and teachers respectively.

Chapter 4

Gender Biases in Textbooks

In this chapter, I report my findings from content analysis of three textbooks taught in Nepali schools, namely Nepali language, English language and Social Studies of grade 8 and 10. I begin by discussing the significance of the three aforementioned textbooks and then I review the method of analysis of the textbooks. Later, to reveal instances of gender inequity, I explore the texts and the images from each book separately.

4.1 Significance of textbooks in the Nepali school curriculum

Nepali government exposes young boys and girls to a common set of norms, values, behaviors by mandating a common national curriculum throughout the country. Textbooks serve as ideal agents for the transmission of the state's desired ideologies to the students. Some subjects are more effective than others in socializing the youngsters to the acceptable social and political values. Nepali language, English language and Social Studies textbooks that I have chosen from two different levels of high school, serve this purpose very well. In addition, the private schools also use the same books even though they use books published by private publications for other subjects in grade 8 and 10. Therefore, students all over Nepal use the same textbooks, and similar social and political values are imparted to all students. These textbooks are ideal means to bring change or to preserve certain norms of the society. Unfortunately, these textbooks inclined towards the latter objective than the former.

Language textbooks have been ideal instruments to socialize youths by virtue of their ability to transmit cultural norms through the written words: centuries old poems, old proverbs as well as folk songs and ancient stories. Along with illustrations that appeal to children, these texts have the ability to mesmerize the students, and to convey meanings, opinions and morals that the state deems suitable (Anahita Abbas-Nejad-Konjin, 2012). Both the Nepali and English language textbooks act as effective means to instill the values of the dominant groups, including the normalization of gender disparity among the children of 8 to 16 years age group. According to the preface of the grade 8 and 10 Nepali textbooks, which is published by the

Ministry of Education, in terms of structure and suggested activities for students, these books are continuation of Nepali language arts books of the primary levels. However, “these books also contain sophisticated themes related to contemporary issues making it practical, relevant and job-oriented.” The same is true for the grade 8 and 10 English language textbooks. They contain communicative activities with an aim to make students competent in communicating ideas with people of any nationality. Grade 8 English textbook was developed in line with the Basic Level English Curriculum (Grade 6-8). In terms of content, these books teach advanced vocabulary and grammar rules through variety of reading materials and exercises compared to primary and lower secondary level textbook, but they too follow same patterns. It is important to note here that English language is taught as foreign language in all schools in Nepal. Another significant textbook is Social Studies taught in the schools. Like Nepali and English textbooks, this book also plays a vital role in socialization of children. Social studies textbooks have the potential to render social sciences as inclusive field, accessible to girls as well as boys. The portrayal of females in various roles serving the society could serve as role models for girls, for instance, the image of women successful in development, medicine, politics, engineering, military services etc. is of the utmost importance in social studies books to break the traditionally defined gender roles and careers. All of these textbooks are “designed with the objective to help the students to appreciate and make them aware of arts and aesthetics; preserve and promote social norms, values and ideals; equip them with creative skills and have due respect for ethnicity, languages, religions, cultures, disabilities, regional diversity and human rights so as to make them capable of playing the role of responsible citizens (Social Studies preface, Grade 10).”

4.2 Review of the method of analysis

Finoa Leach (2003, p. 107), a specialist, in the area of gender and education suggests five categories that should be paid importance during content analysis. I have followed those categories in my content analysis and they are as follows:

- Frequency and nature of appearance of females
- Work/employment roles
- Socio-political roles of males and females

- The family roles of males and females
- Psychological traits of males and females

Leach (2003, p. 105) also reminds researchers to note whether the book “promotes women’s self-reliance,” and to assess a number of gender equity issues, namely:

- Women taking initiative to control their lives
- Women questioning their life conditions
- Women leaders
- Women in non-traditional roles

It is important to note that I have adapted the above categories to analyze textbooks, wherever it was possible fitting the content of the books. For instance, whereas I focus on the psychological traits of male and female characters in the stories included in language arts textbook, I pay more attention to sexual identity of historical figures, while analyzing the social studies textbook. Moreover, throughout my content analysis, in choosing categories for coding, I attempted to follow guidelines listed by Rose (2002, p. 65). According to Rose, coding categories need to be “exclusive”, “exhaustive”, and “enlightening.” The categories that I devised allowed me to examine different aspects of images and texts. Additionally, they do not overlap but inform readers about gender disparities that permeate the books.

In some pictures or stories, it was difficult to identify the sex of characters. For example, some pictures in the English textbook showed only a hand holding gardening equipment, whereas few pictures in the Nepali language arts and Social studies textbooks were so small that I was unable to identify sex of the characters. Also, a chapter in Nepali textbook did not have a name or a picture of the character, and the body of the story did not contain any revealing clues regarding the sex of the person. In such instances, where I was doubtful about the sex of characters, I excluded them from counting.

4.3 Analysis of Grade 8 and 10 Nepali Language textbook

Nepali is the official language of Nepal and official works are carried out in Nepali. Nepal is a country with diverse ethnicity and there are more than 100 languages spoken all over Nepal. At times, people from one region do not know or understand the language in another place. Government of Nepal provides free textbooks to students attending government schools, as

motivation for both students to go to schools and parents to send their children to school because it won't be an additional financial burden to the parents. Government of Nepal provides the textbooks in Nepali, which is also the main medium of instruction. The government uses the dominant language to influence students that also serves as a vehicle to carry forward the ideology of the powerful. Students also find it easy to follow Nepali rather than English language. Nepali textbooks usually have poetry, stories, biography, dramas and essays, related mostly to the past and but also few issues of contemporary relevance. This makes it making it an ideal medium to effect, change or perpetuate certain social norms. Unfortunately, the grade 8 and 10 Nepali textbook, does the latter a lot more than the former. Nepali books contain around 150 pages (163 pages in Grade 8 and 142 pages in Grade 10). Grade 8 textbook consists of twenty-two chapters while Grade 10 has only 16 chapters. The lessons in the textbooks feature poems, short stories, biographies (usually man's), essays, applications and letters, debates, dramas, memoirs, comprehension questions, discussions, writing activities and also plenty of grammar exercises. The texts are sometimes accompanied by illustrations (not very clear, as they are in black and white) that attract readers' attention. Lower grades have colored illustrations to catch eyes of children. However, higher grades' books are in black and white, may be because the designers think that students should focus more on contents rather than images. It might also be because publishing black and white books is lot cheaper than colored ones.

4.3.1 People involved in making of the Nepali Language textbooks

It can be argued that the perspective and the content of the book are highly guided by gender of the writer. For grade 8 Nepali textbook, the writers are two males and for grade 10, 3 male writers are involved. In total, 13 people are credited for bringing the grade 8 Nepali book to its current form and they were involved in various phases from writing to various stages of editing. However, out of 13 people involved in the process, only two are female. One was involved in editing of the content while the role of other is not clear.

Table 1: People involved in the making of Nepali Language textbooks

Involved in making of textbooks	Total	Males		Females	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Grade 8	13	11	84.6	2	15.4
Grade 10	13	12	92.3	1	7.7

Source: Nepali textbooks, Grade 8 and 10

Similarly, out of 13 people involved in the making of Grade 10 Nepali book, 12 were male and only one female. She was in the content committee. When large number of males and almost no females are involved in the making of textbooks, we can imagine why textbooks are male dominant. The contents are written and presented from the male perspective and patriarchal norms and values underpin the textbooks. When females are not involved in the writing process, how can the book give justice to the experiences of women? Amruthraj R.M in his article ‘Gender Bias in School Textbooks’ writes that according to a study cited by UNESCO (Blumberg 2007:10), “There is no correlation between the sex of the author and the level of gender fairness promoted in the texts’, but it states that higher levels of patriarchy in a society seem to be associated with more intensely negative depiction of females. This study provides a similar conclusion.

4.3.2 Chapter contents

The grade 8 and grade 10 Nepali textbooks consist of 22 and 16 chapters respectively. The books consist poems, stories, biographies essays, one-act play, monologue, debate and letters, with each chapter followed by word meanings comprehension questions, and writing activities. However, table below suggests that chapters are mostly or only male writers. The biographies in grade 10 textbook are all about males. Grade 10 textbook writers have not paid any attention to giving space to the female writers as well. The textbooks appear to give negative and false messages to the students that Nepal lacks women literary writers, writing is not the forte of women, and they are best doing household chores.

Table 2: Content of the Nepali language textbooks

Genres of chapters	Grade 8			Grade 10		
	Total	Male writers	Female writers	Total	Male writers	Female writers
Poetry	4	3	1	3	3	0
Story	6	4	1	3	3	0
Biography	4			3		
Essay	4	2	0	3	1	0
Application	1			0		
Letter	1			1		
Debate	1			1		
One-act play	1	1	0	1	1	0
Monologue	0			1		

Source: Nepali textbooks, Grade 8 and 10

4.3.3 Chapters and their writers

Nepali language textbooks include writings from many authors other than those who wrote the textbook. Out of 22 chapters in grade 8 textbook, 12 are writings borrowed from other writers' work. Similarly, 50% of chapters of grade 10 textbook are writings by other writers. The writings of female writers are almost non-existent, 16% and 0% in grade 8 and 10 respectively.

Table 3: Content in Nepali language textbook by male and female writers

Chapters and grade	Total chapters	By male writers		By female writers	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Grade 8	22	10	83.3	2	16.7
Grade 10	16	8	100	0	0

Source: Nepali language textbook, Grade 8 and 10

The writings by other writers that are included in textbooks are mostly by male writers. The literary texts by male writers are based on male perspectives and experiences. Female voices

and experiences are missing from the textbooks. The only two chapters by females in grade 8 also not about girls and their experiences. For instance, there is one story by Sudha Tripathi titled *Bhagya* (Fate) and it is about a boy named Punte who gets to learn that good fate depends upon hard work. There are three female characters in the story but they are not identified by their names. Instead, they are defined by their relationship to Punte, namely Punte's grandmother, Punte's mother and Punte's sister. His father, however, has a name and is called Dhane.

4.3.4 Chapters solely about male or female

Textbooks appear highly biased if we take into account chapters that are biographies of males and females. Only running through the table of contents is enough to see the discrepancy in presence of male and female in the Nepali school textbooks. Out of 22 chapters in Nepali language textbooks of grade 8, only 1 chapter is about a female, titled Dev Kumari Thapa, whereas there are 3 chapters about males, titled - *Bhugolbid* Harka Gurung (Geographer), *Sahityakar* (Litterateur) Rabindranath Tagore and Sir Isaac Newton. Difference simply can be seen in the titles themselves. Some introductory word is used before the names of males but not so when it comes to Dev Kumari Thapa despite her achievements in diverse fields.

Table 4: Dedication of chapter based on gender in Nepali textbooks

Chapters	Total chapters	About males	About females
Grade 8	22	3	1
Grade 10	16	3	0

Source: Nepali language textbook, Grade 8 and 10

Similarly in grade 10, out of 16 chapters, 3 chapters are about great personalities who, unsurprisingly, are all male- Jay Prithivi Bahadur Singh, Iman Singh Chemjong and Nelson Mandela. There are no chapters in the book that are titled after female names or female experiences. Women are not even mentioned in exercises either, where students are asked to write a brief biography based on the outlines provided. Students are given outlines of only male figures - Siddhi Charan Shrestha, Moti Ram Bhatta and Sir Winston Churchill. More space is given to foreign men than Nepali women.

For long, patriarchy has tried to limit women household work and their work regarded as unimportant. Despite all the odds, there are many females in Nepal and around the world, who have made a significant contribution to progress of humankind. But they are completely in the Nepali language textbooks. Women have broken all the traditional definitions used to define them and have excelled their male counterparts in many areas and are succeeding in fields that were traditionally identified with males but they are still missing from school level textbooks. All male writers of textbooks might be one reason for this absence. The figures that are taught to students act as their role models but when there are no chapters are about females, girls might lack of motivation in lack of role models with whom they can identify. They are given the impression that despite being educated, women are not able to compete with men and become as famous and successful as them.

4.3.5 Nature and frequency of appearance of males and females

The first image that shows both men and women in grade 10 Nepali textbook is on page 2 that has an illustration where a saint is lecturing his students (Fig. 1). The good thing about the picture is that it includes both male and female students, showing that both have rights to education and being informed. However, when we analyze the picture carefully, we can see the number of boys is double the number of girls. Boys can be identified through their faces,

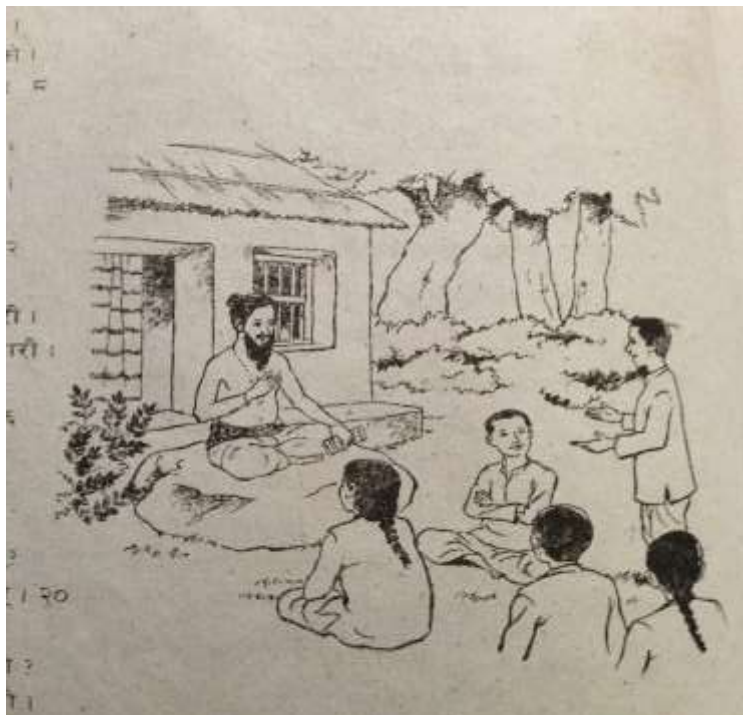


Figure 1: Girls as listeners

but the girls are shown only from their back. Hence, we have to infer that they are girls by looking at long braided hair of girls. Furthermore, the male student is shown interacting with the teacher and the other male student in the class are listening carefully and actively taking part in the conversation. However, the girls appear passive with their roles limited to that of good listeners only. We should note that from early age, girls in our society are taught that they should talk less and listen to elders, usually male members in their family. The same thing is depicted in the figure.

In terms of illustrations, there is substantial gap between the number of males and females in pictures in grade 8 and 10 textbooks. The grade 8 book contains 50 pictures of men and boys, while women and girls appear only 31 times. The difference in illustration is higher in grade 10, where out of 88 images of both males and females in the textbook, there are images of 65 males and boys but only 23 girls and women, which is much less than half the number of images of men and boys.

Table 5: Frequency of appearance of males and females in Nepali language textbook

Unit of analysis	Grades	Males		Females	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Pictures	Grade 8	50	61.7	31	38.3
	Grade 10	65	73.9	23	26.1
Names	Grade 8	99	73.9	35	26.1
	Grade 10	92	67.6	44	32.4

Source: Nepali language textbook, Grade 8 and 10

Most texts revolve around the male characters, who are addressed by their first or last names. The presence of female characters in stories and memoirs is marginal, and they are not even addressed by their names. In fact, in most texts, women are referred to as mothers, grandmothers or sisters and have peripheral roles. Only 35 women's names appear in the grade 8 textbook compared to 99 times for men. Similarly, the frequency of men's name is higher than that of women in grade 10 textbook as well (Table 1). Most women name are not

central characters in the texts and they are mentioned only in passing.

Leach (2006) suggests gender analysts to use following questions as guidelines: “Does the book promote women’s self-reliance?” “Do women question their life conditions?”, and whether “women are equal partners of men” (p. 105). For an in-depth content analysis of the grade 8 and 10 Nepali language textbook, I focused on the two categories mentioned by Leach (2006, p. 107):

- socio-political roles of males and females
- “psychological traits of males and females

Regarding socio-political roles, the textbooks offer a number of examples of male leaders ranging over a significant time span. While some men are from the ancient period, others are from the 19th and 20th century and also some contemporary leaders. Grade 10 has a biographical chapter on Nelson Mandela. The book mentions that Mandela was the first Black person to become the president of South Africa. He struggled long for the rights of the Black and fought against the unjust law that favored the Whites and discriminated against the Blacks. Here, Mandela serves as a supreme model of struggle for all the humans who are victims of exploitation and oppression. The following lesson contains a brief biography of Iman Singh Chemjong, a Limbu historian, writer, linguist, lexicographer, folklorist and philosopher of Nepal. The chapter says that Chemjong devoted his entire life to studying and documenting various facets of Kirati tradition and culture at a time when such activities were frowned upon and even punished by the Nepalese ruling elite as being subversive and "anti-national". Chemjong's research into, and publication of, a Kiranti history and culture challenged perceptions of the Nepalese official doctrine that sought to present Nepal as a Hindu cultural monolith devoid of alternative narratives (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_Xin_Chemjong). In addition to these two chapters, there are five more biographies, all male. There is a poem entitled “*Sahidharuko samjhanama*” (In remembrance of martyrs) by Bhupi Serchan (In remembrance of martyrs). This poem extols the valor of the four martyrs who very proudly gave their life for the nation in 1997 B.S. In Nepal, Nepalese students since the early classes are taught the names of four martyrs- Sukraraj Sastri, Dharmabhakta Mathema, Dasarath Chand and Gangalal Shrestha.. The rolez

of female political freedom fighters are not recognized in the Nepali school textbooks. There are female leaders who invested their whole life in politics like Shailaja Acharya and Sahana Pradhan but they are not mentioned anywhere in the textbooks, as if they were not important, and new generation is not taught to remember them like male leaders. An instance of how patriarchal values underplay women's contribution to what has been understood as male sphere that is politics. As for the women in these books, none of them happen to take leadership roles. There is only one lesson in grade 8 Nepali textbook about a female writer- Devkumari Thapa. The text mentions that she contributed in the field of literature, child literature and journalism. She also worked in the health sector and treated many, but it does not offer the explanation of what positions she held. The text, however, does not miss a chance to mention that she was a good teacher and loved taking care of children, supporting traditional gender roles where women are seen as nurturing and caring. It is worth mentioning that book also talks about various national awards like- Sewa Padak, Gorkha Dakhin Bahu, Ratna Shree Sworna Padak, Uttam Kunwar Puraskar, Prathiba Puraskar, Mahendra Pragya Puraskar, and many others. With the exception to this chapter on Thapa, there is no other chapter that talks about females and their experiences.

While boys do not have to search hard to find examples of powerful leaders who were capable of commanding their people, girls do not come across a single female leader in these two textbooks, not even a woman with limited leadership abilities.

The Grade 8 and 10 Nepali textbooks also present kings, ministers, spiritual leader and head of state, and other male individuals engaged in the political bodies of the state. Out of thirty-five women names mentioned in the Grade 8, and 44 mentioned in Grade 10, none of the female characters presented in the book are political figures. They are either names of the mother of famous male personalities about whom the chapters are, or are sisters, mothers or grandmothers of main characters, mostly males. They are defined by their relationships to men, be it their fathers, husbands or male children. The table below provides the exact numbers regarding the frequency of leadership roles, in the Nepali textbooks of grade 8 and 10.

Table 6: Frequency of leadership roles in Nepali textbooks

Type of leadership roles	Grade 10		Grade 8	
	No. of men	No. of women	No. of men	No. of women
King/Queen	1	-	4	-
Prime Minister	5	-	-	-
Political leader	1	-	-	-
Spiritual leader	1	-	2	-
Military commander	1	-	2	-
Village chief	2	-	-	-

Source: Nepali language textbook, Grade 8 and 10

Although the women in this book surely have names like women elsewhere in the world, in stories and biographies that are often recounted from the perspective of a male child, these women are not addressed by their names, but by formal or more intimate expressions that represent the terms sister, mother or grandmother (equivalent Nepali words for *didi-bahini*, *aama* or *hajuraama*). By doing so, the authors of the book have taken great care to imply that a woman should be known first and foremost by her nurturing characteristics, as a mother or a grandmother.

While the women in the textbooks take care of the children and tend to the housework, fathers or father figures guide children. They are consulted with during ordeals and their advice in various matters is sought by their sons. Fathers are presented as bread-winners, sages and guides, while mothers are nurturers and caretakers. In figure 2 there is a man dressed in the customary outfit of the Nepali men. His finger, pointed towards the boy, implies that he is a man with power who can instruct youngsters. In fact, he is actually reprimanding the boy who tried to con Birat's (main character in the story) mother by saying that Birat had an accident and he was there to get money for his operation.

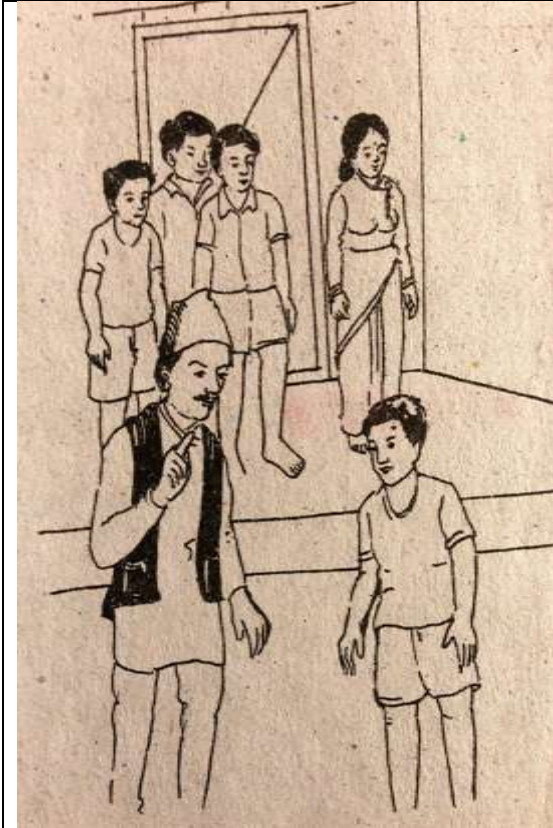


Figure 2: Male as instructor/guide



Figure 3: Female as caretaker

The man, who is Birat and Bikram's uncle praises Bikram's wisdom, and lauds him for saving his mom from being conned. . Reading between the lines, we can see patriarchal ideology at work that finds women incapable making rational decisions and emotional when it comes to children. Even boys are shown to be smarter than a mature women. Similarly in the story, the mother, and Birat and Bikram's sister are not assigned proper names and only referred as Birat's mother and sister.

Likewise, the picture on the right is from the monologue in Grade 10 Nepali book. Santaman, the main character is working in Saudi Arabia. The picture shows Santaman regretting his decision of coming abroad for work, and is lamenting about his days back at home. He is seen washing dishes but he is nostalgic about how his mother loved him and fed him good food with so much love and care. Here in this picture too, a woman is presented as someone's mother who is so happy taking care and working for her son.

Table 7: The frequency of careers for men and women in Nepali textbooks

Career	Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Men(Total:23)	Women(5)	Men(21)	Women(1)
Scientist	1	0	6	0
Inventor	1	0	0	0
Mathematician	1	0	0	0
Farmer	1	0	3	0
School principal	4	0	1	0
Soldier/Police	6	0	2	0
Geographer	1	0	0	0
Teacher	2	3	2	0
Writer	2	1	3	0
Lawyer	1	0	1	0
Poet	3	1	3	0
Care taker	0	0	0	1

Source: Nepali language textbook, Grade 8 and 10

Interestingly, none of the women in the book are employed in something that needs leadership skills and women's sole contribution to the larger society is their caretaking duties. Surprisingly, women do not even have the jobs that are generally considered as feminine careers, like teaching (only three teachers in books of grade 8 and 10) or nursing. They never leave their homes to go to work and none of them are gainfully employed. When talking about Prabha Bhattari, a poet, and Sudha Tripathi, a story writer, although the book (grade 8) has included samples of their poem and story, it does not mention whether they are remunerated for their work. Whereas men are portrayed as scientists, poets, mathematicians, geographers, soldiers, school principals and farmers, the vast majority of the women in Nepali textbooks are limited to domestic sphere. Girls who are aspiring financial independence from men will not find role models in this textbook. Table 4 presented above provides the frequency of careers associated to men and women.

Language textbooks have the potential to transmit core cultural values. All the main characters of the stories in the textbooks are men or boys. Women have very weak presence in the Nepali textbooks of grade 8 and 10 and when they are they are portrayed mostly as nurturers and caretakers. Female characters are not depicted as equals to men but as dependent upon men. Furthermore, women are not part of any state bodies or institutions, and do not happen to be gainfully employed. Moreover, these women in the textbooks do not question their lives and do not seek change in their circumstances. The Nepali textbooks I have analyzed serve to perpetuate the notion that women are not an essential part of the productive workforce in Nepal. These books do not even show women engaged in agriculture even though today agriculture is largely dependent upon female's labor as most men have left their villages and moved abroad for work. We can see women working in fields in the pictures in the photos, but women are not the part of the main texts. These textbooks do not provide role-models for girls that inspire self-reliance and empowerment. Where are the women politicians, authors, artists, human right activists, players, engineers, climbers, doctors, nurses, scientists, head of state that we know and see in mass media?

4.4 Analysis of Grade 8 and 10 English Language textbook

In the Nepali school system, students begin to learn English as a foreign Language from the first grade and it is taught at all levels. In private schools, English is taught from kindergarten levels and functions as a medium of instruction. In large metropolises like Kathmandu, children of upper middle class families are not dependent on school textbooks to learn or improve their language proficiency in English. Many children have access to internet, watch Hollywood movies on TV or DVD, and attend private language schools and institutes to improve their English. Many who attend daycare facility learn English as an extra-curricular activity. For other children in the villages, particularly in government schools, however, school textbooks are the only sources of exposure to English.

In Nepal's context, English language is gaining its popularity as a medium of education. English language is preferred as a medium of teaching and learning in many educational institutions right from the elementary level. Parents and guardians feel proud to have their children enrolled in English medium schools. The government of Nepal has therefore

introduced English from grade one as one of the compulsory subjects. (*Ministry of Education and Sports, Curriculum Development Centre*)

According to the preface of Grade 8 and 10 English textbooks- most students attending schools at grade 8 are still not confident in English language. With the objective to help learners achieve competency and learning outcomes set in the curriculum, the book contains a variety of reading materials and exercises. “Each unit deals with all language skills and the subject matters required to practice various language learning activities. Along with the grammar rules and basic vocabulary, textbooks use a great deal of pictorial prompts for instructions. Given the limited ability of students to read and write competitively, illustrations play an important role in instruction.” Similarly the preface of Grade 10 English Language notes that the book contains communicative activities with an aim to make students competent in communicating ideas with people of any nationality.

When many private English language institutes use textbooks that are published in the UK or India, the textbooks used in the schools mandated by the Ministry of Education of Nepal are published in Nepal. Along with the international publications, private schools all over Nepal also teaches the ministry prescribed textbooks in grade 8 and 10, as students are required to take the district level examination in grade 8 and national level exam in grade 10, and examination questions are set based on the government prescribed textbooks. Though the contents of the textbooks are taken from English publications and English writers, the images in the books give impressions of Nepali society. The women and girls portrayed in the books abide by the Nepali dress code as they are all wearing sarees and blouse or full length clothes covering their bodies. Likewise, the majority of the names of the characters presented in the textbooks are Nepali, not Anglophone names. Some pictures portray men, women and children while celebrating Hindu festivals like Chhath, Sama-Chakewa and Teej. Have they attempted to avoid sexism in textbooks?

From a cursory look at the book, it is difficult to see the gender inequality in the pictorial representation but if we read between the lines, and observe images in detail, we can find plenty of instances. Grade 8 English textbook has 135 pictures of male out of 200 pictures

of male and female in total. Grade 10 has the maximum number of people in pictures. Out of 518, 293 are male. English textbook of grade 8 is no less biased in terms of male and female names. Out of a total of 171 names in the entire textbook, only 69 are female names. However, Grade 10 textbook has almost equal number of male and female names, 79 and 80 respectively, with just the difference of 1 name. The book not only mentioned the first female and male names, but also last names that are accompanied by the titles like Mr. or Mrs. The terms Miss or Ms. are not mentioned anywhere in both the book.

Table 8: Frequency of appearance of males and females in English textbooks

Unit of analysis	Grades	Males		Females	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Pictures	Grade 8	135	67.5	65	32.5
	Grade 10	293	56.6	225	43.4
Names	Grade 8	101	59.4	69	40.6
	Grade 10	79	49.7	80	50.3

Source: English textbook, Grade 8 and 10

I have attempted to analyze socio-economic roles assigned to males and females in the text and also the illustrations while doing content analysis of the English textbooks of Grade 8 and 10. I have tried to find the answers to the questions about the types of jobs assigned to women and if women are assigned mostly traditional jobs associated with women, or if the book made an effort to address issues regarding the portrayal of women in non-stereotypical and non-traditional fields. How are the girls and women shown in the public and their professional roles? Are women shown as equal to their male counterparts or not? I have used following categories to get answers to the above mentioned questions:

- Professional/employment roles assigned to men and women in the text
- Sex of children portrayed in outdoor settings

Analyzing data by categorizing children and adult in separate categories makes categories exclusive and comprehensive, and it is possible to explore each category in detail by comparing girls with boys, and women with men.

4.4.1 Professional/employment roles assigned to men and women in the text

The following table demonstrates the figures for men and women in various employment roles. Women are not confined within the household and are shown as employed and earning. However, most of the times they are depicted as salesgirl, cashier in the bank and shops or receptionist which are usually regarded as easy, and are less respected job, traditionally identified with women. Generally people consider that these works require more charm and less intelligence. These jobs aren't very well paid either. There is only one instance in Grade 8 book where woman is presented as a doctor. Women are not even frequently in roles of teachers and nurses which are generally perceived as women's job in Nepal. While no attempt has been made to depict women in non-traditional jobs, men are given the roles of religious and political leaders, astronaut, bank manager, sports person. There are many roles like researcher, engineer, army/police, sports person, etc. in which many women/girls are exploring and excelling in the real contemporary world. However, no attempt has been made by the textbooks to break these stereotypes. The table 8 presents types of roles in which men and women are presented in English language textbook of Grade 8 and 10.

Table 9: The frequency of careers for men and women in English textbooks

Grade 8		Grade 10	
Male	Female	Male	Female
doctor (2)	doctor	Farmer	Teacher
dramatist	salesgirl	Teacher	Nurse
businessmen	writer	Soldiers	Queen
political leader/minister	businesswoman	Prince	
King and prince (4)	receptionist	Restaurateur	
waiter	cashier/accountant		
saint	journalist		
astronaut	teacher		
cricketer			
bank manager			
poet			

Source: English textbook, Grade 8 and 10

Out of eighteen units in Grade 10 English book, there are only two units which are about women. One is the biography of Florence Nightingale and another is a story about a clever blind girl. Unlike the Nepali textbook, this book has tried to include stories of females, for which it deserves accolades. However, the Grade 8 English book does not have a single chapter about any woman and here aren't any stories where protagonists are women. It has only one biography, and that is of Ganesh Man Singh, who is described as the supreme leader of democracy.

One chapter in Grade 10 English textbook informs readers about the role played by Florence Nightingale as a nurse during the Crimean War. Seventeenth century was an era when women were criticized if they adopted the nursing profession because it was not taken as a respectable job. However, this biography talks about the determination of Nightingale to serve the sick and wounded, which she accomplished despite opposition by her parents. "She was called 'the lady with the lamp' by the British soldiers because of the late hours she worked tending to the sick and the wounded, carrying a lamp in her hand". She had to face hardships despite her strong will to serve, and had to get permission from high level officials, all male, to carry out any kind of work. (Source: Grade 10 English textbook, pg.96) At the first glance, the text seems to be motivating the readers to be determined to achieve the goal of their life. But when we interpret it focusing gender, it is promoting the gender stereotypical role- by assigning women to the role of nurse, it is promoting the ideology that the first and foremost role of a woman is to look after others, be kind and caring. Here the text says that Nightingale looked after the sick and wounded soldiers (all men and no women) without caring about herself. This implies that for a woman the self always comes after the other i.e. man. She should be nurturing, caring and kind. It can be asked if such lessons reinforce the cultural belief that for a woman the first priority is to act like a mother, always loving and caring.

In Grade 10 English textbook, there is another stimulating story about a blind girl called Mina. Mina is alone in her house when a gang of thieves entered the house. They disconnected telephone lines and made sure that the servant was fast asleep before entering the house. They threaten her by showing a knife and force her to sit quietly as they pick

up the valuables from the house. However, they do not know that she is blind. She very smartly turns off the light and finds her way to the kitchen where the servant Damber was sleeping. Damber comes with a stout stick and then the thugs run away. The story shows Mina as brave and smart who dares to turn off the light as she goes to the kitchen to wake up Damber.

Though the main character of this story is a girl, and she is smart enough to trick the thugs, she is still dependent on a man, her male servant, to save herself from the thugs with knife. Despite being a protagonist, and taking a courageous step of tricking the thieves by not letting them know that she is blind, she turns off the light and wakes up the servant. However, it is said in the end that the servant drives away the thieves with a stick. Even Mina's father says that it is hard to believe that she actually fooled the thieves for so long and says that he believed it only after he saw the cut telephone wire. The father's expression, his disbelief towards his own daughter shows his stereotypical thought that women are not smart and not quick in action and that they are not reliable. He needed proof to believe his own daughter.

Although we see images and names of women in the textbooks, they come only in the passing. The names are only there in the exercise section, where the students are required to work on the grammar. There is nothing about the women in those sentences. The jobs they are in are menial. Female as teachers excel the male in grade 10 textbook. Most of the teachers in the stories are female. There is one story in which one Ms. Pradhan attends a job interview. She has applied for the position of a teacher. In the selection panel there are two males and a female teacher. The head teacher asks, "Do you like children Ms. Pradhan?" (English textbook, grade 10, pg. 75) And in the answer she says she does and explains how she used to look after her siblings, cooked for them and helped them with their homework. Later, the Head Teacher told her that she was selected because of her love for children. The qualification and her confidence was not the reason for selection, but she was judged on the basis of traditionally defined traits of women and she fit with it. The text gives the message that a teacher should be a model for students and Ms. Pradhan was a good model that the school could use to transmit cultural traits that required women to

be loving and caring towards children. When we look at photos of women, not just in household settings but also in their work, we can see them wearing either saree or kurta, traditional attires worn by women. Only foreign women are shown wearing pants, shorts and skirts. The pictures are clearly indicating how the patriarchal Nepali society wants to see women. However, this is the only story in the text where ‘Ms.’ is used to address a woman. In all other places, Mrs. is used, giving more importance to the marital status of the women, which gives the impression that all women should be married and known after their husband’s name.

Grade 8 English textbook has 18 chapters that varies in terms of content and contains stories, essays, biography and poems. Twelve chapters in the books do not have contents that can be interpreted from gender perspective. There is only one autobiography in the whole textbook and another is a fairy tale whose main character is male. All other chapters are essays on festivals, technology, journalism, dangers of junk food, district profile.

There are few evidences in the textbooks which reflect the ownership of the assets, but some attempts have been made to give ownership to the women characters too, which is commendable. The lack of economic power and financial independence leaves women vulnerable to abuse. So textbook can play a very important role by including examples of more educated women and girls working in diverse field and in decision making roles. Empowerment brings freedom to take decisions and also decreases the rate of violence. The patriarchal society treats women as the weaker sex and her life is always under the control of the male figure, first her father, then her husband and later her son. But this can be tackled once women are employed and have access to economic power.

4.4.2 Sex of children portrayed in an outdoor setting

In Grade 8 and 10 English language textbooks, in terms of public presence, girls lag behind boys when we take instances from girls in outdoor settings. The table below shows the data based on the images showing boys and girls in the outdoor setting.

Table 10: Frequency of boys and girls in outdoor setting in English textbooks

Grade	Boys in outdoor setting		Girls in outdoor setting	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Grade 8	51	78.5	14	21.5
Grade 10	40	51.9	37	48.1

Source: English textbook, Grade 8 and 10

From the above table it is clear that, out of 65 pictures of girls in the Grade 8 English textbook, only 14 are shown in the outdoor setting. Similarly in Grade 10 textbook, 37 girls are in the public places out of 225 pictures in total. Most of the pictures depict girls chatting with other girls in restaurant or market or working in field with no boys working with them. The book portrays women confined mostly to domestic sphere. However, there are some good examples such as a girl swimming, two girls playing basketball, three little girls running a race, playing some games with other girls, a girl painting a wall, a boy playing a sitar when there are girls playing football in the same picture and few tourists and trekkers. The book is not always biased towards girls.

I came across some pictures where the textbook is trying to give the message that no work or sport belongs to just boys or girls alone. Everyone can do the work and play any sport. It also gives the message to the student that there is no shame in doing the household work, which is traditionally defined as feminine work or playing traditionally masculine sports like football. There are pictures in the books that show men sweeping, cooking in the kitchen, and playing sitar. However, the book does not have pictures showing girls socializing with boys or vice versa. Although girls are seen in the public, socializing with boys is still not taken easily in Nepali society, and the same values are being promoted by these textbooks.

I find a text in Grade 8 book about habits and behaviors very interesting. It talks about good and bad behaviors. In good behavior, there is a photo of a lady in kurta writing something. Whereas the photos that are supposed to tell us about the bad behavior has men in both pictures. In one they are having a party, playing music and dancing and drinking, alcohol probably. And in the other photo, one middle aged man is smoking cigarette and is making an offer to a small boy. Here the authors are being biased or are they just sharing their experiences? We can interpret this photo in many ways. One hidden meaning in the text could be that girls should not attend parties or go to public events. Another could be that it is only male who smoke and drink. We have seen both men and also women in villages smoking publicly. Then why is the textbook trying to hide this fact? Is it because what women are doing is against the feminine ideal set by our patriarchal society? Is the textbook trying to give the message that to party and socialize in public is suitable only for men and not women?

Here I present some photos from the mentioned textbooks that will make issues that I raised above much clear.



Figure 4: Woman working in kitchen



Figure 5: Women working in the field

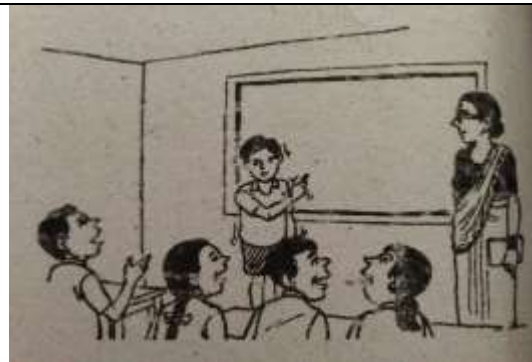


Figure 6: Woman as a teacher



Figure 7: Woman as a teacher



Figure 8: Woman as a mother



Figure 9: Women doing household work



Figure 10: Girl interacting with girl



Figure 11: Men having party

4.5 Analysis of Grade 8 and 10 Social Studies textbook

Social studies textbook is the most common textbook used in schools of Nepal, both private and government. It is taught as a compulsory subject in all grades from 1 to 10. For this thesis, I am doing the analysis of grade 8 and 10 social studies textbook. Social Studies textbook is more prone to biasness and criticism as the subject deals with social and cultural issues more than other subjects. Gender stereotype is widespread phenomena in contemporary world, but textbooks have to be designed more carefully focusing not only on presentation of issues from past and present, but also on shaping g knowledge and attitude of children and producing better citizens who are not guided by biased and stereotyped ideologies. Since education is the most important factor for development of the nation and books are the most effective tool, textbooks play a vital role in teaching and learning process.

Social studies is defined by the *American National Council for Social Studies* as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence." Social studies try to acquaint citizens with knowledge about the world, nation and society around them. It incorporates history, geography, population, political science, development and economics, religion as well as psychology. Children and young adults are expected to better understand civic issues and make informed decisions about them as those civic issues affect them and their families.

Social Studies and Population Education is the book taught in Grade 8 with 10 units in total. This book consists of two chapters related to population education and remaining 8 chapters are on Social Studies. Grade 8 and 10 social studies consist of same unit heads except chapters on population education. Social studies of grade 10 is an independent subject because students are taught Population Education as different subject. Following are the title heads in Social Studies textbooks-

1. We, our community and the nation
2. Prerequisite of development
3. Our tradition, social norms and values
4. Social problems and solutions
5. Civic awareness

6. The earth
7. Our history
8. Economic activities
9. International relations, peace and co-operation

In Nepal, women are compelled to live their lives following unjust patriarchal rules. Gender based discrimination is high in Nepali society and people's perspectives are shaped by patriarchal norms. Women are compelled to live as second class citizens whose identity is dependent on some male figures in the family. With various protests and movements related to women's rights, changes have been made in laws and constitutions as well. With such changes, social studies books need to be updated in time. However, it is worth mentioning that the Grade 8 Social Studies and Population Education used currently in Nepali schools was first published in 2072 B.S. Therefore, it is expected that texts in the book was updated and widely covers and addresses contemporary issues. The Grade 10 Social Studies textbook was first published in 2056B.S and the book taught at present was last revised in 2067-68B.S. Same edition was published in English, making it the first Grade 10 social studies book published in English. In CDC's word, "this book has been brought in English to carter to the needs of both private and public schools." It claims its subject matter to be authentic. In Grade 8, there is 143 pictures of males, while there is only 89 pictures for females. There are few pictures in Grade 10 book, only 72 in total, out of which only 26 are females and remaining 46 are males. Talking about authors of textbooks, Grade 8 Social Studies was written by three male writers and Grade 10 book also was written by the team of three, all males.

While analyzing Social Studies textbook my focus was on history section and the appearance of male and female in politically influential roles as presented in the textbooks while talking about history of Nepal and the world. Apart from history, social studies also consists other contents related to geography, demography, and international relations but these chapters don't deal with gender issues. However, besides history, Development, Social Traditions, Norm and Values, and Social Problems are other interesting chapters that are analysed while doing the gender analysis of the textbook.

Under the unit Our Social Norms and Values, there is a chapter titled International Personalities. And this chapter talks about two personalities, Florence Nightingale and Mahatma Gandhi. From the cursory look at the chapter, it appears that the book has given equal space to both male and female. But when we analyse the content closely, we can see discriminatory values regarding gender. Nightingale is described as a girl who used to play with dolls as a child and nurse them. Despite her parents' denial, she worked away from home, cleaned the dirty place where the injured soldiers of Crimean war were treated and she gave all her time in looking after the sick. From this description of the role of Nightingale, it clearly shows that a woman's job is a mere extension of her household work. In contrast, Gandhi is described with decorative words like nationalist, patriot, and a great leader who brought peace. The role played by Nightingale in saving the lives of people, serving them day and night with such dedication is interpreted as a role that is expected of a woman i.e. to be caring, nurturing and kind.

These two personalities and their brief biography in the chapter Norms and Values shows what our society expects from males and females. Women's roles as political agents are ignored and are always presented as caring and giving. In a unit called Development, under the chapter Human Resource, there is a picture in Grade 8 where people are shown in various professions. But again, women are in no other roles than that of nurses and health workers while men are seen as doctors, drivers, teachers and engineers.



Figure 12: Human resource and the gender

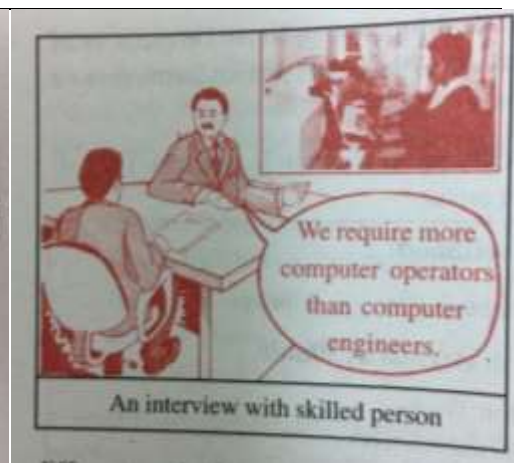


Figure 13: Male as an engineer

Similarly, the second picture is taken from the Human Resources chapter of Grade 10. This is the only photo in the chapter. And in the photo, there is an interview going on and one male is interviewing the other male candidate and in the conversation the interviewer is saying that they need computer operators not computer engineers. From that line we can infer that the guy giving the interview is a computer engineer. And the same picture shows another man as a computer operator. What message is this text giving to students? It is clearly drawing a line marking what professional field for men and women are. Nursing is a low paying job compared to other jobs associated with men. This way, the text is implying that though women work, men are superior to them as they earn more. Failure to change the content of the textbook, and depicting women in same traditional roles despite recent changes is deeply problematic. One positive step worth-mentioning here is the use of the term “human resource” unlike the use of “manpower” in the past.

Textbook is not only an important tool in educational process but also is a device to instruct the teachers’ work. Even if the main aim of the textbook is to give a subject specific skill to its readers, it is also used as a tool to inculcate the dominant public opinion in young generation. Various articles published nationally and internationally reads that the textbooks reflect the opinion of the dominant class and dominant public opinion is the opinion of dominant class, and institutions like textbooks and schools are of central importance in development of public opinion. I have analysed the textbooks both as the cause that shapes the public opinion and also is the reflection of public opinion. They are interlinked with each other. Public opinion that is taught through the text books may not be convincing to the recipient and they do public debate and based on that new opinion is formed and based on that texts are changed. Textbook being both cause and reflection of public opinion change with the time. When our society was highly patriarchal, we were taught that men are breadwinners and women should look after her family and household; men should be strong and not cry while women should be delicate, submissive and tolerant. However, women have challenged this ideology and we can see changed attitude toward women both in the general public and also in the textbooks that are used as the sacred tool to impart knowledge and moral education.

Chapter 5

Gender and its Reception by Young Women Students at Devchuli High School and Shree Nepal H.S School

In this chapter, I present my findings based on interviews I conducted with twelve school going students who attended Grade 8 and Grade 10 during the time of interview. The main goal behind conducting these interviews with students was to find out the answer to my second research objective: “To find out the perception of students regarding the implicit and explicit messages being delivered through the textbooks and other factors are influential in gender socialisation.” In this chapter, I discuss perceptions of students regarding contents in textbooks, classroom performance, teacher and student relation, sports and participation, sitting arrangement and dress code, their roles in household activities, family norms and values, their future aim and their role models. I aim to find out factors influential in gender socialisation and the extent to which patriarchal mindset guiding the society. All these sections will focus on the analysis of gender stereotypical practices and biases.

5.1 Gender inequities in School Education and young women’s resistance

School is a gendered institution which reinforces gender roles in children through the illustration of boys and girls in the textbooks, behavior of teachers towards boys and girls, sports, dress code and seating arrangements. Here, I have tried to link various aspects of school education that are important in students’ life and how students perceive and react to it.

5.1.1 Students’ perception of textbooks and their content

All students I interviewed felt that textbooks are very important in students’ life. It is the main tool used by the teachers in the classroom and students also spend most of their time learning things from the textbooks. Unlike the students in urban areas, they do not have access to internet or well-resourced libraries in the school to learn new things and textbooks

prescribed by the government is the main source through which they get acquainted with the contemporary world. According to one student of Devchuli School:

Only attending classes is not enough to learn things well. For better understanding of the topic, it needs to be studied well. In this learning process, textbooks help us a lot, as we can go through the lesson taught in school back in our homes too. I find English language very hard and find it difficult to follow the teacher in school. In that case, I revisit the chapter after coming home and in this process textbook is very helpful.

Few students shared that they had not focused on or thought about representation of males and females in textbooks. Rather think that there is almost equal number of images of male and female in the textbook

From the content analysis of three government prescribed textbooks, it is already clear that they are highly biased and guided by patriarchal norms. I tried finding out perceptions of students regarding textbook contents during the interview. Most of the students agreed that textbooks are gendered and are more in favor of males than females. When asked to a student of grade 10 in Nepal School to illustrate some instance found in the textbook which she felt were biased, she said-

Females are usually shown doing the household works like cooking food, washing dishes, and planting rice in the fields. And in my opinion those are tough works to do. Similarly we can also see them mostly portrayed as nurses and teachers. Whereas male are shown playing football and other games, or are working as farmer, doctor.

Another student agreed to the fact that women in textbooks are represented mainly in caretaking roles and professional roles aren't assigned to them often, saying,

The content of our textbooks are usually about the male characters. Mostly the main character in stories and poems are males. It is hard to find any chapter that is about females. Similarly, texts that are included in textbooks are also by male writers. Women in the textbooks are seldom seen in powerful positions. I remember reading only about Florence Nightingale in the textbook. But teachers in our books are

mostly females, unlike in our school. We have only one female teacher in Grade 10 and all others are males.

It is hard for girls to find role models in their textbooks. In the social studies textbook, we found a marginal presence of women in pages of history. When I asked a Grade 8 student in Nepal School to name some personalities she recalled from her text books, she could say many names of historical figures from the textbook, but no female name. Our textbooks do not present women and most teachers do not make effort to do some research and teach students about female figures. There are many women who have achieved success and have proved that they are no less than men but they get no space in textbooks forcing us to question if women are really treated equally as is said by the law. Had it been the case the state would have focused on making textbooks gender neutral and giving equal space and fair inclusion to both males and females. However, it is clear that the state is inculcating the patriarchal ideology through the textbooks.

5.1.2 Gender and classroom performance

Students agreed that it is not the sex of the individual that determined the intelligence but it is his/her hard work. However, most of them said that boys do better in accounts, mathematics and science and girls are good in language subjects. Girls do the homework regularly but many boys do not do their homework. Despite not being very sincere in the classroom, boys outperform the girls in the examination. According to one of the students of Nepal School, extra burden at home makes them weaker in their studies.

In my class, boys always get top positions. It is not that girls are dumb or lazy, but they do not get extraordinary results despite working hard. One reason can be that boys have less or no work burden at home. After going home from school, they are free and have no work to do. But girls have to prepare snacks, wash clothes, look after domestic animals, and go to get fodder and also to fetch water. Sometimes they will have to prepare dinner and do dishes and help mom in every work. While finishing all these household chores, we are too tired and can only finish our homework. We get less time compared to boys to put extra effort in subjects we are weak in, ultimately affecting our classroom performance.

This is the reality of almost every girl in the rural and in many case urban Nepal as well. Girls are brought up in such a way that they are emotionally trained that doing household work is their duty and the better they do that work, the easier their future will be. They are expected to do the household work and help mother at home. If a girl does not do household work, she is not considered a disciplined girl and is a subject of gossip. Such societal and family pressure on girls to learn and do household work is akin to training girls to abide by patriarchal norms. Women are confined within the household and have no time to learn and get engaged in public activities.

5.1.3 Teacher and student relationship

Students do not usually interact with their teachers outside of their classes. Students and teachers communicate usually only during their classes. Young girls in particular are mostly shy and also afraid to talk to their teachers who in higher grades are mostly men. The community schools have large number of students, with 50 students in a class. It is not possible for teachers to interact with all students. Therefore, only students who are smart in their studies and who ask questions get attention of the teacher.

I like mathematics a lot and want to be good at it. But I have difficulties in understanding it easily. When I ask question to the teacher, he does not respond well. Most of the time, he just ignores. He gives attention to questions asked by smart kids holding good position in the class and ignores weak students. I do not like this biased nature of our teacher. We have even complained to the principal but we do not see any change in the way our mathematics teacher treat us. I am poor in mathematics but with some support from the teacher, I can do well. I've to attend SLC this year, but when my teacher doesn't help me in my studies, I am afraid I might not even pass the exam. This will affect my future.

I talked about this issue with another student as well and she too gave the same reply. The teachers favor and prefer smarter kids and weaker students are mostly left behind, too scared to ask questions and most likely to be neglected by their teacher.

However, in my opinion, if there were female teachers, they would have responded to us in a better way. They would understand girls and their practical problems. Our voices would not have been left unheard. We have only one female teacher teaching

us. She teaches Nepali and is not biased towards any students. If we girls have any problems, we go to her and she helps us.

5.2 Gender socialisation in family and young women's resistance

Simone de Beauvoir said that "Men and women are not born, we are created and we create ourselves." It means that like other cultural values, norms and practices, gender is acquired through the process of socialisation. People continue to learn through social experience which is a life-long process. Among many other "agents of socialisation", family is probably the most important institution.

Family members guide their children in a number of ways and teach them to conform to norms that exist in the society regarding the appropriate behaviors, attitudes and the roles of members of each sex. It is in the family where a child first learns what it is to be 'male' or 'female'. Parents have a number of gender stereotypes and treat children of different sex differently. They hold certain ideas about how a girl and a boy should ideally act and think. Therefore, they tend to treat children of different sex differently.

5.2.1 Works at home

The type of tasks and activities that are expected to be performed by male member and female member in the family are also different. Girls are often expected to help their mothers in housework while boys often help their fathers. According to one student of Shree Nepal Higher Secondary School,

Girls have to prepare snacks, wash clothes, look after domestic animals, go to get fodder and also to fetch water, even sometimes will have to prepare dinner and do dishes; if not do everything on her own, she will have to help mom in every work. Whereas, boys usually do not do household work. The only work they do is help plough the field when it the season of cultivation. Rest of the time they are free and parents even do not expect them to do any chores. It seems like it is natural for girls to do household work.

When girls try to reject this belief and ask for equality, parents give them lessons on how a girl should be. An ideal girl is one who is obedient to her parents, who abides by the rules set by the society, who keeps herself at home, does household work skillfully, and is polite.

5.2.2 Family values and norms

Parents also tend to apply different rules to their children. Boys, for example, are more likely to be granted permission to play on the street or to come late at home than girls. They are usually given more liberty. However, there are different set of rules for daughters in the family. All girls I interviewed agreed that there were different sets of rules for sons and daughters. According to a student of grade 10 at Devchuli School,

I have to be home in time after school. After school, I directly go home and if I am ever late, my parents will inquire a lot and sometimes even scold me. And if ever I am out with friends, I'll have to reach home before it is dark. My parents never allow me to go for sleepover at my friends' place. I've to get approval before doing anything or going anywhere out. But that is not the case with my brother. He has freedom to go anywhere and no one asks him anything even when he comes home late and just roams around friends and do not even study much. Neither does he have to do any household work. I am not happy with such different rules within the same house.

All girls were dissatisfied with this discriminatory family norms. In schools, they are taught that men and women are equal and both share same basic rights. However, they are confused when the behavior is so different and things in text and real life do not match. Rights are limited only in paper, and Nepalese girls are deprived of enjoying those rights. Ms. Thanet of Devchuli School added,

Recently there was a musical concert in the village. But I could not go just because I was a girl and the concert was at night. My family members didn't allow me to go out of the house at night. My brother went to the event with his friends and came back after midnight. The next day, when I brought up this topic, my parents said me that it is not same to be a girl and a boy. "You are not a boy", said my mother, "therefore stop arguing about this, and act like a girl."

Girls are all too often reminded that they are girls, which entails fewer liberties than boys. If not the work, they are expected to sit down at the corner and talk quietly. They do not have choices like boys to go out with friends or play. Curtailing their freedom and limiting girls within the household makes them lose freedom and power, forcing them to act as expected by the patriarchal society. However, girls do not stop trying to change their parents' mindset and are always struggling for equal freedom.

5.2.3 Aim in life

All these differences in the treatment they receive, prepare children for assuming their gender roles later in their life. Gender roles are "attitudes and activities that a society links to each sex" (vcampus 2016). Children from about the age of three already start referring to themselves in terms of their gender, and very early in life, they are already aware of the way they are expected to behave and their aim in life is guided by it. Out of twelve girls I interviewed for this research, except two girls who wanted to be a police and another a dancer, everyone else chose to be a nurse, and if not a nurse, a teacher.

Once we are done with our SLC, many boys who are smart in their studies study science and set their path accordingly but girls go for nursing. If not selected for nursing, we start to teach in school. However, there are many girls who get married and quit further studies. Some boys and girls also go abroad as migrant labors. Those not successful in passing examination join the Chaudhary Factory and other industries in the municipality. They are happy with what they earn and stop studying.

When asked how they are motivated to go for nursing or teaching profession, one of the grade 10 students said that there were many girls in her community who chose this profession and did really well.

It is not only the desire to serve the sick but also economic benefits of being in this profession that attracts many girls. We have seen many girls going abroad after studying nursing, and we hear that they make a lot of money there. Here in Nepal too, it is easier to find a job once we are trained. My parents also want me to be a nurse once I finish my SLC.

But I also came across Jamuna and Lila who want to become a policeperson and a dancer respectively. Jamuna aims to be a policeperson in her future. She said she does not like the life like her mother. “I do not want to be a housewife and look after kids. I want to be a working lady who is independent. I want to serve the nation. When I am a policeperson, I will be in the position to bring positive changes in the society.” She does not have anyone from her family working as a police. Similarly, Lila wants to learn to dance going to Kathmandu and be a dancer. “I like dancing, and I want to make it my profession. I dance at home for fun and my family appreciates my dance. They might however, not like my idea of becoming a dancer and going out of house to learn it. But that is what I want to do and I’ll try to convince them and support me.”

Balkumari Chaudhary wants to become a cook (chef). She said that she will study hotel management in high school and pursue her career in cooking. “I love to cook and I want to be trained in it and make it my profession. My brother is working abroad and he said that cooks make good money abroad. So once I am done with my studies here, I will go abroad to work”, said Chaudhari.

Jamuna, Lila and Balkumari are some examples whose decisions to go out of the home to make their career reflect their agency and resistance. They mentioned that a pale presence of female in the textbooks and the traditional roles assigned to those present never gave them the sense of self in the school textbook. They find only heroes and no heroines in their textbooks but they find their books counterproductive as they give these girls reason to aspire for more and not be submissive.

Chapter 6

Teachers' Perception of Gender Socialisation

In this section, I present my findings based on the interviews I conducted with five teachers of two schools who teach English, Nepali and Social Studies subjects in secondary level. The main goal behind conducting these interviews with the teachers was to find out the answer to my second research objective: “To find out the perception of teachers regarding the implicit and explicit messages being delivered through the textbooks, how they deal with such issues and what other factors are influential for gender socialization.”

6.1 Role of textbook in gender socialisation

The content analysis I conducted has already given us the idea that the textbooks that the schools use, which are prescribed by the government, are highly biased regarding the gender representation and also the curriculum has not been revised since long and same thing has been taught to the students over the long period of time. One of the teachers of Social Studies subject, who had taught this subject for 18 years said that the curriculum he has been teaching is the same. Only minor changes are seen in the textbook with its revision.

Curriculum needs to be changed every ten years. But this has not happened since I started my teaching career. I find it very challenging to strictly follow the Social Studies textbook. The society is dynamic but our textbooks are still the same, still teaching the ideology of the past. The change in our national politics is so rapid that it changes in months. We are required to update students with the contemporary context but it happens so fast that every term we have to teach them new facts. It feels like I am teaching the content of two books in single period. The textbooks are based on the old constitution when there is already new constitution in place and in examinations, questions might be asked from the new one. For that teacher has to get acquainted with the new knowledge and then impart it to students. I use internet to get information on those changed contents and distribute it to students.

Since the textbooks are flawed, one cannot completely rely on the textbook. The knowledge in it might not be accurate. “To address this issue, teacher should be proactive and correct the wrong message being given by the contents of the textbooks. However, sometimes when we correct, students doubt it, as for them, every word written in textbook is true and correct,” said Nepali teacher from Devchuli School.

In case of social studies, teacher is more important than the textbook. As the textbook lacks many contents like the issue of inclusion, equality, changing political dynamics, third gender etc., which are but very important to know about in the contemporary competitive world. Hence teacher should play a very important role in introducing students with the reality of the society. Textbooks say one thing, but students are seeing something else in the society. Hence, also for the students to trust the teacher, teacher has to first acquaint him/herself with the issues and then teach the students.

English teacher, at Devchuli School, who has been teaching this subject for last twenty years said that he has seen changes in the English textbooks. The content of the book has largely changed regarding the readings in the text. The book focuses mainly in communication and writing skills, rather than in the content.

There are images of females in the textbook but very few characters are in the main role of the textbook. The images come in the exercise part of the book mainly. There are many poems in the books but they are mainly singing the bravery of the men and almost no poem relating to women. Another important thing is that, our teaching is exam oriented and hence the teachers are focused in preparing students for examination rather than for the society by teaching them the real practical contents.

Regarding the illustrations in the textbooks, all teacher agreed that female is less and misrepresented in the textbooks. Social Studies teacher of Nepal School said-

As the saying goes- ‘A picture speaks more than thousand words’, authors and designers who are involved in the making of the book, when keeping the pictures in the books should very carefully think what message they are trying to give

through the picture. The pictures in the books are supposed to give the real and positive message. However, often times they go wrong. For example- A photo of a man smoking might be used in the textbook to give the message that smoking is a bad habit. However, when we analyse it closely, it might be implying that it is only men who smoke, or it is bad if only men smoke and is alright if women smoke. Similarly, showing a picture of women fetching water, cooking also are stereotypical roles assigned to women.

6.2 Other factors of gender socialisation

Nepali teacher at Shree Nepal H.S School, who has been teaching this subject since last seven years, said-

Parents who still have the patriarchal mindset, still wants their children to behave according to the expectation of the society. And they are successful in convincing their children to follow it. But with the increasing access to television, radios, newspaper and also internet, young women and men are learning more and more about the gender and gender equality and also how discriminative our society really is. Hence many are not acting as they are expected to.

It is taught that talking too much or in between is not a right demeanor and is not expected from girls. This might have influenced the participation of girls in the classroom activities. English teacher at Devchuli School who teaches in both secondary and high school said,

Girls hesitate to ask questions even when they do not understand the subject matter being taught. Boys are not shy to ask questions. But girls fear that her friends will make fun of her for not understanding even a simple thing. I have seen that girls are hard-working than boys. When I ask students to submit the homework, it is mainly the boys who do not submit it. But when I ask questions, girls are reluctant to raise their hands to answer; they are shy or also scared to utter a word. This may be because our family teaches girls not to talk much, which might indirectly be hampering their speaking skill and also reducing both her confidence and will-power.

Regarding the dressing pattern, Nepali teacher at Devchuli School said,

Textbooks shows women and girls in saree and kurta always. But with the changing time and access to different media, their fashion is changing. It is hard to find girls wearing kurta, other than in the formal and religious events. Similarly, women also have shifted to kurta from saree. We do not see women covering their head anymore.

Social Studies teacher teaching in the same school added-

Likewise women in this area are not confined only with household work. Almost every houses have a working and earning female family member. They work in the Chaudhary Factory in various fields. With the financial empowerment, vulnerability to various form of violence prevalent in the patriarchal society have reduced significantly.”

Working outside has not however, reduce their work burden. Despite working hard out of home for almost eight hours, they again go back home and finish the household chores like cooking food, cleaning dishes, washing clothes and many more.

Though I come from an educated family and am myself a professional, things are not any better for me at home. We are four in my family and I am the only female in my house. I work really hard here at school whole day, as I have great responsibility of students being the only female teacher in the school (3 female staffs). But when I go home from school, there again I’ll have to do all the work of cooking, cleaning, washing and all other household works. Males do not feel that it is also their responsibility to do household work. My husband and sons grew up learning patriarchal norms and values and they do not want to change their habits. Though I teach in schools about the gender biases prevalent in our society and advocate about the need of gender equality, I myself am the victim of patriarchy at home. Until and unless our cultural values and societal expectations regarding gender does not change, it is hard to imagine equality. I grew up accepting this domination but I don’t think women of today’s generation will tolerate all this injustice. –Nepali teacher, Devchuli School

An English teacher at Nepal H.S School said, “Women and men of higher caste and middle class families are more under pressure to abide by patriarchal norms than the women and men of minority groups in this area. In the Brahmin and Chhetri community, girls are scolded more for talking in loud voice, or running or wearing anything different than the outfit covering the whole body. However, Tharus enjoy more freedom in these kind of matters. Not only the female, but Brahmin male also have to abide by the values like they should not drink alcohol, eat meat, eat without taking shower in the morning, and have to touch the feet of their elders and many more. If a male tries to act differently from the traditional belief like- help his mother, sister, or wife with the household work, his mother, sister and wife themselves stop him first. Some kind of guilt and awkwardness haunts them. Similarly the people in the society too do not leave any chance to criticise and make fun of him, rather than learning to share the work and help the females in their families with the so-defined feminine works.”

Seeing all these trends and practices in their house, at school and society, textbooks and media, young generation is learning to behave like a male or female. They are also changing their attitude from the traditionally defined set of behavior associated with men and women. Boys and girls are moving ahead, with the positive feeling for one another. And the environment and the culture they are growing in plays a significant role in making a just society in future where everyone will be treated equally and no biased values will come in their way to progress.

During the interaction with teachers of young as well as older generation, they talked in tone of gender equality. Older generation find it hard to accept rapid changes in behavior of new generation. However, they accept both male and female are equal and provided equal opportunity, both can excel. Teachers’ perception in gender was formed based on the ideology that was taught to them in the text and also the society they grew up in. However, they have unlearned what they had learnt regarding gender and have learnt about equality denying stereotypes relating to gender. Unlike in their childhood, they do not treat the students differently just because of their gender. With the changing society, they are also refuting the biases in the textbook, if there is any, and are teaching the students to create a just society. However, there could be gap in what they teach in school and practice at home.

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusion

7.1 Summary

This study started with the assumption that the textbooks that are used as the major tool of instruction in the schools contain gender biased contents and students are not learning about gender equality but patriarchal values and norms. It might not be very explicit but there is gender biased and stereotypical messages within the texts, in the hidden form. I have tried to focus on the relationship between textbook content and cultural and social reproduction through textbooks. I also argued that textbooks play a vital role in ‘cultural reproduction’ and social reproduction- the reproduction of the relationships of power and privilege. The textbooks are not promoting gender equality. Instead, social inequality is reproduced through the educational system and as a result it is legitimate (Haralambos 2001: 215-16). Here, the role of interpretation was of central importance because I wanted to demonstrate how students and teachers interpreted the textbooks and their contents, being textbook the key tool of instruction and learning process.

I also tried to make a point that there is a great role of illustrations and the careers assigned to the characters in the textbooks in informing children about the kind of career they can pursue and in the same time, most of the times limit them in certain field. Similarly, the observation of the classroom behavior of the students, their performance and various types of work they do at home and school also helped me get clear picture of what is being taught about gender by institutions like schools and families. My research also tries to elucidate how students take the messages being imparted through the depiction of men and women in the textbooks, and to what extent they accept or refute it.

To address my research problem, I proceeded with two objectives. First, I began with content analysis of three textbooks each of grade 8 and 10, taught in government schools namely- Nepali, English and Social Studies. To meet this objective, I paid attention to the

contents of the textbooks all time focusing the issues relating to gender. I recorded the cases of contents relating to gender to find out about the portrayal of concept of male and female. Second, I sought to find out the perception of both students and teachers regarding the implicit and explicit messages being delivered through such representation of men and women in textbooks. Through this study, there was an effort to examine the role played by textbooks along with teachers and also family in reproduction of patriarchal cultural knowledge and how strongly patriarchy continues to rule and shape peoples' thought and attitude.

This research is primarily qualitative in nature. It adopted interpretative and descriptive method for content analysis of the textbooks. Similarly, explanatory research design has been used to understand the perspective of students and teachers using those textbooks in teaching-learning process. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected largely through the means of semi-structured interviews and at times through observations. The tools of data collection were determined by the specific research objectives. Purposive samplings, a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the interview population. A purposive sample, also commonly called a judgmental sample, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. The subjects were selected because of some characteristic. Similarly the classes were selected based on the level of examination students' take- district and school leaving. The students selected were the girls holding first three roll number among the girls excluding boys. The teachers interviewed were the ones teaching Nepali, English and Social Studies in Grade 8 and 10. Interpretation and discourse analysis were the most important methods used during the course of data analysis.

This study consists of three sections. In the first section, I present the findings of the content analysis of the Nepali, English and Social Studies textbooks of Grade 8 and 10 exposing the cases of gender disparity against women and girls in comparison to men and boys. Since all the students studying in public or private system are required to take district level examination in grade 10 and school leaving certificate in grade 8, all students all over the country study the same national curricula, and are exposed to same textbooks. Nepali

education system is centrally controlled by the government. In the second section of the study, I interviewed twelve girl students, six each from two different government schools located in Devchuli Municipality of Nawalparasi district, asking them to talk about their opinion towards textbooks in regards to gender and also their experiences of gender disparity in their schooling and how they understand, adopt, negotiate and resist gender inequity. And in the third section, teachers' opinion of gender socializing is mentioned.

A thorough content analysis of those textbooks proved that there are plenty of instances of gender inequity and discrimination against women and girls. Men not only outnumber women in both texts and images, but they also relegate women in vital roles, for example, many men in textbook stories are given leadership and decision-making positions. Men take decisions for their families, manage their communities, govern their towns, and command their nations. Women, on the contrary, are not portrayed as leaders in any of the books. Very few women who have paid or gainful job are mostly consigned stereotypical jobs, jobs like nursing and teaching, that are traditionally associated with women. No female political leaders appear in the books. The girls in the books are not audacious, they never go out to explore the obscure. While men and boys are depicted as courageous, powerful, wise, curious, and adventurous, women and girls are portrayed as passive, obedient, and submissive. Since females in the books do not question their subordinate position, they seem to be content with their status.

The interviews with the students affirm that the textbooks are assigned traditional roles and shown to be abiding with the stereotypical roles assigned by the patriarchal society. Despite the promotion of stereotypes by textbooks, their teachers and family members, some wish to contest the stereotypical beliefs by choosing non-traditional fields like service in police, chef, artist which are taken as men's field. However, many girls still choose the field of nursing and teaching. But these choices are commendable too as they aspire to be employed unlike their family members who were limited in becoming a good housewives. Besides this, from my interaction with students, new generation dare to defy the patriarchal systems of power. All girls talked, unanimously, about the stereotypical beliefs and biased practices that exist in the Nepali society. They pointed that there are

beliefs and practices not only in our society but in the family itself which stand as obstacles on women's path to progress and gender equity.

While recounting their experience in school, they pointed out some sexist practices performed usually by their male teachers, and confirmed that boys shared good relationship with teachers then girls. Teachers hardly answer questions raised by the girls. Their behavior to intelligent boy students and girls is biased. They prefer to help boys than girls. Similarly they recounted their difficult experience playing sports wearing skirt. But again, despite having same uniform as boys, they are limited sports like volley ball, kabaddi and musical chair. The games that need running like cricket and football are men's sports. They also talked about the sexist stories of the textbooks, which celebrated the domestic roles of women. In their opinion, the books do not present the just society. They believe that the society they live in is changing and they wish to live in such a society where women are present in the public sphere too and not only limited doing the household. The young girls do not find any female role models in the school textbooks, and yet they are not disheartened. On the contrary, they disapprove the weak, passive and submissive women portrayed in the books for whom the priority is always their domestic duties. The girls will to defy the traditional role models presented in the books. In other words, the books have created a backlash against the sexist portrayals of women. Unlike the instructions of the textbooks, girls want to prove that they are no less than boys. And they aspire to be empowered in the male dominant society. Despite the discriminatory practices of the education system, the sexist representations of the textbooks, and the partiality done by the teachers and also the parents themselves, girls are getting effectively trained being in such situation for the uninviting atmosphere of the workplace, and compete for the parity with men.

7.2 Conclusion

This thesis brings to light how the textbooks being taught in the schools all over Nepal promote the dominant patriarchal beliefs and cultural attitudes that deter girls from exploring the new career path. The message being indoctrinated through less reference of women and girls in both text and illustrations, depiction of women in domestic sphere exclusively and not in public sphere, stress on identity of women and girls only in relation to male, no depiction of women in leadership roles, portrayal of women in weak and fragile characters and only in the professions like teaching and nursing relegates and confines women and girls within the household. Students' life are highly being influenced by gendered messages books intend to promote and are successful in reproducing the patriarchal ideology. I argued that students are highly being influenced by gendered messages books intend to promote and these books are successful in reproducing the patriarchal ideology. Therefore, one can contend that education as a social institution serves the hegemonic project (Gramsci et al. 1992) of the patriarchal state that reproduces (Bourdieu: 1973) ideologies that discriminates between men and women in everyday life. However, despite the sexist teachings of textbooks, dominant patriarchal beliefs and cultural attitudes, and restrictive family practices, teachers and students are not completely overwhelmed by these ideologies. On the contrary, my research shows that many students (including boys and girls) and teachers see through this ideological smoke screen and are committed to resist and change existing gender norms and values of the society. Today, individually and collectively, we see Nepalese women combating deep rooted gender injustices and demanding progressive laws that are powerful enough to annihilate unjust patriarchal structures.

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Annex A: Interview questions for students

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Grade studying in
5. Do you like reading books? Which is your favorite subject? Which subject less interests you?
6. Who is smarter in studies? Boys or girls?
7. Or do you think that there are certain subjects in which boys do good and in certain other subjects girls perform better?
8. What subjects are girls good in and what subjects are boys good in?
9. Do your school have dress code?
10. Do you like the dress code of your school? If yes, why? If no, why?
11. Do you like playing games? What kind of sports do students play in your school?
12. Are there sports that are played only by girls or only by boys?
13. Are there any sports in which both boys and girls play together?
14. How important is textbook in your student life?
15. Do you like going through the pictures in the textbook? Have you noticed or tried to analysis those pictures?
16. Who are the main characters in the contents of your textbooks?
17. Do you think the book emphasizes certain gender more than the other?
18. How do you react to it? How does your teacher address the issues in the textbooks that is clearly gender biased?
19. When you have trouble understanding certain topics being taught in the class, do you raise question?
20. Who asks more questions, girls or boys?
21. How is the teacher's response? Does s/he try to solve your queries or ignore it?
22. Do you feel your teachers prefer certain gender hence answers either boys or girls better?

23. Are there more male teachers or female teachers for your grade? Whom do you prefer?
24. What do you do after getting back from school?
25. What kind of works do you do at home?
26. Do you like doing those work? Does your sibling of other gender also do those works? Or are there certain works you do and others your brother/sister do?
27. What types of rules are there set by your family for you?
28. Do you feel these rules are different to boys and girls? How is your reaction to this?
29. What do you do on holidays?
30. Whom do you socialize with?
31. What does your father do? And what does your mother do?
32. Who is your role model?
33. Given that you can be whatever you want, what do you aim to be in future?

Annex B: Interview questions for teachers

1. How long have you been teaching this subject?
2. Do you think our text books are gender sensitive?
3. Are gender issues addressed properly? If yes how? If no How?
4. Are there places for improvement regarding the presentation of gender roles and relations in textbooks?
5. Have you come across any gender insensitive and unequal content in textbooks?
If yes, how do you deal with it?
6. Do you try to make the text more gender sensitive while teaching it to students if you find it biased?
7. Have you noticed any changes in the contents of text books regarding gender roles and relations in recent years?
8. Do you think gender relations presented in textbooks shape students' perspective regarding gender roles and relations?
9. How is that? Any examples?
10. Are such influences manifested in their interaction with fellow students?
11. Do you encourage your students to choose non-traditional professional fields?
12. Do boys and girls respond differently to things in the text?
13. What do you think is the best professions for boys? And is the list different to the girls?
14. Do you think textbooks plays important role in socialising the children?
15. Do you think there are places in the books where we can make the changes?
16. Were you in that position, what would you change?