

## CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL VALUES AND BELIEFS IN SOCIETY THROUGH TEXTBOOKS

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### Abstract

*Educational system with its goals and practices is now a dominant part of civilized societies. The purpose of this study is to analyze the ideologies and fundamental values which are working behind the theoretical representation of educational policies in Pakistan. Mixed Method approach has been applied in this study. Fairclough's 3D model is used to conduct analysis on descriptive level, interpretational level and the explanatory level (Fairclough, 1989). This study has also applied Model of Van Dijk "The socio Cognitive Analysis" for ideological analysis (Dijk, 1989). Teaching content of selected books of Punjab and NWFP Curriculum Board has been analyzed by means of critical approaches. Paper demonstrates the findings which prove that how the textbook knowledge is socially constructed. Analysis has been carried out in various dimensions including textual analysis, analyzing lexical items, indoctrination of cultural social and religious beliefs. Moreover, the awareness of educated class about biasness of text is examined and last section discusses with the results and opinion of researcher. Thus, it has been extracted that course books and textual discourse in Pakistan serves the interests of powerful fraction of society and the interests of learners are kept aside while designing syllabus. This paper is to highlight the fact that books must be designed to transmit knowledge, develop creative skills and to make learners capable, therefore they must not be bias and neither should be mean of manipulating young minds*

### 1. Introduction

Building and development of a healthy society is highly dependent on educational regimes in that particular society. Books on this part play a vital role in shaping personalities of individuals. According to Milton books are far more superior than humans because of their mortality and everlasting deep impacts (Milton, 1644). Importance of textbooks is undeniable therefore every state pays specific attention on what is being taught to students and how it can influence their thinking and personal development on broader level. In Pakistan similarly compulsory textbooks are heavily embedded with certain ideological beliefs and values that indoctrinate minds of learners. National educational policy of Pakistan was lastly restructured in 1979 in the reign of President General Zia-ul-Haq. His policy of Islamization also included reforms in educational field most importantly revision and redesigning of textbooks by giving a particular Islamic ideological shift to the curriculum. This step of indoctrination of Islam oriented content was taken to influence the minds of younger generation which in result would help to reshape whole society. Present national educational policy of Pakistan makes no difference between religious, ideological and citizenship education therefore it seeks to create more practicing Muslims instead of democratic citizens (Ahmad, 2004).

This study is conducted to analyze such discourse in Pakistani Textbooks that inculcates particular social and cultural constructs moreover it also deals with impacts of this defined

choice of literature on society. It has also been explored that how “Pakistani Identity” is defined by officials and citizens in terms of historical cultural, social, political and religious context. Selected chunks from books taught in different Boards of Pakistan (more specifically English, Pak study and Urdu textbooks) will be kept in consideration to highlight elements of religious beliefs, nationalism, gender definition, us and them/self and other, Islamic ideology, cultural norms and social constructs. Current study also deals with the aspect that such wide use of context specific discourse leaves no room for several other important topics that would be more helpful for students to have strong hold on subject.

This paper aims to determine that how knowledge conveyed in textbooks is not merely knowledge instead it goals to formulate traditional and widely accepted fundamentals among youngsters. Textbook literature in other terms intends to transfer the value system that state wants to be taught in institutes. A critical analysis is drawn in present study which demonstrates the ways in which content specific discourse benefits the state and dominating (ruling class) fractions. The comparative analysis has been carried out by applying different theories of CDA (critical discourse analysis).

### **1.1. Research questions**

1. To what extent the ideological content is conveyed through text books?
2. How are the national, religious and cultural beliefs promoted by linguistic discourse?
3. How such content in textbooks effects/impacts the premature minds?
4. Is our education system acting as the mediator by transmitting particular values to generation which would benefit the ruling class of society?
5. Does curriculum designed by government has a biased approach towards rest of the faiths prevailing in Pakistan? Is this one-sided approach only limited to the religious boundaries or goes beyond?

### **1.2. Research objectives**

The discourse analysis of textbooks content in Pakistan by applying critical approaches has been the center of focus in this research paper. A deep comparative analysis has been conducted in order to bring in light the religious, political, cultural ideological values promoted by these books; moreover, how regionalism, gender biasness, patriarchal dominance and the belief of “us” and “them” is supported by linguistic choice in these books has been the question of study. This research paper is probably going to help readers to end up with this misconception that bookish language and content is ideologically not manipulated.

## **2. Literature Review**

Any use of language cannot be ideology free also “the ideology of ruling class is the ruling ideology” (Marx, 1845). Similarly in words of Fairclough “ideology is any social policy that is consciously derived from a widely accepted social theory” (Fairclough, 1989). According to the “theory of ideology” proposed by Rosen, Pakistani society can be correctly defined as a

self-maintaining society and this continuation is stabled by the means of oppressive regimes therefore such approach is called false consciousness. This theory was fully explained by Marx several models were included which helped in detailed understanding that why and how the fundamentals of few are widely accepted by many in any culture (Fluxman, 2005).

Use of language and discourse in any society is widely accepted and adopted social practice which can result in influencing or molding social ideologies. Education with no exception has a deeply rooted use of language in written and verbal form. Luke (1988) claims that knowledge transmitted by means curriculum or textbooks is and ideological procedure serving the interest of certain social groups; therefore, it is a continuously driving activity (Luke, 1988).

Education plays a very important role to complete the cycle of socialization in modern society. According to Nunan education plays a very important part in nation-building hence Ministry of education is responsible to maintain and ensure the preservation of ideological foundations of state by promoting and transferring these fundamentals/foundational beliefs into next generation by means of textbook discourse. The process of curriculum designing therefore seeks to upgrade and enhance educational discourse as per needs of state and society (Nunan, 1988). School education must now be designed as smooth and tolerable with a positive outlook of rationalism and acceptance of every existence (Amicus, 2009 April 22). Knowledge and education both have a prime importance and value in Pakistan but curriculum and textbook knowledge draws a very thin line between citizenship knowledge and religious education. The problem lies with curriculum and syllabus (Haider, 2011).

There have been various aspects in which models of curriculum designing have been presented similarly Rao, V in 2010 also proposed a model with three dimensions (1); subject centered curriculum it deals with the discourse related to a particular subject (2); learner centered curriculum anchors the designing according to learners (3); problem centered curriculum is a sort of learning dealing with any problem and the matter of such study rotates around the issue that needs to be solved.

Textbook knowledge taught in institutes is the basic source of information about culture, values and beliefs for students. "To provide an authoritative version about any field of knowledge the books are formulated according to certain patterns" (Stray, 1994). Christian Smith in 1991 argues that "Neither any book nor any body of knowledge is neutral or free of interest". The syllabus presented in the form of books for assistance and guidance is never impartial. Instead, it is a part of selective tradition and communal collective belief of righteous facts and knowledge. Thus, text can be result of shared understandings which can either conjoin the social groups or can make them fall apart (Apple, 2000) The knowledge presented to students in institutes by means of books is always rooted/ embedded by certain ideologies. (Dijk, Ideology and Discourse, 1993). There is an ideological and structural framework behind designing and formulation of textbook syllabus, thus textbooks highly depend on the validity claims in order to accomplish the desired aims. The idea of validity claims was given when "theory of communicative action" was formulated (Habermas, 1981).

Pakistan is multicultural state but its educational system has always propagated the view of Pakistani identity nothing else then Muslim identity. And a series of continuous efforts have been made to alter the course in order to enhance specific moral and social values (Rehman, 2010). A collective identity is developed among the citizens by manipulating their minds, rationality and thinking abilities. Such domination is not carried out by force rather the use of discursive power is made and identities are developed by involving individuals into certain roles within society (Althusser, 1969,1971)

### 3. Methodology

Mixed method approach has been adopted in this research paper therefore it analyses the influence and use of the textbook discourse accomplishing the desired goals. Data has been collected from various sources most specifically from books published and used officially. During study/research several aspects and dimensions came into light which normally a student cannot interpret if text is not analyzed critically. Internet sources and works done by other researchers made it easier to critically study the books which previously also had been the part of researcher's curriculum.

The transparent and opaque social structures, power relations along with the cultural practices and their representation within institutions most prominently in text books has been the core concern of researcher. According to Van Dijk (1993) when any state or authoritative people in society imprudently use their power it ends into inequality among social groups. The paper hence illustrates the use of written discourse along with the ideologies and knowledge transmitted by context specific use of language. A multilevel textual analysis has been carried out from selected books taught in Pakistan in order to evaluate national, religious, cultural, political and other elements along with gender specification which are presented in course books.

The current study applies approaches of CDA to interpret and analyze text. Fairclough's 3D model is used to conduct analysis on descriptive level (dealing with linguistic study), interpretational level (dealing with the relation between meanings and text) and the explanatory level (dealing with relation between social context and textual interpretation). Textual practices in contact to communal practices are also kept into consideration. "The socio cognitive analysis" (Dijk, 1989) model is also used for an ideological analysis. This approach rejects any direct connection between societal constructions and discourse rather claims the existing relation among two by means of personal and communal cognition (knowledge, beliefs, values, aims). Therefore, it assists to highlight the areas by which dominant class conveys particular values to upcoming generation. Using such analytical tools, the paper aims to explore assertive ideologies planted in Pakistani books.

The quantitative approach has also been employed in order to collect responses from people belonging to educational area by means of questionnaire. The results helped the researcher to evaluate the awareness of biasness in course books among layman. Present paper examines the chosen lines from different course books hence will help the reader to scrutinize text in more than one dimension.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

The study examines textual analysis of governmental textbooks provided to government schools free of cost. These are only course books considered for board exams and are compulsory for all students at intermediate and matriculation level. Research framework divides analysis part into different sections that will turn out to be helpful for reader to easily grasp various dimensions of selected discourse.

Meanings interpreted from books are subjective in general and can be evaluated as per readers understanding. Author's intention and use of language in this regard gives an edge to initiate thinking believing and accepting all that what is written.

##### ***Islamic identity promoted as Pakistani identity:***

Identity markers nominate one's existence in society. Language and religion add up to define any particular group or individual's identity. Curriculum taught in Pakistan is using both of these main identity markers to fulfill the aspired aims. Islamic policy has been the basic theoretical framework chosen by state holders behind course designing. Such approach helps the authoritarians to control and structure social practices, beliefs and life style of citizens. National educational policy of Pakistan has clearly described **"Pakistan cannot survive or succeed without placing entire educational system on sound foundations of Islam"** (Pakistan, 1998, p. 2)

Thus, in following quoted text a clear reflection of this policy can be visualized. Text has been selected from "social studies book" for class five used in NWFP.

**"Almost all of us are Muslims. We have one God and one Quran and we are all the Ummat [followers] of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah. In Pakistan, Muslims have the same ways of worship, marriage, burial and religious celebrations everywhere"** (NWFP, pp. 61-62)

Pakistan is a state with more than one religion and culture co-existing democratically. Above mentioned text has linguistically ignored existence of all religious groups other than Islam *"We have one God and Quran"* the statement is advocating complete denial for others. Term *"We"* here is not only a reference for Muslims rather is pointing that all Pakistanis are Muslims. The very first line of text also ignores the fact that readers are not limited (Muslims) instead when taught in class non-Muslims will also study the same text. Such superimposition of Islam and marginalization of rest of the ethnic groups will give rise to differences among citizens. Ministry of education justifies this approach in these words *"The only justification of our existence is our total commitment to Islam as our sole identity"* (Pakistan, 1998, p. 9)

A study conducted for research purpose by *"Naureen Durani"* in four schools of NWFP resulted that largest proportion of participants identified themselves as Muslims; second place was of those who recognized their existence as being Pakistani. Self-recognition connected with religious identity in books holds back Pakistani identity for those who come from different religious backgrounds.



Another famous quotation that is mentioned in social studies book and is often used to define ideology of Pakistan totally negates the acceptance and importance of minorities. Stated as “*Pakistan came into existence on the day when First Hindu was converted to Islam*”. This concept of equation that being Pakistani means being a Muslim can create tension between citizens of a democratic state. Such discourse challenges the presence, role, rights and importance of minorities. English, Urdu and history books very prominently revolve around the core concepts of Islam, nationalism, patriotism; the evaluation of students in end is also done on the basis of what they were able to learn and acquire from this biased curriculum. To no surprise it was also found that none of course book included any literature about non-Muslim “*Heroes*” which again advocates that being Pakistani our heroes can only be Muslims.

Along with the exclusion there is also contradiction found in our books; page no 80 of social studies book grade V states that “*minorities in Pakistan are given complete rights for being citizens*” in the very next section of same page a contradictory statement is presented “*president and prime minister of the state has to be essentially Muslim. English textbooks for grade 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> used by Punjab board summon readers to have strong faith in Islam, oneness of Allah and huge respect for religious figures. Chapter one from 10<sup>th</sup> English book states that*

***“Read in the name of thy Lord who created, He created man from a clot of blood. Read! Thy Lord is most Bounteous who taught by the pen.” .....pg.# 1***

Above mentioned text is from the very first chapter and it clearly acclaims that author is addressing to Muslim readers ignoring the fact that being compulsory book it will be studied by every Pakistani student. Similarly, some other examples can also be quoted from same chapter which demonstrate that the text intends to be an Islamic in nature. “*Allah Held Heaven and earth in His grip....*” Also “*The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said, “Learn the Holy Quran and teach it to the people” ...pg#1*. Such discourse enforces the belief that Islamic values are best of all and must be maintained by every citizen necessarily. Religion followed by Muslims is represented as model/standard for every person irrespective of the fact that Pakistan is a state where people with more than one faith exist in harmony.

Page no 23 of class 10<sup>th</sup> book states “*All disputes shall be referred for decision to God and Holy Prophet (S.A.W).*” Similarly, another statement from 9<sup>th</sup> English course book also declines the existence of any virtue except Islam in the world in these terms “*Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) –the greatest reformer of the world. Without Him the World would not have been improved. He was sent to reform the whole mankind.*”

### ***Ideological constructs and lexical Items:***

Social cognition is thus dominated by national ideological constructs. Social cognition refers to shared concepts existing in society but our textbooks do not define society as Pakistani society instead refers it to be Islamic one. Similarly, when it comes to personal cognition our textbooks contain many terms with ideologically based modalities which cover a larger area of text. Concepts like Eid, Urses, Hajj, Martyrs and histories of Islamic figures have an Islamic context; still, it is compulsory for every student to master them to pass English paper. There are

more than 27 such terms in 10<sup>th</sup> English book and more than 22 examples in 9<sup>th</sup> English textbook taught in Punjab. For example, page #5 of 10<sup>th</sup> English book states.

**“After the prayers the Muslims greet one another and offer sacrifice of a goat, sheep, cow, or a camel to honor the sacrifice of the Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim (A.s) .....”** also the same page from same book quotes that *“Shab-e-barat, a night of blessing is celebrated on 14th shabaan, the 8th month of the Islamic calendar. The Muslims illuminate their houses and Masjids. Devotional prayers are performed throughout the night to seek the blessings of Allah....”*

Particular cognition on the other hand refers to context model presenting any event that has shared contextual background. Our textbooks thus proclaim such events from Islamic word to be permanently the part of readers’ memory. One can find 44 examples from 9<sup>th</sup> and 26 examples from 10<sup>th</sup> English books based on context models. Generalizing the view it is examined that there are 11 out of 22 units in 9<sup>th</sup> and 7 out of 22 units in 10<sup>th</sup> course books of English which have religious content; this is hence a larger proportion of text and it occupies space for the content that will be more suitable to improve English language skills of learners.

Use of religious lexical items and variant ideological assertion is eminent in textbook discourse. Most of this vocabulary is not the part of our daily conversations and intentionally added to English course by officials thereby new learners need to learn of the Islamic history of these terms for example *“Hajja-tul-wida, Saifullah, battle of Yarmuk, battle of Ohad, battle of Badar, khilafat, um-ul-mominin and hijri calendar”*.

An analysis of lexical terms drawn by researchers of GCU mentioned the frequent use of religious lexical items in matric English textbooks Punjab (kazim, 2013, p. 7). According to this the frequency of certain terms is mentioned here

No of words	Words	Frequency (10 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency (9 <sup>th</sup> )
1	Hazrat	50	61
2	R.A	35	16
3	Muslims	24	20
4	Islam	24	21
5	S.W.A	29	51

***Strong representation of “us-group” and “them-group”:***

The distinction of us and them group usually describes us-group in positive face while them-group in negative face. Textbook discourse creates a boundary line by dividing Pakistanis

into us (Muslims) and them (non-Muslims) on internal grounds by referencing to the ideology presented and promoted by political leaders of subcontinent declaring Muslims and Hindus as separate nations. This opposition towards non-Islamic groups is still prevailing in our society and kept alive by means of textbooks. Teachers are also playing their part heat-up and spread this intolerance into young learners. This claim is to be proved when small children are asked to draw/describe differences between Pakistanis and non-Pakistanis they identify them as Muslims (Pakistani good people) and Hindus (non-Pakistanis bad people).

This division of groups is not only confined to religion rather goes far towards the territorial boundaries and generates intolerance for rest of world. Need of nationalism can be accepted but nationalism leading to extremism is inappropriate. The content presented in official “*Pakistan study books*” promotes hatred for Indian people, British/American People rest of the non-Islamic world. They are portrayed as barbarians, tyrant, inhuman and always planning against Muslims and Pakistan. The distinction made in form of us and them is continued thus military glorification is used as a tool to describe the conflicts between India and Pakistan. The description of battles is highly associated to religion for its neutralization and acceptance. The steps taken Pakistani military are justified by terms defense, chivalric acts, bravery and courageous advancements benefiting nation. This heightens the emotional praise for us-group along with this the feelings of hate and intolerance are also promoted for out-group. This strategy works well when non-Muslims within and without territorial boundaries are seen as betraying, clever, evil and harmful creatures.

**“When India tried to forcefully capture Kashmir, the people of Kashmir rebelled against this armed aggression. The Pakistani mujahideen also went to help their Kashmiri brothers”** (NWFP, p. 10)

Authors of our history textbooks have successfully portrayed the negative image of external out-group. The textual lines depict our soldiers as Mujahideen (religious term ignoring army men can also be non-Muslims) and Indian army as being unjust. Term Kashmiri brothers is also significant as they are added up in us-group. Moreover, one can find various examples in course books which teach one sided biased history of subcontinent and supports an ever-existing myth that external out-group is enemy which always ready to harm our nation. The sense of national insecurity is then used in favor of political domains.

Unity and oneness in accordance to textbook discourse is solely on religious and national grounds. This unity according to textbooks is solely of Muslims and our books only this us-group is addressed frequently, a line from English book 9<sup>th</sup> states:

**“In our prayers five times a day we the Muslims pray to Allah to show us the right path.”**  
page# 5.

This statement uses “our” and “we” which strictly refer to united us-group (Muslims). Adding fuel to fire this grouping is generalized by emphasizing that them-group always violates norms and value systems which serve as foundational ground for us-group. Representation of positive self-image and negative others image in curriculum intends to create differentiation in



young minds; portrayal of others is always wicked and negative while self-identity is always shown in an appreciative manner for example

**“Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) used to relate to his companions the instance of Jewish women. She was punished by God for starving her cat to death.” Page # 8.**

Above quoted example indirectly sets the standard view that non-Muslims are wicked/evil and are not liked by God, also what is not liked by God can't be liked by Muslims. The problem here is that the message to be kind to animals is conveyed by a hidden message to young minds that kindness is only restricted to Islam and all the rest are unkind people. Such linguistic representation becomes reaches to extreme in our course books also intensely advocates the “us” and “them” grouping by use specific terms for example

- **Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) as the greatest reformer**
- **Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed as brave person and warrior**
- **Hazrat Abu Bakr Sadique as a faithful companion and admirable leader**
- **Hazrat Ayesha as the role model for Muslim women**
- **Arabs as pagans and idol worshippers**
- **Arabs as savage and tyrant people**
- **Jews as evil, wrong doers, unblessed people and Prisoners of war**
- **Arabs as uncivilized people**

To admire own people is not something wrong but continuous target on others is questionable. Literature taught in our institutes must be selected keeping the point in consideration that goal of education system must be the development of an idealistic generation not a nation with rigid, extremist and intolerant beliefs.

#### ***Gender specification and cultural values:***

In Pakistan gender roles and their specifications play vital role in personality development. Male and female are identified by the roles they play in society. Modern era has although facilitated our women working in various fields still their part is social building is not equally dominant as of males. This limitation and specification social roles in relation to gender are equally transmitted to young minds through textbooks. Heroic figures widely presented and idealized in our textbooks are majorly male Muslims praised either on the basis of nationalism, Islam or their political roles. The few females who are admired in our curriculum is because of their services to men or bringing up their families in ideal Islamic way for example

**“Hazrat Fatima used to do all her household chores herself. In obedience and love of her husband, in the bringing up of her sons and daughters and in the worship of Allah, she presented a role model for the women of the Muslim world” (NWFP, p. 109)**

Above quoted text acclaims and supports the point of view that an ideal muslim women needs to be obedient to husband, should do all the household chores, and also bring up the children. These are the only roles associated to women. To no surprise our social and cultural values perfectly match with this belief; therefore women are legally treated as subordinates to men.

Mostly female students idealize such female heroic icons and male idealize brave and exceptional male heroic figures. In this way our curriculum specifies the gender roles in young minds so that these cultural values must deeply be rooted in community. Such socially constructed gender approach limitizes the part that can be played by women if not manipulated.

**Awareness among layman:**

A survey has been conducted to find out how much the common people are aware of this functional approach in textbooks. Among respondents 97% had studied the selected course books and 3% were those who had never studied these textbooks. Following is a tabular representation collected responses.

Statements	Agreed	Disagreed	Maybe	Neutral
There is ideological framework behind textbook discourse	71%	9%	17%	3%
Textbooks impact learners mind	85%	2%	11%	2%
Books promote certain cultural constructs	54%	14%	32%	
Biasness exists in books	54%	20%	17%	9%
Islamic ideology is promoted through books	77%	14%	11%	
Being pakistani means being good muslims as per books	57%	24%	5%	14%
Books transmit cultural values in generation	60%	17%	5%	18%
Educational policy of pakistan needs to be redesigned	80%		20%	

80% respondents of survey included youth and their aging between 21 to 29 which shows that most of youth is capable to analyse the framework behind textual discourse. Instead of this awareness no step has been taken by officials or civilians to update course books. Importance of textbooks cannot be denied but this stillness of people on this issue is questionable. It can also be

impact of such discourse that all these practices so openly accepted and no one feels them abnormal.

### 5. Conclusion

Pakistan is a state with more than languages, cultures and religions which are co-existing. Constitution of Pakistan declares every citizen of state has equal rights without any discrimination. Unfortunately, educational policies of Pakistan are designed considering only the presence of major religion. Minorities are marginalized and none of course book has any chapter about any non-Muslim hero. Our Urdu and English and Pakistan study textbooks are highly dominated with Islamic ideology. This theological aim has equated Pakistani and Muslim identity.

Moreover, our books intend to serve the interest of specific sector of society. Female interests are also not considered and contents comprise of topics that create a patriarchal mindset in upcoming generation. Representation of female is limited and they are described as working at home or subjects to men to be ideal women. Such discourse taught at school and college level highly limits the thinking ability of students and these norms and values become part ones personality. These social attributes are then widely followed and accepted thus no one ever dares to question these set standards.

Aim of this paper is to highlight the fact that books must be designed to transmit knowledge, develop creative skills and to make learners capable, therefore they must not be bias and neither should be mean of manipulating young minds. It is obvious that if discourse is indoctrinated with certain fundamental concepts, it will influence the learner, it is accepted that there is a need of developing a sense of patriotism, peace, equality and citizenship among students but such social phenomena are needed to be moderate. Present research paper is just an effort to highlight these drawbacks in our educational policies and give reader a clear outlook about such indoctrinated ideological aspects.

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