

CHAPTER- 3

METHODOLOGY

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Methodology

Introduction

The present study was an attempt to analyse the sexist elements present in the English textbooks at secondary level and their transaction. The study was formulated mainly with the three objectives:

1. To analyze and find out the sexist elements in the present textbooks of lower level English;
2. To observe and analyze elements of sexism in classroom transaction of English curriculum; and
3. To know the opinion of teachers, principals, parents and students about the sexism in textbooks, classroom transaction and their suggestions to reduce sex bias from the secondary schools.

The methodology adopted for the present study is presented in the following

3.1 Study Design and Research Methods

Taking into consideration the objectives of the present study and the nature of data required to achieve the objectives, the methodology for descriptive study was followed. The research methods used to collect data to answer the objectives were: Content analysis, observation and interviews. Each of these methods has been described in the following.

3.1.1 Content analysis

To achieve the first objective of the present study, lower level textbooks of English of standards VIII, IX and X following Gujarat Board of Secondary Education Syllabus were examined and a content analysis was done. These English textbooks were published by Gujarat Textbook Board of Secondary Education, Gandhinagar.

3.1.2 Observation

To achieve the second objective, the method of observation was used. The English periods were observed. Apart from the classroom observation, the interactions of students, teachers, and parents were observed at different places in the schools like, corridors, prayer hall, playground, canteen, common room, parents meeting, gatherings, cultural programmes, picnic groups, etc. to find out the sexist elements. The observation was unstructured

3.1.3 Interviews

To achieve the third objective, interviews were held with teachers, principals, students and parents regarding their views on sexism prevailing in the textbooks, and their classroom transactions.

3.2 Sample

For the content analysis of the lower level English textbooks of the secondary schools, a total of 89 lessons of the English textbooks of standards VIII (31 lessons), IX (29 lessons), X (29 lessons) were examined

As the lower level English textbooks are followed in vernacular medium schools, three vernacular medium schools of Vadodara city were purposively selected for the observation of sexist elements in classroom transactions. Of these three schools, two had Sindhi as the medium of instruction and one was a Marathi medium school. Two of these schools were co-education and one was an all-girls school. The students of one of the co-education schools were predominantly boys. These schools will be hitherto referred to as School A (Sindhi medium, all girls school), School B (Marathi medium, co-education school) and School C (Sindhi medium, co-education school, having predominantly boys as students).

In each of these schools, 10 English periods of standard VIII, IX and X were observed. The investigator observed 10 periods each in one division of standard

VIII, IX and X¹ in the three schools under study. Thus, 30 English periods were observed in each school and in all, 90 English periods were observed.

For the interviews, the principals of all the three schools and 12 teachers of English of standard VIII, IX and X were selected. As for the students, from each school the required sample of 20 students was selected randomly and those boys and girls who reported having at least one sibling of the opposite sex were interviewed. Thus in all, 60 students were interviewed from the three schools that were put under the study. Similarly, from each of the three schools, 60 parents of the students were interviewed. Several of them were the parents of the students of standard X who were interviewed. The sex-wise breakup of the sample presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Sample selected for interview

Sample	School A ¹		School B ²		School C ³		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Principals	--	1	1	--	1	--	3
Teachers	--	4	2	2	2	2	12
Students (standard X)	--	20	10	10	20	--	60
Parents	10	10	10	10	10	10	60

¹ Sindhi medium, girls' school

² Marathi medium, co-education school

³ Sindhi medium, co-education school, but students predominantly boys

As can be seen in Table 3.1, among the principals, 2 were males and one was female. Out of 12 sample teachers, 4 were males and 8 were females. From 60 students, 30 were girls and 30 were boys. Among the 60 parents, 30 were mothers and 30 were fathers.

3.3 Study Tools

The tools used by the investigator were: A content analysis checklist, an observation guideline, and structured questionnaires.

¹ As (lower level) English is an optional subject in standard X in these vernacular medium schools, a common English period was conducted for students of standard X which was attended by all those students from divisions A, B, and C, who had opted for English as a subject in the S S C Board Examination

Although the observation of the classroom interactions was unstructured, the investigator prepared a list of issues on which to focus the observation, which served as a guideline. The observation focused broadly on the following issues:

- Teachers' attitude in general towards boys and girls, regarding their abilities.
- Teachers' efforts to involve boys and girls in the process of instruction, classroom participation, and participation in other extra curricular activities, such as sports, social and cultural functions held at the school.
- Attention given to boys and girls.
- Encouragement in choice of careers and career aspirations of boys and girls.
- Types of roles, tasks, duties, responsibilities assigned to boys and girls.
- Evaluation of boys and girls.
- Controlling the behaviour and disciplinary measures for boys and girls.
- Segregation of boys and girls, interactions between them.

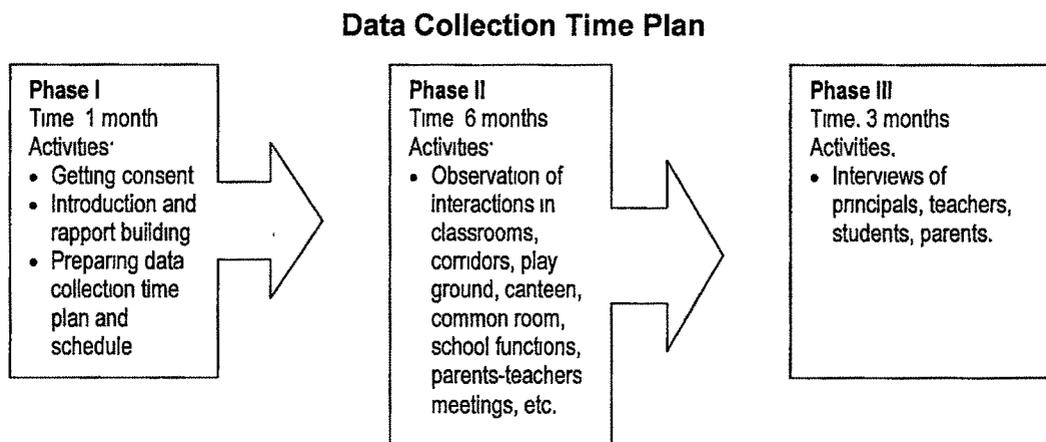
The above list of issues was prepared to facilitate the analysis of the data collected through the observations.

Three structured questionnaires were prepared separately for teachers, parents and students. Each of the questionnaires was prepared on the basis of observations made by the investigator on their interactions in the classrooms and other places in the school premises. The items in these three questionnaires were related to the perception of teachers, parents, and students on gender bias and discrimination in schools, classroom and in the family.

Each of the questionnaires was given to a few experts for their suggestions and on the basis of their feedback, the questionnaires were modified accordingly. The copies of the questionnaires prepared for the principals and teachers, parents and students are given in Appendix A, B, and C, respectively.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection for the present study was conducted over a period of one academic year, between July 1999 and March, 2000. In the first phase, over a period of one month, the investigator sought the permission of the school authorities, the concerned teachers by briefing them about the study and its objectives. All efforts were made to ensure that the presence of the investigator and the study would not in any way cause disturbance or inconvenience to the schools. As the timings of the schools differed and being a full time teacher in a school, the investigator had to plan the data collection according to the time-table of the study schools and her own convenience.



The following were the procedures adopted for the various research methods adopted to gather the required data for the present study.

3.4.1 Content analysis

The (lower level) English textbooks of standard VIII, IX and X were taken for the content analysis. The English textbooks contained four types of sections viz. detailed study section, supplementary reading section, revision section and poetry section. The first two parts of the content were taken for analysis. Detailed studies and supplementary reading were analysed thoroughly, but poems were excluded from the analysis as ambiguity of their meaning and elasticity of their structures were

not amenable to content analysis. A total of 89 lessons of the English textbooks of standards VIII (31 lessons), IX (29 lessons), X (29 lessons) were examined. While analysing the content of the lesson, title of the lesson, theme of the lesson, number of words, number of sentences, number of words that revealed male domination, bias against females, and neutral words and sentences, types of examples, pictures were considered. Apart from the analysis of lessons, the text architects including writers, editors and other technical persons associated in preparing the textbooks were also analysed in terms of the number of male and female persons involved the total analysis of the textbooks was done with a view to finding sexist elements in the textbooks.

3.4.2 Observation

With the permission of the authorities of the selected schools, the English classes of standard VIII, IX and X were observed. The researcher observed the English periods from the beginning to the end. The duration of the English period in the schools was 30-35 minutes.

Apart from the classroom observation, the interactions between students, teachers, and even parents were observed at different places on the school premises, like, corridors, prayer hall, playground, canteen, common rooms, parents meeting, gatherings, cultural programmes, picnic groups, etc. to find out the sexist elements in their interaction and differential treatment of boys and girls. The observations were meticulously recorded in a notebook and these field notes were later expanded.

3.4.3 Interviews

Once the observation of English periods and interactions were completed, teachers, school principals, students and parents were interviewed face-to-face with their prior consent. Teachers and students were interviewed in the school in a separate room. Parents of the students were approached mainly at the school during the "result day", when they came to collect the report cards of their children. Some were contacted during school functions or when they came to meet their children (e.g.

during lunch break, etc.). They were interviewed either on the school premises or at their respective homes. The interviews lasted 15-20 minutes.

3.5 Data Analysis

Collected data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively to achieve the objectives of the present study. For objective 1, the contents of English textbooks were analysed qualitatively. Frequency count and percentage analysis were used to find the sexist elements, in terms of the number of words related to different sex. While analysing the sexist elements in terms of the text architects, title of the lessons and themes of the lessons, qualitative statistical technique was used. Chi square test was also used for this purpose.

Qualitative analysis was done for the observations. Observed points were recorded in the descriptive text forms. Data collected through interviews were analysed with the help of percentage techniques for specific responses.

The details of analysis of the data and their interpretation are given in the following chapter (Chapter 4).