

The Angry Bakri (Goat) and the Shy Pari (Fairy): Deconstructing Gender and Behavioral Norms in Pakistani ECE Storytelling through Critical AI Literacy

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Abstract

A primary medium through which culture is transmitted is the narrative ecology of early childhood education (ECE), involved in implicitly inculcating society in the young psyche via cultural norms and values. The ecology is prolifically endowed with archetypes of the oral traditions, local folklore, and the modern media, where the obstinate Bakri (goat) is usually masculinized and corrected about her wrath, and the beautiful Pari (fairy) is usually romanticized as silent and delicate. The inductive incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with a specific focus on generative AI, conditioned on these already existing collections of corpora, is not a dialectic of nonexistence, but rather a powerful lubricant to the mass production and strengthening of these damagingly held stereotypes. The paper supposes the idea that technical integration is not the pressing condition to apply AI in Pakistani ECE, but rather the strong framework based on critical AI literacy that should be developed among the teacher body, curriculum planners, and policy makers. Leaving the Western-centrist idea of AI bias, the study is based on the socio-cultural setting of Pakistan to first systematize the existing gender and behavioral stereotypes in a selection of trendy children's stories, cartoons, and textbooks. The paper extends to suggest a revolutionized pedagogical model of training ECE practitioners. In this way, the creation results in the innovative model of the decolonization of early -learning AI in Pakistan. The framework encourages community-driven redesign, inclusion of marginalized voices, regional languages, and challenges patriarchal norms for AI-driven empowerment.

Key Words

The Angry Bakri, Shy Pari, Gender and Behavioral Norms, AI Literacy, Early Childhood Education

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Introduction

Storytelling corpus in early childhood education is a highly potent means of transmitting cultural heritage; a potent mixer of norms and values of a society into the tender mind of a small child (Ahmed, 2020). This topography is extensively detailed using oral culture-founded archetypes and Pakistani local mythology. But the main objects, who received this input of mentality, were the number of them, Bakri (goat), a stubborn little girl that children choose to treat as male, Pari (fairy), and a cheerful child due to its silence and delicate nature, which concentrated on the way children were to treat one another. And these narratives are a very powerful hidden curriculum, eliciting theories of gender and social behavior even before children enter the classroom.

The growing generation of new educational resources, often based on such stories as a starting point, is not a disinterested solution. It may, in fact, be a catalyst that permits these allegedly solidified stereotypes to be produced in large quantities and strengthened. To this paper, it is proposed that, unlike ever before, we are most urgently lacking some framework with which to think critically about ways to teach, as the manifestation of new curricular content like this has the power to do the same to the established conservative norms that we observe are being taught in our schools today, and therefore without a more critical approach towards education the end of liberal democratic educational aspirations is even more openly being served (Khan, 2018).

In addition to Grand Critique, the inquiry is closest based on the specific socio-cultural context of Pakistan. It begins with a careful catalog of the existing stereotyping of gender and behavior in a carefully chosen sample of well-known children's stories, cartoons, and texts in schoolbooks. Thereafter, the paper proposes a new training model for early childhood educators. The model takes the next step of a big agency, which will be practically active and provide the teachers with the means of conversation engagement tools that are practically valuable to break down and deconstruct curricular content with the pupils. It presents a task classroom by sharing the silence of unproductive consumption of new material. The recovery of this effort is an original framework in which the Pakistani context of early learning is redefined. This paradigm is based on a community-oriented approach to design, which purposefully incorporates ignored histories, promotes local languages, and purposefully examines the patriarchal archetypes. The end objective will be to make sure that the narratives we share with our children are instruments of social emancipation and not just a mirror of our historical biases (Naz et al., 2025).

The concept of incorporating their own cultural practice into the early years of education of children is a strong one, but the concept has not been popular among educational researchers. Particularly, this is true of communities where indigenous cultures are still intact. We have always known that the early development and learning of a child happens to be greatly fostered by the surrounding world, by the stories being told in the native language, the rituals they partake in, and the communal life they share (Masood et al., 2025).

Something beautiful occurs when early childhood curriculum considerably incorporates these indigenous practices. Children of these societies perform this with a feeling of cultural identity and self-worth (Ghumman & Khalid, 2016). In addition, this is not a culmination of its benefits. It is also through the framework that there is exposure of the children in the prevailing cultural setting to learn and to internalize diversity at a tender age. This exposure to alternative ways of worldview at a tender age can be described as a supportive pillar along the path to the creation of a more reconciled and respectful society (Bhayo et al., 2024).

Research Objectives

1. To find out about the most popular gender and behavioral stereotypes with special focus on the archetypes of an enraged Bakri and a wary Pari, in the mainstream Pakistani Early Childhood Education (ECE) examples of storytelling media.
2. The purpose of the study is to develop a framework of critical literacy that would allow the Pakistani ECE teacher to overcome stereotypes in their educational resources and materials.

Significance of the Study

It has significant implications for the authoring of the educational policy, the teaching practice, and the development of learning materials from a culturally sensitive perspective.

- ▶ **Effects on Educational Equity and Inclusion:** The contribution of the research to the population is the critical analysis of the so-called hidden curriculum that is represented in Pakistani early childhood narratives, and it is interested in the processes that cause gender inequity. One of the necessary steps that can help to create a more equal learning environment is the deconstruction of such an archetype as the Angry Bakri and the Shy Pari. Through this, it will enable any child, regardless of his or her gender, to be in a position to get into the broad field of feelings and social roles, thus achieving the national and global goals of inclusive and quality education, which has been outlined in SDG 4.
- ▶ **Critical Pedagogy of New Classrooms:** The book goes beyond elementary technical education by offering a new model of critical literacy to teachers. It is important in the sense that it replaces passive intake of the new learning material with active criticism. This revolution transforms the teachers and the learners into reflective, agentic-driven consumers. It allows educators to embrace renovated materials without cultural erosion or enlightened ideology.
- ▶ **An Educational Materials Ethical Foundation:** The results of the study are highly significant, situation-related, evidence-based for policy-makers and content developers. It emphasizes the pressing necessity of creating instructional resources that are grounded in various and representative narratives, where there are measures to eliminate negative stereotypes. The suggested community-based approach has shown a roadmap toward developing culturally responsible content to act as an instrument of social emancipation, which can be applied to other Global South situations as well.
- ▶ **Preservation and Reclamation of Cultural Narratives:** There are no arguments in this study that local folklore should be led to the rubbish pile. Rather, it offers a process of its critical reclamation. It is a significant attempt to maintain the tradition of rich storytelling in Pakistan and, at the same time, redefine the patriarchal nature of its traditions. This makes the transmission of culture dynamic and progressive to the new generations.

Limitations of the Research (Scope and Focus)

This study is focused on a narrow scope, which is deliberate to enable a profound and narrow exploration. The research is specific to the situation of Pakistani Early Childhood Education (ECE), and it can thus be seen as most directly relevant to that particular cultural and educational environment. The analysis is purposely limited to the most common gender and behavioral stereotypes in the children's media, including the depiction of female characters with their anger as a negative feature, as well as passivity in female characters as an ideal one. The paper is concerned in particular with the idea of story-based media; folk tales, cartoons, and textbooks; it does not extend into other aspects of the curriculum, such as music or physical activities. Lastly, the proposed framework and literacy model are professional and curriculum developers oriented, since professionals will have the capacity to evaluate and to critically impact on the material to be added to the classroom.

Methodology

Research Design

The qualitative design applied in this article was the sequential qualitative design, which was divided into two large processes. Phase 1 involved a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to deconstruct the Pakistani ECE media narratives as they exist today. The second stage (Phase 2) was devoted to the participatory process of constructing the model and the framework of the pedagogy, to the construction of practical solutions, with direct references to the final results of the first stage, etc.

Data Collection (Phase 1)

- ▶ **Sample Selection:** A curative purposive sample of Pakistani Early Childhood Education (ECE) content was popular. This collection included: Provincial curriculum,, passed storybooks,, and textbooks by children. o Popular local children's cartoon episodes. o Mainstream publisher of folktales.
- ▶ **Data Collection Method:** The materials that were selected were compiled, and a corpus was created to be systematically analyzed.

Data Analysis (Phase 1)

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework that is based on feminist and postcolonial theory was utilized.

- ▶ **Coding Process:** The data were codified in search and coded with the following:
- ▶ **Gendered Archetypes:** An example is the Angry Bakri, Shy Pari, and the brave Prince.
- ▶ **Norms of Behavior:** The way the behaviors were either rewarded or punished, depending on the gender of the character.
- ▶ **Patterns in Linguistics:** The usage of adjectives, verbs, and the aftermath of narratives about various genders.
- ▶ **Power Relationships:** The implicit culturings of voice, agency, and socially constructed role in the stories. In this phase, the model and frame can be created and examined through preliminary computations.< |human| >Model and Framework.

Model and Framework Development (Phase 2)

According to the Phase 1 findings, the pedagogical model of critical content literacy was created. During this stage:

- ▶ **Literature Synthesis:** The synthesis of principles relating to critical pedagogy, media literacy, as well as existing models of digital literacy.
- ▶ **Stakeholder Input:** To base the model in the realistic world, preliminary consultations with a limited number of ECE experts and those who teach teachers should be conducted. The ensuing model outlined the important competencies and offered empowering discursive tools to teachers..

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the normal ethical standards of content analysis. In the phases requiring consultation with experts and teacher educators, informed consent was obtained in the study. A responsible proposition of the research design was made to promote a responsible and respectful study by all the contributors. This approach guaranteed a strict and contextually based study of the problem stereotypes in narratives with the subsequent development of a practical solution in the shape of a critical literacy paradigm and a decolonizing framework..

Analysis

Analysis was done in two major stages because of the dual emphasis of this study on the deconstruction and development. Phase 1Critical Discourse Analysis of ECE Narratives. Such a step involved qualitative and thematic analysis of the sampled Pakistani ECE books, such as storybooks, cartoons, and textbooks.

Thematic of Gendered Archetypes

- ▶ **Coding of Characters:** The main characters of the chosen corpus were also coded in terms of species (e.g., human, animal, mythical), gender presentation (according to pronouns and gendered words, such as brave boy or kind girl), and narrative role (e.g., hero, villain, helper).
- ▶ **Recurring Tropes:** The review determined and described recurring character archetypes, namely: The Angry Bakri (Masculinized Female): When female-coded characters were angry, obstinate, or assertive and the

narrative ramifications that befell them, which included being punished, ostracized, or turned into a tamed woman.

- ▶ **The Shy Pari (Feminized Ideal):** The female-coded characters who were praised and empowered as possessing such qualities as silence, frailty, beauty, and obedience, and then were rewarded in the story.
- ▶ **Gendered Behavioral Results:** The experiment recorded the difference in rewarding and punishing the same behavior, e.g., courage, curiosity, or loudness, depending upon the perceived gender of the character..

Linguistic Analysis

- ▶ **Adjectival Analysis:** The paper has studied the most commonly used adjectives to discuss a character coded male or female, and observed trends like strong/beautiful or brave/kind.
- ▶ **Verb Association:** The kind of actions (verbs) attributed to members of each gender was analyzed, i.e., to male-coded characters hatred and fighting, exploring and leading, whereas to female-coded characters caring, waiting, or helping. O
- ▶ **Narrative Resolution:** The endings of the stories were examined in the context of how conflicts were solved, and which characters ended up having agency, voice, and power.

Table 1

Framework for Coding Narrative Elements

Narrative Element	Coding Categories	Example from Corpus
Character Archetype	Angry Bakri, Shy Pari, Brave Prince, Wise Old Man	"Bakri is shouted at for refusing to eat leftovers."
Gendered Trait	Assertiveness, Anger, Nurturing, Passivity, Curiosity	"The pari was praised for her silent obedience."
Trait Outcome	Rewarded, Punished, Neutral	"The boy was celebrated for his brave fight."
Associated Language	Specific adjectives, verbs, metaphors	"She was as pretty as a delicate flower."

- ▶ **Phase 2: Artificial Intelligence Content Analysis.** In this phase, the fifth and sixth stages were used, that is, to examine a corpus of recently written children's stories through the same critical discourse framework used in Phase 1.
- ▶ **Generation of Content:** The content was commissioned by approaching modern authors with prompts aimed at producing archetypal Pakistani stories, such as a story about a naughty goat and a beautiful fairy.
- ▶ **Comparative Analysis:** The same coding scheme used in Phase 1 was used to analyze these newly generated stories. The research question that informed this analysis was whether this new material reinforced, weakened, or merely copied the stereotypes that were found in the traditional corpus.
- ▶ **Bias Identification:** The analysis was particularly searched.
- ▶ **Amplification of Stereotypical:** The availability of more extreme or simplified versions of the archetypes.
- ▶ **Omission:** The deletion of local or cultural detail in the original tales.
- ▶ **Homogenization:** There is a predilection towards stories being generic or a lack of particular cultural indications.
- ▶ **Synthesis: Analysis to Framework:** The results of the two phases of analysis were integrated to create an argument to support a critical literacy model. The analysis presented factual and practical information on the type of stereotypes that are dominant in the current narrative ecology. It showed a significant threat that the new content generated as educational materials could continue these established biases. The concrete case of problematic tropes and language, e.g., the consistent punishment of an assertive "Angry Bakri,"

directly influenced the practically-based discursive tools created towards educators. This provided them with clear, evidence-based aspects to know and challenge in an educational setting. The identified gaps and biases constituted the content of the centers of the decolonizing framework, where specific aspects of the narrative had to be disturbed, and what other stories had to be incorporated. Simply put, the analysis offered the empirical foundation that substantiated the whole study, transitioning between the definition of the problem to offer the evidence needed to construct the solution..

Alignment of Projected Results and Conclusions with Research Objectives

Research Objective	Projected Results	Projected Conclusions
1. To identify the predominant gender and behavioral stereotypes in Pakistani ECE storytelling media.	▶ Documented evidence of the "Angry Bakri" archetype: female-coded characters exhibiting anger or stubbornness are consistently antagonized, punished, or "tamed" by the narrative's end. ▶ Documented evidence of the "Shy Pari" archetype: female-coded characters are disproportionately rewarded for passivity, beauty, silence, and helping roles. ▶ A catalog of linguistic patterns showing a strong binary in adjective and verb use aligned with traditional gender norms.	▶ The hidden curriculum in Pakistani ECE narratives actively reinforces restrictive gender and behavioral norms. ▶ These stereotypes are not anecdotal but are systemic and recurring across various media (textbooks, stories, cartoons), forming a coherent cultural schema that shapes young children's perceptions.
2. To develop a framework for critical AI literacy for Pakistani ECE educators.	▶ A proven pedagogical model that increases educators' ability to identify stereotypes in both traditional and AI-generated content. ▶ A practical toolkit of questions and activities (e.g., "Whose voice is missing?", "How could we change this ending?") that teachers can use in the classroom. ▶ A viable framework for decolonizing AI, built on principles of community-centered design, integration of subaltern narratives, and linguistic diversity.	▶ Critical AI literacy is a necessary prerequisite, not an optional add-on, for the ethical integration of technology in Pakistani ECE. ▶ Educators, when equipped with the right discursive tools, can effectively shift from passive consumers to critical facilitators of technology. ▶ AI can be harnessed as a tool for social emancipation rather than regression, but this requires an intentional, decolonial design process.

Overall Synthesis

The direct evidence (the what) that met the first objective was the result, and the conclusions drawn out of the results comprised the actionable solution (the how) that was necessary in order to achieve the second objective. The results showed that the described stereotypes rendered a critical literacy model not only useful but also critical, which entirely confirms the results of the study with their intended objectives. Future Research Recommendations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Expand the Scope of Analysis: It was suggested that the planning of future research would involve developing the textual discourses to encompass more regional and linguistic folktales, including Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi folktales. This would result in a more holistic and more nationally representative picture of the gender archetype in Pakistani early learning.

It was also recommended to conduct further studies on stereotypes about other social identities (socio-economic status, disability, and ethnicity) in order to gain an insight into intersectional bias in child content.

Tests of Framework are empirical: The developed model of critical literacy has been found to need empirical research in longitudinal studies and action research in real Pakistani early childhood classrooms. It would evaluate its effectiveness in transforming the practices of teachers and the perceptions of the students.

It was recommended that further research be done to design and test assessment methods that will be used to determine the influence of this critical literacy on the achievement of pedagogical performance.

Creation of Culturally-Deep Resources: One of the recommendations was that researchers, content producers, and educational experts should work together in creating new pieces of learning. They would be based on considered collections, diverse, and representative collections of Pakistani children's literature.

Future projects were advised to develop and pilot assessment instruments that were specifically meant to detect the prejudices in educational output in multilingual non-Westernized settings such as Pakistan..

Policy-Oriented Research: It was decided that to accommodate the national educational policies existing today and work with the ultimate recommendations to introduce the standards related to critical literacy and ethical content review into a curriculum development process and teacher accreditation, studies were necessary.

More studies were proposed to explore the idea of effective models on large-scale teacher professional development on critical literacy across the diverse and usually resource-burdened Pakistani educational context.

Child-Centered Research: Participatory approaches that involved direct inclusion of young children were recommended for future research. This would assist in learning their interpretation of stories, so the work of making more inclusive content works out in accordance with the views and realities of children themselves..

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