Reflection of Gender Inclusivity in the English Language Textbooks of 5th Grade of Primary Education in West Bengal

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Textbooks play a pivotal role as agents of social change, shaping the perspectives and values of students from a young age. Through the content presented in textbooks and the experiences within the classroom, students learn to internalize gender socialization, social norms, beliefs, and roles. These educational materials can also contribute to inequality and bias, influencing how students perceive and accept gender dynamics in society. This study examines the reflection of gender inclusivity in the English language textbooks used in Class V of primary education in West Bengal. Five aspects of the textbooks were analyzed to assess gender inclusivity: (i) Male and Female Orientation in Titles, (ii) Male and Female Orientation in the Theme of the Lesson, (iii) Male and Female Nouns, (v) Male and Female orientation in Imagery, (v) Male and Female Generic Construction, and (vi) Gender Assumption within the Textbooks. The research was conducted using a documentary research method followed by a qualitative approach through content analysis. The findings reveal that gender patriarchy and bias are present in English textbooks. Overall, the results indicate that males are more prominently featured in the textbooks, both in images and text, while females are still underrepresented. In conclusion, the reflection of gender exclusivity was found in the English language textbooks used in Class V of primary education in West Bengal. The researcher suggests that these insights could be beneficial for textbook development agencies, authors, and educators in creating a gender-sensitive curriculum and educational materials. Keywords: Gender reflection, Inclusivity, English language, Textbooks, Primary education, West Bengal

1. Introductıon

The reflection of gender inclusivity in educational media especially textbooks, plays an important role in shaping students' perceptions of gender roles and equality (Anjali & Manikar, 2022). The study of gender inclusion in textbooks is especially relevant in India, where social norms and cultural beliefs can profoundly influence educational practices. Ensuring that textbooks have balanced and diverse gender representation is essential to promoting an inclusive environment that empowers all students (Wivan,2023) In the context of West Bengal's primary education system, ensuring that textbooks promote a balanced and inclusive view of gender from an early age is essential to promoting a more equal society, by analyzing the content, images, and stories presented in these textbooks. This study aims to reveal biases and implicit representations that may lead to reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes, or vice versa promote a more equitable understanding of gender roles with this analysis. The research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equality

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in education. It emphasizes the importance of curriculum reform and the need for educators to use media that reflects and promotes inclusiveness.

Textbooks are the most essential, affordable, and accessible educational resources, providing students with foundational knowledge and influencing their thinking (Zhou et al., 2021). According to Saleem and Zubair (2013), textbooks play a crucial role in shaping individual and societal behaviors. The content and messages within textbooks can have both positive and negative effects on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, as they convey implicit or explicit images and narratives (Sever, 2004). Textbooks are believed to have a strong impact on students' perceptions of gender, shaping their cultural heritage and contributing to the formation of gender identity (Ullah, Ali, & Naz, 2014). They also have the potential to influence gender stereotypes and social power dynamics (Kobia, 2009). Textbooks significantly contribute to the formation of gender models for boys and girls, reinforcing gender stereotypes (Arslan Ozer, Karatas, & Ergun, 2019). Primary schools, recognized as a critical stage in education, play a strategic role in shaping students' perspectives on humanity, molding attitudes, imparting knowledge, and developing fundamental skills (Halimatussakdiah et al., 2021). The primary-level curriculum plays a key role in shaping young learners' mindsets, influencing their behavior, and addressing gender biases (Ali & Hussain, 2019). As a central component of this process, textbooks help instill desirable attitudes in children (Sumalatha, 2004), making primary-level textbooks a subject of research across different societies. The representation of gender in school textbooks has long been a focus of research, with scholars highlighting the persistence of masculinity and femininity stereotypes in these educational materials. In recent decades, the study of gender in education has gained importance. Textbooks play a significant role in promoting gender ideologies and values (Ariyanto, 2018). The relationship between gender and textbooks is reciprocal, as textbooks both reflect and shape gender norms within a culture (Aydnoglu, 2014). Therefore, the issue of gender in textbooks has a significant impact on students' learning experiences and attitudes (Ansary & Babaii, 2003).

Promoting gender inclusivity aims to create a sense of belonging among all students, particularly marginalized and underrepresented groups (RTI International, 2016). Ensuring educational materials reflect diverse gender roles is crucial to combating discrimination and fostering respect among learners (RTI International, 2016). Gender inclusivity in educational materials will provide an environment equitable for learning. It deals with biases and stereotyping passed through textbooks that have a great impact on the self-esteem and performance of students (Lewis, 2022; RTI International, 2016). Not only in India but also in West Bengal, current educational policies have focused much on this genuine issue of gender bias prevalent in the textbooks. Earlier studies proved that the textbooks for primary education contain stereotypical gender-based propaganda, where male characters are still leading and working in diversified fields than their female counterparts, according to a 2016 study by RTI International. This difference also does not represent gender roles appropriately and serves to further limit the aspirations and self-concept of the learner toward harmful stereotyping, both inside and outside the classroom (RTI International, 2016; Marak & Sutradhar, 2020).

It is significant to study the representation of gender in educational materials, especially Class V textbooks because children are at an age where they experience crucial development stages. Exposing students to balanced and more equitable representations of gender can improve learning experiences, foster healthier relationships, and contribute to overall development (RTI International, 2016; Child Help Foundation, 2024). Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand how the inclusiveness of gender has been reflected in the chosen textbooks so that improvement in educational outcomes can be achieved by creating an educational system in West Bengal that is more inclusive. The analysis critically brings to light how reform in textbook content can be made to reflect both genders and support an inclusive learning environment for all students.

The present paper addressed the reflection of gender inclusiveness in the English language textbooks of Class V at the primary level of West Bengal highlighting existing biases. This study examines the reflection of gender inclusivity in the English language textbooks used in Class V of primary education in West Bengal. Five aspects of the textbooks were analyzed to assess gender inclusivity: (i) Male and Female Orientation in Titles, (ii) Male and Female Orientation in the Theme of the Lesson, (iii) Male and Female Orientation in Terminologies, (iv) Male and Female Nouns, and Imagery, (v) Male and Female Generic Construction, and (vi) Gender Assumption within the Textbooks.

2. Literature Review

In the Indian context, several studies on gender bias and stereotypes in textbooks have highlighted that females are often underrepresented and stereotyped (Kadri, 2022; Bhattacharyya, 2017; Kuruvilla & Thasniya, 2015). Nandi, Bhattacharyya, and Das (2020) found that textbook illustrations often depict a disproportionate number of males versus female figures, with female characters being less represented. Ahmad and Shah (2019) observed that genders are imbalanced in textbooks, with males shown in dominant and influential roles, while females are depicted in subordinate and less significant roles. Kharbanda and Anwar (2015) noted that female characters appear less frequently than male characters. Similarly, Kharbanda and Lodhi (2015) reported a greater number of references to males compared to females. Sumalatha and Ramakrishnaiah (2004) also found that textbooks predominantly feature men.

International studies on gender bias and stereotypes in textbooks revealed consistent patterns of male overrepresentation and female underrepresentation across various contexts. Vu and Pham (2021) highlighted that males are given more verbal space and are depicted with greater social properties, whereas females are portrayed with limited independence, choices, and resources. Similarly, Tyarakanita et al. (2021) found that textbooks often depict males in more prominent social roles compared to females, both in textual and visual content. Suwarno et al. (2021) identified that gender stereotypes are embedded in portrayals of academic and non-academic achievements, domestic chores, and hobbies. Siren (2018) reported an overrepresentation of men and traditional portrayals of gender roles, though some textbooks also featured patterns that challenged these stereotypes. Orfan (2021) observed that female characters were significantly underrepresented compared to males and were often relegated to fewer social roles with male characters leading dialogues and narratives. Namatende-Sakwa (2018) explored how women are constructed through discourses that depict them as emotional, appearance-focused, and dependent on men, contrasting sharply with the rational and physically capable portrayal of men. Lee and Collins (2008) similarly found that textbooks perpetuate the stereotype of women as weaker and primarily confined to domestic roles.

Therefore, the focused study was carried out after looking at various earlier studies and recent academic publications. Although many studies reviewed recent journals, they did not address gender stereotypes and bias in the text and illustrations of primary education English language textbooks of class V from West Bengal, India. Most existing research has analyzed gender representation in primary education textbooks as a broader category, with limited attention given to English language textbooks specifically for Class V. While studies have documented stereotypical portrayals of women and the underrepresentation of female characters across various grades, the nuances and specificities of English curriculum materials for young learners have not been thoroughly explored. The need for targeted analysis becomes evident due to the critical importance of early educational experiences in shaping children's understanding of gender roles. There has been limited exploration of this issue in the Indian context. Therefore, this study focused on a detailed examination of all the text and illustrations in these English language textbooks of class V prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative and documentary approach. Document review, a qualitative research method, involves systematically evaluating textual and electronic documents (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005; Bowen, 2009). Qualitative research is particularly effective for in-depth exploration of specific problems or topics (Creswell, 2013). This research treats textbooks as documents and analyzes them through content analysis techniques. Documents typically present information through a mix of text and visual elements, such as images and diagrams (Prior, 2003). Content analysis, as described by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), seeks to uncover meaning and interpret phenomena within a social context. This technique, which aims to make replicable and valid inferences from texts (Krippendorff, 2004), is widely used in social science to identify patterns and draw conclusions based on message content (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976). This study specifically explores gender stereotypes and biases in primary school English language textbooks of class V by employing content analysis to assess the portrayal of gender inclusivity.

3.2. Sample and Data Sources

English language textbooks named i) "Butterfly" for Class V were chosen through the purposive sampling technique as samples in this study. The Primary Education Board, School Education Department, Government of West Bengal, India, was the publisher of the textbook. This textbook was implemented in government primary schools only. However, most private schools had textbooks that were different from those of government primary schools. Private school textbooks were not included in this study. The validity of the research data used credibility, transferability, triangulation, dependability, and confirmability (John W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Scott, 1990).

3.3. Instrumentation

The researchers were a key tool in the study (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). In qualitative research, the researchers themselves serve as key instruments in the study, playing a central role in data collection and analysis (Anne E Pezalla, 2024). Their identities and perspectives significantly contribution to how data is interpreted, which highlights the importance of self-reflexivity in understanding their impact on the research process (Collins & Stockton, 2022).

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Researchers systematically gathered data through content analysis, employing a meticulous approach. They conducted a thorough examination of textbooks, scrutinizing each page, as outlined by Collado and Atxurra in 2006. The textbooks were examined through six primary categories: (i) Male and Female Orientation in Titles, (ii) Male and Female Orientation in the Theme of the Lesson, (iii) Male and Female Nouns, (iv) Male and Female Orientation in Imagery, (v) Male and Female Generic Construction, and (vi) Gender Assumption within the Textbooks. First, the textbooks were selected. Next, these textbooks were thoroughly analyzed, with all content related to gender and value representation being collected. Then, the content was categorized into various dimensions and coded accordingly. After that, the information was interpreted, and a detailed explanation was provided. Finally, a conclusion was drawn.
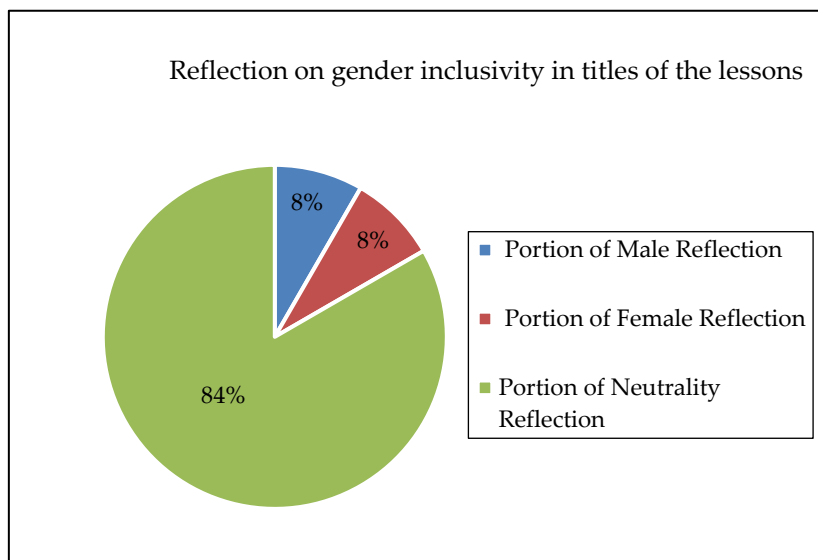
4. Data Analysis

Reflection of gender inclusivity in titles of the lessons

Table 1. *Orientation of Male and Female in the Titles of the Lessons*

Lesson no.	Name of the Lesson	Gender inclusivity remarks
1	"India: Superpower in Cricket"	The title "India: Superpower in Cricket" does not show gender bias in its wording, as it focuses on the nation's status in cricket rather than on gender-specific roles.
2	"A Feat on Feet"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "A Feat on Feet" generalizes the achievement, making it seem like an extraordinary human endeavor without specifying the gender.
3	"Phulmani's India"	The title is "Phulmani's India" the name "Phulmani" is typically feminine, which may indicate that the lesson centers on a female.
4	"Memory in Marble"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "Memory in Marble."
5	"My School Days"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "My School Days."
6	"The Clever Monkey"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "The Clever Monkey."
7	"The Rebel Poet"	The title is male-centered in wording. The phrase "The Rebel Poet" is typically masculine, which may indicate that the lesson centers on a female.
8	"Buildings to Remembers"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "Buildings to Remembers"
9	"The Bird's Eye"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "The Bird's Eye"

10	"A Great Social Reformer"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "A Great Social Reformer"	
11	"The Finishing Point"	The title is gender-neutral in wording, as it does not directly reference any gender. The phrase "The Finishing Point."	
12	"Beyond Barriers,"	The title of the lesson, "Beyond Barriers," is neutral and does not directly reflect any gender bias.	

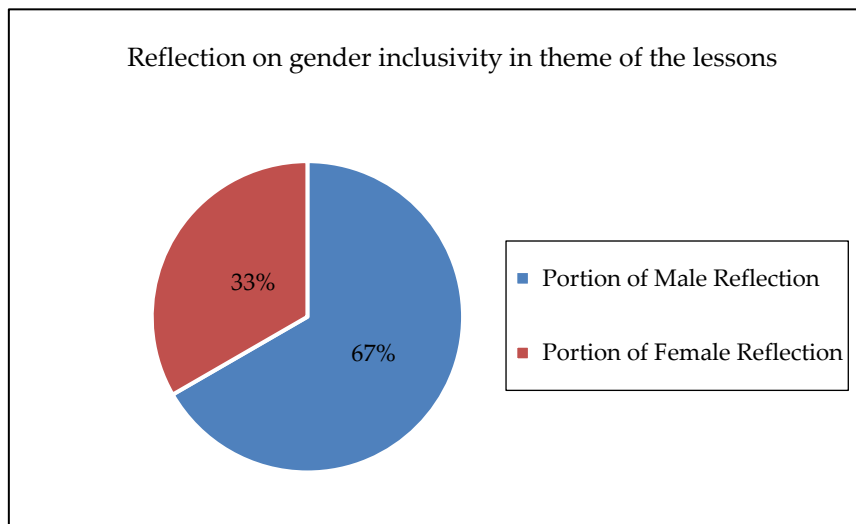**Graph 1.** *Reflection on Gender Inclusivity in Titles of The Lessons*

Figure. 1 represents the proportion of male and female reflection in titles of the lesson in English textbooks named "Butterfly" used in 5th Grade under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. English textbook shows that male reflection in titles makes up 8 %, female reflection in titles makes up 8 %, and gender neutrality is reflected in the titles 58%.

Reflection of gender inclusivity in the theme of the lessons

Table 2. *Orientation of Male and Female in the Theme of the Lessons*

Lesson no.	Name of the Lesson	Male and Female Orientation in the theme of the lesson	Gender inclusivity remarks
1	"India: Superpower in Cricket"	The theme is centered entirely around male-dominated sports (cricket) and male characters (Rahul and his father). The narrative reinforces the notion that sports, particularly cricket, is primarily a male domain.	Male-dominated
2	"A Feat on Feet"	The theme emphasizes male accomplishments in mountaineering, reflecting a gender bias where male achievements in exploration and adventure are more prominently celebrated.	Male-dominated
3	"Phulmani's India"	The text focuses on the experiences and thoughts of a young girl, Phulmani, which are often stereotypically associated with females.	Female-dominated
4	"Memory in Marble"	The primary theme revolves around a male protagonist, Tarun, who seeks knowledge from his grandfather, another male character. The story also emphasizes the historical narrative of Shah Jahan, a male emperor, and his achievements. Although Mumtaz Mahal is mentioned, her role is passive, centered around her death and the subsequent actions of her husband.	Male-dominated
5	"My School Days"	The text predominantly revolves around a male narrator's school experience, focusing on his memories of school life, teachers, and events.	Male-dominated
6	"The Clever Monkey"	The primary theme revolves around a monkey and a crocodile. The narrative focuses on male characters as the primary decision-makers and actors, while the female character is portrayed as secondary, only	Male-dominated

7	"The Rebel Poet"	influencing her husband's actions, and reinforcing traditional gender roles. This text predominantly revolves around a father-son interaction, where the father educates his son, Pritam, about the life and contributions of Kazi Nazrul Islam	Male-dominated
8	"Buildings to Remembers"	The theme of the text is focused on a school trip where students visit a historical place. However, the text revolves predominantly around female characters, with Mita, Amina, and Sunita being the main participants, which highlights a positive portrayal of girls as active learners	Female-dominated
9	"The Bird's Eye"	The central theme or narrative of a lesson tends to focus on male experiences or perspectives more than female ones. Lessons centered on male protagonists, traditionally male activities, or male-dominated settings may reflect a gender bias.	Male-dominated
10	"A Great Social Reformer"	The lesson presents Begum Rokeya in a positive light, emphasizing her contributions to female education and social reform. However, the focus on female-oriented themes, terminologies, and roles might reinforce gender-specific assumptions. The construction of the narrative is centered on Begum Rokeya, a woman. While the focus is positive, it could create a skewed representation without similar lessons focusing on male reformers.	Female-dominated
11	"The Finishing Point"	The theme is centered around the achievements of P.T. Usha, a female athlete, which positively highlights female empowerment in sports. The narrative focuses entirely on her journey, struggles, and accomplishments without diverting attention to male figures.	Female-dominated
12	"Beyond Barriers,"	The theme of the lesson revolves around space exploration and the achievements of astronauts. Both male and female figures (Rakesh Sharma and Kalpana Chawla) are highlighted. However, the narrative begins with a male-centric viewpoint (Barun's interest in Rakesh Sharma) before introducing Kalpana Chawla.	Male-dominated

Graph 2. *Reflection on Gender Inclusivity in the Theme of the Lessons*

Figure. 2 represents the proportion of male and female reflection in the theme of the lesson in English textbooks named "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. English textbook shows that male reflection in theme makes up 67 %, and female reflection in theme makes up 33 %.

Reflection of gender inclusivity in the noun used in the lessons

Table 3. *Orientation of Male and Female in the Nouns Used in the Lessons*

| Lesson no.	Name of the Lesson	Male and Female Orientation in the noun used in the lessons	Gender inclusivity remarks
1	"India: Superpower in Cricket"	"Rahul," "Father," "Kapil Dev," "Vivian Richards," "Amarnath," etc.	Male-dominated
2	"A Feat on Feet"	predominantly uses male nouns, such as "climbers," "men," and specific names like "Edmund Hillary," "John Hunt," and "Tom Bourdillon." "Arjun Vajpai" The only female reference is Anna Czerwinska, who is briefly mentioned.	Male-dominated
3	"Phulmani's India"	The text predominantly features female nouns, with "Phulmani" being the central character. There is a mention of male nouns such as "Emperor Akbar" and "Tansen."	Female-dominated
4	"Memory in Marble"	"Tarun," "grandfather," "prince," "son," "emperor," and "Shah Jahan." The female nouns "Mumtaz Mahal" and "Arjumand Banu Begum."	Male-dominated
5	"My School Days"	The terminologies used in the text are male-oriented. The teachers and students mentioned are all male, there is no reference to female-oriented terminologies or activities.	Male-dominated
6	"The Clever Monkey"	"Wife."	Gender Balanced
7	"The Rebel Poet"	"Great poet," "revolutionary," and "freedom fighter," are all male-oriented. These terms are traditionally associated with males in the context of the text	Male-dominated
8	"Buildings to Remembers"	The female nouns include "Mita," "Amina," "Sunita," and "Madam" (the teacher). Meanwhile, male nouns, such as "uncle" and "Father Joan da Cruz," exist but are less emphasized compared to their female counterparts.	Male-dominated
9	"The Bird's Eye"	Male nouns (e.g., "king," "boy," "father") and female nouns (e.g., "queen," "girl," "mother")	Gender Balanced
10	"A Great Social Reformer"	Uses female nouns like "woman," "women," "girls," and "Muslim Women's Association."	Female-dominated
11	"The Finishing Point"	Female nouns like "queen," "woman," and "she" describe "P.T. Usha." Male noun, "Milkha Singh."	Female-dominated
12	"Beyond Barriers,"	Male nouns are prevalent in the story, especially in the first half, which focuses on "Barun" and "Rakesh Sharma." Female nouns are used when Kalpana Chawl and Barun's mother are introduced, though they appear less frequently overall.	Male-dominated
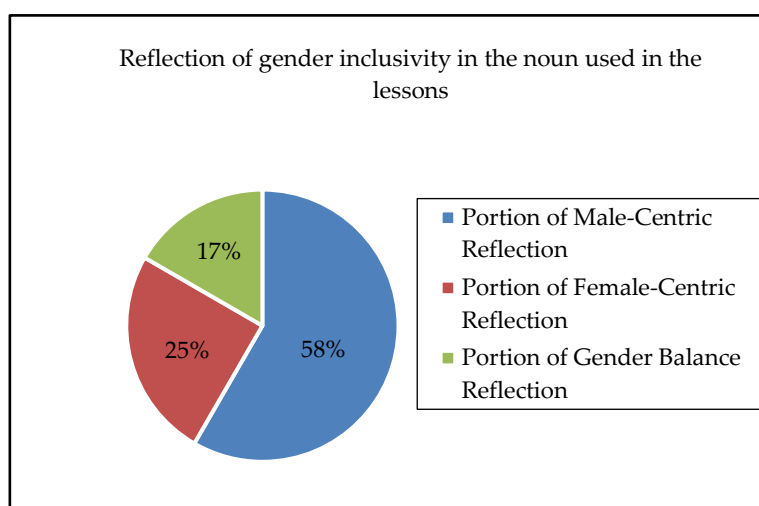
Graph 3. *Reflection of Gender Inclusivity in the Noun Used in the Lessons*

Figure. 3 represents the proportion of male and female reflection in noun used in English textbooks named "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. English textbook shows that male reflection in nouns makes up 58 %, female reflection in nouns makes up 25 %, and gender balance is reflected in the nouns 17%.

Reflection of gender inclusivity in the imagery used in the lessons

Table 4. *Orientation of Male and Female in the Imageries Used in the Lessons*

Lesson no.	Name of the Lesson	Male and Female Orientation in the imageries used in the lessons	Gender inclusivity remarks
1	"India: Superpower in Cricket"	The stories are exclusively related to male figures, with no mention of females.	Male-dominated
2	"A Feat on Feet"	Male figures and achievements in mountaineering. Female representation is minimal.	Male-dominated
3	"Phulmani's India"	The stories are exclusively related to male figures, female representation is minimal.	Male-dominated
4	"Memory in Marble"	Male and female pictures are equally presented	Gender Balanced
5	"My School Days"	The stories are exclusively related to male figures, female representation is minimal	Male-dominated
6	"The Clever Monkey"	Images of male or female characters are not shown in this lesson	Gender Balanced
7	"The Rebel Poet"	The stories are exclusively related to male figures, with no representation of female	Male-dominated
8	"Buildings to Remembers"	This lesson does not show any male or female character	Gender Balanced
9	"The Bird's Eye"	Images of men in leadership roles versus women in supportive or domestic roles.	Male-dominated
10	"A Great Social Reformer"	Picture of male social reformers were more depicted than female reformers	Male-dominated
11	"The Finishing Point"	The stories are exclusively related to female figures, male representation is minimal	Female-dominated
12	"Beyond Barriers,"	The stories are exclusively related to male figures, with no representation of female	Male-dominated
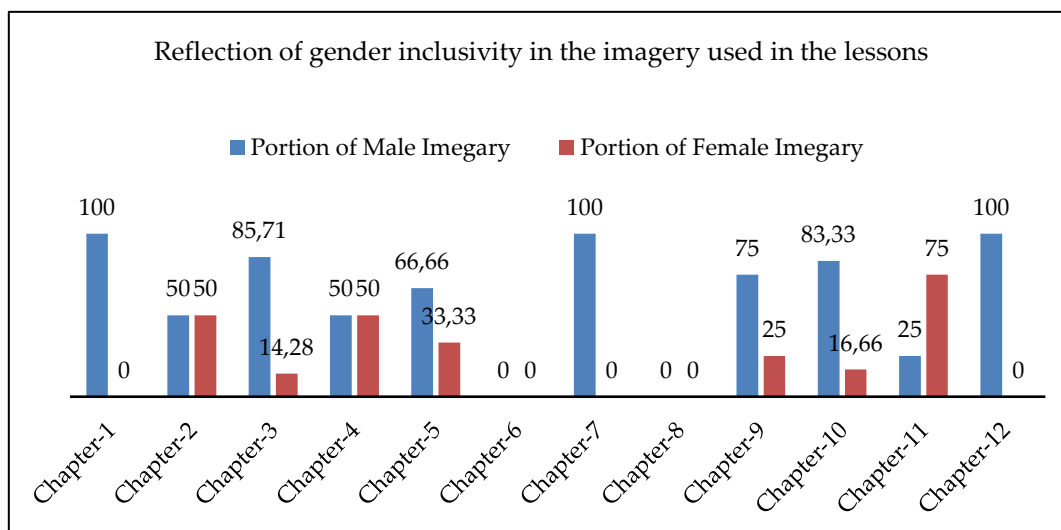
Graph 4. *Reflection of Gender Inclusivity in the Imagery Used in the Lessons*
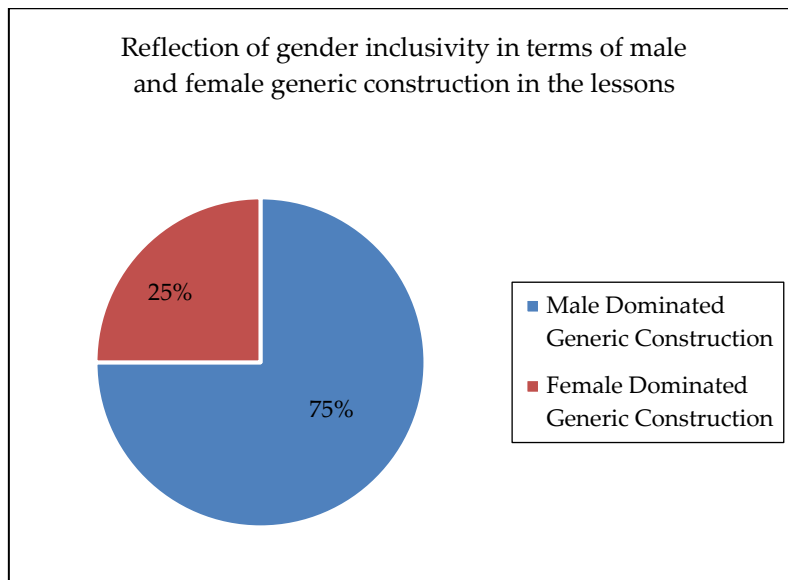
Figure. 4 represents the proportion of male and female reflection in imageries used in English textbooks named "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. Chapters 1, 7, and 12, where the male imagery representation is 100%, and females are completely absent. Chapters 3, 5, 9, and 10 also show a higher representation of males, with proportions of 85.71%, 66.66%, 75%, and 83.33% respectively, compared to lower female representations of 14.28%, 33.33%, 25%, and 16.66% in these chapters. On the other

hand, Chapter 11 shows a reverse trend, where female representation is significantly higher at 75%, and male representation drops to 25%. In Chapters 2 and 4, male and female representations are equal, each with 50% representation. Notably, in Chapters 6 and 8, male and female imageries are absent.

Reflection of gender inclusivity in terms of male and female generic construction in the lessons

Table 5. *Orientation of Male and Female Generic Construction in the Lessons*

Lesson no.	Name of the Lesson	Male and Female Orientation in the generic construction used in the lessons	Gender inclusivity remarks
1	"India: Superpower in Cricket"	Generic use of male-focused language and constructs (e.g., "Man of the Match")	Male-dominated
2	"A Feat on Feet"	The text uses male generic constructions, such as referring to the climbers as "men" with male names, while the female climber is mentioned separately and late in the narrative.	Male-dominated
3	"Phulmani's India"	"Ancient men" is a male-generic construction	Male-dominated
4	"Memory in Marble"	The text predominantly constructs male characters in active roles	Male-dominated
5	"My School Days"	The generic construction in the text is heavily male-oriented. The narrator, teachers, actors, and even the students mentioned or implied are male. There is no mention of female students, teachers, or any other female figures, indicating a male-dominated environment. The absence of female characters perpetuates the idea that the school and its activities are male domains.	Male-dominated
6	"The Clever Monkey"	The story constructs its characters generically around male characters. The wife of the crocodile is the only female character, and her role is primarily to serve her husband.	Male-dominated
7	"The Rebel Poet"	The text consistently uses male pronouns (he, him, his) and references to male characters. This reinforces a male-dominant narrative. The absence of female characters in the text creates a generic construction that excludes females.	Male-dominated
8	"Buildings to Remembers"	The generic construction in the text includes phrases like "students," "teacher," and "children," which are gender-neutral. However, when specific characters are referenced, females (Mita, Amina, Sunita) are highlighted. The text favors female characters in particular roles, while males are mostly referenced in historical or secondary roles, potentially indicating a subtle gender bias.	Female-dominated
9	"The Bird's Eye"	Assess whether the text uses generic male terms to refer to all people or includes female-oriented language. Consider the use of "he," "man," or "mankind" versus "he or she," "person," or "humanity."	Male-dominated
10	"A Great Social Reformer"	The construction of the narrative is centered on Begum Rokeya, a woman. While the focus is positive, it could create a skewed representation without similar lessons focusing on male reformers.	Female-dominated
11	"The Finishing Point"	The text largely avoids generic constructions that could overshadow Usha's identity. By focusing on her individual accomplishments, the lesson reinforces the idea that female athletes can achieve greatness on par with or surpassing their male counterparts.	Female-dominated
12	"Beyond Barriers,"	The generic constructions in the story seem to follow traditional gender roles. Barun is a male child interested in space, and his mother is portrayed in a nurturing role. This reinforces stereotypical gender roles where males are associated with adventure and intellectual pursuits, while females are associated with care and support.	Male-dominated

Graph 5. *Reflection of Gender Inclusivity in Terms of Male and Female Generic Construction in the Lessons*
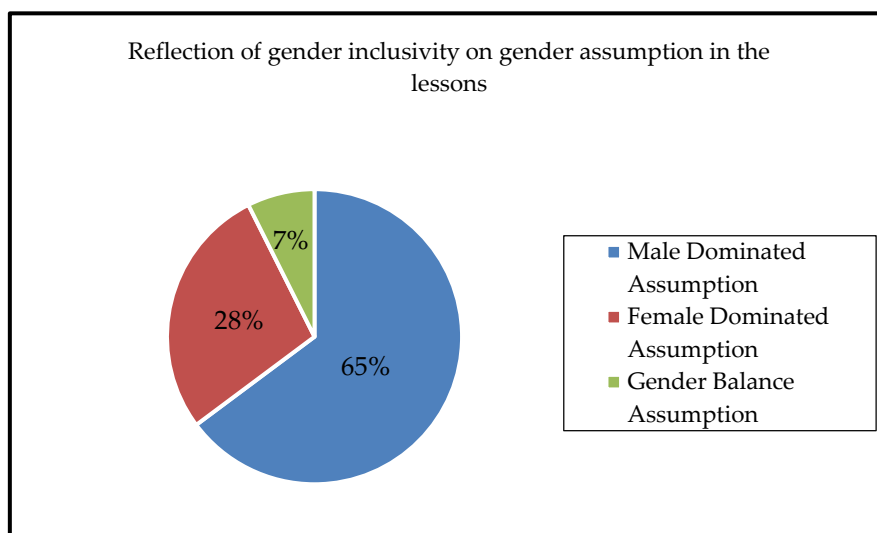
Figure. 5 represents the proportion of male and female reflection in the generic construction of the lesson in English textbooks named "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. English textbook shows that male generic construction reflected 75 %, and female generic construction reflected 25%.

Reflection of gender inclusivity on gender assumption in the lessons

Table 6. *Orientation of Gender Assumption in the Lessons*

Lesson no.	Name of the Lesson	Male and Female Orientation in gender assumption about the lessons	Gender inclusivity remarks
1	"India: Superpower in Cricket"	The narrative assumes that both the protagonist (Rahul) and his father have an inherent interest in cricket, a sport often stereotyped as a male domain. There is no mention of female characters or their interest in the sport, which can suggest that cricket is primarily a male activity.	Male-dominated
2	"A Feat on Feet"	The text assumes that the primary figures in the story of mountaineering are men. The assumption that leadership, bravery, and skill in this context are male attributes reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes, minimizing the visibility of women in similar roles.	Male-dominated
3	"Phulmani's India"	The narrative assumes that Phulmani, as a girl, is naturally inclined towards artistic and cultural pursuits, reinforcing stereotypical gender roles. Aligning with traditional feminine attributes such as creativity and cultural appreciation.	Female-dominated
4	"Memory in Marble"	The story's narrative assumes that a male figure (grandfather) is the authority on historical knowledge, while the female character's significance is tied to her beauty and the monument built in her memory by her husband. This reinforces gender stereotypes and assumptions about the roles and capabilities of men and women.	Gender balanced
5	"My School Days"	The text assumes a male experience as the default. The narrator's experiences, the depiction of events, and the absence of female perspectives contribute to a gender-biased narrative. The assumption that educational and extracurricular activities are primarily male experiences is evident.	Male-dominated
6	"The Clever Monkey"	The story assumes traditional gender roles, with the male characters being active, clever, and resourceful, while the female character (crocodile's wife) is portrayed as manipulative but ultimately reliant on her husband to carry out her plan. The assumptions in the story reinforce stereotypical gender roles where males are the primary actors and thinkers, and females are either supportive or manipulative.	Male-dominated

7	"The Rebel Poet"	The text assumes that the father is the primary source of knowledge and authority, and the son looks up to him for learning and inspiration. This reinforces traditional gender roles, where males are seen as the knowledge-bearers and decision-makers. The absence of a mother or any female figure in this educational or inspirational role perpetuates the assumption that men are naturally more knowledgeable or capable of guiding others.	Male-dominated
8	"Buildings to Remembers"	The gender assumption in the text may suggest that females are more actively involved in learning and exploration, while males are either historical figures or passive participants. This could imply an underlying bias that assigns different roles based on gender	Female-dominated
9	"The Bird's Eye"	The central theme or narrative of a lesson often revolves around female experiences or perspectives, overshadowing male ones. Lessons centered on female protagonists, traditionally female activities, or female-dominated settings may reflect a gender bias.	Male-dominated
10	"A Great Social Reformer"	The lesson reinforces the idea that women's issues are separate from broader societal concerns, which could marginalize the importance of gender equality as a universal issue.	Female-dominated
11	"The Finishing Point"	The lesson does not seem to make gendered assumptions that diminish Usha's achievements. It portrays her as a determined and resilient athlete, challenging the typical gender stereotypes that might expect women to be less capable in sports. However, the inclusion of her marriage and retirement can be seen as reinforcing traditional gender roles, although her comeback challenges this narrative by showing that her identity as an athlete extends beyond these roles.	Gender balanced
12	"Beyond Barriers"	The lesson starts with an assumption that the reader would relate to Barun's excitement and disappointment, framing the male experience as the central one. While the story later introduces Kalpana Chawla, it begins with a focus on a male astronaut, which might subtly reinforce the assumption that space exploration is primarily a male domain.	Male-dominated

Graph 6. *Reflection of Gender Inclusivity on Gender Assumption in the Lessons*

Figure. 6 represents the proportion of male and female reflection in the gender assumption of the lesson in English textbooks named "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. English textbook shows that male assumption reflected 65 % and female assumption reflected 28%, and gender-balanced assumption reflected 25%.

Examples of gender specificity reflected through images of textbook

Fig 1. *Child care by female*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. Content)

Fig 2. *Playing cricket by male*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. Content)

Fig 3. *Mountaineering by Male*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. Content)

Fig 4. *Jumping by Female*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. Content)

Fig 5. *Female as a social reformer*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. Content)

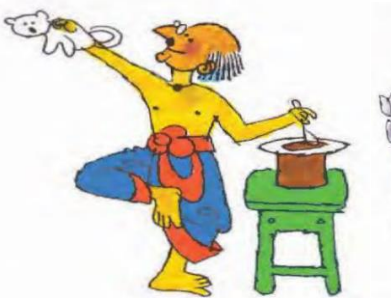**Fig 6.** *Playing football by Male*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. 22)

Fig 7. *Male as magician*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. 42)

Fig 8. *Male as Archer*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p.42)

Fig 9. *Male as Astronaut*
(Source: Butterfly-V; p. 112)

5. Findings and Discussion

Reflection of gender inclusivity in titles of the lessons

Findings revealed that English textbooks titled "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education reveal across all three grades, the majority of titles in each textbook are gender-neutral. Using gender-neutral titles in textbooks is essential for promoting equality among students. Research has established that gender-neutral language contributes to reducing stereotypes and biases that can influence young learners' perceptions of gender roles (Khalid, 2017).

Reflection of gender inclusivity in the theme of the lesson

The findings indicate a consistent trend of male-oriented themes being more prominently featured than female-oriented themes across the English textbooks for Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education, indicating a potential gender bias in the portrayal of themes within the textbooks. This is by previous findings (Camera, 2016; Lee & Collins, 2008; Ali & Hussain, 2019; Arslan Ozer, Karatas & Ergun, 2019). The dominance of male-oriented themes in textbooks can significantly impact students' perceptions of gender roles and contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes. Researchers have noted that when educational resources portray male characters in leadership roles while relegating females to domestic spheres, it fosters an environment where students internalize these biases, affecting their aspirations and self-image (Camera, 2016; Benavot & Jere, 2022, Ullah, Ali & Naz, 2014). The identified trend of male-oriented themes correlates

with broader measures of gender inequality (Alber, 2017). Prior studies have pointed out that textbooks tend to mirror the prevailing social attitudes of their contexts, where women are depicted in domestic roles and men in positions of authority (Crawfurd, Saintis-Miller, & Todd, 2024).

Reflection of gender inclusivity in the noun used in the lessons

The findings reveal a prevalent trend wherein male nouns are more frequently represented than female nouns in English textbooks targeted at Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. This observation suggests a significant gender bias within educational materials, echoing findings from various studies that highlight a similar prevalence of male representations across different contexts and educational resources. This observation aligns with previous studies that document similar tendencies in various educational materials, (Crawfurd, Saintis-Miller, & Todd, 2024; Benavot & Jere, 2022; Ullah, Ali & Naz, 2014; Lee & Collins, 2008). The disproportionate representation of male nouns can significantly influence students' perceptions of gender roles. Research indicates that when textbooks primarily feature male characters and terms, they inadvertently shape students' understanding of societal norms, suggesting that certain traits and careers are predominantly aligned with masculinity. This alignment may lead to students developing skewed expectations regarding gender roles, limiting their perception of opportunities available to both boys and girls (Crawfurd, Saintis-Miller, & Todd, 2024; Benavot & Jere, 2022). The bias towards male nouns reinforces traditional gender stereotypes, which can have lasting implications on students' self-esteem and aspirations. Studies have shown that children exposed to gender-biased materials tend to internalize these stereotypes, which can adversely affect their engagement and participation in various activities. The consistent portrayal of males in authoritative, active roles, while females remain underrepresented or depicted in passive capacities, contributes to a curriculum that maintains outdated views on gender (Benavot & Jere, 2022; Para, 2024; Alber, 2017).

Reflection of gender inclusivity in the imagery used in the lessons

The findings indicate a significant imbalance in the portrayal of male and female imagery, with male imagery being more prominently featured in the English textbooks for Class V used by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. This reinforces previous research showing that educational materials often reflect pervasive gender biases that favor male representations, sidelining female imagery in both visual and textual contexts This is to previous findings (Crawfurd, Saintis-Miller, & Todd, 2024; Nandi, Halder & Das, 2024). The disproportionate representation of male imagery can shape students' understanding of gender roles from a tender age. Research suggests that textbooks featuring predominantly male characters can perpetuate stereotypes, making male figures synonymous with authority and competence, while female figures are often relegated to domestic or passive roles (Benavot & Jere, 2022; Camera, 2016; Alber, 2017). This can influence not only girls' self-esteem and aspirations but also boys' perceptions of gender roles, potentially limiting their understanding of equality and shared responsibilities (The Educator, 2024; Lee & Collins, 2008; Ali & Hussain, *2019).*

Reflection of gender inclusivity in terms of male and female generic construction in the lessons

The findings indicate a notable trend where male-generic constructions are more prominently featured than female-generic constructions in the English textbooks for Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education. This observation aligns with previous studies that document similar tendencies in various educational materials, highlighting a pervasive gender bias against female representations in textbook content (Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Crawfurd, Saintis-Miller, & Todd, 2024; The Educator, 2024). Studies show that when female generic constructions are underrepresented, girls may feel less empowered and may not envision themselves in roles reflective of leadership or accomplishment (The Educator, 2024). Furthermore, this discrepancy reinforces male dominance across various contexts, which can lead to significant psychological impacts on young female students regarding their potential and capabilities (Benavot & Jere, 2022; Camera, 2016).

Reflection of gender inclusivity on gender assumption in the lessons

The findings from the analysis of the English textbook "Butterfly" used in Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education reveal significant gender disparities in the reflection of gender assumptions within the lessons. The findings indicate a notable trend where male-generic assumption is more prominently

featured than female-generic assumption. This pattern is consistent with previous research on gender representation in educational materials. Studies have shown that textbooks often perpetuate traditional gender roles, where males are predominantly portrayed in active, authoritative roles, while females are more likely to be depicted in passive, supportive roles (Barker & Aspray, 2006; Lindsey & Jones, 2013). The disproportionate male representation in "Butterfly" aligns with the findings of Papadakis (2018), who highlighted that textbooks across different subjects frequently fail to represent gender inclusivity, contributing to the reinforcement of stereotypical gender norms among young learners. Furthermore, the underrepresentation of female characters and perspectives in educational content has been criticized for limiting the scope of role models available to young girls, thereby constraining their aspirations and perceptions of potential future roles (Gardiner, 2011; Perry & Brown, 2016). This gender bias is not unique to the West Bengal context but reflects a broader issue observed in educational systems worldwide (Walker & Huang, 2021). The relatively low percentage of gender-balanced assumptions in the "Butterfly" textbook suggests that efforts to incorporate a more inclusive and balanced representation of gender roles have been limited.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the English textbook titled "Butterfly" used for Class V under the West Bengal Board of Primary Education reveals significant gender imbalances in the representation of male and female identities. While a portion of the titles may be gender-neutral, the overarching trend leans toward male dominance in themes, nouns, and imagery. This bias not only skews the portrayal of gender roles but also limits the scope of an inclusive educational environment where students can see equal representation of both genders. The consistent focus on male-oriented themes and imagery suggests a reinforcement of traditional gender stereotypes, which can influence the development of gender perceptions among young learners.

Reforming the content of these textbooks is essential to create a more balanced and inclusive learning experience. By consciously incorporating gender-equal themes and representations, educators and policymakers can help shape a generation that values and respects diversity. An inclusive curriculum that reflects equality in every aspect is crucial to fostering a holistic educational environment that encourages critical thinking, challenges stereotypes, and promotes gender equality. Textbooks should be carefully revised to ensure that both male and female identities are equally visible, empowering all students to see themselves represented in their learning materials.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

Only English textbooks of primary-level of class V could be covered due to insufficient time. For the content analysis of gender biases and stereotypes in imagery, textbooks were selected. Description. Other textbooks can be considered and this research is done on some specific dimensions.

Further research on "Gender Inclusivity in English Language Textbooks of Primary Education in West Bengal, India" may consider the longitudinal impact of the content of the textbooks on students' perceptions of gender roles and identities. One such comparative analysis could be done between government and private school textbooks, bringing to the fore how far apart the differences are in terms of their gender representation and pointing out inequalities in the approaches toward education within these two strata. Further, it can be done on their impact on self-esteem, career aspirations, and social behavior for both boys and girls to understand the long-term implications of representations of gender in the early years of education. Research on the role of teachers in mitigating the effects of gender biases present in textbooks and on restructuring teacher education programs to enable pedagogical techniques that are more sensitive to gender issues is also necessary. Finally, such integration would provide insight into how students and parents view and internalize how men and women are portrayed in textbooks, outside of a classroom context.

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