

# UNESCO: Sexism Is Rampant In School Textbooks

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Textbooks are children's best tool for learning. Parents and teachers always encourage their students to learn, but what if the textbooks contain biases? Does it still do good for children?

## Sexism Rampant in School Textbooks

A new UNESCO report revealed that school textbooks contain gender bias information by undermining girl's education. [CTV News](#) reported that the books are filled with gender stereotype ideas.

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In the said textbooks, women are often described as nurturing, friendly and accommodating household workers. Meanwhile, men dominate the higher level of occupations including law enforcement, politics, science and engineering. These gender bias book under-represented women and disproportionately represented men.

"Examples of girls as mothers, and as cooks, and not promoting girls' ambitions in curriculum and textbooks is squashing girls' ambitions and dreams around the world," said Yona Nestel, senior education advisor at Plan International. "It's not showing girls that there are opportunities for them beyond what they're traditional taught to believe."

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## Gender Stereotyping in Textbooks A Global Concern

According to [Global Education Monitoring Report](#), the pre-primary and primary textbooks in China as cited in the EFA GMR 2008 contained more male characters. Books for 4-year-olds has 48 percent male characters and it increased by 13 percent for 6-year-olds. In the social study texts, all scientists and soldiers were male, while women were limited to teachers and service personnel.

The same scenario applies in India illustrations, which represents women by only six percent. Men dominate everything from commercial, occupation and marketing situation.

Meanwhile, in Australia, females dominate the population, but they remain under represented in textbooks. A [2009 study](#) revealed that 57 percent of the characters in textbooks were men. They doubled the number of men represented in law and order occupations and were four times as many in politics and government.

## Gender Equality Should be Promoted

Although actions were taken to improve the trend and reduce gender stereotypes in the textbooks, the battle for gender equality remains challenging. A [2015 study](#) in Pakistan revealed that the negative portrayal of women in textbooks remained the same for over a decade already. In 2012, [Iran's](#) Ministry of Education designed books with 80 percent of the characters being men.

In view of these issues, UNESCO is encouraging everyone to share examples of gender roles in textbooks be it positive or negative to raise awareness. Do your part, spread gender equality.

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