

## A content analysis of gender representation in primary school *Heritage-Social Studies* textbooks in Zimbabwe

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### ABSTRACT

The study explores gender representation in grades 4 to 7 *Heritage – Social Studies* textbooks available to teachers, and learners in Zimbabwe Primary Schools. The feminist theory, which questions gender inequality and injustice through challenging the hegemony of patriarchy, formed the basis of the study. The qualitative study engaged the tenets of content analysis in its analytical framework. The analysis was based on language use and pictures in the textbooks studied. A purposive sample of four *Heritage – Social Studies* textbooks was selected to investigate the phenomenon of gender representation. Five units of each of the four textbooks were the focus of the study. The findings in the study show that textbooks studied are gender biased, as men and boys dominate the first position in nouns and pronouns. Picture presentation in analysed textbooks was biased towards men and boys thereby depicting an inclination towards patriarchy. The positively skewed picture representations biased in favour of men and boys impact on school learners differently. The study indicated that imbalanced representation in HSS textbook discourse continues unabated. Stakeholders in the textbook production need to ensure that *Heritage – Social Studies* textbooks are devoid of gender bias and gender discrimination. This is possible if government, through the Ministry of Education put in place guidelines for gender representation in textbook writing. Gender fair language on which both masculine and feminine generics promote the visibility of both men and women as well as boys and girls should characterise HSS textbooks. The textbooks produced should have gender-balanced pictures in order to undo stereotypical portrayal of females as inferior beings and males as dominant beings.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender, representation, gender discrimination, gender bias, *Heritage-Social Studies*; textbooks, gender equality



## **Introduction**

The first agents shaping gender identities in schools are, among others, school textbooks (Aoumeur, 2014). A study by Sadker and Zittleman (2014) revealed that pupils spend 80 to 95% of their time in class using textbooks. Teachers on the other hand tend to develop most of their instructional decisions from school textbooks. Furthermore, textbooks facilitate conversations that are gender-related between teachers and pupils. However, gender bias in textbooks is a barrier in efforts dedicated to securing gender equality (Blumberg, 2007; Ma, 2020; Scott & Husain, 2021).

Gender bias in school textbooks, has been identified in researches conducted throughout the world. Article 10c on the Convention for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), refers to the elimination of stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by way of revising textbooks and school programmes as well as adapting teaching methods (Thompson, 2017).

Textbooks generally are effective and cost efficient and they are also critical teaching media particularly in the continent of Africa where there are under-resourced schools. This is the reason why most scholarship about gender in instructional material in the continent is dedicated to textbooks. Literature reviewed shows that girls and women roles in textbooks are depicted as inferior to those of boys and men (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009). There are discourses that have highlighted perpetuation of gender inequality in school textbooks. The discourses note the dominance of masculinities over femininities in ways that perpetuate inequitable gender relations at the same time consolidating male supremacy through school textbooks (Morojele, 2012). School textbooks, researchers emphasize, are an integral aspect of the curriculum and most formal artefacts demonstrating what educational norms to be transmitted in the classroom are (Levtov, 2014; Chinyani, 2010). Furthermore, textbooks have a potential and capacity to induct girls and boys into specific gendered performance (Pillay & Maistry, 2018).

One study that has been carried out in Zimbabwe was by Mutekwe and Modimba (2012). These researchers conducted an evaluation of the gender sensitive nature of science textbooks in the Zimbabwe secondary school curriculum development. The study aimed at evaluating how gender sensitive and balanced were the selected textbooks in the school curriculum in Zimbabwe.

The study by Mutekwe and Modimba (2012) revealed that a great deal of patriarchal values and ideologies are contained in the school textbooks studied. The textbooks analysed were found to contain gender biases, imbalances and stereotypes. This study, on the other hand, investigates how gender is represented in Heritage – Social Studies (HSS) textbooks. That social gender roles are presented to students mainly through textbooks is a given in most schools in Africa. In view of this, textbooks can be viewed as important material mirroring society's cultural patterns. The main focus of this study therefore is to examine how women and men, girls and boys are presented in HSS textbooks in Zimbabwe.

Given that textbooks are the main teaching material in most classrooms in Africa, it is of crucial importance in this study to establish ways in which textbooks depict gender through representation of both males and females. As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, there is a dearth of studies conducted to examine gender representation in the primary school HSS textbooks which have been in use in Zimbabwe since the introduction of the current curriculum. To this end, this study was designed to establish how gender representation is handled in Zimbabwe primary school HSS textbooks.

## **Review of Literature**

Feminist theory forms the basis of this study. It is a theory that questions gender inequality and injustice by challenging the hegemony of patriarchy. It analyses structures of domination in a number of issues inclusive of gender, class, sexuality, as well as gender differences in behaviour, roles, and activities (Chinyani, 2010). The theory has influenced studies on gender and language and it strives to bring about social justice and change by challenging discourses and ideologies that are rooted in patriarchal power interrogating gender and power relations among other issues (Lazar, 2017; Sunderland, 2006).

A textbook is a key educational resource in a classroom. It is viewed as a core learning medium composed of text and or images designed to bring about a specific set of educational outcomes, traditionally a printed and bound book including illustrations and instructions for facilitating sequences of learning activities (Thompson, 2017). A scholar in the field of education sees a textbook as a basic learning tool for pupils and teachers; a tool of negotiation between the various actors involved in its production and use; and an element of communication within families, especially for values Chinyani (2010).

Textbooks are, therefore, a tool for both education and social change. As an instrument of socialisation, textbooks are important vehicles in the construction of beliefs and attitudes about gender that may not be immediately apparent to the untrained eye. (Pillay & Maistry, 2018).

### ***Textbooks and gender representation***

**U**nited Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2005) viewed textbooks as the core learning medium composed of text and images which are designed to bring about a specific set of educational outcomes. Textbooks play a central role in HSS as they are frequently the cornerstones of classroom discourse as well as a key medium in classroom teaching and learning. Academic research has queried the contribution of textbooks to gender discrimination through skewed representation of men at the expense of women in the textual language (Backhouse & Cherrier, 2019; Paudel & Khadka 2019). In the same vein, investigation by Lee (2018) on gender representation and construction in Japanese textbooks found out that the 'male-first' phenomenon was an ongoing concern. Studies in Malaysia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh showed gender inequality and male bias. In these three countries, females were depicted as passive and introverts in English textbooks investigated as pointed out by Jabeen, Chaudhary and Omar in 2014.

**B**rugeilles and Cromer (2009) viewed textbooks as agents of social change given that they propagate values that are global in nature. Over and above their contribution to learning through dissemination of knowledge, textbooks contribute to the upbringing of learners through transmission of norms and values among other roles they play. Furthermore, Kostas (2021) studied the discursive construction and positioning of gender in primary school textbooks using Feminist Critical Discourse and found out that there were dominant representations of men in pictures and texts. In the same vein Cocoradă (2018) reported that in Romanian textbooks, there was dominant representation of men and boys in pictures and texts implying under-representation of women and girls in both pictures and texts. The referred to studies show that textbooks in general are androcentric, and are defined by femininity and masculinity discourses that are hegemonic.

**E**thiopian social science textbooks, as found out by Dejene (2017) gender representation was unfair to girls and women. Related to this finding, Asadullah (2018) as well as Risman (2018) concurred on the observation that within social studies textbooks, women and girls were underrepresented and stereotyped.

Hence, the observation that school textbooks merely reflect existing inequities within society. If women are marginalised in textbooks, they sustain the societal stereotype that women are not important (Kosir & Lakshminarayanan, 2022).

**T**extbooks, as depicted in the above reviewed literature, are therefore, important and influential tools through which children are exposed to ideas about gender. In view of this, unequal treatment of women and men, girls and boys in textbooks would be reflected on the learners' thinking and their daily activities in society. It is through textbooks that learners' ideas and thoughts are shaped. Hence, Dejene (2017) observed that coming up with a textbook is akin to choosing values, norms and representations that lead to social cohesion and harmonious relationship between people and institutions. Of concern, therefore, is the dearth of research-based knowledge on the content of Heritage – Social Studies textbooks as it relates to gender representation when these textbooks are an important teaching resource.

### *Variables demonstrating gender representation in textbooks*

**T**he variables demonstrating gender representation are many and varied. This section of the study reviews three main variables. These variables include language use, masculine firstness, generic use of the word man and pictorial presentation.

#### *Language use*

**O**n language use Swanson (2016) as well as Melesse and Yayeh (2020) in their studies contributed significantly to the analysis of gender representation in textbooks used in the school system. The Swanson (2016) study is research that analysed the use of the generic pronoun 'he' in textbooks, and its impact on gender representation and inclusivity. The study found out that it was used significantly more often than other gender-neutral pronouns. The study also found out that the 'he' pronoun perpetuates gender stereotypes as it excludes women from representation. Melesse and Yayeh (2020) focused mainly on language use among other variables to demonstrate gender representation in textbooks used in the Ethiopian school curriculum. Gender related proper nouns, pronouns and common nouns emerged as variables used to demonstrate gender representation in textbooks used in the school curriculum. The study revealed that male representation was to a large extent much higher than it was when compared to that of female representation in the textbooks studied. This representation characterised all subjects offered in the Ethiopian curriculum and cut across all grade levels.

### *Masculine firstness*

**M**asculine firstness is a term that was coined by philosopher and feminist scholar Judith Butler. The term refers to the way in which masculinity is often seen as the first position in society with femininity being viewed as a deviation from that norm. This relates to the idea of gender as a social construct because it highlights how gender roles and expectations are not inborn, but that they are socially constructed and reinforced and perpetuated through cultural norms and values. In the context of textbook analysis on gender representation, 'firstness' refers to positioning of the male noun or pronoun ahead of the female noun or pronoun in sentences and conversations (Sugino, 1998). In their study, Melesse and Yayeh, (2020) found out that the order of mentioning two nouns in textbooks took the following pattern: 'Mr and Mrs', 'Brother and Sister' as well as 'Husband and Wife'. The masculine lexical item always came first. It is noted that masculine firstness implies higher status on the part of men. Furthermore, this automatic ordering reinforces the second-place status of women, thereby reinforcing the stereotypical notion of masculine firstness (Pillay & Maistry, 2018).

### *Generic use of the word man*

**G**iven that gender is one component of the way in which power and privilege interact with language, the word 'man' refers to a biological being. It also implies moral characteristics, positions of power, and legitimacy that go far beyond this. Related to this thinking Festande (2013) at a conference held at the Stanford University presented a paper that focused on the issue of gender-neutral language and the use of the generic form of the word man. The conference aimed at raising awareness about how the use of male-centric language can contribute to the marginalisation of women and other gender identities. Festande (2013) argued that using generic form of the word 'man' diminished women to lesser importance than men. Furthermore, using the generic form of the word 'man' to refer to all people is problematic as it erases the existence and contributions of women simultaneously reinforcing gender inequality and the idea that men are the default and women are secondary. In the final analysis generic use of 'man' to represent human beings relegated women to the periphery of humanity.

### *Pictorial presentation*

**P**ictorial presentation refers to illustrations which include pictures and other representations in the form of drawings within a text (Mkuchu, 2004). In a primary school classroom, teaching effectiveness is enhanced when images

reinforce the written content. This is common practice in the teaching of HSS when pupils are exposed to, for example, social, cultural and civic concepts, that enable them to make well thought out decisions as citizens of an interdependent country and world. Given that what teachers teach, and what children learn is what the society expects, HSS textbooks content offers school pupils a lot of opportunities for them to develop attitudes and acquire skills that enable them to become very active citizens.

**R**esearchers focusing on gender representation in textbooks have pointed out that teachers tend to reinforce gender stereotypes through their teaching practices and the materials they use in the classroom (Srinivasan, 2019; Košir & Lakshminarayanan, 2021). These researchers point out that school textbooks are important in making pupils attentive in learning, especially in the primary school. Concurring with this point Teron and Cobano (2008) posit that pictures in textbooks can be used as powerful tools to reinforce cultural values and ideas, and that teachers should be aware of their potential impact on students' attitudes and beliefs. In view of this observation, pictures in textbooks as motivating elements tend to reinforce values and ideas of school pupils. Therefore, pictures form part of the analysis for gender representation of HSS textbooks in this study.

### *Analytical Framework*

**A** feminist perspective was used as a theoretical lens to explore gender representation in the HSS school textbooks. Feminists are of the view that language provides the means for people to think, speak and give meaning to the world around them as alluded to by Weedon as far back as 1987. Research examining gender representation in school textbooks suggests that the frequently employed methodology is content analysis (Wafa, 2021; Southworth, Cleaver, & Herbst 2020). Content analysis was, therefore, the specific framework employed. Therefore, in order to find out gender representation in so far as language use and pictures are concerned in the HSS textbooks the study used specific sampling, to collect data from the HSS published Zimbabwean school textbooks.

**S**pecific sampling refers to a sampling technique used in research studies in which the researcher selects a specific sample because it has characteristics that are of interest to the research under focus. It was employed in this study as it has characteristics of interest to the study under focus in the sense that language used in the textbooks as well as pictures in the selected textbooks



gave a picture of the extent to which men and women as well as boys and girls were represented in these selected textbooks and the respective units selected. The textbook sample of HSS textbooks were accessed and made available. The textbooks published by College Press between 2015 and 2019, were selected to investigate the phenomenon of gender representation. A review of HSS primary school textbooks helped the researcher to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the representation of men and women as well as boys and girls within these textbooks. Within the four selected HSS textbooks, the five units covered were:

- Identity, family history and local heritage
- Cultural Heritage
- National History, Sovereignty and Governance
- Entitlements/Rights and Responsibilities
- Shelter

All the content in the five units was thoroughly analysed based on the identified categories. A qualitative content analysis was conducted focussing on four main dimensions of gender representation. Analysis of variables that included language use, masculine firstness, generic use of the word man and pictorial presentation as they portrayed gender inequality was carried out. The dimension of language inequality involved a qualitative approach in which occurrences of words phrases and sentences attributed to men and women as well as boys and girls in so far as nouns, pronouns and common names were concerned.

On the dimension of picture presentation, textbooks were also analysed to identify representation relating to images of all human characters. The qualitative data gathered under this dimension was interpreted in line with Southworth et al. (2020), which is based on meanings from pictures in the textbooks under consideration. A checklist with main categories and units of analysis was prepared. Gender related content was extracted from each of the five units (sentences and illustrations). Data was then organised in the identified categories for analysis.

Lazar (2017) posited that Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) aims at establishing connections between gender representation and gendered discourses in texts within socio-cultural contexts. This study, within the FCDA framework, attempts content analysis of gender representation in HSS textbooks



in Zimbabwean primary schools from grade four to grade seven, based on the following research questions:

- How is the presence of gender biased language depicted in the HSS textbooks?
- What is the portrayal in pictures of males and females in the HSS textbooks?

## Results

This section analyses and interprets of the data. The purpose of the study was to analyse the Zimbabwe primary school HSS textbooks for gender representation. Gender representation was analysed in terms of language use, masculine firstness, generic use of the word man and pictorial presentation. In this study, therefore, a full picture of gender representation in the units of the selected textbooks is disclosed through these analysed variables.

### *The presence of gender-based language in the textbooks*

In this section of the findings focus is on language use in terms of firstness of nouns, pronouns, and common nouns. The units in the textbooks studied revealed firstness of males in the order of mentioning nouns, pronouns and common nouns. Examples are indicated below:

- Mr and Mrs
- Brother and Sister
- Husband and Wife
- King and Queen
- men and women should always be treated equally
- a man and a woman
- boys and girls
- boy – girl relationships
- Long ago there were no policemen or police women like today.
- Nuclear family is made up of two adults, who are husband and wife and their children.
- Monogamous family is made up of a husband, wife and children.
- Polygamous family - made up of a husband, two or three wives and children

- father and mother
- heroes and heroines
- male and female
- father and mother
- grandfather and grandmother
- a young man and a young woman can get into a courtship relation

The firstness of the noun, pronoun or common noun in the above examples extracted from the textbooks under study referring to males in all the four textbooks and five units was evident with the regularity of a ritual. The masculine word always came first in the textbooks under focus. By implication, higher status was accorded to the masculine words in the units of the textbooks examined. This is in agreement with Pillay and Maistry (2018) who observed that this automatic ordering reinforces the second-place status of women. This also serves to show how the power of men and boys is reinforced. Whilst the explanation for this arrangement could be traced to patriarchy as it relates to historical and cultural dominance of men in society if this goes unchecked it reinforces and perpetuate the subordination of women and renders them second class citizens in these societies. Boys and girls in schools learning HSS using these textbooks means are being socialised to accept this arrangement as normal and natural order of man woman relationship. It, thus, conveys the message that the male status is of more importance than that of females. This observation is in agreement with the finding by that the firstness of the male noun refers to the grammatical rule in some languages where the masculine form of a noun is considered the default or unmarked form, and is often used to refer to both males and female (Melesse & Yayeh, 2020; Southworth et al., 2020; Wafa, 2021). Researchers concur that firstness of the male word compared to that of females characterised most textbooks in schools. Such a scenario reinforces the stereotypical notion of masculine firstness.

### *The prevalence of the 'he' pronoun*

The following section presents sentences and statements in which 'he' is used generically in the HSS textbooks analysed. The textbooks examined revealed that the 'he' pronoun characterised sentences making reference to farming and other professions as evident in the extracts from the textbooks below:

- A farmer grows corn. He has two full time labourers.
- He produces corn at his farm

- He went for a value addition workshop
- He also regularly hires a driver.
- Gender discrimination – where one is treated in a certain way because he is a man or she is a woman.

Swanson's (2016) study analysed the use of the generic pronoun "he" in textbooks and found that it perpetuates gender stereotypes and excludes women from representation.

### *Generic use of the word man*

Over and above the "he" pronoun and professions illustrated above, in the textbooks examined masculine generic constructions were evident as shown in the extracts below:

- man – made disasters
- skilled manpower
- policemen
- Fisherman
- Dustman
- Policeman

The HSS textbooks revealed use of male pronouns as generic as shown in the examples extracted from the textbooks studied. This conveys to the pupils who use these textbooks the visibility and dominance of men and boys over the invisibility and inferiority of women and girls in the home, the professions and in everyday life. This skewed representation of males over females agrees with the observation made by Festante (2013) that using generic form of the word 'man' diminished women to lesser importance than men. Swanson (2016) in agreement also pointed out that generic use of man to represent human beings relegates women to the periphery of humanity. Therefore, use of gender biased language as evident in the textbooks under focus, reveals a marked preponderance of masculine nouns and pronouns over female equivalents. What should be born in mind is that language is an institution that reflects values and it is, therefore, an important vehicle for transmitting ideas about masculinity and femininity. The textbooks examined reflected the primacy of masculinity over femininity. This representation of masculinity in HSS textbooks, therefore, has a significant impact on both boys and girls as it has the potential of shaping their world view of gender roles, expectations as well as behaviours.

### *Picture presentation*

This study analysed pictures in Zimbabwean primary school HSS textbooks for gender representation. Pictures were captured as evidenced by the following descriptions:

- Church delegates donating food, blankets, books, and clothes to orphans. Most of adults in the picture were females.
- Weaving – a female figure
- Dance group (Performing Arts) comprising female dancers only.

The three descriptions of pictures above convey the message to the pupils that caring, weaving and dancing are a female domain thereby perpetuating the stereotype that these three roles are exclusively for the feminine gender. On the other end the description of pictures in the textbooks under study portrayed the masculine gender as illustrated below:

- Welding – a male figure
- Carving – a male figure
- Grinding – a female figure
- Moulding bricks – a male figure
- Brick project – all men image project
- Bakery – a male figure. A baker backing bread
- A man wearing protective clothing whilst spraying chemicals at a farm.

The pictures in the HSS textbooks going by the descriptions above portrayed stereotypes in terms of roles for men and women thereby confirming the findings by Wafa (2021), Cocorada (2018), Southworth et al. (2020), and Melesse & Yayeh (2020) that men generally dominate in pictures in textbooks. Pictures constitute a major element in defining what school textbooks are as a fundamental part of the task of transmitting content. They are one of the most attractive aspects of pupils' attention and this is particularly relevant to the early stages of education. It can be affirmed that pictures are motivating elements which reinforce values and ideas.

Looked at from the content analysis perspective some of the pictures in the HSS textbooks show that gender representation in these textbooks is positively skewed in favour of men. Women are shown largely in stereotypical and passive roles suggesting that women, as evident in the textbooks examined, are not prioritised within the Zimbabwean patriarchal social structure.

This becomes more so given the almost complete reliance of teachers and students on textbooks. Such picture imbalances militate against the objective of HSS textbooks as agents of social change. This study indicates that imbalanced representation in textbook discourse continues.

The analysis made in this study shows that language affirms masculinity across the Heritage-Social Studies textbooks and units studied. Recurring representation of firstness of male nouns in the units of the textbooks analysed, reinforces the second-place status of women and girls and is one of the ways in which the power of men and boys is reinforced. This pervasive ordering is then taken as the natural gendered order by the pupils using the textbooks. The overall trend in these textbooks reflects frequent depiction of masculine linguistic choices before feminine linguistic choices. This use of gender unfair language, especially of the masculine generic restricts the visibility of women and girls.

Picture presentation is a major element in defining school textbooks. Pictures in textbooks therefore become a critical element in transmitting content. Pictures are one of the most attractive aspects of pupils' attention and this is particularly relevant to the primary school level of education. This is in agreement with the observation by Teron & Cobano (2008) that pictures in textbooks are useful and powerful tools for reinforcing cultural values as well as ideas. The analysis in this study does affirm the view that pictures motivate as well as reinforce societal values and ideas. Teachers, therefore, ought to be aware of the potential impact of textbooks on pupils' attitudes and beliefs and deconstruct the stereotypes rooted in patriarchy obtaining in HSS textbooks currently in use in Zimbabwe primary schools.

## **Conclusion**

The findings in this study show that textbooks used in Zimbabwean primary schools for subjects such as Heritage-Social Studies do not take on board gender equality in their representation. The analysis has shown compelling evidence of imbalanced representation in the qualitative content analysis of primary school HSS textbooks as shown by male dominated use of language, masculine firstness, generic use of the word man and male dominated pictorial presentation. Furthermore, women and girls are depicted in stereotypical roles in pictures in these textbooks. This reflects what obtains in a patriarchal society, a silence that is deliberate in order to perpetuate the status quo.

The studied HSS textbooks in primary schools in Zimbabwe, therefore, convey the message underscoring male hegemony disregarding pupil's gender identities. By and large, this study revealed that despite the measures taken by the Zimbabwean government to promote gender equality, male and female representations in HSS textbooks are still far from being realised. In general gender is still represented in a way that supports the *status quo*. The study shows that women and girls, in the HSS textbooks studied are marginalised, stereotyped and given second place status to that of men and boys as pointed out by Lee (2018).

If representation is skewed in favour of men and boys at the expense of women and girls in in school textbooks in general and HSS textbooks in particular, then there is a possibility of a female's world view and experience to be relegated to the dustbin of history. Textbooks are usually taken by teachers and pupils as authoritative sources of information given that they will have been approved by government. In view of this consideration both teachers and pupils use these textbooks as a basis for teaching and learning respectively. This is possible given that teachers use textbooks mostly in their teaching and pupils do use textbooks mainly in their learning, Furthermore, when females' experiences are presented as second class, the vision of HSS subject of socialising pupils to live as equal citizens in their society cannot be realised.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion made, the way forward is proffered below:

- The government, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, may put in place guidelines calling for balanced representation of both men and boys as well as women and girls in textbooks to guide textbook writers.
- In Zimbabwe, the textbooks in general, and HSS textbooks in particular, should depict a balance in masculine and feminine visual and linguistic presentation. In other words, there is need for use of gender fair language in HSS textbooks where masculine and feminine generics promote the visibility of both men and women as well as boys and girls.
- Furthermore, automatic ordering of male pronouns over those of female pronouns should not have space in the HSS textbooks as a way of avoiding reinforcement of the second-place status of women and girls thereby rendering them unimportant and minor.

- In view of this, stakeholders in textbook production should produce textbooks that do not give a preponderance of firstness of men and boys, among other considerations. This is only possible if and when textbook authors deconstruct their own ideological assumptions of gender.
- Given that pictures or visuals constitute a major element in the very definition of school textbooks, and that they are one of the most attractive aspects of pupils' attention and this is particularly relevant to the early stages of education as they are motivating elements reinforcing values and ideas, it follows, therefore, that gender-balanced pictures in HSS textbooks will do away with stereotypical portrayal of females and males as well as girls and boys. Authors of school textbooks are, therefore, obliged to come up with pictures that can make pupils challenge biased representations and make them social change agents.



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