

# **Analyzing Gender Representation in English Textbooks (IX & X) through Gender Schema Theory**

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## **Abstract**

*The current English textbooks of Nepal misrepresent gender in lexical, graphic, and symbolic ways. If a teaching material starts misrepresenting gender through an academic approach, it directly hits the mental and behavioural aspects of students. This study explores gender representation in the current English textbooks IX and X from the perspective of qualitative research design and the Gender Schema Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how gender is represented in terms of visibility, character attitudes, and gender stereotypes. The results indicate that these textbooks misrepresented gender differently, including profession, social roles, prioritizing male roles, and social space. This dominance reveals a persistent gender bias favouring men in various activities, such as becoming athletes, holding prestigious positions, and participating in sports. Despite this bias, gender stereotyping has significantly decreased compared to previous research, with some evidence of equality in responsibilities, activities, and pictorial representations. This study suggests contributing to raising gender awareness in education in order to maintain equity and equality in learning.*

**Keywords:** Gender representation, English textbooks (IX and X), gender schema theory, gender bias

## **Introduction**

As an English teacher with over a decade of experience in Nepal, I have consistently observed significant gender biases in the English textbooks for grades 9 and 10. These biases manifest in the repeated use of male pronouns, limited representation of women's contributions, and stereotypical portrayals of gender roles. For instance, textbooks often depict women as caregivers, nurses, or homemakers, while men are portrayed as leaders, doctors, or engineers (Sharma, 2018). Such representations narrow career aspirations for young girls and reinforce outdated gender norms.

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In the current English textbooks of grades IX and X, I have noticed unconsciously treating students differently based on gender, praising boys for being strong and girls for being pretty. Masculine terms are frequently used to address mixed-gender groups, reinforcing the notion that men are the default (Awasthi, 2023). These biases affect the learning environment's inclusivity and undermine the self-esteem and aspirations of marginalized genders (Acharya, 2020). My own experiences as a student and now as a teacher have deeply influenced my decision to explore this area. Witnessing and experiencing gender discrimination—both within educational materials and in broader societal expectations—has shaped my understanding of the pervasive impact of such biases. These issues urgently need to be addressed to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment that empowers all students, regardless of their gender.

This research aims to critically examine the extent and implications of gender bias in these textbooks and advocate for changes that will contribute to more gender-sensitive educational practices in Nepal. By shedding light on these issues, I hope to support efforts toward a fairer and more inclusive educational system that nurtures the potential of every learner.

Textbooks are the basic tools of school education. Students' ideologies are affected by textbooks. Textbooks have worked as a fundamental socialization tool, disseminating knowledge and values. Students can strengthen their academic skills with the help of textbooks. Textbooks impact outside the immediate context of education in any given society and worldwide. As a result, we must consider how much impact textbooks have. The purpose of this paper is to explore the broader context of textbooks in relation to gender inequality and to investigate the potential uses of textbooks as an effective social change agent for promoting gender equality.

The ultimate purpose of textbooks is to assist language learners in developing their communication and linguistic skills. Ur (2009) states that a textbook serves as a framework that guides teachers and students in a particular way. She adds that textbooks serve as a guide that helps instructors and students understand what is being taught and what they hope to get out of the course. As noted by Hutchinson and Torres in 1993, a textbook is a structured compilation of teaching and learning materials that are thoughtfully created to match the learners' proficiency, preferences, and requirements. It provides a framework to guide and orient them. In the note, Tomlinson (2003) shared the views report of textbooks, in which he highlighted that a textbook is a means of delivering content and offers exercises for students in different aspects of languages, including vocabulary and its utterances and language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing).

We understand that books are integral to the sociocultural environment and strive to mirror societal conditions. They are an indispensable element of the educational process, serving as the main instructional resource that both educators and students depend on. Textbooks significantly shaping children's upbringing as they convey patterns of social conduct, standards, and principles, either explicitly or implicitly. Consequently, textbooks serve

as instruments for both fostering learning and driving social transformation. They function as channels for instilling societal values in children. Nonetheless, textbooks frequently reinforce the idea that females, particularly women and girls, are depicted as frail, passive, and obedient. Their portrayals are predominantly within domestic, nurturing, and supportive roles.

Education is a powerful tool in fostering fairness and equity, so I have chosen to focus my research on the portrayal of different gender groups in school textbooks. Teachers, curriculum designers, and authors wield significant influence in shaping educational materials and must be made aware of the implications of gender bias. By illuminating the ways in which gender is represented in educational contexts, my research aims to empower these stakeholders to enact meaningful change within our education system. My motivation extends beyond academic achievement, and I am driven by a genuine commitment to creating a more just and inclusive society. I envision a world where every individual is afforded the same opportunities and where gender-based discrimination is a relic of the past. This work is dedicated to all those who share this vision and strive to usher in a brighter, more equitable future. Together, let us cultivate a world where every person, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to the betterment of our collective community. With this mindset, I have tried to answer the question, "How do the English textbooks at the secondary level represent gender?" The study aims to see how gender roles are represented and how gender equity is reflected in the textbook.

### **Gender Representation: What and How ?**

Gender Representation, in general, refers to the way in which gender is treated in a traditional and a biasful manner. It means textbooks consistently reveal that these materials often reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Across various countries, including those in South Asia, textbooks have been found to disproportionately portray males as authoritative, active, and in leadership roles, while females are frequently depicted in passive or nurturing roles (Durrani, 2008). In these educational materials, male characters are often associated with professions such as doctors, engineers, and leaders, while female characters are shown as homemakers, teachers, or caregivers, reinforcing a limited set of gendered expectations. A study conducted in Pakistan, for instance, found that textbooks underrepresent women and perpetuate rigid gender norms by assigning male characters to more public and socially valued roles while confining female characters to the domestic sphere (Ullah & Skelton, 2013). Such depictions are not confined to the textual narratives; they are also evident in visual materials, where images overwhelmingly favour male characters in prominent and action-oriented settings. These biased representations subtly convey the message that men are more valuable or capable than women, thus perpetuating gender inequality from an early age.

The biased depictions of gender roles in textbooks, viewed through the lens of Gender Schema Theory, pose a critical problem in shaping students' cognitive development and perceptions of gender roles. As Bem (1981) highlights, children form mental frameworks or schemas based on observed gender roles, which influence their behavior, aspirations, and

self-concept. When textbooks perpetuate stereotypes—portraying women predominantly in caregiving or subordinate roles and men in leadership or technical positions—they reinforce limiting societal norms. Ullah and Haque (2016) argue that such skewed representations are particularly damaging in South Asia, where traditional gender norms are deeply ingrained.

For instance, girls exposed to such textbooks may internalize the belief that leadership or professional success is beyond their reach, limiting their aspirations. Similarly, boys may develop a sense of entitlement or dominance in public and professional spaces. These biased portrayals, as suggested by Tibbitts (2017), not only restrict individual potential but also perpetuate systemic inequalities, undermining gender equity efforts in education and society. This issue is evident in Nepal, where current English textbooks for grades IX and X, as analyzed by Shrestha (2023), depict male dominance in textual and visual content, further entrenching traditional gender stereotypes.

Addressing this problem is crucial to fostering an educational environment that promotes equitable and progressive gender perceptions. Without a critical examination and revision of such educational materials, these stereotypes will continue to hinder students' holistic development and societal progress toward gender equality.

### **Natures of Gender Representations in Textbooks**

The portrayal of gender in textbooks has long been criticized for perpetuating traditional and stereotypical roles, with research highlighting several recurring patterns in the representation of males and females. One of the most prominent tendencies is the disproportionate emphasis on male characters, who are featured more frequently and given greater importance in both textual and visual materials (Ullah & Skelton, 2013). This overrepresentation of males conveys the implicit message that men are more significant or central to societal functions, which can contribute to gender imbalances in students' perception of roles in society. In contrast, female characters are often shown in secondary or passive roles, rarely portrayed in positions of power or authority. This imbalance is quantitative and qualitative, as female characters are frequently depicted as socially weak or dependent on their male counterparts (Blumberg, 2008). These representations reinforce the stereotype that women are less capable or assertive than men.

Another common nature of gender representation in textbooks is the stark division of labour along gender lines, particularly in relation to professions. Males are typically assigned to outgoing, prestigious, and economically significant jobs, such as doctors, engineers, and teachers, while females are confined to domestic or caregiving roles, such as cooking, cleaning, or nursing (Durrani, 2008). This occupational segregation in textbooks reflects and reinforces the gendered division of labour in society, teaching students from an early age that certain jobs are naturally suited to one gender over the other. Visual representations further entrench these stereotypes by depicting men in active, professional settings and women in passive, home-based activities (Ullah & Haque, 2016). These depictions limit students' understanding of gender possibilities, shaping their future career aspirations and self-concepts in alignment with

traditional gender roles. Such biases in textbooks not only misrepresent the realities of modern gender roles but also hinder progress toward gender equality by perpetuating outdated social norms.

### **Possible Language Domination in English Textbooks**

A study conducted by Sharma (2018) sheds light on the prevalent issue of textual gender domination within English textbooks for grades 9 and 10 in Nepal. The research revealed a significant disparity in the representation of male and female characters, with male protagonists and examples outnumbering their female counterparts. This imbalance perpetuates traditional gender roles, with male characters often depicted as assertive leaders or professionals while female characters are relegated to supporting or domestic roles (Sharma, 2018).

**Gender Bias in Language Use:** The linguistic bias evident in these textbooks is further emphasized by the consistent use of masculine language, particularly the default pronoun 'he,' to refer to generic individuals or professionals. Studies by Smith (2017) and Jones (2019) corroborate these findings, highlighting how such language usage reinforces the notion that males are the norm while females are marginalized. Sentences like "A doctor should treat his patients with care" neglect the existence of female doctors and perpetuate gender stereotypes (Smith, 2017; Jones, 2019).

**Stereotypical Gender Roles:** Research by Patel (2020) and Kumar (2021) underscores the prevalence of stereotypical gender roles within educational materials. Illustrations and accompanying text frequently depict boys engaging in activities such as sports or leadership roles, while girls are portrayed in domestic settings or as passive bystanders. Such representations limit students' perceptions of their own potential and perpetuate societal expectations regarding gender roles (Patel, 2020; Kumar, 2021).

**Unequal Treatment in Classroom Dynamics:** Classroom observations conducted by Gupta (2019) and Singh (2020) have revealed instances where teachers inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes through differential treatment of students. Male students are often praised for their academic achievements or leadership qualities, while female students receive compliments primarily on their appearance or demeanour. This disparate treatment affects students' self-esteem and perpetuates unequal gender dynamics within the classroom (Gupta, 2019; Singh, 2020).

A qualitative assessment of textbooks by analyzing both language and visuals seems mandatory to explore gender portrayal in terms of firstness, visibility, character attitudes, and stereotypes. It examines socially marked gender issues, including roles, characteristics, and conversations, by analyzing explicit content, such as male and female representations in pictures, social roles, and activities. Although no participants were involved, the study focuses on how gender is presented in the grades IX and X textbooks to support revision from a gender perspective.

## **Methodology**

Gender Schema Theory, developed by Sandra Bem in 1981, provides a framework for understanding how individuals internalize societal gender norms and roles. According to this theory, children learn about gender roles and expectations through cultural and societal cues, forming cognitive structures known as gender schemas. These schemas influence how individuals perceive and process information related to gender, guiding behaviour, and attitudes (Bem, 1981).

In the context of analyzing English textbooks for grades 9 and 10 in Nepal, Gender Schema Theory is particularly relevant. The lexical and visual representations of male and female characters in these textbooks can contribute to developing and reinforcing gender schemas among students. If textbooks predominantly depict males in active, authoritative roles and females in passive, subordinate roles, they may reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. Conversely, balanced and diverse representations can promote more egalitarian gender schemas, encouraging students to envision a wider range of possibilities for themselves and others, regardless of gender (Martin & Halverson, 1981; Bem, 1983).

Reviewing Gender Schema Theory is crucial for the analysis of English textbooks for grades 9 and 10 in Nepal from a gender perspective. This theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how children internalize gender norms and roles through societal and cultural cues. Given that textbooks are a significant educational tool, the way they present male and female characters can greatly influence students' gender schemas.

By applying the Gender Schema Theory, we can critically assess whether the textbooks in question perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes or promote gender equality. This is important because the internalized gender schemas formed during adolescence can shape students' self-perceptions, aspirations, and interactions with others. Identifying and addressing any biases in these educational materials is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Therefore, Gender Schema Theory serves as a vital lens through which we can evaluate the impact of linguistic and visual representations of gender in these textbooks, ensuring that they contribute positively to developing students' gender identities. The gender schema theory explains how cultural norms and gender socialization affect people's perceptions of gender roles and expectations.

## **Results and Discussion**

The section has been analysed and interpreted based on the information extracted from the current grades IX and X textbooks. The section also analysed the current textbooks from the perspective of gender schema theory.

### **Major textual and graphic gender discrimination in English Textbooks**

Gender discrimination in educational materials is a critical issue that influences the development of young minds and shapes societal norms. In Nepal, where traditional

gender roles are deeply ingrained, the content of school textbooks can either perpetuate or challenge these stereotypes (Acharya, 2017). This discussion focuses on the presence and implications of gender discrimination in the English textbook used in Grade IX. By analyzing the representations of gender roles, the language used, and the visibility of male and female characters, we aim to uncover biases that may reinforce gender inequality (Shrestha & Luitel, 2019). Addressing these biases is crucial for fostering an equitable learning environment that promotes gender sensitivity and equality. Research has shown that educational content significantly impacts students' perceptions of gender roles, making it imperative to ensure balanced and inclusive resources (Subedi, 2020). Through this examination, we hope to highlight the need for more balanced and inclusive educational resources that reflect the values of a progressive society.

### **The Hidden Rooted Professional Discrimination**

In the recent textbooks of grades IX and X, several denotative and figurative representations directly reveal the culture of showing inferiority among genders. As a teacher, it is my responsibility to point out the mistakes that have been mistakenly practised. It is said that the students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. If our future leaders and professionals are trained in such a patriarchal training manual, the slogan of equality will only be heard but not implemented in society. With this mindset, I thoroughly reviewed the recent textbooks of grades 9 and 10, and traced some of the figurative representations which directly push the female gender in the corner where they feel inferior, weak, poor, unprofessional, low payer, etc. some of the noticeable gender bias examples which are presented in image are listed one after another below:

#### ***Image 1 (Figure Representation):***



Fig 1: Grade 9, Unit 5

The content analysis of the selected textbooks revealed that the textbook tried to balance gender representation (Nepal Government, 2021), but still, the writer's mind is equipped with the perception of conventional dominant posts for males. In the above pictures, the male characters in Nepali society, doctors and pilots, have a higher value than the singer and the teacher (Sharma, 2017). Such representations disregard the capabilities and talents of individuals, irrespective of their gender, and hinder efforts to achieve gender equality in various fields (Koirala, 2019). Promoting inclusive and diverse portrayals of professions in educational materials is essential to encourage all individuals, regardless of gender, to pursue their interests and aspirations freely (Adhikari & Shrestha, 2020).

In this image, male characters are depicted in high-status professions, such as doctors and pilots, while female characters are shown in lower-status roles, like singers and teachers. This portrayal reinforces traditional gender schemas that associate masculinity with professional success and authority, suggesting that certain careers are inherently male-dominated. Such representations can discourage female students from aspiring to high-status professions, perpetuating the stereotype that these roles are not suitable for women (Acharya, 2017; Koirala, 2019). Gender Schema Theory suggests that repeated exposure to these images helps solidify rigid gender roles in children's minds, limiting their aspirations and reinforcing societal expectations.

#### **Gender Bias in Conversational Dynamics:**

I have encountered many conversational exercises in the current English textbook for grades IX and X, which directly reveal a dominative tone while selecting words and phrases in the conversation. For your reference, on page 61, there is a dialogue which illustrates a significant imbalance in gender representation, with male characters initiating interactions more frequently than female characters. This dynamic reflects societal norms that prioritize male voices, leading students to internalize the belief that men should dominate conversations and decision-making processes. Such portrayals can shape children's understanding of gender roles, reinforcing the idea that men are more capable or entitled to take the lead in social interactions (Clark, 2019; Williams & Jones, 2020). According to Gender Schema Theory, these patterns contribute to the development of cognitive frameworks that perpetuate gender inequality.

#### **A. Look at the picture and answer these questions.**

- a. **What could the people in the picture be talking about?**
- b. **What do you think when a friend forgets your name?**



**English 9**

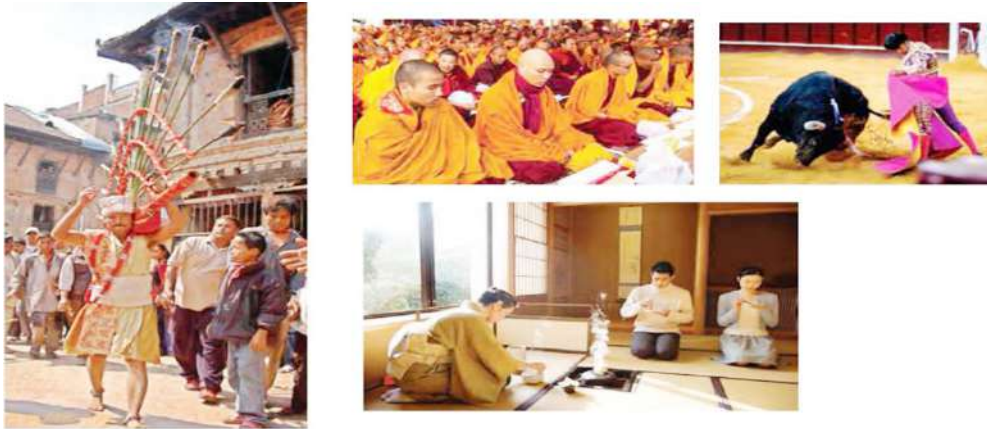
**61**

The dialogue between male and female characters is the next element. The illustration demonstrates an awareness of including female figures, yet the distribution is uneven (Clark, 2019). When it comes to female participation, male dominance is perceived as having a very



obvious gap (Williams & Jones, 2020). The depicted images also suggest that men are more prone to striking up conversations with women and that women are more likely to respond to inquiries posed by men (Smith & Taylor, 2018).

**Religious/Cultural aspect of discussion**



**Fig 3, Grade 9 Page 65**



**Eid**



**Biska Jatra**

**Grade 10, page 17**

The way that both genders are portrayed in a textbook is referred to as gender representation (Smith, 2010). Equal depictions of gender in terms of balance or imbalance constitute fair treatment of gender representation. It assesses how men and women are portrayed in images or text (Johnson, 2015). There was an imbalance or uneven representation since one sex predominated and the other was underrepresented in the photographs (Brown & Davis, 2018). The representation of each gender in the textbook should be fair and balanced, but the reality is often lopsided (Miller, 2019).

In Figure 3, all the characters representing different socio-cultural and religious activities and rituals are performed by male characters. It shows the real position of females in society. Many religious institutions have traditionally excluded women from leadership positions, limiting their authority and influence within religious communities (Anderson, 2017). This gender bias perpetuates the notion that women are less capable or deserving of positions of religious authority, reinforcing gender inequality and denying women the opportunity to participate fully in shaping religious practices and beliefs (Taylor, 2020).

Challenging these discriminatory practices and promoting gender equality within religious institutions is crucial for creating inclusive spaces where both men and women can contribute their unique perspectives and talents (White, 2021). It is important to recognize that everyone, regardless of gender, should have equal opportunities to participate in religious leadership roles and make meaningful contributions to their faith communities (Lewis, 2016).

### **Domestic, social and intellectual roles through conversation**

The English textbooks for grades nine and ten in Nepal delve into the intricate dynamics of domestic, social, and intellectual roles through conversations highlighting gender-dominative representation (Nepal Ministry of Education, 2023). These textbooks present dialogues and narratives that shows traditional gender roles, illustrating how societal expectations influence the lives and opportunities of individuals based on their gender (Koirala, 2022). By incorporating stories and examples from various contexts, the textbooks encourage students to critically analyze and challenge gender stereotypes (Sharma & Adhikari, 2021). The inclusion of these themes aims to promote gender equality and empower students to envision a society where roles are defined by capability and choice rather than gender (Rana, 2020).

Through these educational conversations, the textbooks foster a deeper understanding of the importance of gender equity in all spheres of life. However, such a demonstration cannot be seen, as I have observed my students showing their humiliated perceptions of such social demarcation. Even though the Ministry of Education (2023) has ensured the quality and equity for the accessibility of education for every individual, exploring such textual content in the current textbooks always makes me think about how we construct students' psychology from our education system. The following textbook cutouts show that the current textbooks are not designed from the gender perspective (Gurung, 2021).

### Conversation III

Aunt : Would you like another piece of cake?

Uncle : Yes please, that would be nice.

English 9



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Fig 4, Grade 9, page 83

The depiction of females solely preparing food and fulfilling the roles of males in pictures and conversations holds traditional patriarchal concepts. This perpetuates the women's primary role as domestic and subordinate to men. Such mentioning limits the perception of gender roles and strengthens the traditional value that men are superior to women. It is the need of the day to challenge these outdated norms by presenting more balanced roles in textbooks. As we are striving for an equitable society, women should be shown in various

### Conversation IV

Sanjay : Shall I help you with your maths problem?

Ramila : Yes, please. That would be very nice of you.



### Conversation V

Sister : I'll do the washing, if you like.

Brother : It's OK, I can do it.

Fig 5, Grade 9, page 85

The above textbook cutout clearly presents how a female character is dominated on the basis of their social roles. As mentioned in the conversation, the female character has a socially lower-level task specified, whereas the male character has a socially stronger and more prestigious task assigned. This context has been analyzed from the perspective of the Gender Schema Theory of Sandra Bem (1981), in which she stated that children learn about gender roles and expectations through cultural and societal cues, forming cognitive structures known as gender schemas. These schemas influence how individuals perceive and process information related to gender, guiding behaviour, and attitudes. The given dialogue in the current English textbook for grade 9 is not legal as it directly creates a kind of negative mindset among children of 13 to 16 years old. If such gender-biased social roles are expressed through the academic route, the children of 12 to 16 age groups surely perceive a negative mindset regarding their social roles (Sperandio, 2016). Girls are not inherently weak in mathematics.

This is a harmful stereotype that lacks scientific basis. Such biases in textbooks can demotivate girls. They may doubt their abilities and lose interest in pursuing STEM subjects. It may lead boys to believe they are naturally superior in mathematics.

In conversation, V's sister asks to wash her brother's clothes. Such imagery supports the idea that domestic chores are primarily a woman's responsibility. This strengthens the young minds of students with outdated and unequal views on gender roles when they are already facing such concepts at home and in a society of patriarchy. These depictions can limit girls' aspirations and normalize the expectation that women should serve men.

Discrimination based on gender manifests in various aspects of society, including domestic, social, and intellectual realms. The discrimination with deep patriarchal roots in the kitchen is shown in Figure four. All are male members, and only the aunt is responsible for fulfilling the uncle's demand for extra food. In the first conversation of the second figure, the male character offers help to the female character in solving the math problem. In the second conversation, the sister offers to help with the washing for her brother. Addressing these forms of discrimination requires a concerted effort to challenge societal norms, promote gender equality, and create inclusive spaces where both men and women can thrive and contribute their unique perspectives and talents.

### **Physical and Financial Discrimination (Conversation Analysis)**

The current English textbook in Nepal addresses the significant themes of physical and financial discrimination, shedding light on the pervasive inequalities that exist in society. Through engaging narratives, critical essays, and thought-provoking discussions, the textbook aims to raise awareness among students about the challenges individuals face due to their physical abilities or financial status. It emphasizes the importance of empathy, equality, and social justice, encouraging students to reflect on their own attitudes and actions while fostering a more inclusive and equitable community. Some of such noticeable discriminations are presented:



**Fig 7, Grade 9, p 128**

It is attempted to portray masculine roles as being powerful and dominant. It is stereotypically stated that males are considered the breadwinners, the ones who manage the powerful aspects of home management, whilst women are primarily seen as the homemakers, the ones who cook, take care of the house, wear aprons, cater to the requirements of the in-laws, and prepare meals for the kids and the entire family. Financial discrimination in positions of authority enhances gender inequality by restricting women's access to finances and preserving gender-based gaps in financial success, job development, and decision-making influence. In comparison to their male counterparts, women frequently experience major differences in access to high-level roles, representation on executive committees, and high earning levels. In the picture, males are also presented with powerful messages and female characters are presented in a common and powerless sense.

**Example: A: Can you stand on your hands?**

**B: Yes, I can stand on my hands.**



The picture, in the selected textbooks, the male gender is given priority over the female gender. Here, four out of five pictures are of male characters. The finding, to some extent, syncs with the findings of a previous study by Mirza and Malik (1999), which also observed females represented as weaker creatures who lacked decision and ruling powers, being inactive and cowardly. Men, on the other hand, were portrayed as idols of vitality, strength, and decisiveness. The finding also coheres with Anwar's study (1982), which has revealed an unfair proportion between the depiction of male and female characters in the selected textbooks, with males given more space than females. Zeenutunnisa (1989) also found that male characters were leading in number in the majority of the textbooks she analyzed and that the males were associated with a wider range of activities than the females.

**B. Write the names of the sports shown in the pictures below.**



Females are underrepresented among athletes in textbooks. This lack of proper representation can reinforce stereotypes and discourage girls from pursuing sports. Many female athletes have success stories, but they are frequently overlooked or minimized compared to their male counterparts. Addressing this imbalance is crucial for promoting gender equality and encouraging all students to participate in sports equally. Updating textbooks to include more female athletes can inspire schoolgirls and provide them with role models to look up to in the future.



*English 10*

211

The above picture from the English textbook for grade 10 reinforces outdated gender stereotypes. Such representations can limit students' perceptions of gender roles, perpetuating inequality and hindering progress toward gender equality. It's essential to challenge such stereotypes by presenting equitable roles for both genders in textbooks and other educational materials. Balanced perspectives of gender representation can empower students with a more inclusive and respectful understanding of gender dynamics.

### **Conversation I**

**Abhi** : My father works in a factory.

**Reema** : So does mine.

**Bikalpa** : But mine works in a bakery.



**A. Work in pairs and practise the conversation below.**

- Woman : Excuse me sir!  
Police Inspector : Yes, how may I help you?  
Woman : Someone snatched my handbag.



English 10

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In the picture the father is described as the earner providing for the family, reinforcing traditional gender norms. Mothers should be included as financial contributors for the irrigation of growing young mindsets of school levels. The new way of parents as earners and caregivers helps challenge the outdated notion that only men are breadwinners.

In the second picture, showing a woman requesting help from the police depicts the reality that men are the ones in power and authority. This image supports practiced male traits undermining gender equality. If the same picture is of a male requesting help with a female, it can empower the mentality of young school students. A strong textbook supporting gender equality can help break down traditional gender norms and concepts.

- Abdul : Is this Sahara, the girl who plays the piano?  
Swikriti : No, this is Reema, the girl who won the singing competition last year.  
Abdul : I know her. She is the girl who has long brown hair.



- a. How are the girl's eyes?  
b. What shape is her face?  
c. Describe her hair.



From the perspective of Gender Schema Theory, the tendency to describe girls primarily through their physical attributes creates a problematic framework for how students understand gender roles and identity. Gender Schema Theory, as posited by Bem (1981),

suggests that children internalize societal cues about gender and develop mental schemas that guide their perceptions, behaviors, and expectations. When textbooks emphasize girls' physical appearance over their intellectual abilities or achievements, they reinforce a schema that devalues girls' capabilities beyond superficial traits.

Such depictions can have significant developmental implications. Ullah and Haque (2016) argue that girls exposed to these narratives may internalize the belief that their worth is primarily determined by their physical appearance, which can erode self-esteem and limit aspirations. This constrains their ability to envision themselves in roles that emphasize intellectual, leadership, or athletic capabilities. Similarly, boys absorbing the same narratives might form skewed perceptions, associating girls with passivity or superficiality, further perpetuating gender inequalities in social and professional settings.

Textbooks, as critical tools in shaping young minds, have the responsibility to counteract these limiting schemas by presenting balanced and empowering narratives. Tibbitts (2017) highlights that showcasing girls' achievements in academics, leadership, sports, and other fields challenges stereotypes and helps build schemas that value individuals for their abilities and potential. Such portrayals empower girls to see themselves as capable and accomplished and educate boys to respect and value these contributions, fostering a more equitable societal mindset.



**Grade 10, Page 51**

In Nepal, while it is true that males predominantly plough the fields, females are not weak. Traditionally, males do physically demanding jobs, and the notion is that girls are inherently delicate and need to be protected. This perspective fosters gender discrimination and supports work-based gender norms. The textbooks should present a more balanced view of gender roles in labour, dismantling the perception of female fragility and promoting gender equality. Both genders should be presented as capable and strong so that the students are empowered to question and overcome traditional gender values.



Koteshwor, Kathmandu

19 May 2022

The Editor,

The Rising Nepal

Dharmapath, Kathmandu

Dear Sir,

**Grade 10, Page 81**

The letter's address, "Dear Sir," reflects historical and traditional norms where men predominantly held positions of power and authority. This practice continues even today, which can be seen as outdated and exclusionary, failing to acknowledge the core value of gender equality. It's better to use gender-neutral salutations that ensure respect and equality.



**Grade 10, Page 102**

In patriarchy, females are more harmed by facing harassment, bullying, and exploitation. When textbooks portray such pictures, it can normalize the concept for students, suggesting that girls are inherently targets for harm.

## Popularity of Different Sports in the World

Sports are popular for a number of reasons. Keeping healthy, for example, is often cited as a reason for participating in sports. Others will tell you that they do sports for recreational purposes. Sports are even more popular with people who do not necessarily participate in them, but love being spectators. Since time immemorial, people have been awed and inspired by extraordinary human beings who are able to perform tremendous athletic feats. Here is a brief discussion of the most popular sports in the world.



Grade 10, Page 160

### A. Answer the following questions.

- Name any two most popular sports in Nepal.
- Which one of the two do you like the most? Why?



Sources: Grade 10, Page 166

The above three images from grade 10 textbooks occupy more space for boys than girls. This overrepresentation reinforces traditional concepts that favor boys in sports with a male domain. The textbook reveals a significant imbalance in gender representation where boys are more dominantly showcased as athletes.



Javananda Lama (1956-2022 A.D.) ..... passed away at his residence, Kaushaltar Bhaktapur ..... senior folk singer and actor ..... incredible loss for the Nepali art sector .....Kalakate Kainyo, Herda Ramro, Chuin Chuin Chukane Joota, Mulako Chana ..... his super hit folk songs .....acted in more than a hundred movies ..... heartfelt .....

Source; Grade 10, Page 188



The use of only male images of condolences suggests a bias that overlooks the contributions and significance of notable women. Such pictures imply that only men are worthy of public mourning and recognition. In Nepal, there have undoubtedly been many notable women whose deaths merit respect and acknowledgement. It is important to include prominent females to address the imbalance. This not only honours their contributions but also promotes gender equality, recognizing the value of women in society.

My uncle's family usually comes to stay with us for Dashain, but ..... (by this Dashain/this Dashain) we are going to visit them instead. They live in a village in Kalikot. I can hardly wait. I ..... (will have had/will be having) a fantastic time there. School holidays ..... (are going to start /will start) on Friday, and we are going to leave the following morning. At this time next week, I ..... (will be trekking/will have trekked) to Rara Lake with my cousin, Sunil. He's an experienced trekker, and I ..... (am going to practise/will have practised) rock climbing with him every day. .... (By /On) the last day of our visit, Sunil's dad is going to take us to visit Manma, the district headquarters. I hope by then I ..... (will have explored/will be exploring) a lot about the life of people in Karnali. I ..... (will be getting/will have got) a lot of experience of trekking by the time we get back to Kathmandu after Dashain.

**Sources: Grade 10, Page 202**

The common reference to “uncle’s family” rather than “aunt’s family” underscores the deeply ingrained patriarchal norms in our society. These terminologies reflect the lack of a recognized female identity and their roles in society. In the patriarchal system, women often lack a sense of permanent belonging as they move from their father’s home to their husband’s home after marriage (Subedi, 2020). The system develops the women’s role to contribute and sustain the family without proper recognition or familial title. They even don’t have a direct right to property or any decision-making process. It seems a long time to recognize and honour women’s identities independently in the patriarchal society, but while developing the textbooks, we can promote gender equality, ensuring the terms that value and recognize female identity.

The analysis of the content from the current English textbook of grades IX and X reveals significant gender biases consistent with the Gender Schema Theory, which posits that children internalize societal gender roles through cultural cues (Bem, 1981). Male characters are predominantly portrayed in prestigious roles like doctors and pilots, while female characters occupy subordinate positions such as teachers and singers, reinforcing stereotypes that associate professional success with masculinity and limiting girls’ aspirations (Acharya, 2017; Koirala, 2019). Dialogues often depict men initiating conversations, emphasizing male dominance in social interactions and perpetuating gender hierarchies (Clark, 2019; Williams & Jones, 2020). Additionally, male characters dominate socio-cultural and religious activities, marginalizing women and undermining their potential for leadership in these contexts (Anderson, 2017; Taylor, 2020). These biased representations reflect and reinforce traditional norms, shaping children’s perceptions of gender roles and capabilities. In this support, Subedi (2020) suggested that addressing these disparities by incorporating balanced and inclusive portrayals in textbooks is essential for promoting gender equality and challenging entrenched stereotypes.

## Conclusion

The discussion of this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of gender representation in secondary-level English textbooks in Nepal. This research illustrates a clear pattern of gender bias that manifests through language, visual representation, and character roles within the textbooks. These biases have profound implications for students' understanding of gender roles and their aspirations for the future. To foster an inclusive educational environment that promotes gender equality, critically evaluating and revising existing educational materials is imperative. By doing so, we can challenge entrenched stereotypes and create learning experiences that empower all students, regardless of gender identity.

The study calls for collaborative efforts among educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to ensure that future textbooks reflect a more balanced representation of genders. This is not only vital for promoting gender equality within education but also essential for cultivating a society where all individuals have equal opportunities to succeed. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender representation in education, emphasizing the need for systemic change to dismantle existing biases and promote a more equitable future for all learners. Finally, the paper suggested that the textbook authors be aware that taking orientation or having discussions with specific representatives or experts can help reduce gender biases in the textbooks. Using strategies suggested by the researcher may raise awareness about avoiding gender bias and promoting gender equality instead.

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