



## Understanding and Awareness of GRP: Evidence from Classroom Practices and Beliefs of Teachers



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### Abstract

This study explores primary school teachers' understanding and application of Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in social studies classrooms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-eight teachers (male and female) selected from rural and urban public schools. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key patterns related to teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. The findings reveal that teachers have limited awareness and conceptual understanding of gender and GRP. Although various teaching strategies such as discussion, storytelling, role play, and question-answer sessions were used, they were not intentionally implemented in a gender-responsive manner. Classroom practices remained largely teacher-centered, with minimal focus on equal participation, stereotype reduction, inclusive language, and confidence building. The study concludes that while teachers show positive attitudes toward participatory learning, the practical integration of gender-responsive principles remains weak. The research highlights the need for targeted training and professional development to strengthen the implementation of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in primary education.

### Key Words

Classroom Practices, Teachers Beliefs, Gender Responsive Pedagogy, Understanding

### Introduction

Gender equality in education is a crucial issue that influences how people perceive and internalize gender roles and related topics. Promoting gender equality in educational settings Examining how genders are represented, whether through stereotypical roles or diverse and equitable portrayals, can help educators and policymakers better understand the impact on students' dynamics. According to , addressing these issues in education is essential for creating a more gender-neutral and equitable learning environment that encourages student growth.

The learning of gender roles and the adoption of specific behaviors and attitudes often begin in early childhood, influenced by cultural orientation. This early socialization can have a significant impact on a child's future growth and accomplishments, regardless of gender. Through the cultural transmission of traditional gender roles, families have a direct and significant impact on the growth and achievements of children.

Integrating gender issues into teaching can be challenging for many educators, affecting not only their instructional activities but also the selection of teaching materials and language used. Many teachers have not received training in gender-responsive pedagogies, which contributes to this issue frequently. As a result, activities that reinforce traditional gender roles might be used inadvertently by elementary school teachers. Teachers continue to use traditional pedagogical strategies that portray conventional gender roles frequently. For instance,

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teachers frequently ask male and female students to role-play scenarios that reflect conventional gender norms during classroom activities (Maher & Ward, 2002).

### Gender Parity in Education

An ideal educational system is one that treats everyone equally, regardless of their gender, race, or other social status. Equal access to high-quality education for both men and women is referred to as gender parity in education. Gender-responsive and gender-sensitive school practices and activities are required for gender equality in education. Gender parity in education, as defined by Unterhalter and Aikman (2007), entails equal opportunities for males and females to attend school, learn, and participate in a non-discriminatory environment. UNESCO (2004, p. 5) further elaborates that gender parity in education means providing females and males with the same opportunities to attend school, using teaching methods and curricula free from stereotypes, offering counseling without gender discrimination, ensuring equality in outcomes, learning achievements, academic qualifications, and ultimately equal job opportunities based on comparable conditions, experiences, and qualifications irrespective of gender (Muweesi et al., 2023).

According to Kahamba et al. (2017, p.7), “the ability of a teacher to adopt and practice gender responsive pedagogy starts with their understanding and knowledge level of the concepts itself, and the skills to apply the concept”.

### Literature Review

Understanding the concepts of gender, gender-responsive schools, and gender-responsive pedagogy are essential in order to successfully implement gender-responsive pedagogy. According to Paudel (n.d.), gender is a broad concept that every educator must comprehend. Gender roles must be distinguished from sex roles. Gender, according to Mlama (2005), is the social roles and relationships between men and women. Gender is defined by UNESCO (2005) as the roles and responsibilities given to men and women by our families, societies, and cultural norms. According to UNESCO (2005), these gender roles are socially constructed and passed down from generation to generation. A learning school and environment that is gender-responsive is one in which the academic, social, and physical environments, as well as the community that surrounds the school, address the particular requirements of both boys and girls. To ensure that all students receive an education that is both equitable and inclusive, teaching methods, learning materials, classroom management, and interactions ought to all be designed in a way that is gender-responsive.

The implementation of child-centered and conducive learning is hampered by a classroom that is overcrowded. Traditional seating arrangements, where students sit in neat rows facing the teacher, do not foster a student-centered learning environment or encourage active participation, especially among girls. A gender-responsive classroom empowers both boys and girls, promotes gender equality, and upholds the democratic and human rights of all students (Mlama, 2005).

What is taught, how it is taught, and how students learn both inside and outside of the classroom all fall under the umbrella term "pedagogy." Lesson planning, instructional strategies, classroom management, and performance evaluation and assessment are all components of gender-responsive pedagogy (Mlama, 2005). To promote gender equality, teachers should identify and address key aspects of gender stereotypes when planning lessons (Mlama, 2005). Teachers are encouraged to employ a variety of pedagogical strategies and methods, such as role plays and group discussions. In addition, the significance of addressing differences in students' learning styles to improve educational outcomes is a topic of ongoing debate. In schools, teachers frequently exhibit different attitudes and expectations for boys and girls. Teachers may frequently be unaware of gender-based discrimination (Abraha et al., 2019).

In order to ensure equal participation and interaction of both boys and girls, gender-responsive lesson planning incorporates a variety of teaching and learning materials, engaging learning activities, classroom setup and interactions, management of gender-related constraints within the classroom, and feedback and assessment strategies (Mlama, 2005). The development of attitudes, values, and social skills that support gender equality is greatly aided by textbooks and educational resources.

Language plays an important role in gender-responsive pedagogy and socializing of students, when teaching and learning. The teachers and students lose their communication when the teachers often use abusive, harsh or threatening words. Language may support gender disparities and inequalities, and it determines the status of both boys and girls. Education teachers are recommended to employ strong and inclusive language, which critiques and does not affirm gender stereotypes (UNESCO, 2015). Poor language may send a bad message and adversely affect the process of learning. As Mlama (2005, p. 14) state, a boy or girl who is always told by his or her teacher that he or she is stupid may easily believe it and this could negatively affect the performance of the student. Consequently, teachers should take appropriate measures to improve the performance of students through positive and accommodative language in the classroom.

### Statement of Problem

Gender Responsible Pedagogy (GRP) has received extensive interpretations as being an exclusive approach towards equity, inclusivity and equal representation of both girls and boys in learning institutions. Even though the policy promises and theoretical interest in gender equality in education, it has been found that the meaning as well as application of GRP in the classroom is still inconsistent. There is a possibility that a large number of teachers have positive views regarding gender equality and yet, in their classroom settings, their actions do not even suggest gender-responsive behavior. Low and poor awareness, absence of professional training, culture, and institutional constraints have the inclination to influence how the teachers learn and apply the principles of GRP. Thus, the teachers may not practice gender equity as they may say they do. The level of understanding and awareness of teachers about GRP and the way they reflect the level of perception on the real teaching activities should be critically analyzed. Therefore, the current study is oriented to exploring the evidence of GRP in classrooms and addressing the awareness of the importance of gender-responsive teaching and teachers.

### Research Question

1. What are the teacher's perceptions and understanding of gender responsive pedagogy among primary school teachers in the subject of social studies?
  - ▶ Understanding about GRP
  - ▶ Application of GRP in classroom practices
  - ▶ Teaching Practices
  - ▶ Teaching Learning material

### Significance of the Study

The significance of the research is that it is part of the evolving literature on the subject of Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in terms of gaining an insight into the level of understanding and awareness that teachers have of the subject and how they projected it in classroom. Despite the trend of gender equality currently gaining popularity in the educational policy, this study could be utilized to detect the current gaps between theory and practice by establishing how beliefs of a teacher are connected to his or her teaching practice. School administrators and policymakers find the study really beneficial because it may provide them with information concerning the efficiency of the used training programs and show the probable spheres, where they need to become more professional. It may also help the curriculum developers in the teaching materials to be gender responsive.

## Methodology

### Research Design

A qualitative research design was used in this investigation. A thorough and comprehensive comprehension of the research problem was made possible via the qualitative method. Semi-structured interviews with public elementary school teachers in KPK were used to carry out the study's qualitative phase.

**Participants:** Primary school teachers from public schools in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, both male and female, were among the participants.

**Population:** According to , in the year 2024, total number of teachers in public sector schools are 24642, including male and female. Only social studies subject teachers were be selected as population of the study. Total number of social studies teachers is 50,408 that were stand as population including male and female, in public sector schools. Teachers were stand as population of the study. For sampling the techniques of Gay et al. (2012, p.130), on the basis of percentage, be followed.

**Sample Size:** Purposive sampling technique applied for selecting the sample size. Data collected in the Hazara divisions of KPK that are the 7 District (stratified sampling) for the study.

Table 1

Respondents	Male population	Female Population	Total Population
Teachers	4073	1738	5811

**Sample:** For the qualitative sampling, four teachers—one male and one female from the rural area and one male and one female from the urban area—will be purposefully chosen from each stratum, for a total of seven times four, or twenty-eight.

### Data Collection

Although semi-structured interviews are so good at elucidating, comprehending, and examining participants' viewpoints, experiences, and opinions on particular research topics, they were employed to collect data. One of the best methods for qualitative research is the interview. The interviews in this study concentrated on school-related subjects in order to answer questions on aspects of gender-responsive pedagogy. Gaining knowledge about teaching and learning materials, teachers' practices and difficulties, and their thoughts on gender-responsive pedagogy were the goals of the interview questions. The duration of each interview ranged from forty to sixty minutes. The following main themes were given priority during the data collection process. The format was adhered to throughout the technique. This study's primary themes were:

- ▶ Classroom Practices and Beliefs of Teachers

The following were the sub-themes of this theme:

- ▶ Teaching Methods
- ▶ Teaching Learning materials
- ▶ Use of GRP in their Pedagogy

### Data Analysis

The qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews with social studies instructors in primary schools is analyzed in this chapter. To find important trends pertaining to gender-responsive pedagogical practices, the data was subjected to thematic analysis.

## Interview

Twenty-eight teachers—fourteen male and fourteen female—agreed to take part in the semi-structured in-person interview. Teachers' classroom practices and beliefs about gender responsive pedagogy are examined in the semi-structured interview, which also gives them a forum to express their opinions more clearly. Seven male and seven female participants were from rural regions, while the remaining 14 individuals were from metropolitan regions. Of the 28 participants, 15 had master's degrees, which is equivalent to 16 years of schooling. The remaining participants were older and less qualified. Three participants had already obtained a master's degree in Pakistani studies, and another was in the process of doing so. The participants had between five and twenty-five years of teaching experience. According to their educational backgrounds, most instructors had a BS/B.Ed (Hons) degree, while many also had MPhil/MS degrees. Each of the participants was a primary school teacher.

## Data Analysis

Additionally, teachers who participated were told that the data they supplied Participants would only be utilized for scholarly purposes. To engage in conversation and conduct an interview simply said, both Urdu and English were used for the interview. Thematic analysis was employed to examine qualitative data, including semi-structured in-person interviews. Themes were created and examined following the coding and classification of qualitative data. The validity of the qualitative data was ensured by a number of procedures and data gathered from various sources.

Figure 1



## Research Ethics

Ethical guidelines were followed over the course of the investigation. All interviews were conducted in Urdu, the official language of Pakistan and the language of education. The majority of teachers and students spoke Hindko and Pashto as their native tongues, but English was also used while interacting with teachers. The interviews took place in a laid-back setting where participants' thoughts and the information they provided were valued. The researchers sought to maintain objectivity by refraining from expressing their personal preferences or diverting the participants' focus. Pseudonyms were used to conceal the names of the professors (Hafaiedh, 2009).

## Findings and Discussion

### Teachers' Understanding and Awareness on Gender Responsive Pedagogy

According to the findings, teacher participants are not much informed on gender concept and gender responsive pedagogy (Mlma et al, 2005). There is an importance to create awareness to teachers about what gender and gender responsive pedagogy is and how to apply the same in the course of instructional activities.

In face to face interview, all the teacher participants acknowledged that they used GRP without intention in the classroom they have never done so before orientation about gender responsive pedagogy.

They lacked the knowledge on gender responsive pedagogy and thus could not be applied consciously and deliberately in their lesson.

One teacher said, GRP is the learning needs of the students either male or female, every student have their own specific needs and requirement, According to me responsibilities are different in our society. Our culture and religion permit us , there are our some boundaries. Before your discussion about GRP I literally do not about this important term but now I understand the meaning of GRP.

All teacher participants responded that they cannot create gender responsive academic environment and respond professionally to the specific needs of both boys and girls in teaching learning processes. There is also limited awareness program on gender and gender responsive pedagogy among teachers in the primary school.

Figure 2



This word cloud represents graphically the highest frequency of the words concerning the Gender Responsible Pedagogy (GRP) and classroom. Each word is marked with its size which shows its frequency and significance in the data. The words that are used the most including the students, learning, teaching, classroom, and participation and responsive imply that major issue of respondents is student-centered learning. This implies that educators consider GRP to be strongly intertwined with enhancing the engagement and the active involvement of students in the classroom. Key words like training, resources, motivation, and profession imply that teachers are of the view that the capacity building process and institutional support are needed to make gender-responsive pedagogy effective implementation. The words language, environment, understanding, community presuppose that in addition to teaching strategies, gender responsiveness can be discussed in terms of respect and positive classroom atmosphere.

### Teachers' practice of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Teaching Learning Process

The teaching learning process was teacher direct. The lesson group work was bench wise or row wise or according to the grouping made by the classroom teachers. Dominant and outspoken students perform the leading group task. Weak and timid students were sidelined in many instances by the researcher. Students had little interaction due to pure size of students and limited time of lesson or activity and does not encourage learner autonomy in the

classroom. The sitting arrangement in the classroom would be overcrowded and therefore it would influence the quality interaction among students. Moreover, there is lack of decent feedback to both girls and boys in order to make sure that boys and girls could learn the lesson and the activity. Still many classes adhere to such traditional setting arrangement as tables and chairs are in rows which face teachers and does not facilitate student centered learning and student participation. Though different teaching strategies were employed by teacher, including role play, group discussion, Reading, lecture and demonstration, storytelling, none of this strategy was gender responsive (Mlama et al, 2005). They employed these strategies in order to improve the learning of the student. The face to face interaction with the instructor’s participants proved that teachers were little aware of gender responsive pedagogy. they unintentionally used gender responsive pedagogy In the classroom.

Figure 3

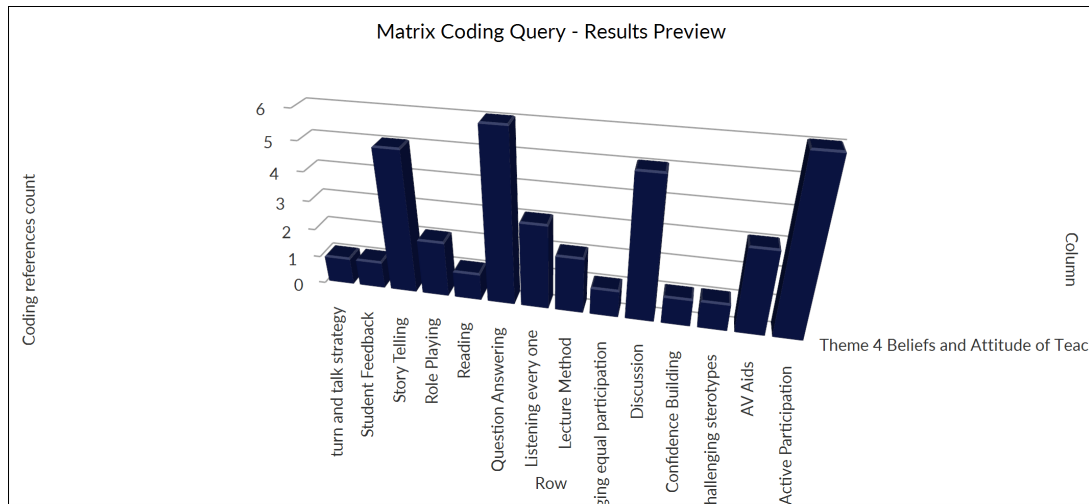


Table 1

Most Frequent Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Question Answer</li> <li>▶ Active participation</li> <li>▶ Discussion</li> <li>▶ Story telling</li> </ul>
Moderate Level Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Role Playing</li> <li>▶ Lecture Method</li> <li>▶ Listen to everyone</li> <li>▶ AV Aids</li> </ul>
Least Referred Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Turn and talk strategy</li> <li>▶ Student feedback</li> <li>▶ Ensure equal Participation</li> <li>▶ Confidence Building</li> <li>▶ Challenging Stereotypes</li> </ul>

The results suggest that the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers are less concerned with gender-specific transformative practices (equity, stereotype reduction, structured equal participation) and more concerned with general active teaching approaches (discussion, storytelling, question answering).

This implies that although the teachers show favorable dispositions towards participatory learning, they might still be at the surface or methodological level of their comprehension of gender-responsive pedagogy, and not be able to integrate principles of equity into their classroom activities.

### **Teaching learning Material, Including Textbooks**

The social studies textbook: A course book for class. Most Of the chapters are related the role of men and women in the society. Most of the chapters like Citizenship, Diversity and tolerance, Historical Events etc. in all chapters clearly highlight the role male and female and needs of both genders. Men were portrayed as leaders and masculine in the society.

### **Conclusion**

According to the study's findings, primary school instructors have a limited understanding of gender and gender-responsive pedagogy. I provide orientation and have a conversation with the teacher about GRP before I begin interviewing. Their daily lesson plan did not incorporate gender-responsive pedagogy. Using gender-responsive approaches in the classroom had very little practical component. Gender is not appropriately addressed in the terminology used, classroom arrangements, or classroom interactions. Educators still have a long way to go in addressing gender prejudice in the classroom. In light of the study's conclusions, the researcher suggested that:

- ▶ A growing teacher orientation, workshops, and seminars to raise understanding of Pedagogy that responds to gender

### **Future Research**

The researcher recommends other researchers to carry out study on gender responsive pedagogy on a larger scale covering whole province. If possible private school should be included in similar studies to support teachers.

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