

Representation of Gender in the Selected Pakistani Authors' Children's Picture Books

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Abstract

Children's picture books have a significant role in developing gender roles and identities in children. Therefore, children's literature is one of the most influential mediums to instill social and cultural values. This study addresses gender depiction in children's picture books by Pakistani authors. A total of five picture books authored by Pakistani writers are selected to see how gender is portrayed through language. Qualitative textual analysis of selected picture books has been undertaken to uncover characters of different genders. Spender's dominance approach (1980) to language is employed for the linguistic analysis of characters. Turner Bowker's (1996) and Alsagoff's (2009) general categorizations of adjectives are employed to investigate descriptors used for characters of different genders. Linguistic analysis of the picture books reveals that gender disparity exists in the authors' word choices. Male characters are defined as determined, authoritative, and proud, while females are described as beautiful, and caring, but not brave enough to fight for themselves. Gender-oriented tasks are given to male and female figures. Females are restricted to indoor activities, while outdoor activities are assigned to the male gender. Even if women are portrayed in public life, the nature of their roles remains the same; she is in the role of teacher, nurse, and receptionist. In contrast to previous studies, their representation in central roles and titles has greatly improved. Such stereotypical depictions of gender may have a detrimental effect on children's minds. Hence, it is imperative for parents and teachers to choose gender-neutral literature for children.

Keywords: children's literature, picture books, gender depiction

Introduction

Children's literature has a significant role in transmitting culture-based values to children (Cherland, 2006). Through picture books children are acquainted to the world of literature. Like all other forms of literature, children's picture books also can transmit societal values through the stereotyped depiction of female and characters. Studies carried out on children's picture books show that children's books are one of the powerful mediums to perpetuate stereotyped gender images. The gender-biased portrayal of characters can have an enduring impact on children's sense of self-value (Adams, Walker, & O'Connell, 2011). The stereotyped gender portrayal in children's picture books is perpetuated through oversimplified character

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depiction through text. In different cultures and societies, gender is perceived differently based on their roles. In other words, males are supposed to act and behave in a manner that makes them different from females. In almost all societies, wage-earning tasks are attributed to masculinity, and males are identified with these roles, while females, on the other hand, associate themselves with feminine roles. Gender stereotyping results from categorizing males and females into two diverse groups based on gender. Children exposed to these stereotyped roles consider them appropriate and try to adopt these roles and mold themselves accordingly (Weitzman et al., 1972)

Studies conducted by different scholars on children's literature show that children's books have tints of linguistic sexism and stereotyping. These books are primarily about male characters, and females are underrepresented in them. The children's books story is mainly about the adventures of male figures and revolves around their life stories. Common themes in children's books where females predominate are passivity, homemaking, and victimization by the opposite gender. Although female representation in children's literature has greatly improved after feminism has grasped the world's attention. Subtle nuances of sexism and gender biases are still visible in the language of children's books. Female depiction in the central role and title of the book has significantly improved, but the tasks assigned to them are traditional feminine roles. They are mothers, sisters, or daughters serving and protecting their families. Ambitious, independent, and career-oriented females can rarely be seen in these storybooks. Female characters are invisible or underrepresented in the story by having fewer dialogues than male characters. Less portrayal of females in storybooks emboldens the belief that females are not significant members of society. Thus, indirectly inculcating in children's minds the common belief that females are inferior to males.

Pakistani society is considered a patriarchal society that upholds gender-based attitudes within its social fabric. Males and females are given traditional gender roles where females are restricted to homes and male is free to meddle with both domestic and social tasks. Unfortunately, gender disparity is so ingrained in Pakistani society that its visible imprints can be seen in all kinds of literature. Children, when they read such biased literature where women are segregated based on their gender, have a profound impact on their personalities. Through differential use of language, children's books authors portrayed the male and female gender as two contrastive figures with different personalities and responsibilities. Rather than bringing some positive and constructive change in society, children's literature further augments this belief by presenting a distorted image of society (Mushtaq & Rasool, 2012).

Picture books play an irreplaceable role in the life of children as it is one of the first mediums through which children are introduced to literature. Picture books provide significant help to parents to develop children's literacy skills before they go to school. Picture books develop children's imagination, language learning, and aesthetic abilities. Through visuals, fancy language, and bright colors in picture books children's interest in reading is stimulated, and they develop the reading habit. The imaginative capacity of children is also stimulated through reading picture books (Weeks, 2013). The language used in these books to depict male and female characters is of utmost significance. So, the language used in the children's books demands attention of the researchers and parents.

Number of studies have been conducted to investigate the gender depiction in curriculum books in Pakistan. Few studies have been conducted on how gender is portrayed in children's recreational books. This paper investigates the gender depiction in Pakistani authored children's picture books. The researcher intended to analyze the language used by authors of these selected books to discuss the male and female characters. These books are composed in English. The researchers aim to see if the writers of the selected books are aware of gender stereotyping.

This research paper is significant for parents and teachers to know the importance of language in children's picture books. This study can be used as a reference by parents to select gender-neutral literature for their children. The findings of this study show the use of gender-biased language. Females are given roles that are considered less prestigious in society, while male characters are assigned more promising and influential tasks. The findings reveal that more research needs to be done on children's literature in Pakistan to create a balanced society where both genders have an equal presentation.

Research Question

How is gender represented linguistically in the selected picture books authored by Pakistani writers?

Literature Review

Gender Development through Picture Books

Picture books rely on both words and images in the text in order to better convey the meaning to the readers. These books are exclusively written for children to build their vocabulary and formally introduce them to the world of literature. So, picture books have a very significant role in the life of a child. Although children spend most of their time watching cartoons on TV and playing games on gadgets, books are still considered the most effective medium because they

remember the books read during their impressionable years throughout their lives to relate to the characters portrayed in them. In contrast, they forget TV shows and cartoons, as they are not active parts of their lives. Keeping the view of the significance of picture books for children, it is evident that the characters depicted in them can have enduring impacts on the children's overall perception of gender roles.

Children's sense of identity is influenced by society and their literature. The culture, values, and belief systems of any society are reflected in the books. Children discover the outer world through books, knowing about the lives of others who are quite different from them. So, the way the characters are depicted in children's picture books can positively or negatively impact children's identity development. Consistent exposure of children to stereotypical text can negatively affect their sense of self-value. Negative portrayal or the invisibility of the female gender in the text gives the impression to the children that females are not worthy enough to talk about, strengthening the existing gendered system (Berg, 1996). The theme of early picture books is to motivate young boys and girls to love their families and be obedient. Boys and girls who obey their parents are rewarded and appreciated by everyone at the end of the story. To sum up, children's books reinforce society's ideals and directions (McCabe et al., 2011).

One of the ways to look at the language used in the text is to analyze the descriptive words used for male and female characters. Sveen (2005, p. 28) is of the view that "characterization through description in children's literature is considered to be one of the strongly gendered narrative patterns". Words connoting cleverness, strength, courage, masculinity, and positivity are associated with male characters. In contrast, female characters are described as weak, impotent, and passive. Most of children's books picture females as dependent on the male gender and relegated to household activities. Linguistic choices made by authors in children's literature reflect subtle tint of sexism. The use of sexist language in written or spoken language comes under subtle sexism. Unfair and unequal treatment of women is recognized as subtle sexism and is perceived to be routine by most people, as it is not causing harm like covert sexism. Most people are unaware of sexist language, or they don't consider it sexist in order to protect the existing hierarchical social structure.

Weitzman et al. (1972) study on children's picture books for preschoolers in one of the cardinal studies in this regard. Findings of his studies show the under-representation of female characters in titles, central roles, and illustrations. Male characters were given more diverse roles while females were restricted to homemaking. Weitzman et al. set a benchmark for many others to follow. An ample amount of

research has been conducted on children's literature by foreign and local researchers to study gender depiction. Almost all came up with similar conclusions that females are either underrepresented or utterly invisible in the whole story. Consequently, efforts were being made by publishers and authors of children's books to eradicate genderism in children's literature. Subsequently, girls were given representations in central roles, illustrations, and the title of the book. However, their roles were traditional feminine roles, and linguistic discrimination was quite evident. Now the obvious shift can be seen from overt and covert sexism to subtle sexism.

Research Methodology

This study is based on children's picture books authored by Pakistani writers for children between 3 to 8 years. A total of five books are analyzed. These books are (i) *King for Day* by Rukhsana Khan (ii) *Rani: The Beautiful Swan* and (iii) *A Visit to the Dentist* by Maheen Zeeshan (iv) *Mama Goat and her Kids* and (v) *Oddie's Adventure* by Roohi Haq. These books were selected through the purposive sampling technique. What makes this research paper significant is that here the focus of the researcher is Pakistani authors who have authored books for children in the English language. They are not translated work and are not part of any school curriculum.

Spender's Dominance theory (1980) is taken as a lens to examine the language used to portray characters of different gender i.e.; male and female, in these selected books. In order to further assess the adjectives, Bowker's (1996) and Alsagoff's (2009) general categorizations of adjectives are taken into consideration. Spender asserts that the linguistic dominance of the male gender that we observe is the result of their dominance in society. Although they (male and female) live in the same linguistic community sharing the same culture and language tools, language still favors the male gender. This linguistic dominance is visible in our everyday language and in our academic writings like "he" or "man" to refer to both males and females. Male gender precedes the female gender in expressions such as brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs., and father and mother, alluding to the fact that the male is the dominant member of society.

Adjectives used to describe male and female characters are further evaluated by categorizing them into type and connotation. According to Alsagoff (2009), adjectives can be divided into seven basic types i.e. (i) value or opinion, (ii) size (iii) shape (iv) color (v) material (vi) age (vii) origin. Bowker (1996) further evaluated the adjective based on positive, negative, and neutral connotations they give in a context.

Analysis(i) *King for a Day* by Rukhsana Khan

Malik, who is the major character in *King for a day*, things are narrated in the story from his perspective. Main character's gender is disclosed to the reader in the very first line of the book.

My brother asks, "Malik, is that all you made?"

According to the gender in the book, character distribution is such that it has one female character and three male characters, i.e., Malik's sister, brother, and Bully living next door.

For the linguistic depiction of gender, one adjective was used to describe the sister i.e.

My sister yells right back, but when turns around, I can see she is hurt inside.

The word "hurt" describes the feelings of Malik's sister. She gets distressed by Bulley's abusive words. The adjective suggests a negative connotation.

The pairing of the male before women in same sex phrases is visible in the book like:

My brother and sister arrive...

... join my brother and sister.

Then my brother and sister get their picks.

In her book *Man Made Language* (1980), Spender acknowledges that the male firstness in the same sex phrases hints at the commonly held belief that males come first in natural lineage.

The roles assigned to characters are gender oriented. Male characters are given roles that are more diverse and require physical exertion. Malik, the main character, is given a wide range of tasks. Although he is paralyzed, the activity he is assigned, i.e., kite flying, is considered a masculine activity. Through his dialogues, he is shown as determined, optimistic, and confident enough to beat his opponent. He is optimistic about his success with only one kite in his hand. He is shown as dominant and commanding by assigning roles to his brother and sister. The indoor tasks are given by him to his sister. An outdoor task of collecting all the kites that he set free is assigned to his brother. In outdoor activities, he is helped by his brother. The involvement of Malik in a wide range of tasks emphasizes that as a male figure, he has to perform both indoor and outdoor tasks and not limit himself to defined tasks.

Malik's sister is the only female figure in the whole story. She is introduced to the readers as Malik's sister as she has no name. This reinforces Spender's (1980) view that women are known to society by their male guardians' names. As compared to her male counterpart, she has fewer dialogues. Her stereotypical feminine tasks are like arranging all the kites for Malik and motivating and encouraging him

to win the title of 'King'. Through her dialogues and role assignment, the writer gives the impression to the readers that she is only there to assist, support, and motivate Malik.

(ii) *Rani, the Beautiful Swan* by Maheen Zeeshan

The title of the book, '*Rani, the Beautiful Swan*' implies that the story is about a female figure. 'Rani' is an Urdu word for 'queen' or 'princesses'. Hence, from the title of the story, it can be reckoned that the female aquatic bird 'Swan' is the central/main character while the secondary characters are the children.

The researchers have identified eight adjectives to examine the main character's linguistic portrayal. They are beautiful, sad, happy, excited, red, white, and long. According to type and connotation, adjectives are classified as; three adjectives present positive connotations, one adjective shows negative connotation, and three adjectives have neutral connotations. Adjectives showing positive connotations are beautiful, happy, and excited to portray birds' optimistic and encouraging image to young readers. Such as,

Rani is a beautiful white swan...

The descriptor 'beautiful' is used to construct an image of swans in the minds of young readers.

Adjectives that give neutral connotations are 'white', 'red', and 'long'. For example:

Rani is a beautiful white swan with a long neck.

She has a red beak.

These adjectives are used to describe the female aquatic bird, Swan. They give neutral implications because different birds have different shapes of beaks, so there is nothing good or bad in them.

'Sad' is an adjective used to tell us about the emotions of a swan that becomes sad when children throw bags into her pond and make it dirty. Hence it implies a negative meaning.

Rani is sad. She wants her pond to look clean.

Similarly, in this text, the roles are distributed among male and female characters according to their genders. The main character of the book is a female swan, and she is assigned the task of looking after her pond. Boys in the park are riding bicycles, and like stereotypical females, mothers are busy gossiping with their friends and taking care of their little ones.

Some boys are riding bicycles.

Mothers are meeting their friends and chatting.

Descriptors used to describe the main character 'Swan' are generally associated with female human beings. For example, the adjective 'beautiful' and the pronoun 'she' is employed by the author to introduce her. Authors often adopt this technique of giving human

qualities to non-human beings (personification) in children's books to make them more understandable for young readers. Swan's duty of taking care of the pond is highlighted throughout the text.

(iii) *A Visit to the Dentist* by Maheen Zeeshan

The main character of '*A visit to the Dentist*' is a boy named Talha. He is introduced to the readers in the very first paragraph.

Talha is going to the dentist for the first time today.

The secondary characters are Aminah, Abuji and Mama.

Three adjectives i.e., excited, happy, and scared were identified to look at the linguistic representation of gender. According to adjective types, they can be put in the category of opinion or value. 'Scared', 'excited', and 'happy' give negative, neutral, and positive connotations in the text respectively.

He is scared but his Abuji has promised

Descriptor 'Scared' is used to describe feelings of Talha. He visualized the dentist as some monster and was unwilling to go for a checkup. Hence, the word 'scared' gives negative connotations.

The adjective 'excited' implies a neutral connotation in the text.

Talha is excited to see the big chair

The descriptor 'happy' is used to describe the feelings of Talha after finding him without cavities. Hence it implies a positive connotation.

Thank you so much. Talha is happy

The dichotomy between the genders is visible in the text in the order of appearance of noun/pronoun phrases and dialogues. In same sex phrases, the male gender comes before the female. Also, the story opens with a male dialogue. This shows the superiority of the male gender in society, which is also reflected in language.

Abuji, Mama, Talha and Aminah all sit in the car to go to the dentist.

Gender-oriented tasks are assigned to characters. Talha's father is the head of the family who carries out all the outdoor tasks, and also, he is the one who gives factual information to the children. Two female figures in the text are Talha's mother and sister. They are a constant source of motivation and encouragement for Talha.

'Talha, don't be scared,' says Mama.

Characters are given social roles and occupations as per their gender. We see females as receptionists and nurses and males in the dentists' roles. Occupations that are considered prestigious in society are assigned to the male gender. This supports Spender's view that males are dominant due to their prestigious social positions.

(iii) *Mama Goat and her Kids* by Roohi Haq

The title of the story is suggestive enough to tell us about the central character i.e., Mama Goat. Using third person pronoun 'her', gender of the goat is disclosed to the reader.

*There lived a beautiful goat with her three lovely kids...
She is known everywhere as Mama Goat.*

Linguistic analysis of the text shows that three descriptors, i.e., beautiful, furious, and grateful, were used to describe Mama Goat. These three adjectives can be placed in the category of value and opinion. Based on Turner Bowker's evaluation of adjectives, these three descriptors imply positive meaning in the text. Such as:

Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful goat with her three lovely kids.

The author employs the adjective "beautiful" to give a physical description of a goat.

Mama goat was very grateful to the bear.

After being helped by the bear, Mama Goat pays gratitude to him. When all other animals on the farm were hesitant to help her and deliver her message to the tiger, only the bear offered his services to her. So, she kind-heartedly thanked him. Hence the adjective 'grateful' implies a positive connotation.

Mama goat was now furious. She soon made a decision.

The adjective 'furious' connotes positive implications in the text as it describes the motherly feelings of Mama Goat. When the tiger kidnapped her kids, she got furious and decided to fight with him in order to unleash her kids from tiger's den.

to release her kids from the tiger's trap.

In describing the secondary character, Tiger, adjectives discovered are cunning, cruel, clever, disappointed, unhappy, arrogant, and very excited. According to Turner Bowker's evaluation, all these adjectives are negatively evaluated. For example:

Nobody liked the tiger because he was very cunning and cruel.

There is a very clever tiger who wants to eat us all up.

The tiger looked very unhappy as he saw them going out together again

Adjectives like 'cruel' and 'cunning' describe the selfish, deceitful, and inhuman nature. All animals on the farm dislike him for his brutal, callous, and sadist nature.

Social roles and occupations are assigned to characters as per their gender. Only non-human female character in the narrative is Mama Goat. The ascribed gender to all other non-human characters is male. The story has no human character. The central figure of the story, i.e., Mama Goat is portrayed as a helpless and emotional being, and also, she has fewer dialogues than a tiger. In contrast to Mama Goat tiger, the secondary character has more dialogue and is also a very

dominant, powerful, clever, and confident figure in the whole story. He uses all her brain and resources to accomplish his plan of kidnapping kids and succeeds in that. Although he was wrong, he was still confident that he would accomplish his plan and was afraid of none.

Apart from linguistic domination of the male gender, social domination is also evident in the text. Male characters exceed the female, and the tasks given to them are traditionally associated with the male gender like the shoemaker is a male figure. Mama Goat is a working lady; however, her role is foregrounded and focus is more on her role as a mother. To save her kids from the tiger's trap, she sent him a message of confrontation. Upon hearing that the tiger makes fun of her, she emerges victorious, busting all the traditional concepts of women being weak to everyone's surprise.

(v) *Oddie's Adventure* by Roohi Haq

From the title of the book, it can be guessed that the story is about Oddie, a mule. The gender of the mule is revealed to the readers in the first paragraph of the book.

Oddie was a very cute mule, but she was very clumsy...

The story has no human character. It has all non-human characters, and the gender of non-human characters is distributed as such that it has three female and seven male characters.

According to Alsagoff's classification of adjectives into general categories, the adjectives used to describe Oddie can be placed in the category of value/opinion. They are cute, clumsy, afraid, scared, extremely embarrassed, sad, lonely, lost, and tired. According to these adjectives, one adjective gives a positive meaning, and eight adjectives can be placed in the category of negative connotation.

The adjective 'cute' used in the text gives a positive connotation.

Oddie was a very cute mule...

The author has used the descriptor "cute" to describe a mule's physical description. The author has used such descriptors throughout the text to attract the young readers' attention and make the text pleasing aesthetically.

Descriptors clumsy, embarrassed, scared, afraid, cold, lonely, lost, and tired implied negative meanings in the story such as:

Oddie was a very cute mule, but she was very clumsy...

Oddie is described as 'cute' but 'clumsy'. A person who does not act gracefully and elegantly is described as clumsy. The author here described her as clumsy, which foregrounds her cuteness. Hence the word clumsy connotes a negative meaning.

On the side of the pond was a thick forest and Oddie was scared to go forward.

Oddie felt afraid and cold as she tried to find her way through the thick, dark forest.

As the day passed and evening fell, Oddie felt sad, tired, lost and lonely.

Adjectives scared, afraid, cold, sad, tired, lost, and lonely are used to describe Oddie's feeling. Oddie scolded by her father for her clumsiness left the house. Now she felt scared, lost, and lonely in the forests. Hence, these descriptors give negative meanings.

Social roles are distributed according to the gender of characters. Oddie's father is depicted as a leading figure of his house makes important decisions. Despite his limited description in the text, he is pictured as an authoritative figure through his actions. He is the one who gives orders and instructions to others. He wants his kids to behave well and act graciously like a stereotypical father. When Oddie spilt tea on Mr. Bear's jacket by mistake, he (Oddie's father) gets furious and scolds her for her clumsiness.

"Oddie!" shouted Papa Mule.

Oddie's mother is pictured less often compared to Oddie's father. The only description of hers is that she makes a good carrot cake. She is depicted as standing in the kitchen and serving her family.

They were having tea with carrot cake, which was Mrs. Mule's specialty.

Tints of subtle sexism are visible in the text where Oddie's family wished Oddie to be more like Mr. Bear's sons. Oddie's family was very impressed and wanted her to follow them. Here female gender is assessed against the male gender by keeping the male as a universal criterion. Spender too in her book *Man Made language* (1980) argue that the world is divided along male lines as they are the superior and authoritative in society.

Discussion

The basic purpose of this research is to analyze the language used for male and female characters by Pakistani authors in children's picture books. It is undoubtedly a fact that our social values are reflected through language. Our social relations are reshaped due to changes in language by human agency (Horesh, 2017). To portray male and female participants in certain specific ways conscious and unconscious linguistic choices are made by the authors in the books. With an intention to interpret the gender construction in books, the findings of this study reveal that male characters are delineated as confident, determined, arrogant, and proud.

With respect to the linguistic choices made by the writers to illustrate female and male characters gender disparity was found in the use of descriptors. Females are portrayed as beautiful, and cute, but

clumsy, fragile, and not able to fight for themselves while males are described as confident, cunning, and proud individuals. A female is positively evaluated if she is fulfilling her role and negatively, if not performing her feminine duties. Oddie in '*Oddie's Adventure*' is described as cute but clumsy. Her clumsiness foregrounds her cuteness, and because of her clumsiness, she was often scolded by everyone. Hence the adjective "clumsy" is negatively evaluated. This supports Turner Bowker's (1996) evaluation of adjectives. In the same way, the disparity was found in noun/pronoun phrases where male comes before female like Mama Mule and Papa Mule, Mr. and Mrs. Bear, brother and sister etc. This validates Spender's finding in her book *Man Made Language* (1980, p.95) that men hold a primary position in same sex phrases because in natural order man comes before female.

In this way, it validated the findings of Svees (2005), that words connoting cleverness, strength, courage, masculinity, and positivity are often ascribed to male gender. In contrast, female characters are described as weak, impotent, and passive. His findings indicate that male and female characters are described in stereotypical ways and the roles specified for them are traditional roles. Taking into consideration the role of women in modern life the present study has given space to women in public life. However, the traditional feminine roles like receptionist, teacher, and nurse are assigned to them. In '*a visit to the dentist*', women are portrayed in the role of receptionist, nurse, and teacher. This gives the impression to the girls that these are the most suitable jobs for females. Underrepresentation of women in outdoor activities or depiction of them in traditional roles has a negative impact on young readers. It influences their behavior and career choices. Young girls aspire to be teachers, nurses, or a mother because they think these are appropriate and acceptable roles for them. Hence, children's book authors should be neutral in their selection of word choices. And also, females should be presented in nontraditional roles. Real life picture of Pakistani society should be presented.

Conclusion

Regarding the linguistic analysis of text, gender disparity was found in the authors' word choices of selected books. Adjectives like beautiful, cute, scared, lonely, and afraid were used to describe female characters. On the other hand, male characters are presented as cruel, arrogant, proud, and clever. Adjectives describing women in their feminine roles are positively evaluated. This validates Turner Bowker's (1996) findings that male characters are portrayed as more potent, powerful, and masculine than females. Female characters are described as frightened, scared, weak, sweet, and beautiful. Two types

of the female are projected in the selected books. One is like Malik's sister who is weak, unable to retaliate and is protected by her brother whereas the other type is like Mama Goat, who fights with the tiger and releases her kids. She breaks all the stereotypes of women being weak, fragile, and unable to fight for themselves.

It is also visible that the male gender precedes the female gender in the same sex phrases in all five books like: brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Bear, Papa and Mama Mule, and Abuji and Mama. This reflects Dale Spender's view that in the same sex phrases primacy of male gender is because of his precedence in natural lineage. Gender segregation was made in all books by giving male and female characters gender-oriented tasks. Tasks requiring more physical exertion and strength are specified for male figures like shoemakers, and desk jobs are given to females like the receptionist in 'A Visit to a Dentist'. Male characters are depicted in a dominant and authoritative position, which make the decision for their families like Malik, Papa Mule, and Abuji have a domineering role in the house. This highlights Dale Spender's views that the dominant role of the male gender is because of his dominancy in social life.

In contrast to previous studies on children's literature, female representation has greatly improved. The selected picture books have females in leading roles, and they are not wholly portrayed as housewives. It depicted working women as well, but their roles and tasks are traditional feminine tasks. Like, they are shown as nurse, receptionist, and teacher. While in real life, we have women in almost all kinds of jobs and roles. This kind of representation limits children's perceptions of worldview. They restrict their career choices and expect the opposite gender to act accordingly. Hence, it is imperative for both parents and teachers to choose gender-neutral books for children. Furthermore, it is recommended that Pakistani authors remain vigilant while writing books for children.

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