

**REPRESENTATION OF CHARACTERS FROM AN
INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE IN NCERT CBSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS FOR ELEMENTARY
GRADES**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF
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MANOHAR PARRIKAR SCHOOL OF LAW,
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MAY 2022

DECLARATION

I, Dea Pareek, hereby declare that the dissertation titled '*Representation of Characters From An Intersectional Perspective In NCERT CBSE English Language Textbooks For Elementary Grades*' is the outcome of my study undertaken under the guidance of Ms. Prachi Prabhu, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies Programme, Manohar Parrikar School of Law, Governance and Public Policy, Goa University. This Work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this Institute or any other Institute or University. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled '*Representation of Characters From An Intersectional Perspective In NCERT CBSE English Language Textbooks For Elementary Grades*' is the record of the original work by Miss Dea Pareek under my guidance and to the best of my knowledge. The research results presented in this dissertation have not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this or any other university.

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EPIGRAPH

I dedicate this research titled “*Representation of characters from an intersectional perspective in NCERT and CBSE English language textbooks for Elementary Grades*” to all the young minds of our country whose contributions towards our future will be invaluable. I also dedicate this study to my siblings, Advika and Vedansh who are these two irreplaceable sun and moon in my life and have shown me new perspectives, time and again. Lastly, I dedicate this study to Dr. Subair Kalathil for introducing me to this field of study and being a guiding star, and Prof. Shaila Desouza for helping me challenge myself and develop a novel insight towards social issues which serve as strong dictating factors for our communities.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Knowledge always demands increase; it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but will afterward always propagate itself.” - Savitribai Phule (Chaudhary, 2022)

Younger generations are the future of the world and all that is taught to them leads to mold them into the adults that will create and sustain society. Education is no more a choice, rather it is a necessity and textbooks serve as the source to create, understand and impart knowledge that leaves an impact enabling people to learn, understand and question the workings of any subject.

1.1 School Education System of India

The Indian school education system comprise of a five-tier system when considering that the National Education Policy is not yet implemented. According to this five tier system that grades can be classified as Pre-primary, Primary, Upper-primary, Secondary and Higher secondary. The Pre-primary grades are the Kindergarten grades, ie., Playgroup, Nursery, Lower and Upper Kindergarten. The Primary grades are from Grades 1 to 5, Upper-primary are Grades 6 to 8 and together the grades 1 to 8 are also known as Elementary grades. The Secondary section comprises of grades 9 and 10 while Higher Secondary is for grades 11 and 12. The typical age group for elementary grades is from 6 years to 14 years. (National Education Policy, 2021)

English is considered as a ‘first language’ that is taught to students at the Primary level, and as the proceed to Upper-primary grades the language scope increases to three languages. However, English is a mandatory subject in all English medium

schools. Given the rise of English as a global lingua franca, demand for English medium instruction (EMI) has greatly increased over the last 20 years at all levels.(Anderson and Lightfoot 2019)

1.2 Why I chose NCERT textbooks

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and its constituent units are responsible for regulating school education and preparing and publishing model textbooks, that are prescribed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). In India, the CBSE board is one of the most favored education boards which is widely followed in most of the schools, thus the outreach of this board is larger than that of the State or International boards. Often the importance of primary education is overlooked but with numerous researches and the much-strained importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE), it is not unknown that learning during the initial years in life is considered to have the deepest and long-lasting influence.

As education creates a significant change in society, it is of great importance to understand the gravity of receiving and sharing knowledge that not only helps in one's personal growth but also clearly imparts knowledge and information in an inclusive manner as children tend to be highly influenced by all that is taught to them. John Locke proposed the theory of Tabula Rasa which states that individuals are born with no in-built knowledge, the minds of young children are like blank slates and that all learning is developed through one's experience and knowledge.(Uzgallis, n.d.) With regard to this theory, the importance of education is all the more valuable and crucial.

We are aware that it is every person of a community that is responsible for making up the very society we live in, but how often do we equally represent each member of this community? Textbooks are a means to condition young minds, they have the power to teach new things or keep on reinforcing prejudices. Many books highlight only one aspect of society, generalizing one single outlook to the

constituents and workings of a society, whereas the society does not function or stand-alone on one single aspect.

Textbooks serve as a guiding tool to many and so the content and its representation is a vital aspect to its credibility. In order to convey the messages and lessons of any textbook, language plays an important role. While looking at any board of the school, it can be inferred that all boards especially for their primary classes, focus on English as it is considered to be a world language with great importance in communication skills, language development, and higher academic purposes. Language is the most vital means of communication; unlike most other subjects like Science, History, and Maths, it is not bound by rules or facts rather it is more imaginative and fluid in nature. (de Jong, 2015) Language lessons in textbooks allow the representation of contexts through words and tones and are probably the first subject children easily learn and relate to. Children can learn and create characters in a language course, giving them a free hand to imagine the world with the understanding that they have developed through the subjects taught. It is empirical to state that education, textbooks, and language courses can impact the knowledge and understanding of children to a great level, therefore it is important to emphasize the need for the information that is imparted to be inclusive of various types of identities that exist in our society.

Many times it is observed that the protagonists, the heroes, the stories are all about men, or the characters are mostly of one light skin color, or the religious aspect is completely concealed while teaching secular topics and/or maybe have no mentions of people with special needs, while all these identities of people are very much present in our surroundings. It is observed that the conventional texts that are referred to while studying at times fail to include such identities and end up showcasing one norm generalizing it to all situations. Women are present just as side characters in most stories, texts, and movies, people of color are also comparatively lesser-seen than people with a light-peach skin tone, religion and disability may also be not in the mainstream content. To see whether this is the case

in educational books as well, the study focuses on the representation of characters among the English textbook- Marigold; of grades 1st to 8th. This representation would be analyzed from an intersectional perspective, focusing on gender, color, religion, and disability as the key points.

1.3 Reason for focusing on this study.

The official last edition of CBSE textbooks took place in 2017, while a few revisions have been made in the following years as well, the latest one being in 2021. (National Education Policy 2020, 2021) With the introduction of the New Education Policy, there have been efforts made towards re-making the educational system of the country at all levels. It calls for changing school education and higher education by addressing various consultation themes that focus on different approaches to make Indian education easily accessible, multi-disciplinary, indigenous, equitable, and inclusive. The first draft for the New Education Policy was introduced in 2019 and finalized in 2020, with all the principles and points set to bring about change, the aim to completely apply it is by 2030. Although the goal to achieve is by 2030, there have been revisions made to the textbooks in 2021 as well, and this study intends on also reviewing whether this 2021 edition is anywhere influenced by the themes outlined by the New Education Policy.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a blueprint for peace and prosperity for all the people as well as the planet. It suggested 17 sustainable development goals which recognized various strategies to improve social, economic, and environmental aspects. Emphasizing on the Sustainable Development Goals, number 4 which ‘ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all’ and number 5 focusing on ‘achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls’, this research is an attempt to document and highlight the portrayal of characters from an intersectional viewpoint. The fourth Sustainable Development Goal has 7 major targets, (i) ensuring complete free, equitable and quality primary and

secondary education for boys and girls (ii) ensuring quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education for boys and girls (iii) ensuring affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education for women and men (iv) increasing the number of skilled youth and adults for decent jobs and entrepreneurship (v) eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all including persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and children in vulnerable situations (vi) ensuring literacy and numeracy for all youth and substantial proportion of adults (vii) ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development (vii-a) building and upgrading educational facilities that are child-disability and gender sensitive (vii-b) globally expanding number of scholarships available to developing countries (vii-c) substantially increasing the supply of qualified teachers. While the fifth Sustainable Development Goal indicates (i) to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls (ii) eliminating all forms of violence in public and private spheres (iii) eliminating all harmful practices targeting women (iv) recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work (v) ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities for women at all levels (vi) ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health & rights (vi-a) undertaking reforms for women's equal rights to economic resources (vi-b) promoting women's empowerment by enabling the use of technology (vi-c) strengthening policies and legislation for promoting gender equality. The aforementioned goals help in recognizing, understanding, and highlighting global issues which require an urgent call for action by all nations. These goals serve as a guiding structure to reflect how the importance of education is globally recognized along with the importance of intersection of gender and other identities in the field of education. (Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.)

There have been a few studies that focus on textbooks but mostly for social science and other subjects. This research aims to study the portrayal of women, representation of characters from a colored lens, depiction of religion, and the

presence of people with special needs in the English language textbooks of elementary classes from the NCERT books recommended and followed by the CBSE board. The study intends on seeing whether these books have moved past the social stereotypes in the last five years.

1.4 Operational definitions-

- NCERT TEXTBOOKS- Textbooks published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training.
- CBSE TEXTBOOKS- Textbooks followed by the Central Board of Secondary Education.
- NEW EDUCATION POLICY- The New Education Policy was introduced by the Government of India in 2019 and finalized in 2020, with all the principles and points set to bring about change in Indian education by making it easily accessible, multi-disciplinary, indigenous, equitable, and inclusive.
- ELEMENTARY GRADES- Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- INTERSECTIONALITY- The factor that allows recognizing how an individual's multiple identities contribute towards shaping their stand in society and lead to their perception by others. The term was coined by Kimberley Crenshaw, intersectionality identifies how a person's social and political identities combine to create multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage, discrimination and privilege and promotion and marginalization of people.
- GENDER- Refers to the portrayal of men and women in textual materials including the characterization in content and illustrations.
- COLOUR- Refers to the portrayal of light-skin-toned and dark-skin-toned characters in the textbooks.
- RELIGION- Refers to the representation of characters belonging to different religions in the content and illustrations of the textual materials..

- **DISABILITY**- Refers to the representation of people with disabilities in the content and illustrations of the textual materials.
- **REPRESENTATION**- How people are portrayed in content and visuals of the context of textbooks.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Feminist scholars criticize the patriarchal construct of the society that leads to various conflicts between genders, leading to oppression on minority groups, creation of disadvantaged sections, and strong biases against women. The focus is on creating a society based on the true meaning of equality in terms of power, access to resources, and opportunities. Education is a vital source of socialization that aids to enforce the concepts of patriarchy and thus it is of utmost importance to start bringing about change at every level, with a special focus on the knowledge that is being taught. Feminist theories were instrumental in shedding light on gender inequalities in the formal education system for scholars. Feminist scholars have also focused on the revision of existing curricula at every level of education, through textbook analysis, by focusing on gender representation, which is very stereotypical and biased (Kereszty 2009).

As education is also recognized as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and a fundamental human right, it is vital to critique the education that is imparted in young children. Textbooks are the pivotal source of information on which the teachers, students, and parents rely. The primary sources of information are school textbooks both for the students as well as the teachers. As children start shaping their understanding of the world through the knowledge provided to them it is of utmost importance to focus on the materials used to impart this knowledge. Socialization primarily happens through families and then the schools are responsible to reinforce or change what is already learned while incorporating new knowledge.

In the study, education imparted to lower primary grades' students would be analyzed from an intersectional perspective, through the lens of gender, disability,

religion, and color. A few pieces of research done along the same lines highlighting the aforementioned domains have helped in adding a fresh perspective to this one.

2.1 Representation of Gender in Textbooks

The paper '*Education Meets Gender: Tracing The Beginning of Learning Gender, The Search for Identity and Representation in Indian Textbooks*' (Desai 2019) investigates gender and intersectionality awareness and gaps in Indian textbooks. It focused on the representation of people based on their gender, caste, disability, age, and religion. It studies the English textbooks for grades 1 and 8, and the methodology used in this paper was through visual and textual analysis. Although the thesis had a smaller sample, of only two textbooks, it showcased all possible points where inclusion and bias based on the aforementioned pointers could be seen along with looking at the representation of identities in the content and as visuals. The purpose of choosing a lower primary grade textbook was to study the content of the material catered to young children as these books highly contribute to shaping young minds as children of age 5 to 8 are still in their formative years developing an understanding of the world. The researcher also considers involving Indian feminism as an added base to study intersectionality in the Indian context. Most of the content of the lower primary book lacked representation of people with disabilities and people from different religions, an intersectional inclusion could not be seen in the content. Two possible interventions cited were one to include a variety of authors for possibly a more inclusive perspective and second, to design the exercises in a way that allowed children to openly question the content of the texts to develop a more realistic understanding and outlook of the world. The research concludes that irrespective of trying to make the first-grade textbook gender-inclusive, it lacked intersectionality and was problematic as regardless of the number of female authors and characters, gender stereotyping remained a concern. The intention to change the narrative of gender stereotyping is considered by the author, but she also highlights that no efforts have been made to bring about this change. Gendered relations of inequality embedded in the matrix of societal

institutions, it becomes important to examine gender dynamics in formal education or schools. A supposed ‘naturalness’ of maleness and femaleness has led to ideas of manhood and womanhood, thus creating gender boundaries (Parashar and Singh 2020). Textbooks may also be analyzed through the technique of content analysis as well; this allows to find out certain themes and concepts in a given piece of data. The research paper *‘Evaluating Gender Representation in NCERT Textbooks: A Content Analysis’* (Parashar and Singh 2020) uses the tool of content analysis to study the NCERT Political Science textbook for grade XI from a gendered perspective considering gender and gender inequality, feminist theoretical frameworks, feminist analysis of education, representation of gender in school textbooks, and the policy initiatives for gender inequality in Indian education. It also takes into account the emphasis made by feminist scholars on the subordination of women to men. Feminist scholars contend that differences in the representation of men and women in textbooks offer poor role models for girls and boys since they do not bring into focus the diversity of roles that women and men play in their real lives, which is instrumental in shaping girls’ and boys’ visions of who they are and what they can become, and such distorted images and portrayals have a detrimental effect on the construction of gender identity among young children (Parashar and Singh 2020). In India, gender concerns in education acquired the center stage after the publication of the Towards Equality report in the 1970s (Srivastava 2016) and since then there have been some efforts about including women in the texts, although these efforts have flourished completely even after all these years. The paper examines the textbook titled – ‘Indian Constitution at Work’ based on active and passive roles, where active roles were defined by characters in a position of dominance while passive roles were defined by characters shown in a subordinate position. The text was evaluated through the evaluation tool developed by the Department of Women’s Studies as its research technique. Content analysis entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter not necessary from an author’s or user’s perspective (Krippendorff, 2013). The findings showed

a clear gender bias as the visuals reinforced unequal gender roles by majorly portraying men in positions of power. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need to take proactive measures towards restructuring the content of school textbooks with a focus on making the invisible characters and realities become visible.

Since every society has its gender belief system and gender stereotypes, the same images of women and men are reflected and portrayed in their formal curriculum (Dawar and Anand 2017). According to research "students spend as much as 80 to 95% of classroom time using textbooks and teachers make a majority of their instructional decision based on the textbook" (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007), thus making textbook information a vital instrument in learning. It is important to seriously consider the prevalence of gender stereotypes in texts and learning materials so that they can be modified and lead to changing the narratives of the stereotypical images of genders.

Another research that has critically analyzed the roles represented for genders in primary school textbooks is the research titled '*Gender Roles Representation and Portrayal: An Analysis of Primary Level NCERT Textbooks*' (Dawar and Anand 2017). It addresses the existing gender stereotypes in English textbooks for class 1st-5th. The article highlights the invisibility of women in seven domains- visuals and contents of the textbooks, the occupational roles assigned to genders in the texts, representation of women in games or sports activities, personality attributes used for female and male characters, first-ness in the language used, gender-specific language expressions and lastly the authors in the textbooks. Dawar and Anand have considered the 2014 and 2015 reprints of the textbooks, and according to their findings, gender stereotypes were visible in some of the other aforementioned domains in all the textbooks. The need to incorporate women and their issues in texts was initially highlighted by the first National Conference on Women's Studies in 1981, we surely have come a long way in the past four decades but are yet to

constantly and consciously work hard towards eliminating gender bias in the texts that are being studied in today's date as well.

At a central level, contributing towards analyzing educative materials through a national department. The report generated in 2016 by the Department of Gender Studies, assigned by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, titled '*Analysis of The Textbooks of Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Manipur, and Rajasthan: An Overall Report*', attempts to analyze the textbooks of the mentioned states for the language subjects- Hindi, English, Urdu, and Sanskrit based on the gender bias and stereotypes in them. In the domain of policy, the Department of Women's Studies has highlighted the commitment by the Indian government in 1986 to enact upon the National Policy of Education, 1986 and the Program of Action, 1992 which emphasized the removal of all types of discriminations, attending to the special need of those who were denied equality and promotion of education for women's equality and empowerment.

The report generated was through analyzing the content by utilizing the evaluation tool developed by the Department of Gender Studies. Along with critiquing the textual material based on gender bias, this study also highlights the importance of the issues of equity and equality. It attempted on suggestions to make the content gender inclusive. The focus points while making the gender audit included five aspects- prioritization of men in the books, occupations associated with gender, protagonists in the content, gender sensitivity in the contents, and the visual depiction of gender inclusion and neutrality. The study emphasizes how it is the interplay of the visuals, content, and exercises together that leads to studying the ideal gender portrayal. It analyzed the books from 2013-16, showed the gender-biased and gender-inclusive areas of the textbooks state-wise. This report is an in-depth study on the gender portrayal in textbooks from class 1st to 8th. The analysis was performed using a structured tool that helped in evaluating textbooks from a gendered perspective. While the focus in the report was from grades 1 to 8, my

study specifically highlights the English textbooks for elementary grades. The limitation of this report included the time limit, focus being only on gender and the language limitations, the analysis, and findings also differed to an extent due to the content varying from state to state.

2.2 Representation of People with Disabilities in Textbooks

Equality is a human right, and including people from all walks of life in every domain is one way to ensure it. Education is one such domain where it is not only important to make sure that knowledge is available and accessible to all based on their physical ability but also ensure that they are a part of the contextual knowledge materials. The dynamic relationship between social power and formal education has led to a stringent structure in the society that influences parents' decisions about sending their children to school by deciding which child gets to go to school and which does not. Regardless of constant efforts, strategies, and interventions at certain levels by the government, the state is still obliged to come up with new processes that can more effectively combat the growing social inequality in education and ensure equal education for all children. *'Inclusive Education in Indian context'* (Bindal and Sharma 2010) focuses on the need for inclusive education in India, i.e. incorporating children with disability in regular classrooms regardless of their physical, psychological, emotional, or intellectual conditions. There is a clear emphasis on child-centered pedagogy, building an inclusive community, and valuing diversity in the article. Though the concept of inclusion is based on the philosophy of acceptance, Ballard (1995) states that inclusion is never-ending; in essence inclusive education is about the politics of representation (Slee 2001) or how students can be given a voice in the construction of their own unique identities (Trueba et al. 1997). In most schools, inclusion is associated with placing children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but it is not only about the presence, inclusion is more about reconstructing school practices to address the needs of all students, encourage full participation and work towards holistic development of students regardless of them being with or without special needs.

The researchers view inclusion from three perspectives- physical, social, and cognitive. The physical inclusion aspect is focused on the policies regulations and any other provisions by the government that promote, facilitate and support people with disabilities. Social inclusion is more focused on the sections of society that enable in bringing about attitude changes within the society regarding people with disabilities, while cognitive inclusion addresses the efforts that can be made by educational institutions to involve children with special educational needs in classrooms by giving them equal opportunity to learn. The paper also highlights the difference between integration and inclusion. Integration is described as the process of moving children from special education settings into regular classrooms where they undertake most, if not all of their schooling (Ashman and Elkins 1998); while inclusion aims at empowering members in a school community to identify and dismantle actual and potential sources of exclusion that limit opportunities and outcomes for all students (Slee 2003). Bindal and Sharma state that the transition from “Special School Concept” to “Inclusive Education” can be treated as an evolutionary process. Along with stating the meaning and concept of inclusive education, the paper also highlights the national and international policies and frameworks. It points at the principles of inclusive education articulated by the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994 in the international context, while highlighting the Article 41 and 45 and the 86th amendment of the Indian Constitution, the National Policy on Education 1986, the Programme of Action 1992, Integrated Education for the Disabled Children 1970, Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 1993, Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992, Persons with Disabilities Act 1995, the Tenth Plan 2000-2007, District Primary Education Program and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to underline the efforts in the national context. The paper also emphasizes the need to provide teacher training modules focused on inclusive practices for both pre-service and in-service teachers; studying the administrative and management aspects at the micro and macro level for both

urban and rural settings in such a way that the practices can be replicating easily for ease of teaching and learning in formal as well as informal education setups. In a lot of places, integration and inclusion were used interchangeably as if they meant the same and this led to a fragmented understanding of the policy of inclusion.

Johansson analyzed four government policies and interviewed eleven schools for the research titled '*A Critical and Contextual Approach to Inclusive Education: Perspectives from an Indian Context*' (Taneja Johansson 2014). The article examines the conceptualization of inclusive education based on government policies and practices in India. The article also studies the contextual understanding of 'inclusive education' in schools of Kolkata. Salamanca Declaration's key point has led to extensive academic discussion materials and changes but the debate as to what inclusive education really means was/is still prevalent.

The social model of disability (Oliver 1990) played a significant role in the rise of inclusive education and shifted the focus from the person with impairment to removing barriers within schools. Significant changes in India's educational system such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 86th amendment of the Indian Constitution, Right to Education Act 2009, action plan of inclusive education of children and youth with disabilities, and inclusive education of the disabled at secondary stage have served to be noteworthy milestones in the country. Singal (2005) has pointed out the growing visibility of inclusive education in popular media while the researchers struggled with the clarity about the same. The findings were categorized under four themes – Notion of Inclusive Education which focused more on the understanding and awareness regarding the use of the term 'inclusive education', Notion of an Inclusive School which focused on the conceptualization of an inclusive school in policies and the field emphasizing on how they were different from a 'mainstream school', Notion of the Includable Child which highlighted that although the policies and schools talked about children with disabilities in reality it was more about only some children with disabilities or children with disabilities to an extent that served as their suitability criteria to fit in the inclusion

program/school and finally the Notion of Consciousness of Responsibility which highlighted the unawareness of most of the school staff regarding existing government policies on inclusive education. The study highlighted the pervasiveness of the term Inclusive Education in India and the intensification of discrepancies in policy and practice. There is an urgent need for generating knowledge rooted in the Indian context about how the inclusion of children with disabilities can take place in India.(Taneja Johansson 2014).

2.3 Portrayal of Religious Diversity of Textbook content

With the growing privatization of the educational sector and rising demands of private education although the number of children enrolling in schools has seen growth this has not been able to combat the growing social and economic pressures that have created gaps in society. In order to facilitate appropriate knowledge, it is important to address the religious dimensions of the prejudices that operate in schools. Zine (2001) argues that along with racial and ethnic identities, too often religious identities of students are not taken seriously in schools, and unfortunately lack of understanding and conversation regarding the same leads to multiple perspectives that are instrumental in producing stereotypes. There is a need to incorporate discussions about religious diversity and educate students and teachers about the same. With the changing demography of students in schools, it is important to consider the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds that they come from and reflect on their experiences in such a way to increase their performance in school. Education is critical in preparing students for performing adequately in social settings. Educational scholars have noted how preservice and in-service teachers resist learning about diverse cultures and racial discourses (Goodwin, 1997; Milner, 2003; Sleeter, 2001).

The limited knowledge of teachers on histories and experiences about students of color impedes their ability to work with a diverse population in schools (Gay,1993). It is important to explore the implicit knowledge about race and racial hierarchy

that lies beneath the surface to challenge and change racial attitudes and feelings that block cognizance and clarity about racism (Bell 2002).

The paper *'Preservice Teacher's Beliefs and Practices: Religion and Religious Diversity'* (Subedi 2006) focuses on the importance of teaching religious diversity in teacher education programs, as the students that teachers usually cater to come from diverse religious backgrounds. The researcher collected data through a course in his own school and found out that mostly for the students that he teaches, Christianity was the only religion they've known. The lack of discussion on religious beliefs and different religious identities, in general, is one of the major causes that this is not considered as a significant topic of discussion. Limited interaction with people of various religious face and the scarcity of the same in texts has led to the restricted reflection of students when regarding people from different religions. Students express to have had stereotyped images of people from other religions. Religion was also taken into consideration when concerning the relationship with contemporary events. Students described that a more religiously conscious knowledge would help in changing stereotypical attitudes when addressing religion and global conflicts. The results showed that most preservice teachers were not willing to be critical of how schools dealt with religious issues due to their own past experiences and beliefs. The complex relationship between religion and knowledge was another topic that many were keen to learn to help improve knowledge and perception about diverse people. It is important to create an interdisciplinary approach towards developing curriculums that call for integrating knowledge from diverse sectors, work towards significant multicultural content creation, and integrative activities so that it can help in combating discrimination that may exist at the individual level or operate at various structural levels. Researchers need to analyze how schools openly promote as well as exclude discussions about diverse religions and religious identities (Subedi 2006). The article *'Studying Religious Diversity in Public Education: An Interpretive Approach to Religious and Intercultural Understanding'* (Jackson 2004) is based

on a report of a project developed in England that was an interpretive approach to study religion that has been used in religious education in England and Wales influencing the debates on cultural education. There has been a change of attitude viewed American public schools from avoiding classroom discussion on religion to studying religion as their curriculum in some form. Studies have opened up areas to critique how religions are being portrayed and interpreted in conventional education.

The University of Warwick has researched the lines of religion since the 1970s, they developed a Religious Education and Community project up and started a project titled '*Ethnography and Religious Education*' under it. The theoretical work developed during the study of the project gave rise to three key issues regarding religion, these were issues of representation interpretation and reflectivity. The issue of representation was addressed through an approach that critiqued the simplest representation of cultures and the relationship between religion and culture. It studied the materials that encouraged and explored the context of religious-cultural groups with special emphasis on a personal element in religion seeing it as a part of lived human experience. The issue of interpretation was studied through methodological comparison between the learner's ideas and material concepts, another aspect of this approach was with applying the model of representation and then understanding individual's outlook towards religious traditions. This methodology was highly influenced by discussions, theory experience, and fieldwork where events for children's activities served as the source for field notes. Reflexivity was viewed through the relationship between the personal experiences of the learner and the experiences of those who are being learned about. It showed the clarity that teachers had about the religious and ideological background of students, their sensitivity towards religious diversity, and their approach to integrating equality. Developing a sense of sensitivity towards student backgrounds, the material provided to study and the level of pedagogy can lead to handling religious education and diversity more consciously. The paper

emphasizes the importance of religious education through the right means as it can help pupils to reflect on their studies of ways of life. As a part of this reflexive process, students might also learn how to engage in constructive criticism regarding stereotypes, generate interest to question negative interpretations, and reflect with effectiveness. The researcher highlights that the Warwick Religious Education Project addressed religious learning through developing curriculum through a pedagogical approach of the materials generated which progressed in three stages, the first one being for students from age 5 to 7, the second one being from 7 to 11 and finally from 11 to 14 years. Activities, texts, and teachings were focused on encouraging students to reflect on personal matters through their learning based on religious traditions. The project focused on learning about various religions, developing the skills of questioning and understanding critical aspects regarding religion and society. An interpretive approach to religious education by the Warwick RE project steered education in a direction where it was able to reflect upon homogenous belief systems and view religion as a dynamic and changing aspect.

2.4 Portrayal of People of Colour in Textbooks

The lack of educative materials on intercultural information in a realistic way has led to false perceptions, social-cultural problems and expanded the existing cultural divide, creating a detached way of learning. English is considered as a global language serving as a functional tool for cross-cultural communication and a fundamental technique for reading and writing but regardless of these factors somehow the outreach of the language becomes restricted is due to lack of true representation of varied cultures in study materials.

The article titled '*Teaching India in the EFL Classroom: A Cultural or an Intercultural Approach?*' (Wandel 2002) refers to the need to add an intercultural perspective within an English and Foreign Language classroom. Wandel emphasizes how regardless of English is considered as a world language in most of

the mainstream educational materials it only focuses on the cultures from Britain and the US ignoring the existence of other cultures. This has led to the construction of educative materials in a culturally insensitive manner as it neglects the roles played by other areas and countries and their cultural patterns. The writer focuses on presenting India to the students of the EFL classroom as India is concerned to be one of the richest countries when talking about culture, religion, and diversity. The paper focuses on how English as a world language can add to a shift in educational work by making EFL teaching more inclusive regarding various cultures apart from those from the UK and the USA. Educating students to use English to develop their intercultural sensitivity by reading, analyzing, and understanding different fundamental aspects of various cultures emphasis are also made on how regional differences are created in educative materials by ignoring the existence of many areas from a social, cultural, and geographical viewpoint. Talking about the perception and projection of the region, Wandel highlights how India was perceived as a part of Britain when it found itself being taught in the German EFL classes, there was a more Eurocentric perspective, focusing on the British in India. The reality of colonial and postcolonial India was hardly taken into account. More or less the context remained around British and the dynamic between the British and India; earlier the focus was on the 'British in India' and now it has shifted to the 'Indians in Britain' in any case the focus of the real teaching is aimed at coming to terms with what may be called as the British National culture of which the Indian dimension is just the regional social and historical subcategory (Wandel 2002). Another area stressed upon is how India was perceived in itself in German EFL teaching, initially, it was understood that India had its linkage to the English language only through the British but recently it was pointed out that this was not the case. There was a direct link to the English language and English language speakers (as well as to literary texts using English) within the context of the Indian subcontinent and its cultures. Researching the role of the Third World in German textbooks for English, Kubanek found that non-European areas and cultures are not

represented and the Third World does not appear as an independent topic to be dealt with for its own sake (Kubanek, 1987: 3). The writer discusses how India has a great value as a topic in the EFL classroom, the reasons stated include that India is the biggest democracy, having been able to establish itself as a nuclear power, creating an Indian software Silicon Valley even though after being known to be a very poor country with the high rate of illiteracy, it has English as a second language by spoken by about 100 million people (Wandel 2002).

Teaching about India and other regions helps in an educational transformation as it assists in questioning the negative stereotypes that are portrayed about India, questioning the previous texts, and allowing a sensible selection of materials when learning about different cultures. Teaching about multiple cultures and equal representation of individuals from different regions allows students to question and learn about the world without biases and stereotypes. There has been no attempt in textbooks to prepare students to raise their intercultural sensitivity that could have been achieved through promoting pre-reading activities. English being a global language can prove to be powerful enough to change the narrative by bridging the gap between foreign cultures and the cultures that are related to home. In the German culture especially, India has had a very negative impression due to only a few facts and figures being highlighted, limited knowledge of the country, and only one perspective being shown. Learning through appropriate mediums and emphasizing equal representation can help in creating an effective approach to establishing relationships between EFL students and various cultures leading to a culturally sensitive audience. Colorism is a preference for light skin tones and the devaluing of dark skin. It is considered to be a genderized phenomenon mostly affecting women, (Sims and Hirudayaraj 2016) leading to negative effects on women of color in social settings.

The paper *'The Impact of Colorism on the Career Aspirations and Career Opportunities of Women in India'* (Sims and Hirudayaraj 2016) reviews the problems related to skin color and how it impacts career aspiration and

opportunities for women of color. With growing globalization and great inflow and outflow of workforce from all over the globe, implications of colorism are now much needed to be understood and considered. The article discusses the experience of colorism felt by 6 Indian women to increase the awareness about the same through the real-life experiences of these women. The study showed that United States had seen a consistently high number of cases related to workplace colorism despite the updated Civil Rights Act of 1964 to address the issues of inequitable recruitment hiring and promotion practices that negatively affected career aspirations and opportunities for people of color. Lighter skin tone somehow grants people unearned privileges and power as they are seen to be more attractive, worthy, and competent in comparison to their darker skin tone counterparts. In the Indian culture, colorism is reinforced not only by the social institutions or the media but is a customary practice perpetuated in cultural beliefs and practices, creating hierarchies in the society apart from those existing due to the caste and class system.

The lack of policies against colorism in India has created a sense of passivity regarding the same. It is of utmost importance to understand the implications of colorism and its impact on women as it is creating a stronger dimension of oppression in the country. The paper tries to fill gaps in the literature and increase the awareness of human resource development professionals regarding colorism impacting career empowerment for Indian women. The findings of the study show how colorism has impacted the aspirations of the participants under four themes- expressions of beauty standards, the first experience of colorism, stifled career aspirations, and passive acceptance. The results highlighted what features were considered to be attractive and unattractive in society setting restrictive beauty standards for women in India, most women realized the value of light skin very early in their life due to constant reinforcement by society, families, and media, being of a darker skin tone has led women to practice self-censorship to participate in jobs that require interaction with customers and the passive acceptance towards their physical appearance led them to come in terms with the discrimination that

exists. The oppression based on colorism is higher than anticipated, overall it has a very deep impact especially on women. It is challenging for people with comparatively darker skin tones to be able to build up the same amount of confidence and not face discrimination the much lighter skin tone people do due to the social notion of favoring fair skin. To combat the same conscious efforts need to be put in so that colorism can be eradicated from the ground level. Colorism is a genderized phenomenon, although men also experience it, women are more likely to face the ill effects. It is important to initiate a dialogue regarding colorism, make practical changes, and understand the power dynamics of the same in society.

Ramachandran in her paper '*Gender and Social Equity in Primary Education: Hierarchies of Access*' (Manjrekar 2005) refers to these disparities as 'historical baggage of social and economic inequalities reinforcing educational differences'. The paper reviews the gender and social disparities in Indian education, the issues of gender and social equity, problems regarding gender divide and social groups, the interrelationship between social power and formal education, and the various dimensions of the District Primary Education Program in India. Feminist pedagogy focuses on gender inclusivity for the teaching and learning of various subjects. The paper reviews textbook content and educative practices of Pakistani textbooks and Indian education scenarios to highlight how educative materials contribute towards reinforcing gender biases, oppression, and marginalization of various domains of society. The paper highlights many instances where schools textbooks and other institutes have been active agents to exhibit visible forms of gender bias, violence, and oppression. It is seen that not only is there a male-centric perspective concerning high-school education, but rather that there is an expectation of masculinized standards of evaluation, of "rational" thought, efficiency, and quick response (Mansoor, Maryam & Srivastava, 2017). The paper has made attempts to objectively critique sexist content and learning methods in high school education. It has also looked at existing studies that were done by various organizations in South East Asia which have been instrumental in highlighting androcentric

representation, various forms of discrimination, and propagated stereotypes in school students. Sexism and patriarchal forms of oppression are not only physical manifestations but are also about colonialism of the mind (Singh 2019). A few instances highlighted in the discussion are- the propagation of misogyny in Pakistani schools where girls were given practical activities to enhance their kitchen skills, sharing encouraging rigorous schedules for and with young girls that would lead them to be ideal women if followed. In the Indian context, there have been textbook materials that have justified dowry as compensation for ugliness reinforcing the long-held perceptions of dowry, perpetuating regressive beauty norms, and objectifying women with a 'value' (Singh 2019). The paper also sheds light on the need to review and reform textbook content for teaching through an inclusive structured system. Singh emphasized the need for the Central Board of Secondary Education to review and reform such content that results in mass misinformation and deconstructs the idea of equity and equality. It also focuses on how the education board should incorporate materials to highlight the success of women across centuries so that the belief that women should be restricted to only domestic work is challenged.

With increasing privatization, institutionalization, and decentralization of structures, primary education in India has undergone drastic changes. The District Primary Education Program initiated a gender and equity assessment to reduce gender and social disparities in primary education. She points out the universalization of primary education as a problem because it segregated the lines of caste class and gender (Manjrekar 2005).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology involves a set of specific procedures that aid in critically evaluating a topic by studying it in depth. It follows systematic techniques to identify, select and analyse a topic for the study by collecting and evaluating data through a theoretical framework. In social research, research methods can be quantitative and qualitative, or both. Quantitative methods use statistics and data analysis to explain research findings while Qualitative methods include detailed descriptions and elaborations to analyse and explain the findings.

3.1 Statement of the Problem

This research relied on both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. The textbook materials were also referred to with the content analysis method which helps in identifying certain themes and concepts within a set of qualitative data, it helps in understanding the broad meanings of the texts in various forms of documents and other textual artifacts. The focus of this study was on the English language textbooks for elementary grades, i.e., Grades 1 to 8 and the representation of human characters in these books from an intersectional lens of gender, color, religion and disability.

3.2 Significance of the Study

Textbooks are the foundation for imparting knowledge in educational institutions. They not only help with textual content it also grabs attention and help in explanation through various illustrations that help grow one's imagination while learning. This makes the role of textbooks vital in the process of learning. With the changes introduced by the National Education Policy, one of the key points to focus is the need for inclusive material of education. This study helps in looking at the 2021 revisions of the textbooks and analyse the type of representation of characters

that exists in the textbooks even after the need of equal representation has been highlighted by government and educational authorities.

3.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this research are-

- To examine the English chapters from an intersectional perspective.
- To analyze the vocabulary and specific expressions used for the characters portrayed that might reinforce the stereotypes related to the aforementioned categories.
- To study the number of female authors.
- To highlight the positives of the content studied.
- To highlight places of possible intervention.

3.4 Sample for the study

The first step in shaping up the research was to determine the sample selection and the basis on which sets of data were to be considered for the study. The broad data sets were Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbooks of English subject for grade 1 to grade 8. The fact that CBSE and NCERT textbooks are taught in the majority of schools in India and the age group of five to thirteen years (i.e. the age group of students of classes 1 to 8) is very impressionable were the two major factors which were considered while selecting the aforementioned criteria. The English subject textbook is titled “*Marigold*” for grades 1 to 5, the book referred for grade 6 is “*Honeysuckle*”, grade 7 is “*Honeycomb*” and grade 8 is “*Honeydew*”. The supplementary readers were not chosen for grade 6, 7 and 8.

The main objective of the study is to analyze the characters of the chapters from an intersectional perspective regarding gender, religion, color, and disability. Not all chapters were chosen to be the sample data set as some of them did not satisfy the intended purpose of the analysis. In order to be selected as a sample for the study,

a chapter had to provide certain findings which could then help in drawing conclusions. All the chapters that have human characters were chosen as they highlight the prevalent gender bias and stereotypes in society along with giving an indication of pre-defined gender roles. Chapters that depicted animals with a human side to them, in other words, animal characters represented as humans were also selected for the study. Such chapters gave interesting insights into how gender notions of the authors define how one would behave under certain situations. By imposing human tendencies on animal characters, gender stereotypes emerge more prominently. Lastly, chapters, where gendered pronouns were used for animal characters, were also chosen. The gender assignment of the animal characters was based on their physical appearances, emotional, mental and character traits underline important pre-defined notions of the society about personality traits based on gender.

On the other hand, chapters that did not provide sufficient data for the study were not analyzed and thus excluded from the sample data set used for the study. Chapters with no human characters and/or animals not in a gendered context and the ones that were solely written in first person were omitted. Such chapters did not provide any form of suitable data which can be used in the study. Chapters describing nature in general, ideas, and moral values were also not included as they gave a generic understanding of these concepts and did not talk in a gendered context. Also, the third chapter- ‘Glimpses of the Past’ of grade 8 textbook could not be clearly analyzed for the number of visuals due to the format of the chapter, it showed masses of people and the quality of pictures didn’t allow them to be counted for. Similarly, any chapter which did not include any of the four mentioned intersectional aspects were omitted from the study as well.

While selecting the chapters to be included in the data set for the study, the following aspects were taken into consideration:

1. Chapter's subject matter – what the chapter wanted to talk about and how did gender depiction help convey the message.
2. Class exercises – how do the class exercises after the chapter reaffirm the gender biases or discourage the same.
3. Visual representation – how are the gendered characters represented in the textbooks visually through illustrations and images and in what light do they represent the genders.

The sample comprises of eight textbooks, all the chapters were taken into account for the study only with regard to the visual representation, based on the rest of the factors it was further decided whether the chapter's content was omitted or not. The content of chapters mentioned in the index only was considered, for the books from grade 6-8 the extra readings at the end of each chapter was also analyzed.

Following is a table for every book specifying the chapters that were chosen and omitted for the study.

MARIGOLD 1- GRADE 1 TEXTBOOK (ed.2021)	
CHAPTERS CHOSEN (12/20)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (8/20)
Three Little Pigs, The Bubble, The Straw And The Shoe, Lalu And Peelu. Once I Saw A Little Bird, Mittu And The Yellow Mango, Circle, If I Were An Apple, Sundari, The Tiger And The Mosquito, Ananadi's Rainbow, Flying Man, The Tailor And His Friend	A Happy Child, After A Bath, Clouds, A Little Turtle, Kite, Our Tree, Merry Go Round, One Little Kitten.
MARIGOLD 2- GRADE 2 TEXTBOOK (ed.2021)	
CHAPTERS CHOSEN (17/20)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (3/20)
First Day At School, Haldi's Adventure, I Want, A Smile, The Wind And The Sun, Storm In The Garden, Zoo Manners, Funny Bunny, Mister Nobody, Curlylocks And The Three Bears, Make It Shorter, I Am The Music Man, The Mumbai Musicians, Granny Granny Please Comb My Hair, The Magic Porridge Pot, Strange Talk, The Grasshopper And The Ant	I am lucky, Rain, On my blackboard
MARIGOLD 3- GRADE 3 TEXTBOOK (ed.2021)	
CHAPTERS CHOSEN (14/20)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (6/20)
The Magic Garden, Nina And The Baby Sparrows, The Enormous Turnip, Sea Song, A Little Fish Story, The Balloon Man, The Yellow Butterfly,	Good morning, Little by little, Trains, Don't tell, Bird talk, How creatures move

The Story Of The Road, Puppy And I, Little Tiger Big Tiger, What's In The Mail Box? My Silly Sister, He Is My Brother, How Creatures Move, The Ship Of The Desert,	
MARIGOLD 4- GRADE 4 TEXTBOOK (ed.2019)	
Chapters Chosen (14/19)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (6/19)
Neha's Alarm Clock, The Little Fir Tree, Nasruddin's Aim, Why? Alice In Wonderland, Helen Keller, Hiawatha, The Scholar's Mother Tongue, The Watering Rhyme, The Giving Tree, The Donkey, Going To Buy A Book, The Naughty Boy, Pinnochio	Wake up, Noses, Run, Don't be afraid of the dark, A watering rhyme, Books
MARIGOLD 5- GRADE 5 TEXTBOOK (ed.2021)	
Chapters Chosen (16/19)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (4/19)
Ice Cream Man, Wonderful Waste, Flying Together, My Shadow, Robinson Crusoe, My Elder Brother, The Lazy Frog, Rip Van Winkle, Class Discussion, The Talkative Barber, Gulliver's Travels, Nobody's Friend, The Little Bully, Malu Bhalu, Who Will Be Ningthou	Teamwork, Crying, Topsy turvy land, Sing a song of people
HONEYSUCKLE 6- GRADE 6 TEXTBOOK (ed.2019)	
CHAPTERS CHOSEN (12/19)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (7/19)
Who Did Patrick's Homework, How the Dog Found Himself a New Master, Taro's Reward, An Indian American Woman in Space, A Different Kind of	What if, Desert animals, The wonderful words, Were do teachers go? Beauty, The kite, A house, a home

School, Who I Am, Fair Play, A Game of Chance, The Banyan Tree, The quarrel, Vocation	
HONEYCOMB 7- GRADE 7 TEXTBOOK (ed.2019)	
CHAPTERS CHOSEN (15/19)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (4/19)
Three Questions, A Gift of Chappals, Gopal and the Hilsa Fish, The Ashes that Made Trees Bloom, Quality, Expert Detectives, The Invention of Vita – Wonk, Fire Friend and Foe, A Bicycle in Good Repair, The Story of Cricket, Garden Snake, Dad and the Cat and the Tree, Mystery of the Talking Fan, The Shed, The Squirrel	Meadow surprises, Trees, Chivvy, The Rebel
HONEYDEW 8 - GRADE 8 TEXTBOOK (ed.2021)	
CHAPTERS CHOSEN (17/19)	CHAPTERS OMITTED (2/19)
The best Christmas present in the world, The ant and the cricket, The Tsunami, Betty at the Party, Glimpses of the Past, Macavity: The Mystery Cat, Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory, The Last Bargain, The Summit Within, The School Boy, This is Jody's Fawn, A Visit to Cambridge, When I set out for Lyonesse, A Short Monsoon Diary, On the Grasshopper and Cricket, The Great Stone Face I, The Great Stone Face II	Geography lesson, Duck and the Kangaroo

Table 3.1: OUTLINE FOR SELECTED AND OMITTED CHAPTERS

The chapters chosen were carefully studied in-depth and the content and visuals analyzed using the aforementioned points that have served as the evaluation tool for my study. All selected chapters were individually studied, the characters and contents were separately marked for each chapter for every book and then the results were closely studied to evaluate the textbooks from an intersectional perspective. Once the chapter-wise findings were recorded, then the results were studied closely to find out whether there is any impact of the New Education Policy on school education, where a major focus was on ‘Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All’. One of the consultation themes of this policy states ‘Enabling Inclusive Education – education of SCs, STs, Girls, Minorities, and children with special needs.’; my study includes the recent revision of the English textbooks, and so the findings were then studied closely to see that if the new edition of the textbooks is somewhere guided by the principle of the New Education Policy by the representation of characters from an intersectional perspective to cater to the goal of inclusive and equitable representation. Based on what the results of the evaluation of chapters show, the data would assist in determining if the textbooks have materials to support equitable and inclusive representation through its content and if the goal set by New Education Policy is far more challenging to achieve due to the current representation of characters in school textbooks.

3.5 Analysis Tool

Once the sample selection had taken place and the data set finalized, the analysis of the same took place with the help of an analysis tool. This analysis tool was created referring to the evaluation tool developed by the Department of Gender Studies for their project of textbook evaluation from the year 2013 to 2016. Based on this, I created a tool that will help us in studying the sample chosen from an intersectional lens. The evaluation tool used for the research will study the content based on the following points:

1. Gender – whether the character is defined as a male or a female or any other gender.
2. Religion - depiction of the character as belonging to a majority or minority religion.
3. Color – whether the character is shown to have a dark or a light skin color
4. Disability – the number of characters shown with a disability.

The analysis of the content of the textbooks concerning the points is done by studying the chapters for their content and visuals, the number of characters and to which section did each one of them belong and the analysis of exercises, activities, and projects suggested at the end of each of the chapters to find out answers to several questions about intersectionality. A more in-depth description of the analysis is furnished ahead.

- ON THE BASIS OF GENDER

- SUBJECT MATTER

Identify whether the content of the chapter depicts or promotes any stereotypes regarding gender, gender bias or if it is gender incisive or gender-neutral. In order to do so, the following aspects are to be analyzed and findings are recorded.

- a) The adjectives which define men and women or boys and girls
- b) Differences are shown among men and women
- c) The different occupational roles assigned to men and women in the text
- d) Social roles given to male and female characters in the text
- e) Moral and human values imparted to male and female characters in the text
- f) Depiction of social and customary practices and how characters behave in these settings based on their gender
- g) Importance shown towards the achievements and contributions of male and female characters and how it differs.
- h) If at all any prejudices are mentioned and are they acknowledged.
- i) Depiction of powerful figures and power dynamics based on the gender of the characters
- j) Decision-making authorities concerning gender in all important matters such as – education, money, health, food, etc.
- k) The representation of women in different walks of life mainly, family, school, workplace, and society.
- l) The fairness and nature of workload distribution in a gendered context.
- m) The representation of the earning member of the household (activities concerning the production of goods and services as well as income generation) concerning gender.

- n) The representation of characters performing household chores such as child care, cooking, washing, cleaning, etc.
 - o) Depiction of organizers of communal events and ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, neighborhood meetings, etc., and which characters take the initiatives – men or women.
 - p) The representation of men and women as agents of change, struggle, a knack for scientific research and achievements, and dissent.
- VISUAL REPRESENTATION
 - a) Representation of men and women taking up active and passive roles.
 - b) Depiction of gender about societal roles, occupations, clothing, and appearances.
 - c) Positioning of men and women in illustrations and figures.
 - d) The portrayal of male and female characters performing various activities.
 - e) Proportion of female protagonists in the textbooks.
 - f) Proportion of male receivers in the textbooks (passive roles)
 - g) Reflection of the social status of men and women in visuals.
 - h) The ideas put across by the body language of the male and female characters in the visuals.
- NUMBER OF CHARACTERS IN VISUALS AND CONTENT
 - a) Female characters.
 - b) Male characters
 - c) Both female and male characters (for example – humans, they, them, people, us, we, he, she, etc.)
- EXERCISE, PROJECTS, AND ACTIVITIES
 - a) Exploring issues related to gender.

- b) Attempt to question power relations based on gender.
- c) Help children connect with realities.
- d) Promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- e) Promote imagination and creativity.
- f) Encourage team spirit and cooperation.

- ON THE BASIS OF RELIGION

- SUBJECT MATTER

Identify whether the content of the chapter depicts or promotes any stereotypes regarding religion, biases about religion or if it is religion incursive (i.e. includes characters from minorities). In order to do so, the following aspects are to be analyzed and findings are recorded.

- a) The adjectives which define men and women or boys and girls from different religions.
- b) Differences are shown among men and women from different religions.
- c) The different occupational roles assigned to characters belonging to different religions in the text
- d) Social roles given to characters who come from different religions in the text
- e) Moral and human values imparted to male and female characters belonging to minority religions in the text
- f) Depiction of social and customary practices and how characters behave in these settings based on their religion.
- g) Importance shown towards the achievements and contributions of characters from different religions and how it differs.
- h) If at all any prejudices are mentioned and are they acknowledged.
- i) Depiction of powerful figures and power dynamics based on the religion of the characters
- j) Decision-making authorities concerning religion in all important matters such as – education, money, health, food, etc.
- k) The representation of women from minority religions in different walks of life mainly, family, school, workplace, and society.
- l) The fairness and nature of workload distribution in a religious context.

- m) The representation of the earning member of the household (activities concerning the production of goods and services as well as income generation) concerning religion.
 - n) The representation of characters performing household chores such as child care, cooking, washing, cleaning, etc., and how it differs in the minority religions from the majority religions.
 - o) Depiction of organizers of communal events and ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, neighborhood meetings, etc., and characters from which religion(s) take the initiatives
 - p) The representation of people from different religions as agents of change, struggle, a knack for scientific research and achievements, and dissent.
- VISUAL REPRESENTATION
- a) Representation of characters from different religious backgrounds taking up active and passive roles.
 - b) Depiction of religions about societal roles, occupations, clothing, and appearances.
 - c) Positioning of characters belonging to the majority and minority religions in illustrations and figures.
 - d) The portrayal of characters from the majority and minority religions performing various activities.
 - e) Proportion of minority religion protagonists in the textbooks.
 - f) Proportion of majority religion receivers in the textbooks (passive roles)
 - g) Reflection of the social status of different religions in visuals.
 - h) The ideas put across by the body language of the various religious characters in the visuals.

- NUMBER OF CHARACTERS IN VISUALS AND CONTENT
 - a) Characters from minority religions.
 - b) Characters from majority religions

- EXERCISE, PROJECTS, AND ACTIVITIES
 - a) Exploring issues related to religious discrimination.
 - b) Attempt to question power relations based on religion.
 - c) Help children connect with realities.
 - d) Promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
 - e) Promote imagination and creativity.
 - f) Encourage team spirit and cooperation.

- ON THE BASIS OF COLOR

- SUBJECT MATTER

Identify whether the content of the chapter depicts or promotes any stereotypes regarding the skin color of people, racial bias or if it is race-incisive or race-neutral. In order to do so, the following aspects are to be analyzed and findings are recorded.

- a) The adjectives which define men and women or boys and girls with a fair or dark complexion.
- b) Differences shown among men and women with a fair or dark complexion.
- c) The different occupational roles assigned to men and women regarding the color of their skin in the text
- d) Social roles given to male and female characters according to their complexion in text
- e) Moral and human values imparted to characters about their complexion in the text
- f) Depiction of social and customary practices and how characters behave in these settings based on their complexion.
- g) Importance shown towards the achievements and contributions of fair-skinned and dark-skinned characters and how it differs.
- h) If at all any prejudices are mentioned and are they acknowledged.
- i) Depiction of powerful figures and power dynamics based on the complexion of the characters
- j) Decision-making authorities concerning skin color in all important matters such as – education, money, health, food, etc.
- k) The representation of dark-skinned people in different walks of life mainly, family, school, workplace, and society.
- l) The fairness and nature of workload distribution regarding skin color.

- m) The representation of the earning member of the household (activities concerning the production of goods and services as well as income generation) concerning complexion.
 - n) Depiction of organizers of communal events and ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, neighborhood meetings, etc., and which characters take the initiatives based on their skin color.
 - o) The representation of dark and fair-skinned characters as agents of change, struggle, a knack for scientific research and achievements, and dissent.
- VISUAL REPRESENTATION
- a) Representation of characters based on their complexion taking up active and passive roles.
 - b) Depiction of skin color about societal roles, occupations, clothing, and appearances.
 - c) Positioning of dark and fair characters in illustrations and figures.
 - d) The portrayal of light and dark-skinned characters performing various activities.
 - e) Proportion of dark-skinned protagonists in the textbooks.
 - f) Proportion of light-skinned receivers in the textbooks (passive roles)
 - g) Reflection of the social status of light and dark-skinned characters in visuals.
 - h) The ideas are put across by the body language of light and dark-skinned characters in the visuals.
- NUMBER OF CHARACTERS IN VISUALS AND CONTENT
- a) Characters with fair skin complexion.
 - b) Characters with dark skin complexion.

- EXERCISE, PROJECTS, AND ACTIVITIES
 - a) Exploring issues related to racial discrimination.
 - b) Attempt to question power relations based on skin color.
 - c) Help children connect with realities.
 - d) Promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
 - e) Promote imagination and creativity.
 - f) Encourage team spirit and cooperation.

- ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

- SUBJECT MATTER

Identify whether the content of the chapter depicts or promotes any stereotypes regarding people with disabilities, discrimination against disabled people, or if it is incisive of characters with disabilities. In order to do so, the following aspects are to be analyzed and findings are recorded.

- a) The adjectives which define characters with disabilities.
- b) Differences shown among people with and without disabilities.
- c) The different occupational roles assigned to characters with disabilities in the text.
- d) Social roles given to characters with disabilities in the text.
- e) Moral and human values imparted to characters with disability in the text
- f) Depiction of social and customary practices and how characters behave in these settings based on whether or not they have any sort of disabilities.
- g) Importance shown towards the achievements and contributions of characters without disabilities and how it differs from characters with a disability.
- h) If at all any prejudices are mentioned and are they acknowledged.
- i) Depiction of powerful figures and power dynamics based on the disability (or lack thereof) of the characters.
- j) Decision-making authorities concerning disabilities in all important matters such as – education, money, health, food, etc.
- k) The representation of people with disabilities in different walks of life mainly, family, school, workplace, and society.
- l) The fairness and nature of workload distribution among people without and with disabilities.

- m) The representation of the earning member of the household (activities concerning the production of goods and services as well as income generation) concerning any disabilities.
- n) The representation of characters performing household chores such as cooking, washing, cleaning, etc.
- o) Depiction of organizers of communal events and ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, neighborhood meetings, etc., and which characters take the initiatives – with or without disabilities.
- p) The representation of characters based on the fact that if they have a disability as agents of change, struggle, a knack for scientific research and achievements and dissent.

- VISUAL REPRESENTATION

- a) Representation of disabled characters and characters without disabilities taking up active and passive roles.
- b) Depiction of people with disabilities concerning societal roles, occupations, clothing, and appearances.
- c) Positioning of disabled characters in illustrations and figures.
- d) The portrayal of disabled characters performing various activities.
- e) Proportion of disabled protagonists in the textbooks.
- f) Proportion of able-bodied characters as receivers in the textbooks (passive roles)
- g) Reflection of the social status of characters with and without disabilities in visuals.
- h) The ideas put across by the body language of the able-bodied and disabled characters in the visuals.

- NUMBER OF CHARACTERS IN VISUALS AND CONTENT

- a) Disabled characters.
- b) Able-bodied characters

- EXERCISE, PROJECTS, AND ACTIVITIES

- a) Exploring issues related to disabilities.
- b) Attempt to question power relations based on disabilities.
- c) Help children connect with realities.
- d) Promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- e) Promote imagination and creativity.
- f) Encourage team spirit and cooperation.

3.6 Limitations for the study

The study encompasses an in-depth evaluation of the chosen chapters that are mentioned above. Although the data was easily available, there were a few limitations to the research. The first one being time constraint, a few exercises for grades 1-5 also had poems and short storylines apart from the main chapter content, the content matter of these extra readings were not chosen, however the characters as visual representation were taken in account. The second limitation was that the visuals for grade 6 textbook could not be clearly analyzed from the lens of color due to the color scheme of the book and the third limitation surfaced while trying to understand the gender divide among the publication team, as many chapters did not mention the author's name, the people involved in creating the books was only taken into account and the authors were not studied.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The study entails analyzing the primary textbooks from grades 1 to 8 from a lens of gender, religion, color, and disability. On taking a deeper look at the results, it made much sense to divide the same. The primary focus was to view and highlight the gender bias in the textbooks while considering the publication team involved, the illustrations used, the content of the books, and the activities for the children. The results for the distribution of religion, color, and disability were not significant enough to perform a comparative study. Hence, it made more sense to group these three categories into one and analyze them as a whole. The national education policy clearly outlines inclusivity for girls, people with disabilities, and other minorities; the results of this study helped in viewing and developing a better understanding of how far we are from creating inclusive study materials for school children. A clearer insight into the results is mentioned ahead.

4.1 GENDER DIVIDE IN TEXTBOOKS

The aspect of gender can be viewed through various lenses when trying to analyze the context of written texts. In this study, gender was viewed under three broad themes: the number of men and women involved in the publication, the number of visuals of men and women, and finally the number of men and women in the context of the textbooks. Further, the chapters were studied and analyzed in depth using the tool created for this purpose. There was an interesting set of numbers that helped shape the results for this study, the gender divide while addressing all aspects of the text was significantly visible while comparing men and women characters. There was a large discrepancy in the data collected.

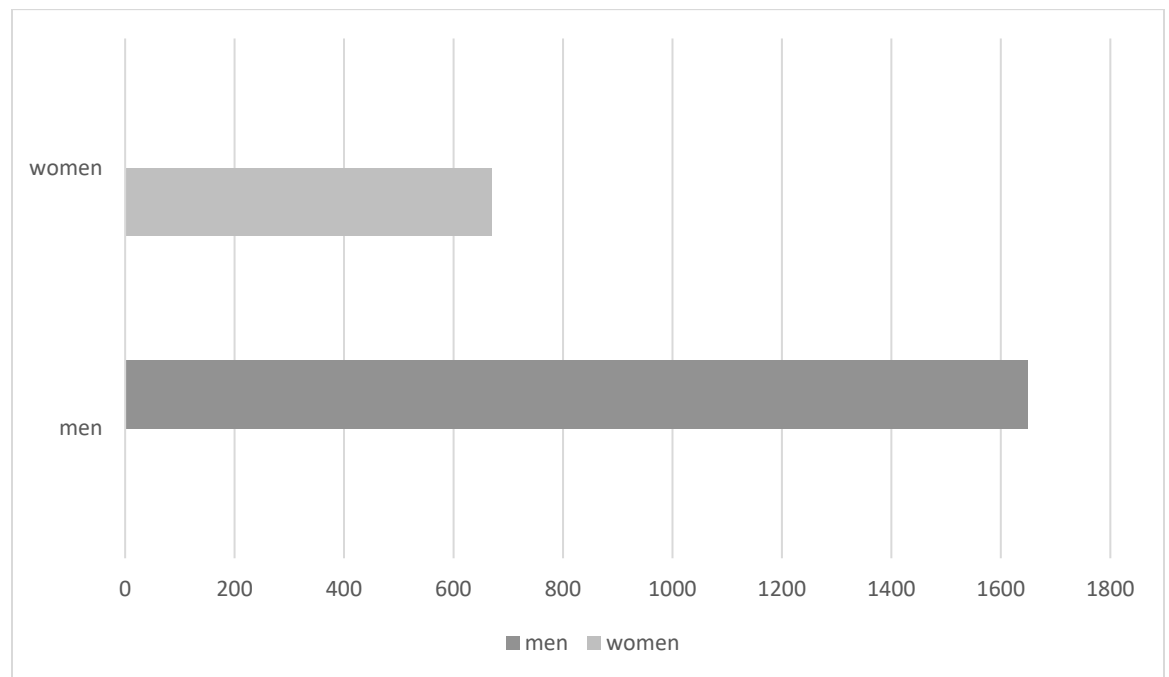


Figure 4.1.1: OVERALL GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE TEXTBOOKS

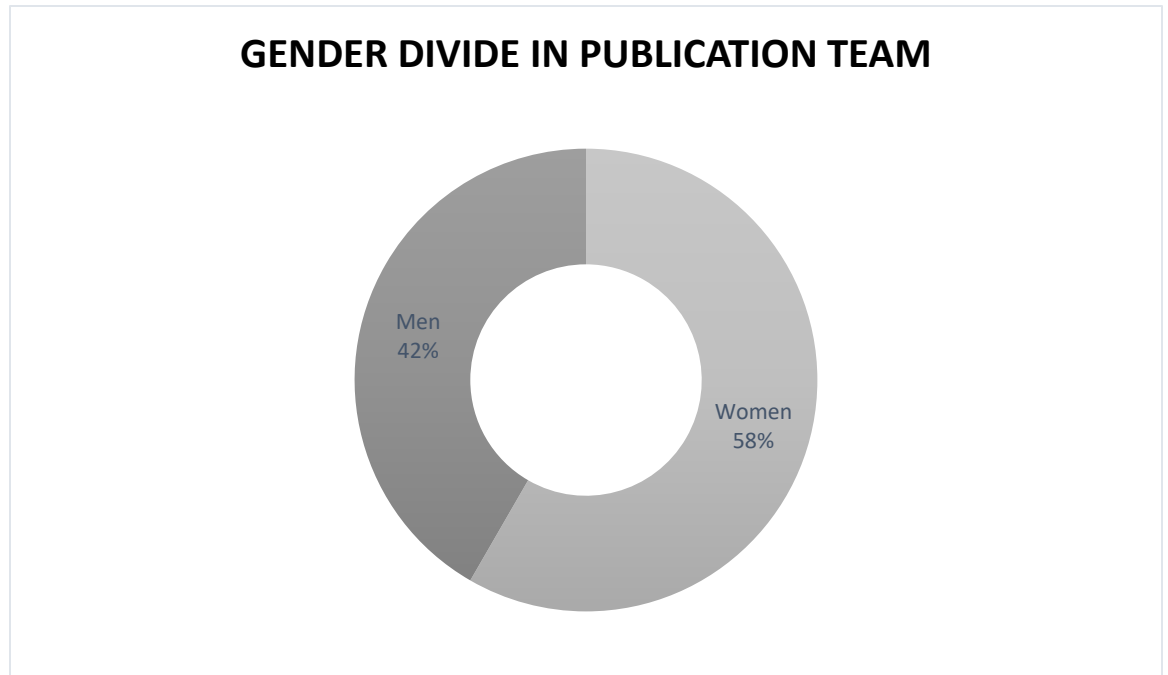


Figure 4.1.2: GENDER DIVIDE IN PUBLICATION TEAM

The publication team showed a slight difference in the number of men and women who were involved in the finalization of these textbooks. There were a total of 105 women and 75 men involved in creating and approving these books. The team comprised editors, advisors, production officers, and other members. As most of the chapters did not have the author's name, this study omitted that criterion. However, the numbers showed that there were 58% of women involved in the creation and publication of these textbooks, while the rest 42% were men. Although the difference isn't very large, this was the only domain where there were more women than men.

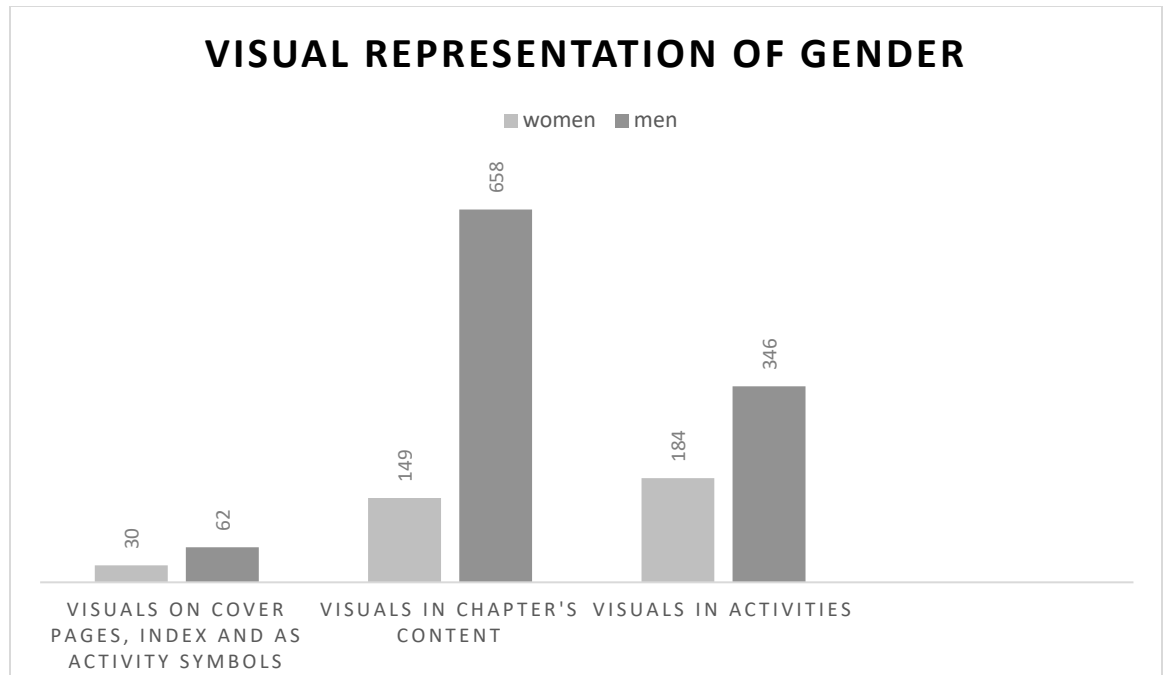


Figure 4.1.3: VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF GENDER

Children's books encompass a large set of visuals to make them more interesting and allow a connection between the text and its related characterization. As visuals engage a child's attention, interest and give meaning to their understanding the importance of illustrations is extremely high. The type of picturization allows the child to connect the written context with the illustration and develop an understanding that would impact their knowledge in the real world.

Considering the visuals of male and female characters it could be seen that there are three categories this aspect can be divided into- the visuals on cover pages, index and as activity symbols, visuals in the content of chapters, and visuals in the activities. Within all three segments, it can be clearly determined that the number of men in the visuals was significantly higher than that of the women, based on the graph. Most chapters that were written in first person also had higher male representation in the visuals. Looking at the content of the chapters it was observed that many chapters had either only male characters or male protagonists which

resulted in the count of male characters in illustrations being 658 while the female illustrations amounted to only 149.

Most of the chapters in the textbooks of grades 1 to 5 were written in first person, although the context was read out in first person, most of them had related images to the chapters depicting male characters. Scenes that comprised market areas or public gatherings also showed a skewed depiction with large numbers of men and a few women. It was observed that even when a group of people was shown in the illustrations the depiction of male characters was mostly more than that of the female characters, even if it was by a single number. Another major point for observation was the characteristics depicted in the illustrations based on their gender. Most of the chapters did indeed show the stereotypical characteristics of men and women, although there were a few chapters with females as the protagonists, their characteristics were also shown in the same light as that of the generalized view of women. Illustrations of families, schools, and crowds also showed male characters in a higher number than women. But there were chapters like ‘Anandi’s Rainbow’, ‘I want’, ‘Hellen Keller’, and a few more that only had female characters, and so there was an only female depiction of characters in these chapters.

Addressing the activities for students, most of the activities ad animated characters purely for decorative purposes, but in a few activities, they helped shape the context. One such activity required students to match the person’s occupation with the type of work that they perform, in this particular activity, out of 10 characters only two were female, these two females were shown as a teacher and a doctor, for all the other roles men were chosen to relate to occupations like postman, police, pilot, etc. In a few activities where the illustration is that of an animal, the context written was associating it with a male through the use of male pronouns. The overall representation of gender in the chapters and activities favored men over women, the activity symbols next to each title activity also mostly represented male faces.

This skewed representation aids the gender bias in textbooks and does not align with the aspired equal representation of males and females.

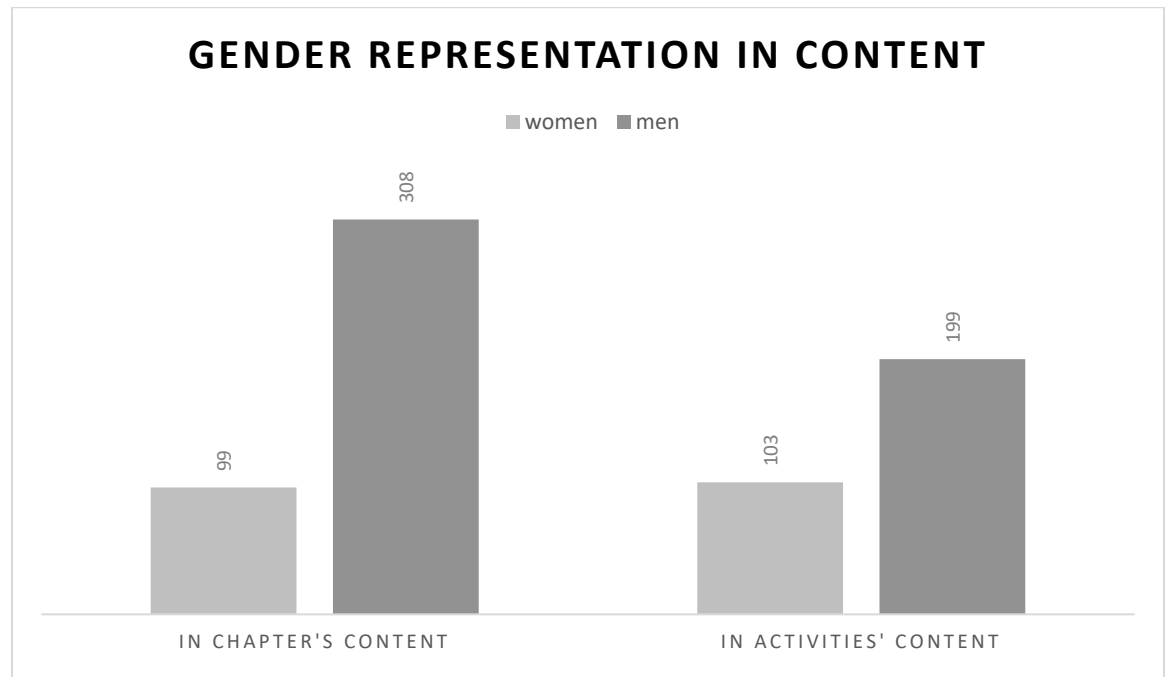


Figure 4.1.4: GENDER REPRESENTATION IN CONTENT

While looking at the content of the chapters and the activities it was observed that the difference between male and female characters was also significantly high. Most of the initial chapters for Grades 1 to 4 focused on nature and moral knowledge, so they did not truly contribute to the gender aspect, a few chapters were also written in the first person making it gender-neutral, but at the same time if the chapters with male protagonists were to be weighed against the ones with female protagonists the difference was of almost 76%. The chapters that had animal characters, mostly portrayed the animals as males for example chapters like 'Three Little Pigs', 'Mittu and the yellow Mango', 'Funny Bunny', 'The Banyan Tree', and 'Puppy and I' are a few to name, on the contrary, the chapter 'Malu Bhaalu' by

Kamla Bhasin depicted a strong, brave a fearless bear as the protagonist. As the grades progress the number of chapters with animals or in first-person decreased. Most chapters grade 5 onwards had human characters and storylines to follow, and they did depict a strong gender bias with more male characters or only male characters in the chapters, chapters like ‘Mumbai Musicians’, ‘Mr. Nobody’, ‘A Game of Chance’, ‘A Bicycle in Good Repair’ and ‘Bepin Choudhary’s Lapse of Memory’, and many others only had male characters. A few chapters that showed female characters on the forefront are ‘Circle’, ‘Granny Granny Please Comb my Hair’, ‘An Enormous Turnip’, ‘Helen Keller’, ‘Alice in Wonderland’, ‘Who Will be Ningthou’, and ‘An Indian-American Woman in Space: Kalpana Chawala’.

Addressing the skewed representation of gender in the chapters, there were a few chapters that contributed to reinstalling stereotypes as well. Chapters like ‘Granny Granny Please Comb my Hair’ comprised of two female characters, where the grandmother and grand-daughter are having a conversation while the grandmother makes the little girl’s hair, ‘My Silly Sister’ showed how an elder brother gets frustrated over her younger sister to be gullible enough to believe anything he says, the little girl is shown pretty young in age and the adjective used for her makes the brother sound condescending and demeaning towards her sister. Contrary to such portrayal, chapters like ‘An Enormous Turnip’ showed that in the end, it was the girl’s effort that led to pulling out of the vegetable, in the chapter ‘Who Will be Ningthou’, initially the skills of the men were glorified but as the story progressed the girl’s compassion and kindness was valued, her part in the story was way less than other characters but the fact that she took away the kingdom made her at the lead. Most of the chapters in the textbooks for grades 5 to 8 had male characters only, chapters like ‘Robinson Crusoe’, ‘Rip Van Winkle’, ‘A Visit to Cambridge’, all had only male characters, it was observed that as the grades progressed the number of chapters with only male characters also increased.

Considering the activities followed in the chapters, most of the activities for grades 1 to 4 were related to writing alphabets and numbers or coloring and drawing, and

for grades 5 to 8 most activities were based on the content of the chapters, but all the activities pertaining to grammar and reasoning were assessed to see the portrayal of gender in them, there was a conscious effort to try and include gender-neutral terms like ‘child’, ‘we’ etc., and have almost equal use of both female and male pronouns, but as the activities progressed, the use of male pronouns increased. As the graph depicts, although the difference between men and women is not significantly large, there surely is a higher representation of men.

What shall I be when I grow up?
Match the following:

A person who sails a ship	an artist
A person who flies a spaceship	an astronaut
A person who draws or paints	a sailor
A person who makes sick people well	a dentist
A person who brings letters	a doctor
A person who grows crops	a farmer
A person who makes clothes	a pilot
A person who works in school	a postman
A person who checks teeth	a tailor
A person who flies an aeroplane	a teacher

112

Figure 4.1.5: Activity page from Grade 1 textbook(*MARIGOLD Textbook in English for Class I* 2021)

80 HONEYSUCKLE

Wordfinders group	1. Thinker becomes Tinker if we leave out an 'r'. Who is a tinker? 2. Make a list of words that your classmates want to find out the meanings of. Then find out the meanings by consulting a dictionary or asking your teacher. Tell your classmates what you have found out.
Peoplefinders group	Find people in the jobs mentioned here. They may be people you know, or people mentioned in newspapers, etc. Make a chart.
Picturefinders group	Get pictures or photographs of the kinds of people, subjects, activities, places, etc., mentioned above.

SPEAKING

A. Why does Radha's mother tell her that it is not suitable for girls to climb trees? Find points to agree with Radha or her mother. Plan what you will say by making notes like this:

- Girls should be able to climb trees if they wish
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Girls should not be allowed to climb trees
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

2020-21

Figure 4.1.6: Activity page from Grade 6 textbook(*HONEYSUCKLE Textbook in English for Class VI* 2019)

4.2 PORTRAYAL OF RELIGION, COLOUR AND DISABILITY

Kimberley Crenshaw coined the term Intersectionality in 1989, explaining it to be a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. It talks about how different social identities of people can overlap creating a compounding experience. In this study as well, the focus was to see how various other identities are considered and linked together to create study material for young minds. There are numerous identities one can talk about from caste, color, and gender to sexuality, immigrant status, and race. In this research, the focus was on gender, religion, color, and disability. An in-depth evaluation from the lens of gender has been aforementioned. Shedding light on the portrayal of religion, color and disability, this section has been divided into three sub-parts, the first one concerning religion within chapters and then activities, the second one concerning with color within chapters and then activities, and finally the third section concerning the portrayal of the disability within chapters and then in activities.

The sample size of this research involved eight textbooks. It was observed that most of the chapters were pertaining to general environment topics, were written in first person, or had animals in the lead. The chapters that did involve humans served as the sample to study the portrayal of religion, color and disability.

Portrayal of Religion

It was observed that the aspect of religion was barely seen in the chapters of the books. Most of the chapters either had no mention of religion or a few which did, did not explicitly talk about religious differences. The following data was counted taking into consideration the names or the visual representation of the characters. To denote Hindus or Sikhs, it was mostly male characters in illustrations with a turban or men shown as pandits, for Muslims, there were just a few chapters that had names like Naseeruddin from grade 4 textbook chapter 6, “Naseeruddin’s Aim” and Jumman Shaikh grade 6 textbook chapter 7, “Fair Play”. Addressing the Christian community, the only chapter that explicitly showed Christian religion was from grade 8 textbook chapter 2, “The Tsunami”. The collation of this data showed that the total number of Hindus or Sikhs in all textbooks pertaining to the content of chapters was 6, for Muslims it was 8, and for Christians, it was 6. By addressing the activities, the data showed three Hindus/Sikhs and 5 Muslims for the entire sample. There were no activities that explicitly talked about religion rather these numbers were considered as the context of the activities was based on the chapter it followed. It can be said that there is no specific data or content which shows a divisive approach when talking about religion. Most of the chapters had a neutral narrative concerning religion when it came to the content of the chapters. This allowed the reader to be unable to understand the dynamics of various religions which would have made the representation more inclusive if there were equal representation of all religions. The aspect of neutrality simply left the religious identities of the characters to be left at the reader’s interpretation and discretion, this may give the majority religions a benefit as it is easier to connect them with the character, ignoring minority religious identities.

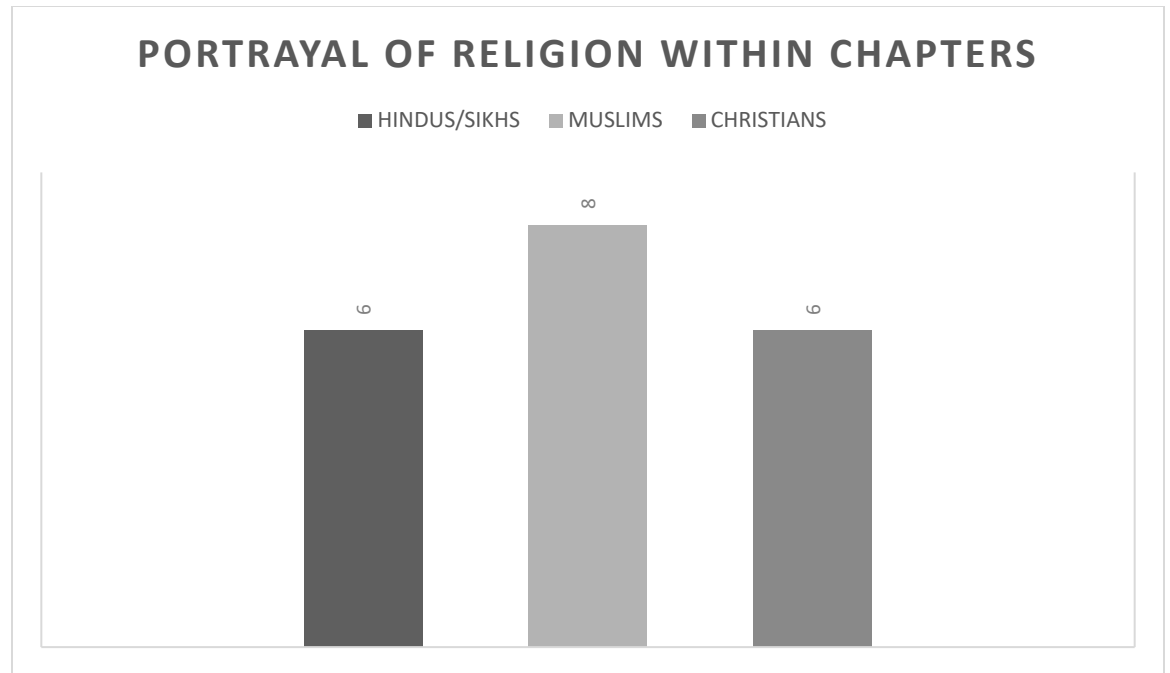


Figure 4.2.1: PORTRAYAL OF RELIGION WITHIN CHAPTERS

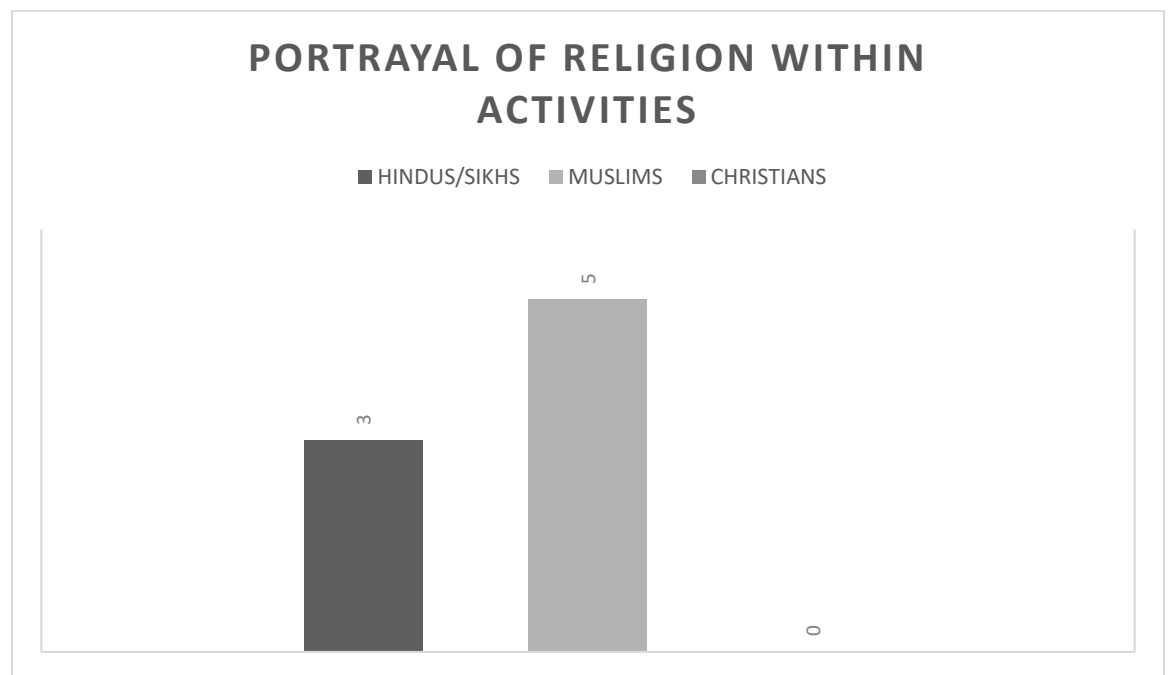


Figure 4.2.2: PORTRAYAL OF RELIGION WITHIN ACTIVITIES

Portrayal of Color

While considering the aspect of color the results were highly contrasting be it in the section of the chapters' content or the activities. While there was no mention of color in the context, the illustrations showed color differences in the characters. Considering both the segments be it the chapters or the activities, the difference between people shown with fair skin tone and the people shown with darker skin tone is extremely high amounting to 1122 fair characters against just 72 characters with a darker complexion. From the lens of color, these textbooks do not support inclusivity or equal representation for people of color.

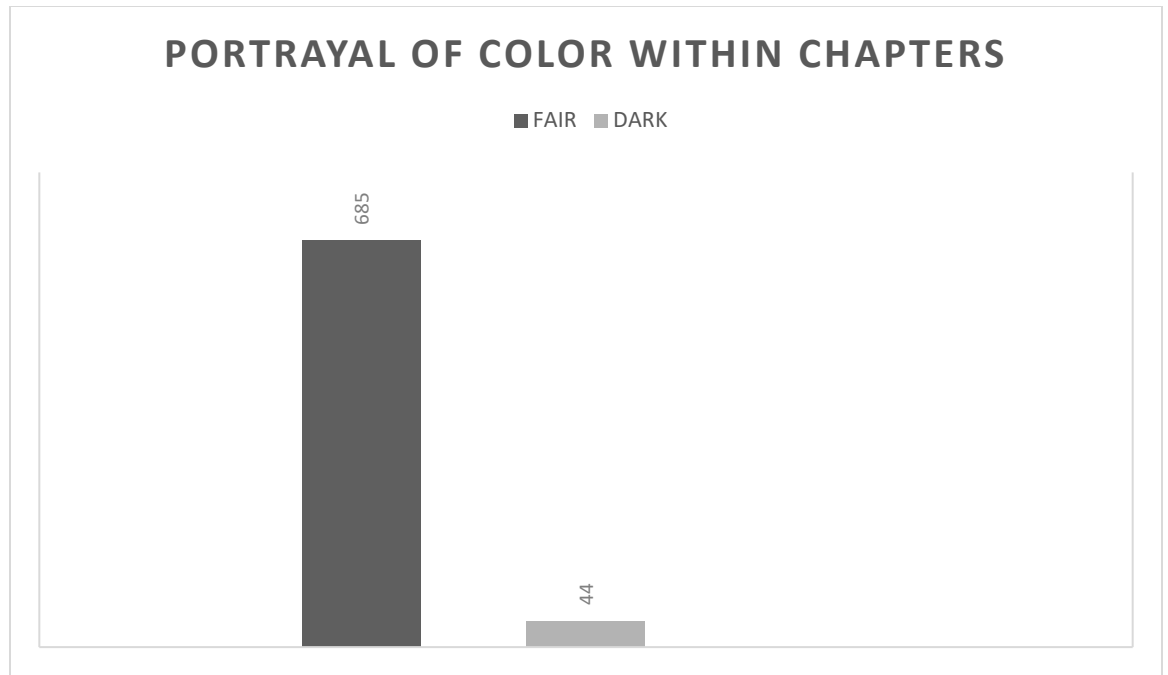


Figure 4.2.3: PORTRAYAL OF COLOR WITHIN CHAPTERS

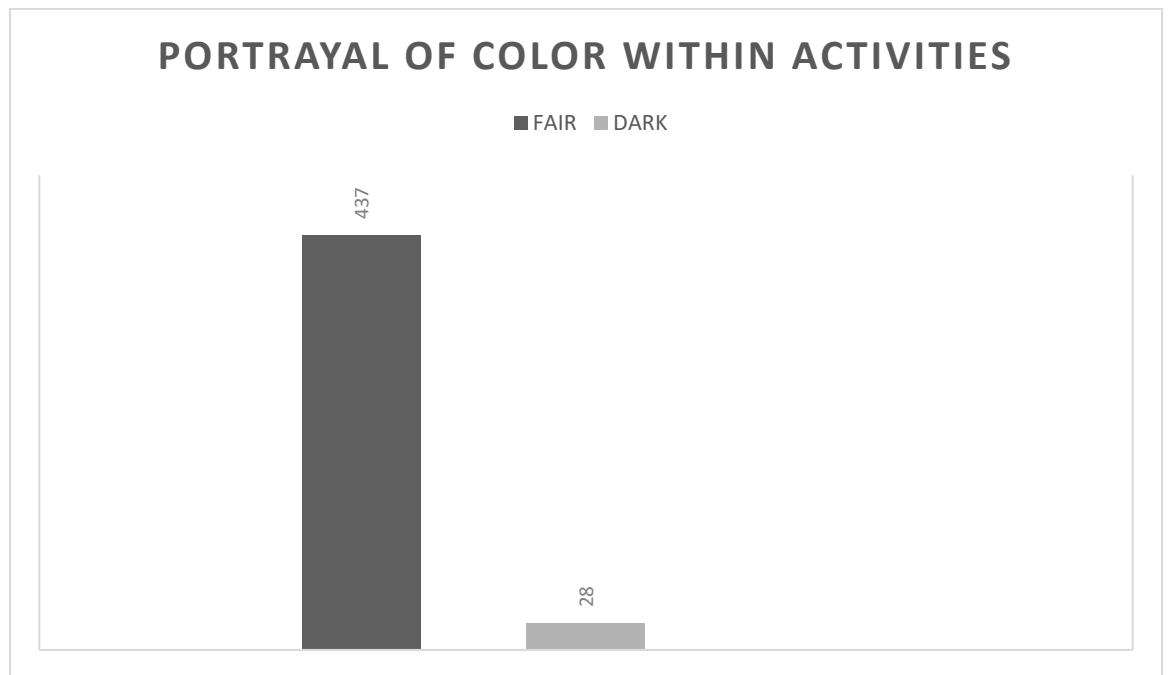


Figure 4.2.4: PORTRAYAL OF COLOR WITHIN ACTIVITIES

Portrayal of Disability

Addressing the aspect of disability, the results were highly contrasting. Foremost, it was observed that there were no guidelines or activities for teachers to include children with disability in a classroom setting. Out of the entire sample set, there were only four instances within the chapters which represented some aspects of people with disability while considering the activities only three references were observed. The chapter 18 of Grade 3, “He is my brother”, mentions a young boy who is unable to walk, here, the construct of the chapter was such that the number of male characters were more than female, rather the only female character was the boy’s sister who was portrayed in a conventional poised and nurturing role where she is carrying the boy on her back and helping him reach from place to place. From the lens of color and religion, the characters were fair in color while the religion was unnamed. This chapter is followed by two activities - first, pertaining to awareness regarding people with disabilities, and second, talking about sign languages. The other chapter that talked about disability was chapter 5 from Grade 6 “A different kind of school”. This chapter introduced experiences of differently-abled children where it was seen that the students in this school would spend a day blocking one of their senses, for example blindfolding themselves or using crutches in order to sensitize themselves towards people with special needs. From a holistic view, the portrayal of disability was barely seen in all the textbooks and so the mandate by the NEP to have inclusive study materials, also for people with disability is all the more important. Considering the intersectionality perspective as well, it was seen that the overall representation of gender, religion and color was quite lop-sided, when looking at the same identities in light of characters with disability the results were contradictory to the requirement of creating textbook materials focused on inclusivity.

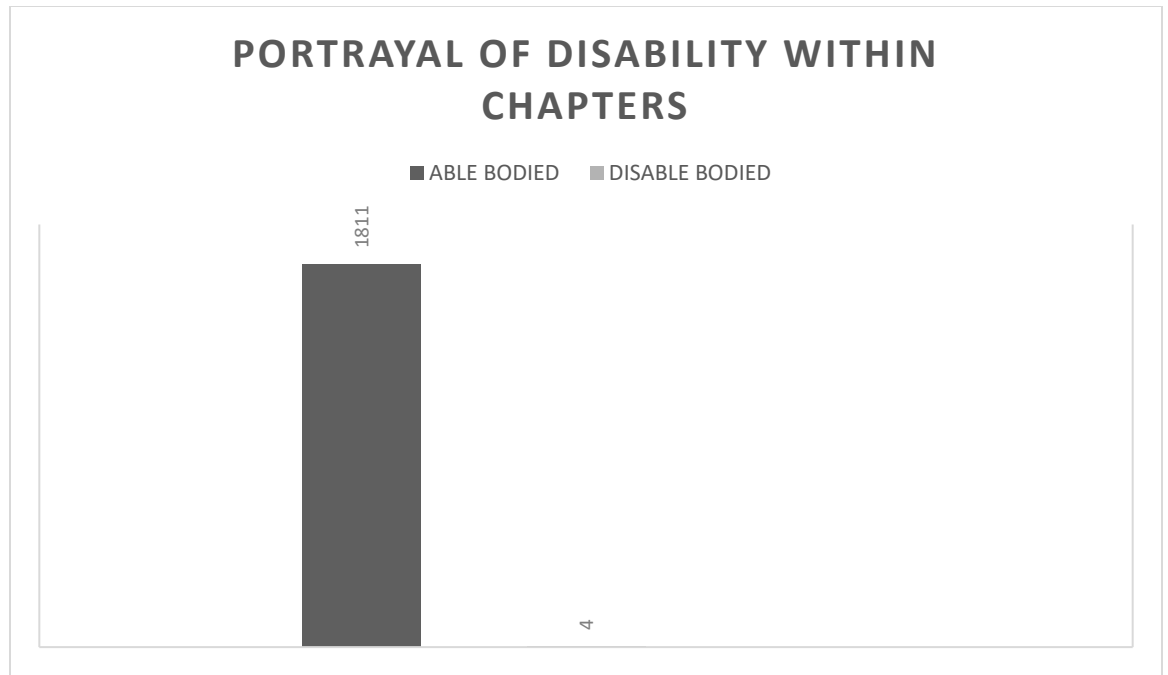


Figure 4.2.5: PORTRAYAL OF DISABILITY WITHIN CHAPTERS

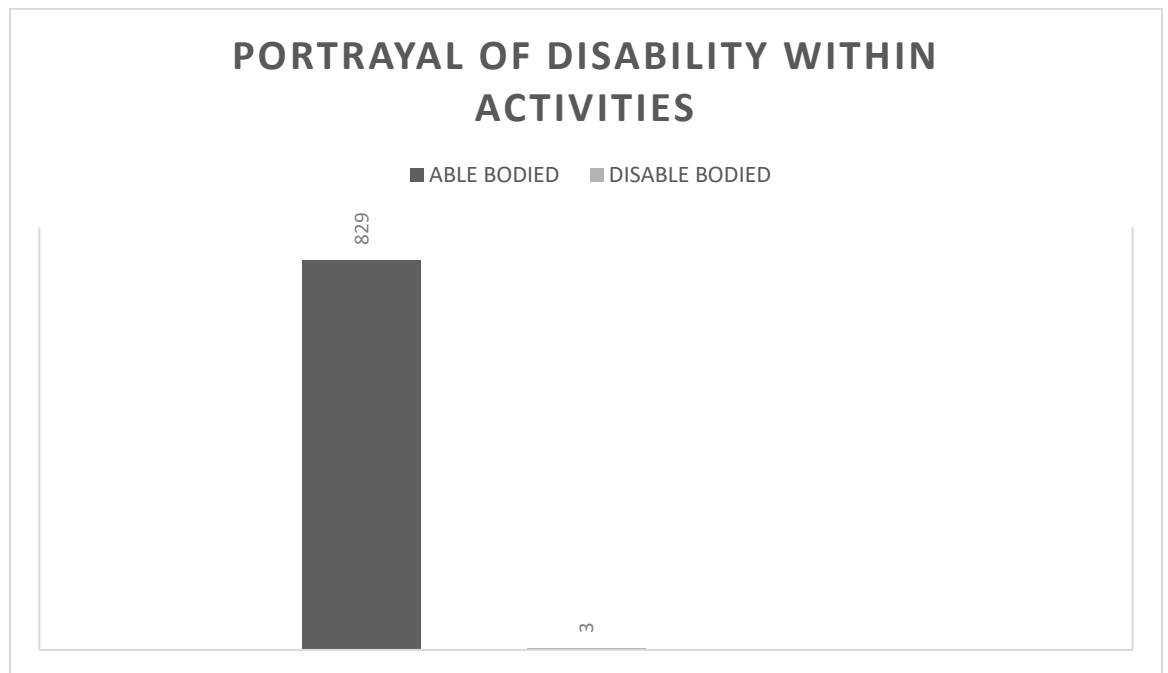


Figure 4.2.6: PORTRAYAL OF DISABILITY WITHIN ACTIVITIES

4.3 WITH REGARD TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

The National Education Policy is regulated under the National Curriculum Framework. The National System of Education has introduced four frameworks till 2022, the first one being in 1975, then 1988 followed by 2000, and then the 2005 framework which is currently being followed. In 2009 the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, mandated the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework all over India. (National Education Policy, 2021)

The National Education Policy was first framed in 1986 and further revised in 1992, until 2019 there were no new revisions in the policy for education. The new draft of the policy was introduced in 2019 and finalized in 2020. The government intends on completely implementing said policy all over India by 2030 by altering the current school and higher education systems. The policy has over 18 principles focused on flexibility or education, achieving Foundational Literacy and numeracy, continuous review of progress, a rootedness and pride in India, eliminating harmful hierarchies between different areas of learning, and increasing access for Divyang students, and many more.

This study focuses on the reforms advised by the National Education Policy for school education. It plans on changing the existing 10+2 structure and modifying it with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18 (National Education Policy 2020, 2021). The objectives and vision of the policy pertaining to school education consider numerous themes from Curtailing Dropout Rates to making Learning A Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, And Engaging thing, from focusing on Efficient Resourcing And Effective Governance Through School Complexes/Clusters To Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning For All. The objective of Inclusive Education: Learning For All focuses on enhancing gender balance in admissions to Higher Education Institutions, ensuring sensitization of faculty, counselor, and students on gender-identity issues and their inclusion in all aspects of the Higher Education Institutions, and ensuring all buildings and

facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly. Along with these objectives and vision, there are 13 themes outlined by the policy for school education, and the two themes that align with this study are Accelerating Rural Literacy with Special Emphasis On Women, SCs, STs & Minorities Through Adult Education and National Open Schooling Systems, and Enabling Inclusive Education – Education Of SCs, STs, Girls, Minorities, and Children with Special Needs.

In order to materialize the requirements suggested in this policy, the first step can be to build a team of creators who are equal representatives of the society. The perspectives of people from diverse communities would help create a much more inclusive set of textual materials as their viewpoints and experiences would help provide an authentic new perspective. The second step can be to not generalize the stereotypical characteristics of all characters, rather show strong characters breaking stereotypes adding a strong impact to the chapters along with specifying their identities to show equal representation and not leave anything subjective to the reader's interpretation as it by default allows more unsaid representation of the majorities. The third step can be to review and edit all materials from time to time so that there are new additions to the material that align with the changing and growing society.

As per the recommendations of this policy, the findings of this study show that there is a lot of work required in the creation of textbook materials to align the resources with the policy's vision. The policy mandates making education inclusive but as per the results, the latest revision for most books showed that the 2021 editions lacked the aspect of inclusivity as intended by the New Education Policy. There was a significant difference in the number of male and female characters and the representation of people of color, various religions and people with disabilities was almost insignificant when compared to the entire text in all the eight textbooks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Education serves as the crux for development and helps us build a better society, so it becomes of even more importance to have an inclusive outreach while imparting knowledge. Textbooks are valuable means to store and convey information, and develop an understanding that sensitizes people towards different aspects of life. This study helps in understanding the gaps in textual materials that are contributors to creating a biased society. School textbooks for elementary grades show skewed representation towards just one sector of society, representation of women, people with darker skin tones, people from varied religions, and people with disability have been scarce. Prior to collecting data and analyzing the same, I had a brief hunch that the gender representation would favor men over women, and such was the result when the data was collated. The surprising factor was that the publication team did hold women in majority, yet the chapters in the textbooks clearly showed more male characters in the limelight in comparison to women. As the textbooks evaluated were mostly for primary grades, the representation of animal characters was quite high, unfortunately, most of the animal characters like in 'The Tiger and the Mosquito', 'How the Dog found himself a new Master', and 'The Squirrel' were all males making the representation of men stronger than women. Along with that, I did feel that the data would be a little biased concerning majority religions, fair colored, and able-bodied people but the actual figures were extremely surprising as to how significant of a difference could be seen in these textbooks.

There was definitely a clear skewed representation when it came to fair vs dark skin toned people as the representation of fair-colored people was way higher, the same was with the representation of people with disability as out of eight textbooks there were only four instances where some reference of special-abled people. Addressing the aspect of religion, although most of the chapters did not specify any single

religious identity to the characters, I think that it just left too much of a scope for the reader to attribute it to a majority religion based on their interpretation, this subjectivity might leave out diverse other and minority religions making an inclusive portrayal all the more challenging. The national education policy is set to be completely implemented across all educational institutions in the country by the 2023-24 academic year, although it does mandate inclusivity, the 2019, 2021 editions of NCERT textbooks are far from attaining the same. Conscious efforts are required to create inclusive study materials for students and given the promise made by the education policy the hope of creating such textbooks is more prominent than ever.

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