

# CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL VALUES AND IDEOLOGY IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the cultural values, beliefs and ideology constructed through Pakistan Studies textbook, published by Sindh Text Book Board, currently used for secondary education in the Government sector in Pakistan. The study aims to critically analyze how discourses are created and what ideologies are embedded in them in the form of textbooks. The paper also analyzes how texts are manipulated in the public education sector to portray certain cultural forces, beliefs and values for the young reader and how these discourses in turn position the learner to go through the way these discourses are developed. The paper states that such discourses are contrary to the young learner's interests and serve the interests of the powerful elite.*

**Keywords:** ideological forces, cultural values, beliefs, critical discourse analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

The current research aims to demonstrate how cultural values, social relations and ideologies are conveyed through textbooks. The official curriculum records in the shape of teaching plans and manuscripts the main goals and objectives for the students and thus, formulates the fundamentals of traditional information and cultural heritage for pedagogic practices at learning institutions. (Westbury, 1990). Textbooks convey certain worldviews and emphasize on certain value systems. They represent 'official knowledge', and that the Government wants to be taught to the

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students. This paper tries to provide an understanding of how texts books index power relations and ideology.

Utilizing critical curriculum studies and critical discourse analysis, I will attempt to analyze how school textbooks expose the novice to the dominant viewpoint and way of life, tailor made to suit the state and powerful factions of the society.

In the section that follows I have briefly outlined the major assumptions of critical curriculum studies and CDA as an analytical technique.

## **CRITICAL CURRICULUM STUDIES**

Literacy is always rooted in cultural politics. Text and power politics are inseparable from each other. The syllabus is, thus not a neutral collection of information in the service of the nation, in the form of textbooks. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection. It's a society's idea of rightful facts and information. Texts are outcomes of strife, discord, upheaval and understandings that join a group together or make them fall apart. (Apple, 2000). When we talk about knowledge its social knowledge almost entirely. Considering that the syllabus of schools is an outcome of power politics, it's significant to analyze the process of inclusion and omissions of cultural knowledge that takes place within the textbooks.

In 1970s with the materialization of the sociology of schools knowledge, a new standpoint emerged for perceiving the connection between literacy, cultural mores and the questions of supremacy and authority came to be discussed in education (Whitty, 1985). In his review of research in critical curriculum studies, Luke (1988) suggests that in any given era of history of education the selected knowledge, competences and practices for transmission in school curricula are ideological process, serving interests of particular classes and forms of social control. He believes, 'the ideological process is dynamic, reflecting both continuities and contradictions of that dominant culture and the continued remaking and relegitimization of that culture's plausibility system (Luke, 1988, cited in Liu, 2005). Textbooks employ very different representational repertoires, less educational and more ideological in orientation.

## **TEXTBOOK EVALUATION**

Text books are important source of teaching and learning at schools .They form the foundation of school teaching and tutoring. Texts remain the

major recourse material for instructors everywhere. . Hutchinson and Torres (1994) state that textual material is an indispensable aspect of instruction and no academic event can take place successfully in the absence of a relevant textbook. Texts promote a selective view of the cultural norms of a society. Certain practices and perspectives are promoted, others discouraged in this process.

According to Tomlinson (2001), textbook estimation belongs to the domain of applied linguistics; it is an effective tool to measure the efficacy of instructional material and its influence on the learners.

In McGrath's (2002) view textbook assessment can be useful especially for programs that aim at teaching language skills. Williams calls textbooks' knowledge, 'selective tradition'. William says,

*"From a whole possible area of past and present, in a particular culture, certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are regulated or excluded. Yet within a particular hegemony, and as one of its decisive processes, this selection is presented and usually passed off as 'the tradition', the significant past ... it is in this sense an aspect of contemporary social and cultural organization, in the interest of the dominance of a specific class" (William, 1989, p56-60).*

*From Widdowson's perspective (2004), whether texts are oral or written, they have to be interpreted linguistically to uncover their hidden meaning. Hence, critical curriculum study practitioners try to consider how texts are manipulated to the service of the politically powerful class. Textbook construction is a hegemonic activity. It aims to create a national identity, a collective conscience for the students, however by critically examining the text the learners can realize the ideational purposes of the texts and critically challenge the hegemony of certain oppressive values portrayed by them.*

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The purpose of critical discourse analysis is "to analyze opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power

and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1993, p. 249)

Dominance to Dijk is the excessive use or abuse of social power by state, institutions or social groups that results in inequality in the society (1993).

To put it simply CDA aims at making clear the connections between discourse practices, social practices and social structures, connections that might otherwise be opaque to the layman. In short, Discourse Analysis is problem –oriented social research. Text, context and discourse play a central role in this process. Also significant is the study of power, ideology, dominance and prejudice in CDA. CDA has its origin in textual and linguistic research. Gee (1999) differentiates small d- discourse and big-D discourse ; the first one refers to the oral or written use of language .The later refers to the accumulated wealth of ideas and information created through verbal discourse; that is the accepted way of life and conduct , accepted by the leading ideologies, perceptions and thought patterns of the time .

An important function of CDA in text analysis is that the students and even teachers can examine the content critically. Canangarajah (1999) believes that learners can potentially identify and confront the ideology embedded in the academic content.

## **IDEOLOGY**

Ideology has been defined by Fairclough (1989 p.126) as, ‘...any social policy which is in part or in whole derived from social theory in a conscious way’. In Marxist terms ideologies are ‘ideas which arise from a given set of material interests’. Both the definitions of ideology point different ideological positions themselves. Since words cannot be taken as an isolated entity, their meanings are to be seen in the context of the ideology behind them. Researchers of CDA have carefully considered both the societal as well as collective political workings of ideology. But its social and cognitive dimensions still largely remain unexplored. It is, thus quite significant to Thus, it’s very important to investigate the cognitive features of ideology as well.

## **INTERPELLATION**

Althusser’s (1969, 1971) concept of interpellation defines the processes of becoming national. It simply stands for all social and cultural practices that allow certain ideas to capture our minds and induces a collective identity on

its victims. The interesting thing about interpellation is that it works not through force but it operates by consent, thereby putting its subject in a specific social role, identity a concept of self.

## **HEGEMONY**

Gramscian hegemony (1971) states the process by which dominant social and political groups impose their sense of reality and truth upon the subjects. It states how power and control are established through consensus. Attitudes points of view and opinions are formed through various discourses that serve peculiar ideologies.

## **VALIDITY CLAIMS**

Habermas (1981) formulated the theory of communicative action which put forth the idea of validity claims, which in his opinion exist in all discourses globally. He believes that verbal or oral communication is a means of achieving understanding or can be used as a part of strategy. In case of language as a tool of understanding, the subjects can accept or discard the validity claims critically. Texts books normally rely heavily upon validity claims to implicitly achieve their goals of interpellation.

## **INSTRUMENT AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS**

The present study has utilized Fairclough's (1989) model of CDA. The approach proposes three dimensions of textual analysis namely; description, interpretation and explanation. Description refers to the linguistic features of a text, interpretation deals with the relationship between text and interaction and explanation deals with the relationship between interaction and the social context. In addition to this, Fairclough (1989) suggests that a text can be analyzed in three directions; textual features, discursive practices and social context.

In this approach the analytical focus is on any communicative event (interaction). The approach takes into consideration text and any textual practices that are part of discourse; which include the processes of text production and reception. In short, socio cultural practice (e.g. social and cultural practices which give rise to the communicative event all fall under the domain of discourse (Fairclough, 1995).

According to Fairclough any sentence is a text, therefore, analyzable in terms of the expression of these functions, which he has labeled

representations, relations and identities:

Particular representations and re-contextualization of social practice... (Ideational function). Carrying particular ideologies.

Particular construction of reader and writer identities (whether status or role aspect of identity or individual and personality aspect of identity).

A particular construction of the relationship between writer and reader (formal or informal, close or distant). (Fairclough, 1995)

Adopting the analytical method of discourse analysis, using the framework of Fairclough as a tool, this study aims to explore qualitatively the dominant ideologies and beliefs embedded in Pakistani school textbooks.

## **MATERIALS**

The materials of this study are taken from the lesson 'Ideological Basis of Pakistan' (Appendix, 1), taken from the Pakistan Studies Textbook for class XI-X, produced and published by Sindh Text Book Board, taught at Government schools in Pakistan.

## **ANALYSIS**

This study analyses text in three stages namely: textual features, discursive practices and social context (Fairclough, 1989). This includes experiential, relational and expressive value of words, grammar and interactions. I have analyzed the text under discussion alternatively on some of these levels as suggested by the text structure.

The text under analysis is 'Ideological basis of Pakistan' (Appendix, 1), It enumerates the following qualities that shape the national character, thus they must be possessed by an individual.

### **Firm belief in ideology**

The text links ideology with character. It says,

'Our ideology stems from Islam. Therefore, we should build our character in the light of Islamic values'. The perspective of Islamic ideology gets maximum attention throughout the text. These texts are designed to inculcate in the children Islamic values, while constructing this specific value other possibilities have been ruled out completely. Ideology has been shown as the builder of national character that in turn stems from Islam, a

religion. The text urges the learners that their actions be regulated by a religious ideology, it excludes possibilities of other religions, and thus no alternate is left for someone not belonging to Islam.

### **Commitment**

‘Commitment means devotion with a sense of duty and responsibility. A person, who acts in conformity with national ideology, fully devotes himself to the cause of the nation.’ The ideology of the text is explicit here; conformity to religion and state is regarded as highest virtue. It highlights the formal didactic relationship between the state and its citizens. The implicit ideology in the text is that the state is legitimized to have the power to rule, as state is the initiator of action and citizen is only supposed to be committed to what the state starts. It is obvious that the ideological intent is to position the child reader to accept established social power relations and to legitimize government rule.

### **Patriotism**

‘Patriotism is an eternal virtue; it is an expression of love and sacrifice for one’s country’, says the text.

The schematic structure of the text is designed in such a way so that the child recognized what are acceptable socio cultural virtues. The attitudinal orientation is also note worth here, as it implicitly states that if you obey the state and follow it unquestionably you survive in the society. Another lesson expresses the same view, ‘every citizen of an ideological state should be loyal and patriotic, ready to sacrifice for the state’ (Appendix, 2).

Patriotism has been shown as a self-referential and self-reinforcing word. Learners are positioned in such texts as agents who enact patriotism as a collective spirit. The inclusion of children as agents creates a subjective position for the child reader to identify himself with the people practice patriotism.

### **Honesty**

The text defines honesty as,

An individual should lead a just live and reflect honesty in words and deeds. Honesty should be visible in all fields of life. Islam has emphasized upon honesty in very strong words’. The text has presented the perspective of honesty as a universal virtue, cherished by all human societies. However,

this virtue has also been linked to religion, making it a sin not to adhere to this virtue. Honesty, as a human quality is the foundations stone of all constructive human relations, thus it is cherished by every community or society, however, the text has given this virtue the specific coloring to religious ideology , distorting its very impact.

## **EXPERIENTIAL VALUES**

It shows the text producer's experience of the natural or social world .It deals with contents, knowledge and beliefs. In the lesson classification schemes have been used to make a good citizen stand apart. No attempt has been made to make the process an indirect one and there is over wording of concepts like virtue and ideology and Islam. Honesty has been used as hyponymy in the sense of devotion to one's country. Patriotism has been presented as an entity, demanding sacrifice from its practitioners; however the other democratic, human and liberal aspects of being patriotic have been left untouched.

Processes predominates the participants, who are constantly directed into actions and compliance. The text gives a specific scheme for classifying behavior; rather it constitutes a classification of steps to being a 'Pakistani'. Hence, in order to be a Pakistani national one has to develop patriotism, devotion, sense of duty, honesty and show faith in Islamic ideology. Commitment has been used as a synonym for devotion, duty, responsibility, thus new meaning relations have been created. Participants are merely subjects in the text that must act upon the commands .Many sentences use active case (i.e. an individual should) where subject is individual, so that the direct responsibility of one's behaviors is land on him/her.

However, at other places passive voice is use (i.e. honesty is a virtue recognized in all societies). Here agent, patient relationship is presupposed thus, the agent is not mentioned, and it's understood. The citizen of all societies recognizes honesty as a virtue is the underlying assumption.

## **RELATIONAL VALUE**

Relational values stand for how a text creates social relations between participants. The text, in questions creates a collective Muslim community, in the name of national identity. It claims that Pakistan's ideology stems from Islam, what then is the status of non-Muslim in the state? It's very much a discourse of racism. It develops a superior image of a group of



people to the exclusion of all others. Hence, religion and racism is the common ground for binding the nation.

An important aspect of the text is its use of presuppositions at various steps, the most important presupposition being that all readers of the text and all members of a community (nation) are Muslims, so they must adhere to Muslim ideology

The word 'nation' has been used in the sense of 'a people', a sort of composite individual with the attributes of a single person i.e. patriotic, honest etc. The use of modality in the text at various stages shows speaker's authority, (i.e. an individual should lead a just life...). Modality is important for both relational and expressive values, as it creates urgency or need for an action.

### **EXPRESSIVE VALUE**

It shows the text producer's evaluation of the reality it produces. It deals with subjects and social identities. The text produces positive evaluation of social practices like honesty, sense of devotion, duty and commitment. These values are relative not absolute, however the text uses them as absolute virtues for its citizens. Actually these are cultural goods that the government wants its people to possess to create a specific type of cultural capital or subjugation (Bourdieu, 1985). Language is a tool for getting things done. In this lesson there is representation of a particular type of reality. Social relations are linked with how ideology is being enacted in the text. For ideology to be effective it must work ideologically not explicitly. The use of the verb 'is' is constantly used in the text to give a notion of universality to the notions of honesty and patriotism. Qualifications of being a member of a certain society have been discussed; it very much limits the relationship between the participants and the state. The agenda of the state is made clear and the learner is interpellated into behaving in league with it.

### **EXPLANATION**

Social practices are regulated ways of doing things, which involve participants, actions, performances, locations etc. Discourse sets boundaries in terms of who is inside and who is outside its realm; who gets to speak and who does not; what is to be said and what is not; and who has power and authority and who is not worth listening to. Here, Gramsci's concept of

hegemony seems to be at work because the powerful only really becomes able to rule by securing or rather 'winning the active consent' of subordinate classes (Hall 1982, p.85). This highlights the idea of contested power and having oppositional readings to socially created forms of meaning or texts.

Respect for religion and authority are traditional cultural values and beliefs among many that are re selected and reconstructed in the textbooks. In the current discursive construction complicated social relations are reinterpreted and diluted into broadly defined unequal power relations between the government leaders, military and ordinary people.

### **IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT**

Since the 1980s education in Pakistan has been devoted to mind- control with a focus on the cultivation of Islamic values and ideology among the learners. The government curriculum demands textbooks to promote Islam as the national ideology of the state. For the past 20 years the state has been propagating its political agenda, formed upon Islamic ideology (Haque, 1987). To achieve their political goals the powerful political elites have furthered an Islamic version of civic instruction, through national syllabus at public schools (Mustafa, 2004). Islam is presented in these text books more than a religion; it appears as a political ideology and a great unifying power.

More importantly, the study also discovers that the vocabulary and concepts used in the textbooks are consistent with the vocabulary and concepts that are generally found in the political rhetoric of pan- islamists. Nationalism, patriotism and spirit of sacrifice for the nations are some of the key elements that Pakistani citizenship education offers to the learners. At another place the text says, 'Religion is a binding force for the nation in the world. Nations in the world are distinct on the basis of their religion' (Appendix, 2).

The curriculum as well as the books lay emphasis upon the ideology of Islam which is a post- independence construct. Pakistani nationalism is repeatedly defined in such a way that it excludes non-Muslim Pakistanis from the national sphere. The consequence of this Muslim Majoritarianism is that it creates an environment for non-Muslims in which become second rate citizen and their patriotism becomes suspected. As the text says, 'The philosophy behind the struggle for Pakistan was to lay down the

foundations of Islamic state' (Appendix, 2).

Text and power politics go hand in hand, add to this religious zeal, we have the perfect formula for citizenship instruction in Pakistan. Such instruction can be expected to exploit the learners mentally, socially and even materially, shutting the door of independent inquiry all together.

## CONCLUSION

The study attempts to analyze the ideational and conceptual goals of social studies texts in Pakistani context. Citizenship education seems to create and reinforce national identity by cultivating certain acceptable values and cultural practices. It demands the students to adhere to national standards in conduct and even in thought. Such an education ignores social, cultural and religious diversity .Apple (1993, p. 233) calls such education as 'cultural national curriculum'.

In Pakistan Children are taught what the state believes to be conceptual foundation of their shared identity, which is likely to result in a particular perspective for understanding the world. In Pakistan the educational system aims at creating nationalism and Islamic identity, what some scholars call 'umma patriotism'. Therein lies the tragedy of our education that aims at attaining certain cultural and ideological goals and values, which are focused on indoctrinating the child on the one hand, and are aimed at islamification of the society on the other hand.

The resultant education is likely to create a sense of alienation among the students and can be contrary to creative national and social attitudes and will result in religious narrow-mindedness and jingoism.

Such exclusivist curriculum has a deleterious effect on the learner and is harmful for the civic unity of a country. The paper on the whole notes the following findings:

The social studies books create an ideological conflict in the mind of the student, confusing the relationship between state and Islam.

The text books confuse religious instruction with citizen ship education.

It appears that the educators and curriculum planners in Pakistan are not clear about the role instruction should play in the life of a learner. Its purpose is to enhance asymmetrical power relations and inculcate the habit of acting and thinking as approved by the state apparatus.

The Pakistani Social Studies textbooks reveal a deep contrast with what the state demands of the kids and what is globally expected of civic education. The main aim of this kind of education can be assumed to create loyalty among its citizens towards the state. The analysis further reveals that the selective versions of knowledge presented in the textbooks are constructed in a manner congruent with the interest of the government. Citizenship education appears to be used as a tool of indoctrination in favor of controversial ideologies. These discourses position the child to conform and to be self-restrained and obedient citizens, while omitting or even condemning the child's interest, curiosity, creativity and critical thinking.

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### **Appendix: A**

Lesson analyzed in the paper:

Ideological basis of Pakistan. Pakistan Studies for classes 1X-X. Sindh Text Book Board. Jamshoro. Sindh. Dated: 9-10-2004, for the province of Sindh. Reviewed by National Review Committee for Textbooks. Shan Printing Press Hyderabad.

### **Appendix: B**

Quotations have been taken from the following lesson.

Making of Pakistan. Pakistan Studies for classes 1X-X. Sindh Text Book Board. Jamshoro. Sindh. Dated: 9-10-2004, for the province of Sindh. Reviewed by National Review Committee for Textbooks. Shan Printing Press Hyderabad