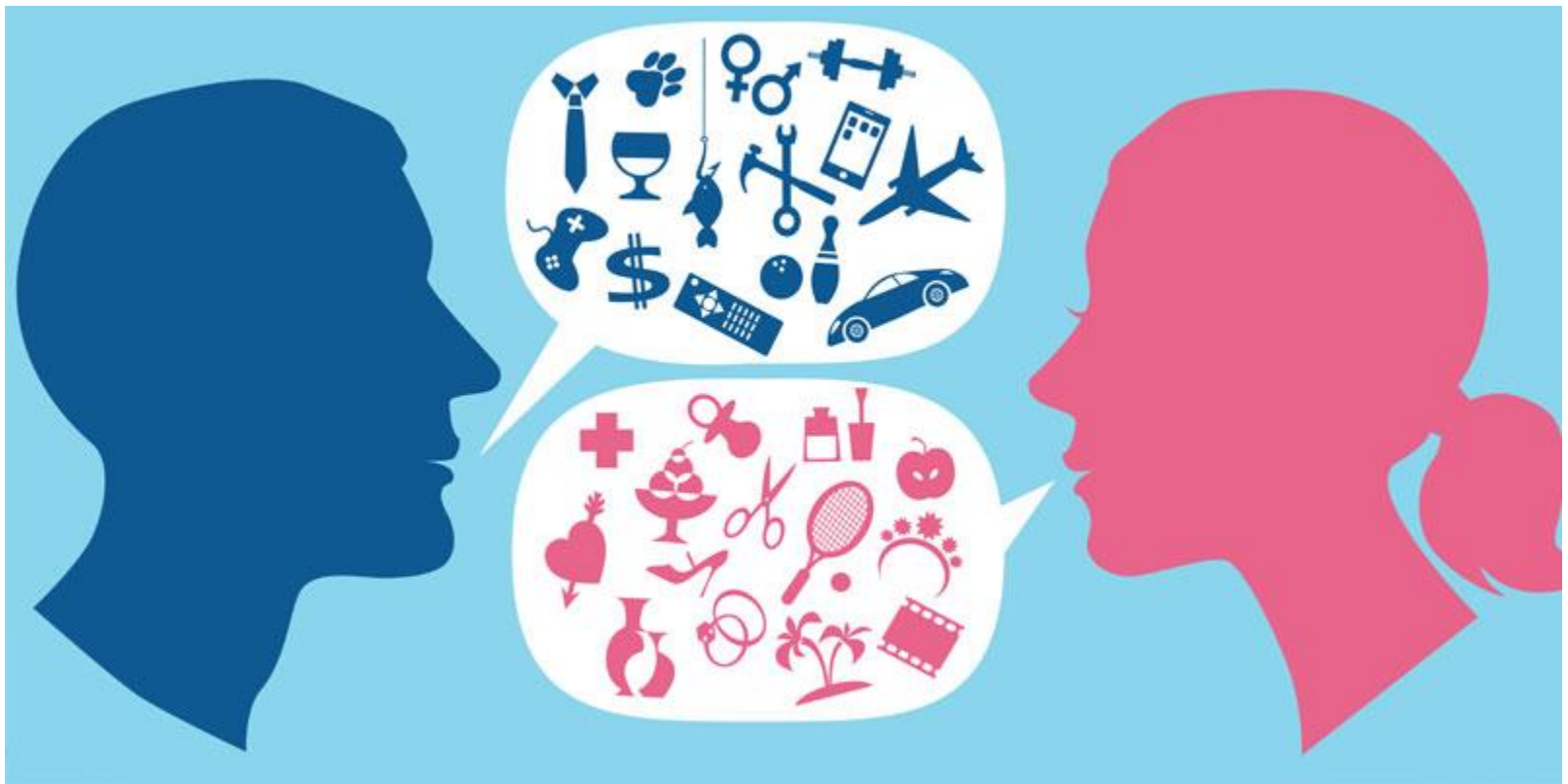


**Gender and Education**  
**«mind the gap»**  
**AHSS204**

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Nurten Kara

# References

- <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-gender-eng.pdf>



# Global education patterns are changing!

- Within formal education systems, from the primary to the tertiary levels,
- opportunities are expanding,
- literacy levels are improving and
- enrolment is rising.

But are these changes advancing the goal of gender parity and equality in education across regions and countries?

# Between promise and progress

- Data indicate that progress towards gender parity at the primary school level continues, yet the gap between boys and girls remains wide.
- An estimated 31 million girls of primary school age and 32 million girls of lower secondary school age were not enrolled in school in 2013 – narrowing their horizons and undermining their potential to contribute to society.

# UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

- As part of global effort to achieve [Education for All](#) by 2015, the UIS produces as many indicators as possible disaggregated by sex, and has developed new indicators that better capture the school experience of girls and boys.
- These data shed light on national experiences but also help to formulate policies and benchmark progress toward gender parity and equality in education.
- - See more at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/gender-education.aspx#sthash.0Q1vYkl6.dpuf>

Despite progress in recent years, girls continue to suffer severe disadvantage and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives.

South and West Asia has the widest gender gap in its out-of-school population - **80 per cent of its out-of-school girls** are unlikely to ever start school compared to **16 per cent of its out-of-school boys**.

Girls' education is both a basic right and a critical pedal to reaching other development objectives.

- Providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty:
  - educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will;
  - less likely to die in childbirth;
  - more likely to have healthy babies;
  - and are more likely to send their children to school.



When all children have access to a quality education rooted in human rights and gender equality, it creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come.

# Some statistics

- Recent estimates show that one-third of girls in the developing world are married before age 18,
- and one-third of women in the developing world give birth before age 20.

If all girls had secondary education  
in sub-Saharan Africa and South  
and West Asia

child marriage would fall by 64 per cent,  
**from almost 2.9 million to just over 1 million.**

# There are various barriers to girls' education throughout the world,

- ranging from supply-side constraints to negative social norms.
- Some include school fees;
- strong cultural norms favouring boys' education when a family has limited resources;
- Additionally, schools often lack sufficient numbers of female teachers which is important in conservative countries
- and negative classroom environments, where girls may face violence, exploitation or corporal punishment.

Increasingly, adolescent girls also face economic and social demands that further disrupt their education,

- household obligations
- child labor to child marriage,
- gender-based violence
- and female genital cutting/mutilation.

# *Empowering girls*

- Recognizing the opportunities provided through girls' education, UN and international conventions supports governments in the reduction of gender disparities through interventions at national, local and community levels aimed at empowering girls.

# A few key stages in this process are listed below:

- 1960. Convention against Discrimination in Education (Paris).
- 1979. United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations, New York).
- 1990. World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand).
- 1995. Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, China).
- 2000. Dakar Framework for Action, “Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments”, World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal).
- 2000. United Nations Millennium Declaration (United Nations, New York).
- 2005. Plan of Action of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (United Nations, New York).

# Convention against Discrimination in Education, UNESCO, Paris, 1960

- **Article 1 defines discrimination in education as follows:** “[...] The term ‘discrimination’ includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education [...]”
- **Article 5 states:** “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; it shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups [...]”



# United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),

- 1979 Article 10 reads as follows:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods.

# World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990

In Article 3, “Universalizing access and promoting equity”, paragraph 3 states:

- “The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.”

# World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995

- Platform for Action, Chapter IV, Section B, paras. 69-79, in particular paragraph 74:

“Curricula and teaching materials remain gender-biased to a large degree, and are rarely sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. This reinforces traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society. Lack of gender awareness by educators at all levels strengthens existing inequities between males and females by reinforcing discriminatory tendencies and undermining girls’ self-esteem.”

# Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, 2000

- Provision of textbooks and other materials of good quality is a necessary condition for achieving the six EFA goals, especially Goals 2 and 5:

“**Goal 2:** Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.”

“**Goal 5:** Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.”

# Millennium Declaration, United Nations, New York, 8 September 2000

- Goal 2: Ensure primary Education for All.
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

“We, Heads of State and Government, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium [...] We resolve [...]

To ensure that, by [2015], children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education [...]

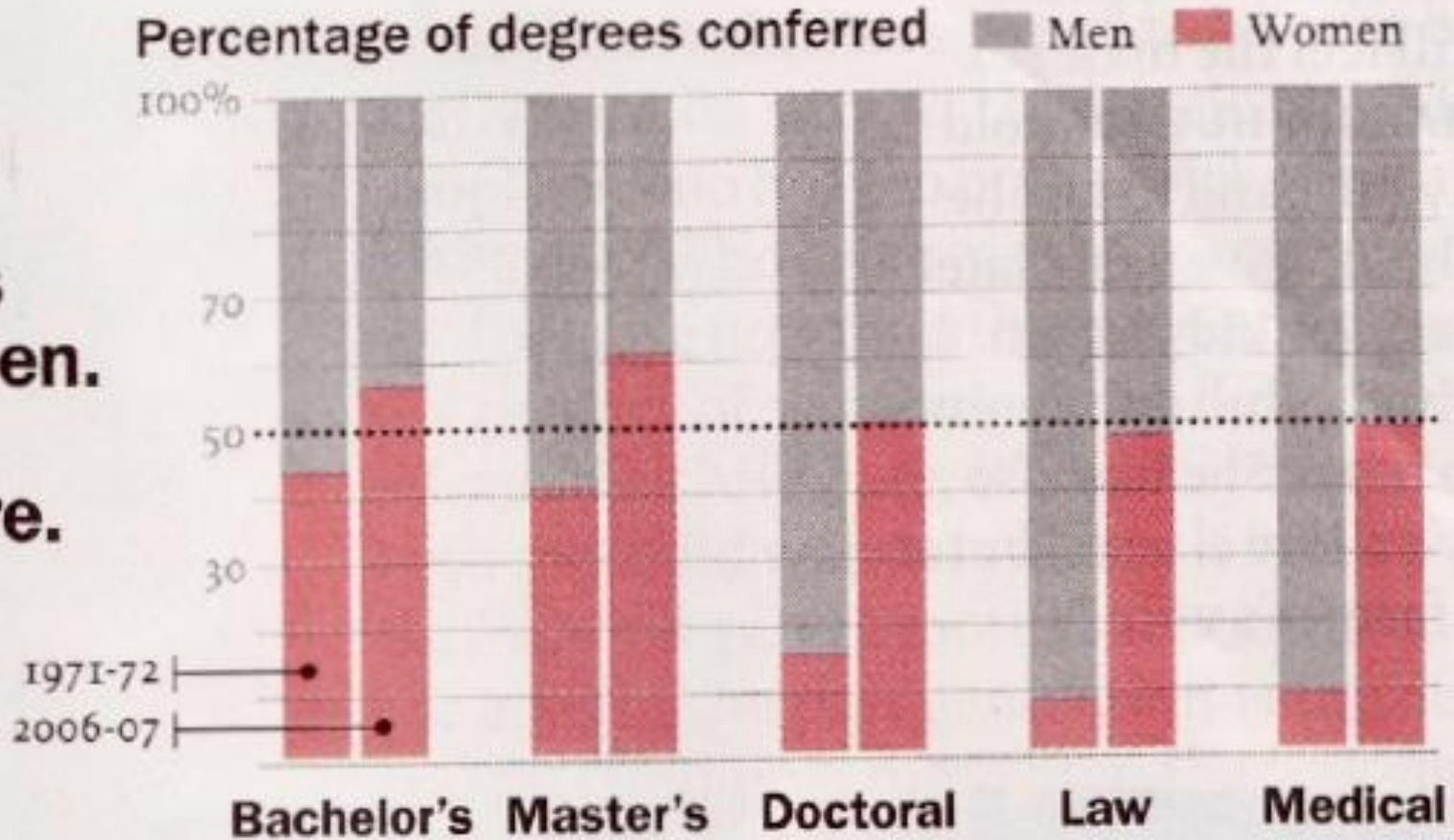
To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable [...]

# Plan of Action of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, 2005, United Nations General Assembly, Fifty-ninth session, A/59/525/Rev.1

- “The international community has increasingly expressed consensus on the fundamental contribution of human rights education to the realization of human rights [...]
- [...] human rights education can be defined as education, training and information aiming at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing of knowledge, imparting of skills and moulding of attitudes directed to:
  - (a) the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
  - (b) the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
  - (c) the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
  - (d) the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law;
  - (e) the building and maintenance of peace;
  - (f) the promotion of people-centred sustainable development and social justice.”

# Some changes achieved

**Today**  
**57%** of  
**college**  
**students**  
**are women.**  
**In 1972,**  
**43% were.**



## Consequently, gender-sensitive policies and measures are designed to promote women in all spheres.

It should be noted that gender relations and gender identities can also have adverse effects on men:

- excess male mortality, for example, can be explained in part by types of social behaviour associated with masculinity: drinking, smoking, speeding, and so on.
- Schools and textbooks are fundamental to the learning of gendered roles. Representations of male and female are legitimized here by a high-status medium.
- Once assimilated by children, the “gender system”, that is “the set of norms, beliefs, practices and knowledge that organizes relations between men and women”, will have repercussions on girls’ academic achievement and choices as well as on their experience as a whole.
- It is from this angle that textbooks may be investigated as potential vehicles for gender equality.



# Textbooks worldwide rely on gender stereotypes

- There is a link between girls' underachievement and textbooks, to the degree that gender inequality and discrimination are reinforced by textbooks, whose power of legitimation is all the greater because they are a rare commodity:
  - girls have fewer books than boys, since textbooks are expensive and in short supply;
  - the representations of both genders in textbooks, reinforced through teacher/pupil interaction with the teacher, continue to put girls at a disadvantage
- \* For these reasons, girls must have equal access to textbooks and gender representations must be changed. Teachers must also be trained to avoid contributing to the transmission of representations that convey inequality, whatever textbook is used.

# A textbook

– usually consisting of text and/or illustrations –

reviews, structures and renders accessible the state of knowledge in a given subject for a given age group in order to lay the foundations for standard learning and a shared culture.

It thus transmits a society's cultural capital to its youngest citizens at a particular moment.

The stories, images or examples either do not include women or describe them in submissive, traditional roles

- like cleaning, cooking and serving men. The men are depicted as the ones who hold positions as political leaders, drivers, teachers or doctors.

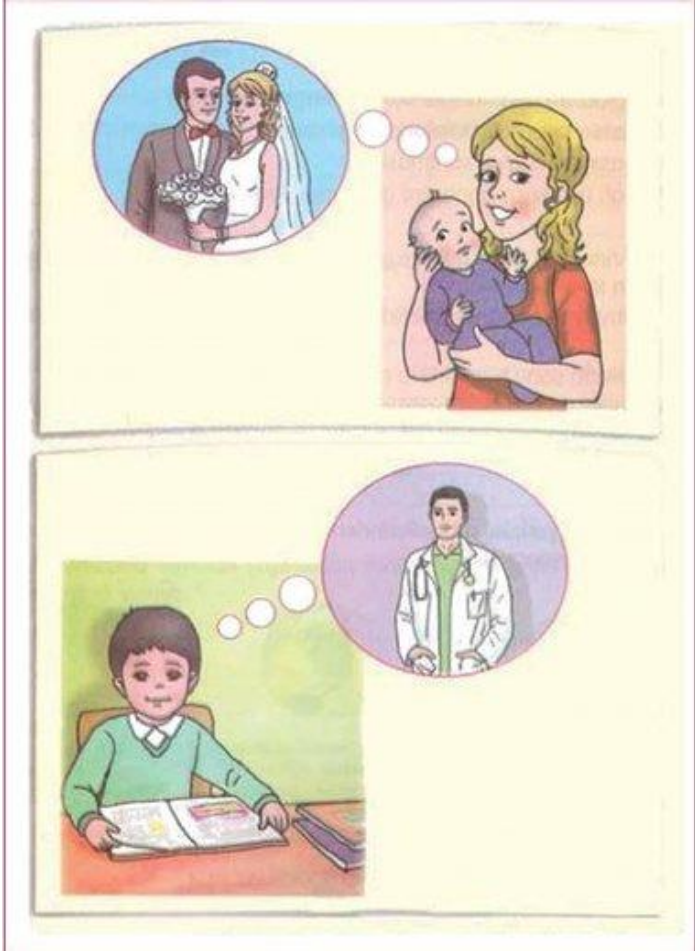
# history books ignore women

- Often, history books leave out influential women in history or do not accurately portray the lives of women. For example, a Thai book shows only a man receiving a land title, when in reality a large portion of the women hold their own land titles. While these biases are subtle, studies have shown that they still reinforce negative stereotypes of women.

Rae Blumberg, who has done extensive research on gender relations in textbooks, insists that

When girls don't see themselves in textbooks, they're less likely to envision themselves doing great things."

- There are already low percentages of women working in government and leadership positions in these poor nations.
- The textbooks only "reinforce, legitimate and reproduce patriarchal gender systems" that keep women out of these positions.





**A** Look at the pictures and say what each person is doing.



**A1** Read the following passage.

Saikat lives with his parents in an apartment in Bogra. His father, Mr. Islam, is a banker. In his free time, Mr. Islam writes stories. He loves listening to music of old times, too. Saikat's mother, Maleka Begum is a housewife. She loves sewing in her free time. She makes dresses. She often gets orders from her friends and neighbours. Saikat reads in class five. He is a good student. He wants to improve his English. So he watches cartoons on TV and reads English story books everyday.

# Gender stereotypes about occupational and domestic roles in textbooks

Males	Females
Vegetable seller (1)	Teacher (10)
Fruit seller (1)	Queen (1)
Teacher (2)	Gardening (house garden) (3)
Farmer (4)	Sweet seller (1)
Leader (1)	Nurse (1)
Driver (1)	Sweeping (1)
Doctor (1)	Cooking (2)
Carpenter (1)	Washing (1)
Professional Cook (1)	Packing (1)
Pilot (1)	Fetching water (2)
Policeman (2)	Making tea (1)
Post Man (2)	
Hunter (1)	




# A total number of 31 occupations were found in the text books

- Professional roles comprise the first kind of stereotypes observed.
- The nurses and teachers in the textbooks were consistently women,
- while doctors, police officers, post persons, pilots, drivers, carpenter, and soldier were all men.
- These text books reinforce the stereotypical image that men dominate the public sphere and women the private sphere.
- Nursing and teaching are the only paid work done by women other than a woman selling sweets. “Women”s potential for excelling in “non -traditional” endeavours receives scanty mention in educational materials.
- Materials rarely picture women as managers, pilots, lawyers, scientists, doctors or heads of state.”

(UNESCO)



A cartoon illustration of a man in a blue suit sitting at a desk with a computer monitor, looking surprised. A woman in a pink top sits across from him. A large speech bubble above the man contains the text. The background is a light blue color.

SORRY, YOU  
ARE SIMPLY NOT THE  
RIGHT MAN FOR  
THE JOB.

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