

REVIEW OF SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOK FROM CLASS 6- CLASS 8 FROM GENDER LENS

Textbook reviewed for

Praxis and Breakthrough

By

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Background and Context of Study:

Curriculum resides in relationship with the concept of gender in complex and multifaceted ways. Such a relationship acknowledges also the interconnectedness of curriculum, with assessment and pedagogy as well as with gender and demands that we look beyond gender as 'sex-group differences' to a deeper understanding of this notion as a cultural artifact, with more nuanced and complex understandings of boys and of girls and how gender affects young people's identities as learners, as consumers of knowledge and skills, as well as differentially mediating their learning and ultimately their attainment.

Furthermore, a consideration of gender in a cultural sense enables us to understand that the curriculum as defined and taught is not value free and that subject-based curricula have associated social and cultural scripts that impact and interact with teachers' views of boys and girls as successful learners as well as learners' views of themselves and their experiences of achievement.

An effective curriculum provides teachers, students, administrators and community stakeholders with a measurable plan and structure for delivering a quality education. The curriculum identifies the learning outcomes, standards and core competencies that students must demonstrate before advancing to the next level.

Objectives of Study:

Gender-based discrimination and violence in India draw a range of responses, from advocating for strict exemplary punishments to condoning and justification. Even skimming the surface of the way gender-based inequities are understood points to the need to aim for deep-seated changes in mindsets in society that challenge and question patriarchal belief systems. This cannot be done without influencing young minds.

To address the high levels of gender-based discrimination and violence in India, Breakthrough supported the governments in Haryana and Punjab in strengthening the curriculum for government schools. A similar initiative is being planned with the Government of Odisha.

To input into the social studies curriculum of students in Classes 6-8, Breakthrough conducted a formative research process that engages with a range of stakeholders and

tries to understand local realities around gender-equity in the form of cultural practices, belief systems, pedagogy, traditions and commonly-held narratives. This formative research will succeed in making Breakthrough's inputs to the curriculum relevant to the context of Odisha and relatable to students and educationists here.

Textbooks of Classes 6-8 have to be reviewed from a gender lens –

- To definitely include women, men represented. How many women are being spoken about, what kind of gender examples is being represented? What is missing? Are there sufficient examples of tribal women, dalit women, transgender/ non-binary population in the textbooks? If not, what are some major misses?
- To identify the type of gender narratives such as progressive or regressive in the textbook
- To identify whether it is acknowledging / questioning common narratives / norms or not
- Any broad thoughts for gender equity within the curriculum based on a reading of the textbooks

The following are some of the observations/reviews:

Class VI:

History:

1. Throughout the book, there has been mention only about male emperors. No women emperor or warrior has been mentioned.
2. In chapter 6 also where there has been detail given about the emergence of new religion, the propaganda has been about only the contributions of men.
3. In Chapter 8 where discussion was about Maurya Kingdom, there has been no mention about any women warrior and emperors.
4. In Political Science section of Class VI, Page number 96 it has been mentioned that the Hindu Families are generally Patriarchal, which gives a wrong notion about the complete family and kinship system India

Geography: No change required

Class VII:

History:

While citing the History, rise, fall of different kingdom, there has been hardly mention about the Women Warrriors like Raziya Sultan, Rani Chennamma, Ahilya Bai Holkar, Begum Samru, Rani Mangammal etc.

In Odisha History also there has been mention only about the male emperors.

In Chapter 5 while describing about the religious transformation and revolution, could we have more examples of women religious leaders, so that the children reading the books can develop an idea how women have also had influence on the religious transformation and revolution?

Geography:

Page 68 Class VII geography:

Impact of Air a Pollution: It gives a general statement regarding the impact of Air Pollution on human beings.

If more specific examples could be given how it impacts men and women and also with specific health hazards for men and women.

Page 103 Class VII Geography

If reference could be made how the climatic condition affect the lives of women and their contribution towards livelihood.

A general statement has been made regarding the Livelihood of the Tribal Community. How shifting cultivation has impacted the lives of women, like when the community shift from one place to another how women gets affected both emotionally and unnecessary physical burden.

Page 109 Class VII Geography

While discussing about the lifestyle in Desert, could we add what kind of struggle women go through while dealing with water scarcity and what method is being adapted to cope up with the situation?

Sahitya:

Out of the 22 chapters only 2 chapters have been included from women writers whereas as have so many women writers from Odisha.

Even regarding chapters in this book, the emphasis has been more on the achievements of men rather than highlighting any achievements of women from Odisha.

No poetry or prose about women freedom fighters.

Class VIII

History:

Women have played a major role in India's freedom Struggle like Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali, Kamala Nehru, Kasturba Gandhi, Annie Besant, Vijaya Lakhmi Pandit etc. But in this book there has been no mention about the women freedom fighters

Similarly in chapters where there has been mention about Tribal Movement and Freedom fighters from Odisha there has been no mention about any women freedom fighters/revolutionary/visionary from Odisha like Rama Devi, Sarala Devi, Annapurna Moharana, Malati Chowdhury etc.

In Page number 15 where the educational system has been discussed, no mention has been there regarding education of women.

Could we add in this chapter, how the girls and women were having access to education and how has been the education system for women. This will add a holistic approach for the child who would be studying how each and every segment had/ didn't have the access to education.

In Page number 18, there has been mention about Sati Pratha. There has been no mention why it was being practiced. If we could add some references, how it has held its roots in Patriarchal though process to keep women under subjugation and how system held women as oppressed it could be more impactful.

In page number 18 why female fetus killing was practiced has been mentioned and having girl child was considered as good has been mentioned. If this could be taken out from that chapter as this segment has shown what activities women could not perform, which gave wrong notion.

In Chapter 4 while discussing about British Economic Policy, if women's participation in the workforce could be added, it will highlight how women since ages have contributed to the economic development of the country in each segment.

Geography: No change required

Recommendations:

- In 21st Century where we are talking of digitalization and development, but still in the curriculum which is being followed for the young minds, depicts more of a male centric derivatives.
- All the chapters have shown how men have contributed for nation building.
- Contribution of women for nation building has been completely neglected.
- Along with India, specific and more importance should be given to Odisha History, freedom movements and modern Odisha where both contribution from men and women needs to be highlighted.
- Along with that, the societal culture needs to find a place in the textbooks in 6-8. As with modern technology, children have access to each and every information, the societal cultural practices from a gender neutral perspective and non discriminatory approach should be included in the textbooks.
- While mentioning of Movements, more examples of Tribal and Dalit women needs to be emphasized whether citing example of India or Odisha.