



**GOVERNMENT OF SINDH  
SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY DEPARTMENT**

Karachi, dated the 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2025

**NOTIFICATION**

**NO. SELD/HCW/18/2018:** With the approval of the Competent Authority & in compliance with the Section 3, sub-section (4), (e) of Sindh School Education Standards & Curriculum Act, 2014, Sindh Act No. IX of 2015, the School Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh is pleased to accord “**No Objection Certificate**” for the Gender-Inclusive Checklist for Teaching and Learning Material Development and Review with immediate effect.

**(ZAHID ALI ABBASI)  
SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT OF SINDH**

**NO. SELD/HCW/18/2018:**

Karachi, dated the 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2025

**A copy for information and necessary action to:**

1. The Chairman, Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro.
2. The Chief Executive Advisor Curriculum Wing, SELD, Government: of Sindh, Karachi.
3. The Director, Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment & Research, Jamshoro.
4. The Director General, Provincial Institute of Teacher Education.
5. The P.S to Minister for Education, Government: of Sindh, Karachi.
6. The P.S to Secretary School Education & Literacy Department, Government: of Sindh, Karachi.
7. The Executive Director, Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority.
8. The P.A to Additional Secretary (A&T) SELD, Government: of Sindh, Karachi.
9. The official website.
10. The office file.



*Handwritten signature* 10-12-2025  
**SECTION OFFICER (CURRICULUM-A&T)**

# Gender-Inclusive Checklist for Teaching and Learning Material Development and Review

## 1. Gender Inclusivity

The Curriculum Wing of the School Education and Literacy Department (SELD) took the initiative to develop a gender-inclusive checklist for textbooks and educational materials. The development of the checklist is informed by a comprehensive literature review and enriched by the insights of Pakistani education experts gathered through a series of workshops and consultations. For details of the evidence that informs the development of the checklist, see the Rationale Document and Literature Review Report.

## 2. Purpose

This gender-inclusive checklist is designed to guide the development and review of textbooks and educational materials that reflect and respect diverse gender identities and experiences. The checklist is applicable across all subjects and educational levels, from primary to secondary education and is relevant for students and teachers' materials. It will serve as a practical framework for authors, reviewers, editors, policymakers, publishers and researchers committed to advancing gender equality in education. It can also be used in teacher training to build educators' understanding of gender inclusivity and support the effective use of gender-inclusive content from textbooks in the classroom. Its aim is to ensure that textbooks and educational materials provide all learners with equitable and inclusive content, along with diverse and representative visuals, by embedding gender inclusivity throughout the textbook development process.

## 3. Structure of the Checklist

There are two sections: 1) Preliminary Review Exercise and 2) Main Assessment Section. The Preliminary Review Exercise provides valuable background information that helps inform and support the rating decisions made in the subsequent section. The Main Assessment Section is organised into four main themes, and each theme contains specific assessment criteria and descriptors. The assessment is carried out using a four-point rating scale.

## 4. Instructions for Using the Checklist

**4.1 Before You Begin:** Please review the following instructions carefully to understand how to assess the textbook and educational materials. Authors and illustrators can use the checklist as a guide during textbook/educational material development to ensure that content, visuals, language and assessments are inclusive and balanced. Reviewers can apply the checklist to evaluate textbooks and educational materials. Users may choose to conduct the review manually (by printing the checklist) or digitally (on a computer), depending on their convenience and preference.

**4.2 Preliminary Review Exercise:** Use the table provided in the section to carry out a quantitative analysis of the textbook/educational material's content and visuals. This includes counting characters and analysing their distribution by:

- Identify all Characters, whether mentioned by name or unnamed, and categorize them by age group (adult or child) and all genders including male, female and transgender person.
- Use the Named Characters row for recording those referred to by name (e.g., Sara, Ali)
- Use the Unnamed Characters row for recording those described without a name (e.g. woman, boy, teacher, child, doctor, father, mother, etc.)
- Calculate and provide the total score at the bottom of the table.
- Use the Observations and Notes row to write key findings, guided by the given prompts.

**4.3. Main Assessment Section:** This section is organised into four main themes identified through a review of relevant literature to address critical aspects of gender inclusivity. Each theme contains specific assessment criteria with descriptors. The four themes with the review focus are:

**Theme A. Cover Page:** It ensures balanced gender representation considering the equity and equality principles through visuals, and overall design.

**Theme B. Content/Text:** It focuses on balanced gender representation throughout books' content, including narratives, examples, descriptions and assessments.

**Theme C. Language:** It encourages the use of inclusive, gender-neutral, transformative language and the elimination of gender-biased terminology.

**Theme D. Visuals:** These promote equitable representation of genders and avoid harmful stereotypes in visuals.

**Scoring Interpretation:** For each of the 13 criteria, assign a score from 0-10 using the scale - Inadequate (0–2), Somewhat Adequate (3–5), Adequate (6–8) and Exceptional (9–10). After scoring all 13 criteria, calculate the total score out of 130 (13 × 10). A score of 78 (60%) or above indicates that the textbook meets the adequacy level for gender inclusivity. If a textbook scores below 60%, it should be accompanied by specific recommendations for improvement.

**Scoring Formula:** To calculate the overall percentage score, use the following formula:

$$= \frac{\text{Score Obtained}}{\text{Total Score}} \times 100$$

**Comments and Recommendations:** Use the space provided at the end of the checklist to summarise key observations. Focus on how characters and roles are portrayed in relation to gender equity, representation of diversity and the presence or absence of gender stereotypes. Support each observation with specific reference to the textbook/educational material's page numbers. Provide clear, actionable recommendations to strengthen gender inclusivity in the textbook.

## Gender-Inclusive Checklist for Teaching and Learning Material Development and Review

**Textbook Details:** Please fill in the table below to keep a clear record of the exact version and context of the textbook being reviewed.

Title/Subject _____	Grade level _____	Publisher _____
Published year _____	Year of revision _____	Number of pages _____

### Preliminary Review Exercise

**Purpose:** This section assesses the visibility and balance of gender representation in textbooks by counting the number of male, female and transgender persons. It is a preparatory exercise to gather objective data that will support the scoring in the main section.

**Instructions:** Count all the characters mentioned in the text and visuals, including named and unnamed individuals and record them in the table below. Use the Observations and Notes row to summarise key findings based on the following prompts:

- Ensure balanced representation of boys and girls in the text and visuals.
- Check for equal naming of boys and girls; avoid instances where one gender is more frequently left unnamed.
- Assign prominent and diverse roles to boys, girls and transgender persons, avoiding stereotypical or one-sided representations.

Character Type	Adult Male	Adult Female	Adult – Transgender/ Gender Unspecified	Male Child	Female Child	Child – Transgender/ Gender Unspecified	Total
Named Characters							
Unnamed Characters							
Total							

**Observations and Notes:**

### Main Assessment: Thematic Review Using Rating Scale

**Purpose:** To evaluate how well the textbook reflects gender inclusivity across key themes using clear, measurable criteria.

**Instructions:** Select a score from 0–10 for each criterion based on the scale provided. Add up all scores and calculate the percentage to see if the textbook meets the adequacy level.

#### A. Cover Page of the Textbook

This includes the front, inner front, inner back and back cover pages. Check that visuals and overall design show fair and equal representation of all genders (male, female and transgender person).

*Note: In A1, if there are no human characters on the cover page, mark a score of 6 points.*

	Assessment Criteria	Inadequate (0-2)	Somewhat Adequate (3-5)	Adequate (6-8)	Exceptional (9-10)	Scoring Points
<b>A 1</b>	Visual(s) present a contextually appropriate, balanced and inclusive representation of human characters, reflecting gender diversity while challenging gender stereotypes.	Human characters (if shown) display clear gender bias (e.g., only male characters depicted in stereotypical roles) with no visible diversity.	Human characters (if shown) reflect some gender diversity, but depictions remain limited or subtly reinforce gender stereotypes. (e.g., women/girls shown only as caregivers, absence of rural or marginalized groups)	Human characters (if shown) reflect a fair degree of gender balance and diversity. While minor gender stereotypes may persist, inclusivity is adequately achieved.	Human characters (if shown) portray a well-balanced, gender inclusive and contextually appropriate representation, reflecting diversity. Gender stereotypes are avoided, and inclusivity is normalized.	

#### B. Content/Text

Review the main content of the textbook (narratives, stories, examples and assessments) to assess whether it includes diverse gender identities and experiences.

Assess whether gender roles and activities are shown fairly and equally.

<b>B 1</b>	Content ensures a balanced and equitable representation of all genders <sup>1</sup> in diverse, non-stereotypical roles, highlighting shared responsibilities across different domains and disciplines (e.g., home, work, community).	Only one gender is predominantly represented, while others are absent. Roles are highly stereotypical and confined to narrow domains (e.g., men at	More than one gender is represented but is limited and stereotypical. Shared responsibilities across domains (home, work, community life) are minimally depicted.	Male and female characters are fairly represented in varied roles with some attempts to avoid stereotypes. Shared responsibilities are shown in some domains (home,	All genders including transgender persons, are equally and positively represented in diverse, empowering and non-stereotypical roles across multiple domains (home, workplace, education and	
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<sup>1</sup> Male, female and transgender persons.

		work, women in home/caregiving roles).		workplace, education, community), but inconsistently.	community life). Shared responsibilities are depicted across these domains.	
<b>B 2</b>	Content reflects the prominence and placement of male, female and other gender identities in both overall text and specific sentences.	Male characters dominate in both prominence and placement. Female and other gender identities are either absent or only marginally represented.	Female characters are positioned with lower prominence (secondary roles, background placement). Representation of other identities is limited or absent.	Male and female characters are given more balanced placement and visibility, though some inconsistencies remain.	All genders are visible and given equal prominence in appearance, placement, and narrative focus across the text. Representation is balanced, inclusive and intentional.	
<b>B 3</b>	Representation of diverse gender identities, family structures and socio-economic backgrounds are included in the content and examples.	Content and examples portray only conventional family structures (e.g., nuclear, middle-class) with no inclusion of diverse gender identities or socio-economic backgrounds.	Limited inclusion of diverse gender identities, family types and/or socio-economic backgrounds. Diversity is minimal and inconsistently portrayed in examples and content.	Content and examples reflect varied family structures, gender identities and socio-economic backgrounds, though some inconsistencies remain.	Content and examples consistently and respectfully reflect a wide range of family types, gender identities and socio-economic contexts. Diversity is portrayed positively and inclusively throughout.	
<b>B 4</b>	Equitable presentation of role models from all genders, highlighting their contributions across various fields and contexts (e.g., history, science, leadership, cultural and social life).	Only boys or men are presented as role models. Contributions focus mainly on male achievements across the fields (e.g., history, science, leadership, cultural and social life). Girls/women and other genders are absent or depicted in subordinate roles.	Females are included as role models, but their contributions are limited in numbers, scope, or field. Male contributions dominate key contexts (e.g., leadership, history, culture).	Role models from all genders are presented across several fields and contexts. Their contributions are acknowledged, though some imbalances in the visibility of their contributions remain.	Role models from all genders are equally visible, and prominent. Their contributions are highlighted and celebrated across various fields and contexts (history, science, leadership, culture and social life), ensuring inclusive and empowering representation.	

<b>B 5</b>	Characters are described with diverse traits, and associations (appearance, personality, activities, objects), while avoiding stereotypical portrayals such as girls shown only as pretty/shy or boys only as strong/brave.	Text descriptions reinforce gender stereotypes. Girls are depicted mainly with beauty, shyness or domestic roles while boys are portrayed as strong, brave, active characters linked with vehicles or sports. Diversity in characters' traits and activities is absent.	Some variation exists, but description of characters' traits, attributes and associated objects remain largely traditional or gendered with limited efforts to show diversity.	Moderate diversity is reflected in characters' traits, attributes and associated objects. Some stereotypes may persist, but more inclusive portrayals are evident.	Descriptions consistently reflect respectful and diverse representations of characters' physical attributes, traits, activities and associated objects across all genders.	
<b>B 6</b>	Assessment activities reflect gender inclusivity.	Assessment activities heavily favour one gender and reinforce stereotypes.	Some gender balance is present in assessment activities, but inclusivity is limited. Representation of the other gender is minimal or absent.	Assessment activities generally reflect gender balance, with examples representing all genders. Minor gaps may remain, but efforts toward inclusion are evident.	Assessment items consistently include diverse gender identities and challenge traditional gender norms and portray all genders in respectful, non-stereotypical ways, ensuring inclusivity.	
<b>B 7</b>	Gender sensitization elements are consistently integrated into teacher guide notes.	Teacher guide notes do not include any reference to gender awareness, sensitivity or inclusion.	Gender sensitivity is mentioned briefly or in isolated sections in teacher guide notes. However, it lacks emphasis, details or practical guidance for teachers.	Teacher guide notes include clear guidance on gender-sensitive teaching practices, though some areas may lack depth or consistency.	Teacher guide notes provide comprehensive and practical strategies for promoting gender equality and inclusion, with integrated activities, classroom practices and examples throughout.	

### C. Language

Review the language used throughout the textbook, especially in job titles (e.g., teacher, doctor), general descriptions of people and activities, pronouns (he, she, and they), and names and labels used for people.

<b>C 1</b>	Gender-inclusive and gender-neutral language is used, avoiding gender bias by applying inclusive terms when gender is	Gender-exclusive or male-default language dominates the text, and no effort is made to avoid bias (e.g., chairman,	Some attempts at inclusive language, but usage is inconsistent. Male-default terms still appear frequently. (e.g.,	Mostly uses gender-transformative and inclusive language with minor inconsistencies	Gender-inclusive and neutral language is used consistently and effectively throughout the content (e.g., people,	
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	irrelevant and acknowledging all genders where appropriate.	manpower, salesman, man-made, brotherhood).	chairman, businessman, forefathers).	(e.g., chairperson, staff, server, homemaker).	students, parents, firefighter, ancestors, human-made, workforce). Language is bias-free, inclusive terms and well-integrated.	
<b>C 2</b>	Non-restrictive and appropriate pronouns are used when referring to people in general or when gender is unknown or irrelevant, for example, alternating “he”/ “she”, or using “they” as an inclusive option.	Consistently uses gendered pronouns such as “he” for general references. No effort is made to use inclusive or neutral pronouns.	Occasionally alternates between “he” and “she” or uses “they”, but with inconsistency. Inclusive pronoun use appears, but not in a systematic way.	Shows fair consistency in alternating pronouns or using “they” for general or unspecified references. Minor oversights remain, but overall pronoun use reflects an effort toward inclusivity.	Pronouns are used consistently, appropriately and inclusively across the text. “They” is used for general or unspecified individuals and pronoun choices fully reflect respect for identity and inclusivity.	
<b>D. Visuals</b>						
Assess that visuals show people in different roles and activities equally and fairly. When female and male characters appear together in one picture, they should be positioned equally, without implying that one is superior or inferior to the other.						
<b>D 1</b>	Visuals fairly represent all genders and reflect diverse races, ethnicities and abilities.	Visuals consistently depict only one gender or a dominant group, without meaningful representation of diverse gender, race, ethnicity or abilities.	Visuals occasionally include different genders or groups, but diversity remains minimal and inconsistent.	Visuals consistently reflect gender diversity with some representation of race, ethnicity and abilities, though some gaps remain.	Visuals consistently and fairly represent all genders, races, ethnicities and abilities.	
<b>D 2</b>	Characters of all genders are shown in active, empowering, diverse and non-stereotypical roles, with body language and clothing reflecting ethnic diversity.	Characters of all genders are consistently shown in passive or stereotypical roles. Their body language and clothing reinforce traditional gender norms with no ethnic diversity depicted.	Characters of all genders are occasionally shown in active and diverse roles/postures/clothing. The representation is inconsistent across gender and contexts, and stereotypes remain visible.	Several characters of all genders are portrayed in empowering and different roles. Some ethnically diverse clothing is depicted, though few gaps remain in either gender or cultural representation.	Characters of all genders are shown in active, positive, diverse (social and professional), empowering roles and postures. Their body language and clothing reflect both gender equity and ethnic inclusivity across all contexts.	

<b>D 3</b>	Visuals show a balanced representation of all genders, ensuring fair prominence and positioning of male, female, and other gender identities in illustrations, photos and graphics.	Male characters dominate in terms of prominence and position. Female and other genders are largely absent or marginalized.	Female characters are occasionally included, but their placement makes them less visible, as they are often positioned in the background or given less prominence.	Visuals show a fair balance in the placement of all genders, although some inconsistencies in visibility or positioning remain.	All genders are equally and visibly represented in illustrations, with thoughtful balance in placement and prominence, ensuring that no group is visually marginalized.	
<b>Comments and Recommendations</b>						
<b>Total Points Obtained</b>						

Reviewers' Names \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewers' Signatures \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Glossary<sup>2</sup>

Gender	Refers to the attributes, roles, and responsibilities which society approves and appropriates for its women/girls and men/boys. Since gender is a social and cultural construct, gender-based attributes, roles, and responsibilities change over time and differ in different cultural contexts.
Gender bias	Prejudiced or preferential treatment of one gender over the other. In many cultural contexts, gender bias results in the unfair distribution of opportunities and resources, favouring men/boys over women/girls.
Gender equality	Refers to the concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment, and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural, and political development.
Gender equity	Process of being fair to women and men, girls and boys, and importantly, the equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination.
Gender-inclusive	Treating all genders fairly and equally, without favouring one or excluding others.
Stereotypes	Fixed ideas or oversimplified beliefs about a group of people, often not true or fair.
Gender stereotypes	Fixed and often unfair beliefs about how boys, girls, men, and women are supposed to behave, look, or what roles they should play in society. These ideas often limit people’s potential and reinforce inequality.
Gender norms	Shared social expectations about how individuals should behave, appear or act based on their gender. These norms can limit opportunities and reinforce stereotypes.
Marginalized groups	People who are often excluded or treated unfairly in society, such as women, transgender individuals or people with disabilities.
Gender-neutral	Language or visuals that don’t suggest any specific gender (e.g., using "they" instead of "he/she", or "firefighter" instead of "fireman").
Diverse gender identities	Refers to the inclusion of individuals beyond the male-female binary, such as transgender.
Balanced representation	Equal and fair visibility of all genders across content, visuals, and characters—ensuring one gender is not consistently dominant or sidelined.
Transformative language	Language that changes the way people think by being inclusive and challenging traditional norms.
Empowering roles	Roles that give individuals strength, confidence, or leadership.
Submissive roles	Roles where someone is shown as weak, obedient, or not in control.
Traditional gender roles	Common beliefs about what men and women should do, based on tradition.
Gender sensitivity/awareness	Encompasses the ability to perceive, acknowledge, and highlight existing gender differences, issues, and inequalities and to incorporate a gender perspective into strategies and actions.
Male-default language	Language that assumes male terms (like "he," "man," or "mankind") as the standard or norm for all people, regardless of gender. It often makes women, girls, and non-binary individuals invisible in communication. For example, using “he” to refer to any doctor or student, or terms like “chairman” and “manpower,” reinforces gender bias. Inclusive alternatives include “they,” “chairperson,” or “workforce.”

<sup>2</sup> The glossary terms are adapted from the following resources:

1. The UNICEF (2017) Glossary of Terms and Concepts. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia.
2. *Gender transformative communication: A Checklist*. (2022, March). Bibliothek der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nepal/19016.pdf>
3. Gender roles & gender norms: Definition & examples. (2023, May 25). United Way NCA. <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/gender-norms/>
4. MasterClass. (2022, November 23). Gender-neutral language: A guide. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/gender-neutral-language>
5. OSCE. (2006, May). *Glossary on gender-related terms*. Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe | OSCE. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/2/26397.pdf>