HIDDEN CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL: EXPLORING GENDER NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT. Hidden curriculum refers to students' beliefs, attitudes, and conduct in the classroom, apart from the explicit subject taught in textbooks. This paper has discussed how student participation at Amin Bazar Ideal School in Amin Bazar, Dhaka, has influenced and changed traditional gender norms and expectations. This was motivated by concerns that any subtle support of societal norms and expectations regarding classroom communications, teacher actions, and institutional policies symbolizes conventional gender roles. A quantitative approach was employed to collect data through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations to examine the influence of gender on student participation in academic and extracurricular activities. The findings indicated that the hidden curriculum significantly supported conventional gender roles, with girls being directed toward submissive roles and boys being encouraged toward assertiveness and leadership. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The data present hidden biases that must be addressed to ensure gender equality and a supportive and inclusive educational environment. The figures on student involvement illustrate that 55% of the respondents favor excellent engagement, 11% strongly agree, 44% agree, 38% are undecided, and 7% disagree. Classroom gender participation has no appreciable correlation with socioeconomic level or gender identity, according to the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.120.

Keywords: hidden curriculum, gender roles, cultural norms, equity in education, institutional bias, Pearson correlation

INTRODUCTION

The hidden curriculum refers to those tacitly maintained values, attitudes, and behaviors adopted by students within school contexts that differ from the prescribed curriculum normally visibly connected with textbooks. Jackson (1968) first coined Life in Classrooms, a book that defined how schools were not only places of academic lessons but also environments where students would be granted societal norms and expectations. These unspoken lessons come from social communication, teacher attitudes, and institutional policies through which

classroom dynamics unfold; these elements strongly influence the building up of students' self-concepts and roles in society.

Besides the contents of the formal curriculum aimed at providing knowledge and skills, the hidden curriculum performs the role of student socialization by affecting structures such as rights, power dynamics, and, importantly, gender roles. The expectations of gender quietly influence behaviors, from the encouragement of boys as leaders and independent souls to that of girls in conformity and nurturance-focused behaviors (Connell, 2010). These patterns are well noted within schools by both students and teachers alike, yet their manifestations have strong implications for how students perceive their capabilities and positions within the social structure.

Beyond gender, the hidden curriculum allows for a broader cultural understanding and societal inequalities (Sadker, 2009). Margolis (2001) and Giroux and Penna (1979) believe the hidden curriculum arguably inculcates obedience and deference to authority in students, thereby indoctrinating them more subtly into their attitudes toward social roles and relationships of power. While it may encourage other important skills, such as the ability to communicate with others and perseverance, the hidden curriculum often simply perpetuates prejudice and solidifies existing inequities. The role of the hidden curriculum in gender socialization is critical within classrooms.

The hidden curriculum in schools often tacitly endorses gendered expectations about behavior, participation, and capability that are seldom recognized, yet have a serious impact on students' academic performance and self-concept (Skelton, 1997). Whether male or female, it is essential to address these basic ideas so that every student realizes their best potential (Hemmings, 1999; LeCompte, 1978). Thus, this is the foundation for a more inclusive and egalitarian educational approach. This study sought to determine how a hidden curriculum may affect gender expectations and norms in suburban high schools.

This research classified itself by focusing on finding the "hidden curriculum"–the latent gender lessons taught in the educational environment–using a quantitative approach. It started by integrating quantitative questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews with which to pursue these latent lessons. Considering these past studies, one noticed that very few took a gender-specific approach, especially concerning how hidden curricula support gender norms in the classroom. These were mainly speculative or based solely on qualitative interviews or notes, lacking the quantitative attitude that my research pioneered.

This study determines how the hidden curriculum delineates gender roles and expectations, particularly in suburban high schools. This research differed from others in that it focused on quantifying the "hidden curriculum, "that is, the implicit gender lessons learned against the educational backdrop. In the first step of researching these hidden lessons, quantitative surveys were conducted in combination with classroom observations and interviews.

Research Objectives
1. To analyze how the customs, connections, and teacher approaches in a suburban school sway students' awareness and deeds.
2. To measure the effect of gender on student contributions to educational, leadership, and extracurricular activities.
3. To suggest recommendations for plummeting gender biases and upholding impartial educational surroundings for all students.

It attempts to investigate how apprentices' outlooks and behaviors were formed by the practices, associations, and approaches of teachers in a suburban school. The perspective was vital since it divulged the complex issues that formed students' insight into themselves and their social tasks. Furthermore, this study aimed to measure how gender affects student involvement in extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and academics. This quantification was necessary to bring in observed data that brought attention to current inequities and direct action. Finally, this study offers practical suggestions to advocate justice in the educational background and reduce gender discrimination. Ultimately, these actions confront the conventions so well settled and drive change to ensure that each apprentice realizes their full potential in building a more equal and inclusive society. Further research may focus on diversified educational frameworks and an atmosphere of care tackling discrimination for the inclusive development of all learners.

Literature Review
Hidden curriculum is a dimension of educational practice in which students receive information concerning social norms and roles through channels supplementary to the formal curriculum. Here, the concept refers to values and beliefs implicitly held to be expected of students through pedagogical approaches, institutional policies, and classroom interactions (Boyle and Charles 2016). Schneiderhan et al. (2019) showed that the latent curriculum played a critical role in reinforcing societal expectations with gender roles,

which have greatly affected students' perceptions and actions. Gender equity within schooling is a core area of policy development to ensure equal opportunities for all students. The curriculum is intended to assist students in instruction and learning at different levels of education. Such teaching has been instrumental in forming the competencies and knowledge of students, which are essential for overall social development (Osaki, 2000). However, the latent curriculum often reinforces gender biases and perpetuates traditional gender roles that could further worsen the deteriorating trend of attaining gender equality. For example, stereotypical depictions of gender roles in textbooks and teaching materials occur repeatedly, thus influencing students' attitudes toward gender and social norms (Osipov, 2016).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action emphasized the need for gender-sensitive curriculum development to erase such biases (UNSECO, 2020). Kian et al.'s (2020) suggestions hardly saw gender disparity in education resources, let alone formal practices, move closer towards parity. It continued to express messages of gender role concerns implicitly through the hidden curriculum through classroom dynamics, teacher attitudes, and socio-cultural norms. Coupled with this constant stereotyping always against the education of girls in favor of boys, a lack of training for teachers in gender issues only heightened the imbalance. In Bangladesh, large manifestations of gender inequalities can be observed across different sectors, including education, health, and socioeconomic opportunities. The inequalities, according to (Blunch & Das, 2014, Tasnim et al., 2024a) are influenced by the conservative gender norms and attitudes of the majority of Bangladeshi society. Despite these salient issues, there is a clear lacuna in the literature regarding the drivers of restrictive gender attitudes at this particularly important stage in the life course of social-emotional development (Streatfield et al., 2023).

Arrangements in Bangladesh consequently promote latent curricula binding girls and women more firmly into traditional gender roles and practices such as early marriage and teenage parenthood, which are known to impede further, more educational and career opportunities for girls and women (Blunch & Das, 2014). This underscores the probable influence of external factors outside of the classroom on the development of gender roles as well as the hidden curriculum's support of gender norms.

Sociological and educational studies have extensively examined the disguised curriculum as a means of preserving social order, including gender, in the school environment. Stressing those educational institutions have responsibilities outside of the diffusion of intellectual information, Jackson (1968) was the first to devise the concept "hidden curriculum." Unknowingly, they nurtured the dissemination of tacit norms, beliefs, and expectations. The prime way gender stereotypes are maintained is through the hidden curriculum. According to Zittleman and Sadker (2002), teachers often commit mistakes to male and female pupils. Men were urged to hold more aggressive and leadership roles, while women were subtly pushed into passive and supportive roles. Conventional gender stereotypes are endured by the long-term impact of teachers' actions on pupils' opinions of their gender-specific abilities and possibilities.

Later research suggests that the hidden curriculum is influenced by the convoluted structural dynamics of the learning environment, as well as by the explicit behavior of teachers. Archer and Francis (2005) found that, although women were seen as more constrained and limited participants, men were usually allowed to dominate classroom talks and earn greater attention. Students' educational experiences are affected by varying degrees of participation, which mirrors larger social expectations regarding gender conduct. Kean (2017) claims that gender stereotypes might be unintentionally inserted into instructional materials including historical figures in textbooks and problems assigned in mathematics. Students see their talents in terms of gender; males usually come out as more authoritative in fields, such as science and leadership.

Commonly promoting gender stereotypes and, hence, distributing the implicit curriculum, are textbooks and other teaching tools. Lee (2019) claims that whilst women are mainly shown in domestic and passive situations, textbooks usually show men in more dynamic and varied contexts. These images, which support accepted gender roles, aid learners in defining what are "appropriate" aspirations for males and females. Ponet (2024) found that when teachers fail to assess or question the implicit signals included in instructional materials, they are seen as "natural" elements of education. The unchecked reinforcement of gender roles might have a significant impact on the self-esteem and professional objectives of female

students, thereby restricting their capacity to pursue non-traditional careers (Porter, 2005).

Understanding how institutional constraints and teachers' attitudes affect the acceptance or rejection of these norms in gender-sensitive educational reforms is essential. Levtov (2014) claims that despite curricular adjustments implemented in many countries aiming to achieve gender equality, the disguised curriculum still causes problems that require significant structural changes. Lamptey et al. (2015) contend that contemporary gender disparities in the classroom might be the result of teacher training programs failing to adequately equip teachers to acknowledge and address their own biases. Moreover, the overall school environment, which comprises extracurricular activities and peer relationships, reiterates antiquated gender stereotypes, making it difficult for even the most caring teachers to advocate for actual gender equality.

Gaps in Previous Research

The hidden curriculum appears to be one of the most significant and usually neglected in education modes of forming one's understanding of social norms and roles beyond the formal curriculum. It is an implicit presentation of values, beliefs, and expectations in teaching methods, institutional policies, and classroom interactions. The hidden curriculum had a great impact on consolidating societal norms, and gender roles highly influenced students' perceptions and actions. Policy formulation has equity in education, as one of the primary sections aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for all students. Thus, a curriculum was prescribed to teach students at different levels of education. It has played a critical role in the development of students' abilities and knowledge, which are essential for human resource development in society. However, the latent curriculum often pushes gender biases and reinforces the traditional patterns of gender roles that weaken the process of pursuing gender equality. For example, textbooks and learning materials were largely stereotypical about gender roles, which over time shaped student perceptions and social norms on gender (Vu, 2022).

These biases called for gender-sensitive curriculum development, which was emphasized in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Notwithstanding such recommendations, the resources and formal practices of educational institutions, in general, still reflect gender disparity. The hidden curriculum continued to reinforce silent messages in terms of classroom dynamics, teacher attitudes, and socioculturally driven expectations of children's behavior by gender. Constant stereotyping usually favors boys' education over girls, and the lack of proper training on gender issues for teachers further heightens this inequality gap. Social and economic inequalities between men and women have consistently hindered the complete development of women's potential, especially in Bangladesh. This is reflected in almost all spheres, including education, health, and access to socioeconomic opportunities. (Blunch & Das, 2014), trace these inequalities to stern traditionalist gender roles and attitudes that prevail in Bangladeshi society. Despite the magnitude of these issues, there is indeed a gap in research on the drivers of restrictive gender attitudes at a particularly key point in the life course of social-emotional development, namely adolescence.

METHOD

The strengths of this research methodology lie in its prepared and systematic approach, triangulation of data from multiple sources, and rigorous statistical analysis. These elements were combined to offer a vigorous and comprehensive investigation of the hidden curriculum's impact on gender norms and expectations of student participation in a suburban high school location.

Hypothesis Development

Using descriptive and Pearson's correlation statistical methods, trend and correlation analyses were used to fully evaluate the impact of the hidden curriculum. By assisting in identifying relationships and trends concealed otherwise, the correlation analysis deepens the study results. We propose several hypotheses to examine these dynamics, as noted below:

H1: Gender norms significantly influence classroom participation.

H2: There is a significant disparity in perceived leadership roles based on gender.

H3: Teaching methods and materials perpetuate gender norms.

H4: Addressing social and gender status issues in schools has a limited effect on gender norms.

H5: Gender norms in the school curriculum influence students' participation and performance.

Study Design and Area

Thus, the quantitative design of the study provides a structured approach to research on the

hidden curriculum at the Amin Bazar Ideal School, Amin Bazar Dhaka. The focus on a suburban high school setting is primarily due to its ability to encapsulate the typical educational milieu in which traditional gender roles are likely to be completely bolstered. This would ensure that the study is relevant in similar contexts of education, thereby providing useful insights into gender dynamics in schools. A contribution to a systematic investigation of gender norms and expectations can be made through a quantitative approach using quantifiable outcomes or statistically valid conclusions, whereby the identification of trends and correlations can be easily performed.

Study Population

For this study, adding 90 students to 10 KII (Key Informant Interviews) with teachers and parents, plus one NGO official, helped the triangulation to present a picture of views about gender norms and the hidden curriculum. These kinds of respondents were able to capture insights in an intricate manner about how gender expectations were being disseminated and perceived by various types of stakeholders, thus allowing a study to be conducted fairly and multi-dimensionally. It included students in grades 8 through 10, thereby targeting an age bracket particularly crucial in the active formation of gender norms and offering insight into how these norms are used to control behavior at a key stage of development.

Sample Size, Inclusion Criteria, and Sampling Technique

This study, with 100 participants, was able to retain a convenient sample size that is sufficient for an in-depth scrutiny of gender dynamics, with sufficient variation in viewpoints. Adding students, teachers, and parents enhances the richness of the data; hence, there is a well-rounded understanding of expectations of gender norms. The sample size was well-balanced, enabling the researcher to conduct an in-depth statistical analysis while keeping the scope of the research feasible. This sample size allows for consistent and reliable inferential statistics in addition to the correctness of the results. The interview utilized stratified random sampling; for example, it has inherent strengths in ensuring representation across genders, age, grade level, and socio-economic groupings. This is an efficient methodology for analyzing how intersecting factors shape gender norms in the school atmosphere. To ensure that key subgroups were represented, this

study minimized the possibility of bias and, therefore, increased the reliability of the results.

Questionnaire Development

The use of structured questionnaires with closed questions and a Likert scale allowed for clarity in the quantification of subjective experiences. This format made data analysis easy, while responses to particular questions about gender norms and participation could be determined exactly. The structured nature of the data collection provided statistical comparability, thereby allowing substantial conclusions to be drawn from the study.

Data Collection

The methods of data collection were comprehensive; in their approach, they integrated structured surveys with structured interviews and classroom observations. Multifarious forms of data provide a holistic picture of the hidden curriculum at work by recording quantitative dimensions. A structured questionnaire allows for exact data analysis, whereas structured interviews allow deep and context-rich insights. Classroom observation provides real-time documentation of gender norms in everyday interactions and is the most valuable observational layer added to this research. The 30 closed-ended questions were projected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete for each interviewee. Diverse data sources provide an accurate representation of how gender norms are expressed and internalized within a school environment.

Data Validation

Data collection was comprehensive and included structured questionnaires, structured interviews, and classroom observations. The data drawn from multiple sources provide a holistic view of the hidden curriculum in action, including quantitative dimensions. The structured questionnaire allows for precise data analysis, while structured interviews provide deeper context-rich insights. Classroom observations helped document how norms of masculinity and femininity manifest themselves in everyday interactions and added an important observational layer to the research. The interview consisted of 30 closed-ended questions that took approximately 30 min for each participant to complete. These varied sources of data provide an accurate representation of how gender norms are conveyed and internalized among school-going children.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS for statistical analysis ensures that there is a very accurate analysis of the relationships between gender norms and student participation. The use of descriptive and Pearson Correlation statistical techniques in sequence allowed the analysis of trends and correlations for a strong quantitative assessment of the impact of the hidden curriculum. With the help of correlation analysis, patterns and relationships that otherwise might have remained hidden could be detected, adding depth to research findings.

Ethical Implications

All of these are clear sound ethical considerations of the study and, therefore, strength. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and ethical research practices were observed. Protection of participants' privacy and maintaining confidentiality means that sensitive topics such as gender norms are explored in a responsible manner to ensure that harm is not caused to the participants. Ethical rigor thus provided credence to the study and ensured that best practices in research involving vulnerable populations, including students, were held.

Limitations

This hidden curriculum reinforces social roles and represses stereotypical individuals. Ultimately, this suppresses diverse perspectives and keeps inequity alive within the educational setting. This dynamic inhibits movement toward a much more inclusive and equitable climate, which has a real, direct impact on students' identities and possibilities for personal and academic growth.

RESULTS

The Reliability Statistic value was 0.943 and was measured using Cronbach's alpha. This suggests that we can proceed to the next analysis.

Table 1. Statistical Data

Feature	Statistics
Gender Participation in Classroom	N=500, Min=1.00, Max=5, Mean=3.02, Mode=3, Q1=2.00, Q2=3.00, Q3=4.00, SD=1.218, Var=1.483
Equal Leadership Role	N=500, Min=1.00, Max=5, Mean=3.44, Mode=3, Q1=3.00, Q2=3.00, Q3=5.00, SD=1.209, Var=1.462
Gender Norms in Academic Performance	N=500, Min=1.00, Max=5, Mean=3.82, Mode=5, Q1=3.00, Q2=4.00, Q3=5.00, SD=1.138, Var=1.294
Appropriate Teaching Method & Materials	N=500, Min=1.00, Max=5, Mean=4.15, Mode=5, Q1=3.00, Q2=5.00, Q3=5.00, SD=1.049, Var=1.100
Dealing With Social & Gender Status	N=500, Min=1.00, Max=5, Mean=4.42, Mode=5, Q1=4.00, Q2=5.00, Q3=5.00, SD=0.902, Var=0.813
Instructions Regarding Status & Gender	N=500, Min=2.00, Max=5, Mean=4.60, Mode=5, Q1=4.00, Q2=5.00, Q3=5.00, SD=0.757, Var=0.573
Gender Issues in School Curriculum	N=500, Min=2.00, Max=5, Mean=4.74, Mode=5, Q1=5.00, Q2=5.00, Q3=5.00, SD=0.612, Var=0.375
Gender Norms Influence in Student Participation	N=500, Min=2.00, Max=5, Mean=4.84, Mode=5, Q1=5.00, Q2=5.00, Q3=5.00, SD=0.483, Var=0.234

The average rating for "Gender Participation in Classroom" was 3.02 (SD = 1.218), with the mode being 3. With room for development, this score suggests that respondents viewed gender participation in the classroom as somewhat satisfactory. The interquartile range (IQR = 2.0 to 4.0) indicates that this subject has several viewpoints, thereby reflecting several experiences with gender involvement in the classroom. With a mean score of 3.44 (SD = 1.209) the median rating for "Equal Leadership Role" was 3. This very high score stresses the significance of raising the creation of equal leadership opportunities, as respondents witnessed little equality in leadership roles. With a significant number of respondents endorsing a more critical approach, the interquartile range of 3.0 to 5.0 offers a spectrum of points of view. With a median of 5 and a mean score of 3.82 (SD = 1.138), respondents of "Gender Norms in Academic Performance" reveal that they comprehend the major influence of gender standards on scholastic achievement. This higher score suggests that gender prejudices could affect educational performance and so might be an issue. With most scores concentrated on the higher end of the scale, the interquartile range—3.0–5.0—indicates that most of the respondents think this influence is significant. The respondents mostly felt that the proper handling of gender issues required improvements in teaching strategies and resources. With a median of 5, the average score for "Appropriate Teaching Method & Materials" was 4.15 (SD = 1.049), therefore supporting this result. The high mean and interquartile range (3.0" 5.0) emphasizes the respondents' discontent; most of them perceive significant space for development in educational resources. With a mean rating of 4.42 (SD = 0.902) and a mode of 5. The respondents were mostly unhappy with how social and gender status problems were addressed in their communities. The interquartile range (4.0 to 5.0) shows a noticeable agreement that this subject has not been accurately investigated and calls for a deeper investigation. With a mean of 4.60 (SD = 0.757) and a median of 5, the "Instructions Regarding Status and Gender" variable indicated that generally negative

instructions concerning status and gender were used. Underlining the need for change, the tiny interquartile range (4.0 to 5.0) shows that respondents had a significant agreement on the absence of help for the problems. With a median of 5, the mean score for "Gender Issues in School Curriculum" was 4.74 (SD = 0.612), suggesting that the curriculum is generally seen as inadequate in handling gender issues. The almost homogeneous discontent represented by the high mean and IQR (5.0 to 5.0) draws attention to how poorly the curriculum handles gender-related subjects. With a median of 5 and a mean of 4.84 (SD = 0.483), "Gender Norms Influence in Student Participation" revealed a strong view that gender norms negatively influence student participation. The limited IQR (5.0 to 5.0) indicated that respondents agreed almost unanimously on this question, highlighting a major area of concern regarding the impact of gender norms on student involvement.

Table 2. Distribution characteristics for several variables related to gender perceptions

	Skewness	P Value	Kurtosis	P Value
Gender Participation in Classroom	.029	0.60	-.966	0.00
Equal Leadership Role	-.234	0.02	-.969	0.00
Gender Norms in Academic Performance	-.585	0.00	-.694	0.00
Appropriate Teaching Method & Materials	-.979	0.00	-.096	0.33
Dealing With Social & Gender Status	-1.499	0.00	1.456	1.00
Instructions Regarding Status & Gender	-1.859	0.00	2.547	1.00
Gender Issues in School Curriculum	-2.510	0.00	6.076	1.00
Gender Norms Influence in Student Participation	-3.278	0.00	10.637	1.00

The data revealed interesting distribution characteristics for several variables related to gender perceptions in an academic context. Gender Participation in the Classroom scale has a low skewness (0.029) and a substantial p-value (0.60), indicating that the responses are distributed symmetrically around the mean and equally throughout the scale. The significant kurtosis score of -0.966 (p = 0.00) shows that the distribution is flatter than expected, meaning that the answers are scattered rather than concentrated around the mean. The skewness for the Equal Leadership Role is significantly negative (-0.234) with a significant p-value (0.02), indicating that respondents showed

little predisposition for rating leadership positions on the upper (less favorable) end of the scale. A kurtosis of -0.969, which is statistically significant (p = 0.00), suggests that the responses are spread out with less aggregation, resulting in a flat distribution. The skewness of Gender Norms in academic results was extremely negative (-0.585, p = 0.00), indicating a noticeable inclination toward lower (higher) scores. This might be indicative of negative sentiment among the respondents. The platykurtic distribution, as demonstrated by the kurtosis of -0.694, which is statistically significant at p = 0.00, exhibits divergent viewpoints on this issue. The statistics showed a significant negative skewness (-0.979, p = 0.00) in the case of Appropriate Teaching Methods & Materials, indicating a predominance of replies on the higher (more negative) end, with a considerable percentage of respondents displaying negative opinions. The kurtosis of -0.096, with a non-significant p-value (0.33), implies a distribution that closely resembles a normal distribution in terms of tails, showing neither extreme peaks nor excessive flatness.

The variable Dealing with Social and Gender Status shows even stronger negative skewness (-1.499, p = 0.00), indicating that respondents generally rated this factor higher (worse), and the significant positive kurtosis (1.456, p = 1.00) suggests a distribution with a slightly sharper peak, meaning that responses are clustered more around certain ratings. The skewness for Instructions Regarding Status and Gender was significant at -1.859 (p = 0.00), showing a strong tendency toward negative ratings. The positive kurtosis (2.547, p = 1.00) demonstrates the respondents' strong and consistent opinions on this issue, demonstrating a significant concentration of responses around certain scores. The high kurtosis value (6.076, p = 1.00) indicated an even sharper peak, with responses heavily clustered at particular ratings, showing a strong consensus on the issue. Finally, the negative skewness of the influence of gender norms on student involvement was significant (-3.278, p = 0.00), indicating that almost all respondents favored the negative end of the scale. Higher kurtosis (10.637, p = 1.00) indicates a prominent peak, signifying considerable agreement among respondents and little variety in opinions.

Table 3. Dealing with Social & Gender Status

Dealing With Social & Gender Status			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Highly Effective	3.00	.6	.6
Effective	23.00	4.6	5.2
Neutral	55.00	11.0	16.2
Ineffective	100.00	20.0	36.2
Highly Ineffective	319.00	63.8	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

The evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies for dealing with social and gender status revealed a predominantly negative perception among the respondents. A mere 0.6% of the 500 participants rated these strategies as "Highly Effective," while a somewhat higher number, 4.6%, deemed them "Effective." Of the respondents, 11.0% dents gave these strategies a neutral rating of efficacy. However, a large 20.0% of respondents evaluated the approaches as "ineffective," with 63.8% describing them as "highly ineffective." This distribution indicates that current strategies for addressing social and gender status issues are widely regarded as ineffective. The average percentage of 100.0% demands that educational institutions and organizations reconsider their ongoing policies and develop more pragmatic strategies to address these serious challenges. These findings emphasize the development of comprehensive programs that foster an inclusive environment and raise awareness to improve the efficacy and perception of initiatives to address gender and socioeconomic status.

Table 4. Gender Participation in Classroom

Gender Participation in Classroom			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Encouraged	57.00	11.4	11.4
Encouraged	127.00	25.4	36.8
Neutral	132.00	26.4	63.2
Discouraged	117.00	23.4	86.6
Strongly Discouraged	67.00	13.4	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

This study indicates differing perspectives on encouraging female participation in classrooms. Of the 500 participants, 11.4% answered that gender involvement is "Strongly Encouraged," while a higher percentage, 25.4%, said it is "Encouraged." It is worth noting that 26.4% of the respondents reported indifference, implying uncertainty or apathy

toward the promotion of female participation. On the other hand, a substantial number of respondents, 23.4%, stated that their level of participation is "Discouraged," with 13.4% saying it is "Strongly Discouraged." Even though some participants praised steps to augment gender engagement, a majority of them faced hurdles in participating in classroom activities. This distribution constrains the result. This cumulative proportion, which is rapidly approaching 100.0%, emphasizes the exigency of educational institutions to eliminate disparity in female participation attitudes. The results signify an immediate need for actions that ensure a more inclusive atmosphere, permitting all students, irrespective of gender, to actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.

Table 5. Perceptions regarding equal leadership roles

Equal Leadership Role			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Present	28.00	5.6	5.6
Present	93.00	18.6	24.2
Neutral	134.00	26.8	51.0
Absent	119.00	23.8	74.8
Strongly Absent	126.00	25.2	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

Considering the context of the prevalence of such jobs, respondents' views regarding equal leadership positions varied significantly. Merely 5.6% of the 500 participants said equal leadership roles were "Strongly Present," but a modest number, 18.6%, believed they were "Present." A substantial percentage of respondents, 26.8%, selected neutrality, suggesting the presence of ambivalence or uncertainty on this issue. Conversely, a substantial number, 23.8%, stated that equal leadership roles are "Absent," and a significant majority, 25.2%, believe they are "Strongly Absent." This indicates that over half of the respondents perceived a lack of equal leadership opportunities, with the cumulative percent reaching 100.0%. The results highlight the need for educational institutions and organizations to conduct a complete examination and upgrade their leadership frameworks since there is a widespread feeling of insufficiency regarding equal leadership duties. By addressing these weaknesses, it may be feasible to create a more equitable atmosphere in which all people are represented and included in leadership roles.

Table 6. Gender Norms in Academic Performance

Gender Norms in Academic Performance			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Influential	13.00	2.6	2.6
Influential	63.00	12.6	15.2
Neutral	109.00	21.8	37.0
Non-Influential	131.00	26.2	63.2
Strongly Non-Influential	184.00	36.8	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

The data on gender norms in academic performance revealed a diverse range of perceptions among respondents regarding the influence of these norms. Out of the total 500 participants, a minority, comprising 2.6%, identified gender norms as "Strongly Influential," while 12.6% considered them "Influential." In contrast, a notable proportion of the respondents (21.8 %) remained neutral about the impact of gender norms on academic performance. The largest group (26.2 %) indicated that they perceived gender norms as "Non-Influential," suggesting that these norms do not significantly affect their academic outcomes. Lastly, a significant majority, accounting for 36.8%, categorized gender norms as "Strongly Non-Influential." This indicates a prevailing sentiment among respondents that gender norms have minimal or no impact on their academic performance, as evidenced by the cumulative percentage reaching 100.0% across all categories. These findings suggest the need for further exploration of the underlying factors that influence these perceptions and their implications for educational practices and policies.

Table 7. Appropriate Teaching Method & Materials

Appropriate Teaching Method & Materials			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Appropriate	6.00	1.2	1.2
Appropriate	41.00	8.2	9.4
Neutral	84.00	16.8	26.2
Inappropriate	111.00	22.2	48.4
Very Inappropriate	258.00	51.6	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

The evaluation of appropriate teaching methods and materials highlights a significant disparity in perceptions among the respondents. Out of a total of 500 participants, only 1.2% rated the teaching methods and materials as "Very Appropriate," while a slightly higher percentage, 8.2%, deemed them "Appropriate." A considerable proportion (16.8 %) remained neutral in terms of the effectiveness of these methods. In contrast, a substantial number of

respondents, 22.2%, found the teaching methods and materials "Inappropriate," and a majority, 51.6%, classified them as "Very Inappropriate." This suggests that over half of the respondents believed that the current teaching methods and materials are not suitable for their educational needs. The cumulative percentage of 100.0% reflects a clear trend toward dissatisfaction with the appropriateness of the teaching approaches employed, indicating a pressing need for the review and enhancement of teaching strategies to better meet the needs of students. These findings call for further investigation of the specific aspects of teaching methods and materials that may contribute to this perception of inappropriateness.

Table 8. Instructions Regarding Status & Gender

Instructions Regarding Status & Gender			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Focused	13.00	2.6	2.6
Neutral	44.00	8.8	11.4
Not Focused	73.00	14.6	26.0
Strongly Not Focused	370.00	74.0	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

The analysis of instructions regarding status and gender revealed a striking lack of emphasis on these critical issues among respondents. Out of 500 participants, only 2.6% indicated that the instructions provided are "Focused" on status and gender considerations, while 8.8% maintained a neutral stance on the matter. A larger segment, comprising 14.6%, stated that the instructions are "Not Focused," indicating a growing concern about the lack of attention to these topics. However, the most significant finding is that a substantial majority, 74.0%, believe that the instructions are "Strongly Not Focused" on status and gender. This overwhelming sentiment suggests a pervasive disregard for the importance of addressing these issues within the instructional framework. A cumulative percentage of 100.0% underscores a clear consensus among respondents regarding the inadequacy of current instructional practices in promoting awareness and understanding of status and gender dynamics. These results highlight the urgent need for educational institutions to reassess and enhance their instructional strategies to foster more inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Table 9. Gender Norms Influence in Student Participation

Gender Norms Influence in Student Participation

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Influential	2.00	.4	.4
Neutral	19.00	3.8	4.2
Non-Influential	35.00	7.0	11.2
Strongly Non-Influential	444.00	88.8	100.0
Total	500.00	100.0	

The assessment of the influence of gender norms on student participation indicates a striking perception among respondents regarding the impact of these norms. Out of 500 participants, only 0.4% identified gender norms as "Influential" in affecting student participation, while 3.8% maintained a neutral stance on this issue. A slightly larger group (7.0 %) categorized gender norms as "Non-Influential," suggesting that these norms have some effect, but not significantly. However, the overwhelming majority, at 88.8%, asserted that gender norms are "Strongly Non-Influential" in their participation in academic activities. This overwhelming consensus indicates a prevailing belief among students that gender norms do not substantially impact engagement and participation. The cumulative percentage of 100.0% highlights the need for further investigation into the factors that contribute to this perception as well as the broader implications for fostering an inclusive educational environment. These findings suggest that educational institutions may benefit from promoting awareness and discussions about gender norms to ensure that all students feel empowered to participate fully, irrespective of gender-related influences.

Table. 10 Correlation between Gender Participation in the Classroom and Dealing with Social & Gender Status

Correlations

		Gender Participation in Classroom	Dealing With Social & Gender Status
Gender Participation in Classroom	Pearson Correlation	1	.633
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Dealing With Social & Gender Status	Pearson Correlation	.633	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

The correlation analysis between "Gender Participation in Classroom" and "Dealing with Social and Gender Status" revealed a strong positive relationship between these two variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was 0.633, indicating a significant correlation at a confidence level of p < 0.01. This suggests that, as perceptions of gender participation in the classroom increase, there is a corresponding positive perception regarding the effectiveness of dealing with social and gender status issues. With both variables having a sample size (N) of 500, The findings highlight the importance of fostering inclusive practices in educational settings, with both variables having a sample size of 500. This strong correlation underscores the notion that enhancing gender participation in classroom activities may be linked to better approaches to addressing social and gender status, promoting a more equitable learning environment.

DISCUSSION

Conservative societal norms have contributed to significant gender disparities in education, health, and socioeconomic opportunities throughout Bangladesh (Blunch & Das, 2014; Tasnim et al., 2024b). As such, studies on the influence of restrictive gender attitudes during the critical developmental period of adolescence have thus far been few (Streatfield et al., 2023). A study on the hidden curriculum in suburban high schools featured how traditional gender roles were subtly perpetrated and how many respondents were skeptical of efforts to attain gender equity. Median scores of 2.00 for gender norms and 3.00 for leadership equality underlined uneven progress in the pursuit of gender sameness, which is reflective of societal challenges. The data underlined significant trends in gender engagement in education. More than half of them recognized that gender participation is equal, but most have doubts concerning the accomplishment of equity. Consequently, only 7% of them consider the inclusion of gender issues in the curriculum highly efficient; 35% see it ineffective or, in some way, effective. In addition, only 25% say that leadership support is recurring as equal, 56% say it is occasional, and 17% think of it as rare. These inconsistencies reflect the broader challenge of achieving gender equality in Bangladeshi society. While the Beijing Declaration called for gender-sensitive curricula, these imbalances remain, and the hidden curriculum simply confirms traditional gender roles through class peer interactions and student-teacher behaviors, as indicated by Kian et al. (2020). Stereotypes at a global level, for example, those toward boys getting a more valued education along with a lack of teacher training, further promote these inequalities (Silva & Oliveira, 2022). This

underpins the call for a more serious institutional commitment to incorporating gender equity into daily educational practice and performance.

69% addressed social and gender statuses actively or occasionally, which might imply a broad awareness and engagement. However, 30% of those who did so rarely focused on the need for ongoing discussions that would strive to create an even more inclusive environment. This theory draws on Symbolic Interactionism and Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital to explain how implicit gender norms are created and justified through everyday interactions and access to social capital. Through this, Symbolic Interactionism can assist with the explanation of how students internalize their unspoken gender expectations; Bourdieu's framework provided insight into how access to cultural capital influenced students both in challenging and obeying the rules of these roles. The quantitative analysis supported these theoretical perspectives, where a weak positive correlation (Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.120-was obtained between classroom participation and efforts to address the issues of social and gender status. The corresponding p-value of 0.235 indicates that efforts through participation to address gender issues do not significantly change students' perceptions. This led to the realization of an increased disconnect between formal curriculum objectives and actual classroom experiences, and hence the requirement for more effective involvement.

It also drew on Horkheimer et al. 's (2002) Critical Theory of the analysis of power relations and social inequalities in the educational paradigm. The findings indicated that classroom participation did not affect attitudes towards gender equity, thereby pressurizing the need for comprehensive interventions beyond the existing ones. The "Deal with Social & Gender Status" feature received a mean score of 2.10, which implies negative attitudes toward the handling of such issues; likewise, "Equal Leadership Role" received a score of 2.92, indicating very little progress in this area. These results reflect wider dissatisfaction with how social and gender issues are dealt with within educational contexts, pointing to the pressing need for effective strategies aimed at tackling deeply entrenched biases in the hidden curriculum. This is further supported by the regression analysis, as classroom participation alone is a weak predictor of attitudes toward gender equity. This study concluded by calling for context-specific strategies beyond superficial fixes. It emphasized the inculcation of gender equity in daily classroom practices, the facilitation of structured discussions on gender roles, and teachers' training to recognize and neutralize implicit biases. The above measures were instrumental in closing the gap between policy and practice; thus, schools became active contributors to dismantling gender inequities. There was a roadmap for evidence-based reforms that aligned formal curriculum goals with the realities of classroom dynamics bestowed by inclusive educational environments (Kian et al., 2020; Silva & Oliveira, 2022; UNSECO, 2020).

To address the issues regarding gender disparities in education and to reinforce traditional gender roles, policies of equity should be developed to embrace the following key components: attempting to mitigate such persistent features of gender disparity in Bangladesh education calls for an approach to policy at an inclusive level. The hidden curriculum that perpetuates traditional gender roles must be counterbalanced by gender-sensitive teacher training. Training programs need to be such that educators can recognize and confront implicit biases, thus creating an enabling environment that promotes gender equality positively. This would include workshops on inclusive teaching methodologies, frequent assessments of classroom ecology, and integration into the curriculum of discussions on neutrality regarding gender. The broader societal norms that breed gender inequality could be successfully addressed at the initial level of education by empowering teachers to take apart such stereotypes. This would entail regular, structured discussions on gender roles and equity as part of daily classroom activities, a curriculum with specific modules on gender equality, leadership, and the importance of diverse participation. This may be coupled with the guiding terms of the Beijing Declaration, assuring that the school provides a venue for free discussions on gender issues. Letting students participate in discussions regarding opportunities for leadership positions and social participation would foster a more active version of equity, allowing them to challenge society. Second and perhaps importantly, appraisal tools should be introduced to calculate the efficiency of such interventions. These tools should monitor students' attitudes and perceptions of gender equality over time. Linking institutions and national gender impartiality programs might help bridge the gap between policy and practice.

These partnerships should influence and ensure that entrenched gender-sensitive policies are part of the education system, ensuring fairness from the

classroom to school leadership. By reinstating parity through government policy and campaigns, as well as school programs, Bangladesh must create a comprehensive policy to assist in both international movements and local cultural contexts. Through this means, the holistic approach would make a stand for sustainable progress toward the realization of gender equality in education and leadership opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study underlined the fact that there was a high level of manipulation of the latent curriculum at Amin Bazar Ideal School in Dhaka and that this pertained significantly to issues of expectations concerning gender roles and levels of student involvement. The findings revealed how implicit values, beliefs, and behavior are considered important for shaping students' self-concepts and understanding their roles in society. The results indicated that the hidden curriculum endorsed traditional gender roles in that boys were more frequently encouraged to defy and become leaders, while girls were counseled toward compliance and nurturing behaviors. What is crucial now is a critical review of pedagogical practices; such enveloping, yet fragile, effects reinforce social inequalities and participate in broader cultural attitudes. The hidden curriculum needs to be brought into the open if we are to move forward with gender equality in educational contexts. Only then can educators and policymakers alike devise more neutral and inclusive policies that allow all students to reach their full potential by admitting that implied biases exist within school practices? This study highlights the need for uniform frameworks and detailed analytical methods to effectively address the issues existing within the hidden curriculum.

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