



UKAAS-THE REFLECTOR

Spring- Summer 2022

Editorial: Violence against women is never an isolated act!

This year on July 20 it was Noor Muqqadam's first death anniversary. A year has passed since this beautiful young woman, was brutally murdered by a man she believed was her friend. The 'close friend' as the entire country found out last Eid was a monstrous abuser.

The details of the horrific murder are well known. The people present in the house where Noor Muqqadam was mercilessly tortured and murdered did nothing to help her. Sadly this callous attitude is as commonplace as the abuse. In Pakistan, where women are sexually, physically, emotionally and mentally abused regularly, families, friends, and neighbours usually maintain silence and a distance. As we saw in Noor's case, other people's refusal to help escalated the violence and resulted in the torture and death of the victim.

There is an urgent need to raise awareness among all sections of the population on the factors that lead to

and encourage such incidents. There are many

misconceptions around the issue which lead to victim blaming and shaming. It is incumbent upon the media to clear these and focus on the perpetrators of the crime.

Instead of focusing on the perpetrator and the circumstances, we saw in Noor's case and in countless other cases that such incidents trigger smear campaigns against the victim and offer justifications for what happened. The narrative that is perpetuated is that women are murdered because they happen to be in the wrong place, at the wrong time with the wrong person, and so it is their fault'.

Such narratives are maintained both consciously and subconsciously. A critical look at Pakistan's entertainment media creates a better understanding of the situation. A significant number of Pakistanis spends several hours watching popular television, which perpetuates a traditional worldview and propagates stereotypical gender roles. TV content frequently romanticises misogyny and normalises physical, emotional and mental torture by men as a means to control women. There are an average of 30 to 40 episodes per TV serial, most of which depict women suffering abuse through almost all the episodes.



Editorial: Violence against women is never an isolated act!

Patience in the face of violence and abuse is lauded as a virtue exclusively for women. Traditionally, women are brought up to serve, be servile and unquestioning. Such 'virtuous' behaviour is often held up as an example for other women daring to consider leaving abusive relationships. Victim's families usually ask them to 'put up with it' instead of offering support and reassurance that she is not alone and that she should do whatever is necessary for her protection, self-respect and honour. The honour code is also upheld, in which a woman's honour is seen to be tied to that of her family, especially to her male relatives. The concept that women also have honour and dignity of their own doesn't exist for many.

Other factors such as gas lighting by the perpetrator are another form of violence in a relationship. Gas lighting is when the perpetrator makes the victim believe that whatever is wrong in the friendship/relationship is their fault. It is a common form of abuse in human relationships and is found between parents and children, siblings, spouses, friends, etc. It occurs gradually through repeated lies, blaming and shaming. The abusive partner's actions may seem harmless at first. Over time, however, these abusive patterns continue, and a victim becomes confused, anxious, isolated, and depressed, losing all sense of reality and finding it impossible to escape the situation.

Another factor is Pollyanna syndrome, a term from a children's book that describes blind or excessive optimism. Some women accept abuse because they believe it will change or correct itself through love and care. Such women may be considered dreamers, idealists, or positive thinkers, however, being overly optimistic or positive can sometimes intensify abuse. In addition, many women who fall prey to misogyny and psychopathic behaviour don't seek help or share their ordeal with family or friends because they are afraid or do not expect support or sympathy. There is a pressing need to create a mindset that women need the love and support of family and friends to protect themselves from their oppressors. Given the scale of the problem, the issue of violence against women needs to be discussed on all forums with a special focus on entertainment media. There is a need to project healthy relationships in mass media and make protecting women in unhealthy, demeaning, abusive and potentially dangerous relationships an ideal.

I fervently hope that individuals, groups, and the media take up the challenge to raise awareness so that victims and potential victims are aware of the red flags and their right to protection from abusers. And society is ready to support victims in need. There is no room in a civilised society for victim blaming and shaming. We are reminded of this every time an innocent life is mercilessly taken from us.



Each one of us is responsible for making sure that the criminal is punished, and the blame is placed solely on the abuser's shoulders.

Tasneem Ahmar
Director

Uks' team has been busy providing support at these platforms

Uks hosts 7th Dialogue for Change 'Understanding Slogans, Expression and Visuals: Aurat March & Beyond!'

On 2 April 2022, Uks hosted its 7th Dialogue for Change titled 'Understanding Slogans, Expression and Visuals: Aurat March & Beyond!' Participants had a vibrant discussion around the empowering but divisive AM slogans.

Participants discussed the banners from Aurat March including the controversial Mera Jism Meri Marzi. The discussion which was led by Director Uks, Tasneem Ahmar and Consultant, Uks Shahrezad Samiuddin, was animated and the DfC was attended by renowned feminist voices. Participants included Afia Salam, Sheema Kermani, Lubna Jarrar, Uzma Noorani and others. The event received coverage in Dawn and The News.

Dawn: *Slogans, expressions and visuals of Aurat March discussed*

The News: *Women rights activists defend Aurat March slogans*



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Uks Campaign on National Women's Day

On 12 February 2022, Uks commemorated National Women's Day. This small campaign consisted of narrating the history and importance of this historic day. One that gets Pakistani women to fight for their rights to this day.



Feb 12

National Women's Day

Uks looks back at the history of National Women's Day, the moment when Pakistan's courageous women raised their voices against martial law and catapulted women's rights issues into the mainstream.

3 REASONS WHY WE NEED NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

- 1 To honour the women who rallied against a series of anti-women laws passed by the former dictator General Zia Ul Haq
- 2 To remind our society that Pakistan needs to do more to make its women feel like equal citizens of the country
- 3 To remind our nation that women's rights are worth fighting for and that independent and empowered women help build a healthy society



Source: Beenasarwar.com

The women protestors were beaten up with batons, sustaining injuries. Some were arrested by the police. But the protestors fought back. Throwing shoes, punches, and even the batons snatched from the police. To stop a law that curtails women's status in society.



Source: <https://jpp torturewatch.wordpress.com/>

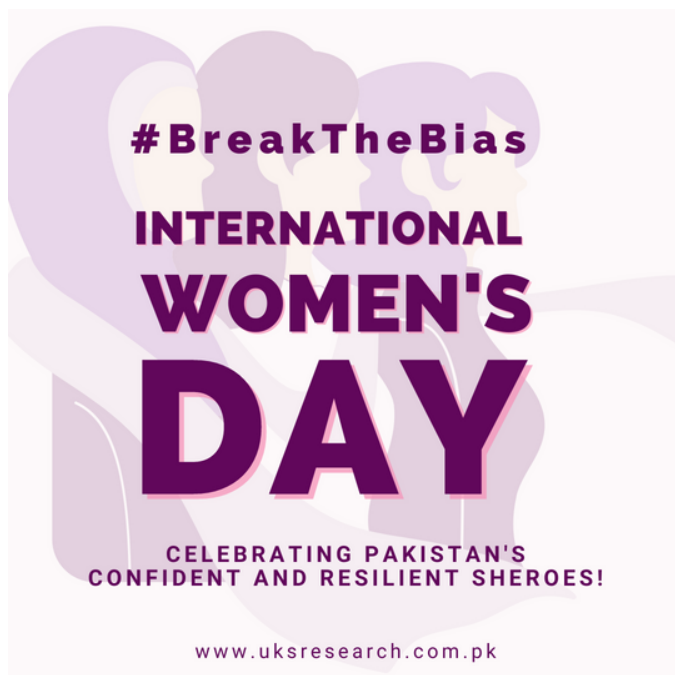
On February 12th, 1983, women poured out on the streets of Lahore, bearing signs and chanting slogans condemning the martial law regime. Walking in groups of four, they had defied Section 144, which banned public assemblies... This group of women, marched on to the Lahore High Court, to petition against Zia's discriminatory Law of Evidence that reduced a woman's testimony to half that of a man's.



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Uks Campaign on International Women's Day

On 8 March 2022, Uks launched a social media campaign on this year's International Women's Day. This year's theme was "Break the Bias." The campaign showcased the brave Pakistani women who were breaking barriers everyday and pushing the boundaries for women as a collective. The campaign was well received.



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Uks Campaign on Menstrual Hygiene Day

On 28 March 2022, Uks launched a social media campaign on the taboo surrounding menstruation. Several prominent personalities both men and women including TV anchor and journalist Zarrar Khuhro, social activist Sheema Kirmani and BBC reporter Sahar Baloch aired their candid views on menstruation and the silence that surrounds the topic.

#MenstrualHygieneDay

PROF. TAZEEN SAEED ALI



PROFESSOR AT AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

"Menstruation is a part of each girl's and each woman's life. This should be understood by each one in the society. Should be supported by all men and women of the family and work institutions."

 www.ukresearch.com.pk

#MenstrualHygieneDay

SAHAR BALOCH



JOURNALIST AT BBC URDU

"Menstruation has long been considered to be a taboo subject to speak about. Although there are studies where it has been established how speaking about it openly helps young girls and women. We have also seen how young girls refuse to go to school when they get menstruation because of lack of access to sanitary pads. It all comes down to one point, to speak about menstruation as much as possible."

 www.ukresearch.com.pk

#MenstrualHygieneDay

ADNAN SARWAR



FILMMAKER, INCLUDING 'THE MOTORCYCLE GIRL'

"The fact that purchasing a simple, everyday item like Sanitary Pads is such a taboo in Pakistan goes to show how much work still needs to be done to raise awareness about menstruation in our society. I have witnessed this awkwardness first hand during my time as a doctor and its unfortunate that a natural female bodily function like menstruation can attract such shame...." 1/2

 www.ukresearch.com.pk

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Tasneem Ahmar, Director Uks was invited by You Magazine (The News) to write about the portrayal of toxic masculinity and weak women which is rampant in Pakistani TV dramas

Break the pattern

By Tasneem Ahmar

Being an avid serial watcher and drama lover, I am starting to notice that this is now being normalised, which is a huge problem....



Link: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/magazine/you/933553-break-the-pattern>

'Global Media Monitoring Project Session 'Media

Tasneem Ahmar, Director Uks was a panelist on 'Global Media Monitoring Project Session 'Media: Building back better with women and girls at Centre'. The GMMP is the largest and longest-running research on gender in the world's news media.

Karachi, Pakistan



Syed Muaz Shah



Shahla Qureshi



Tasneem Ahmar



Dr Sarah Qureshi



Dr Masuma Hasan



Martin Dawson

Women as Catalysts for Resilience, Diversity & Change
A Global Conversation

March 8th - 5:30pm PK
International Women's Day 2022

Ziauddin University Clifton Campus (Auditorium)

@Athena_40 #athena40women



**UKS IS HONOURED
TO BE A PART OF THE**

Global Media Monitoring Project
Session 'Media: Building back
better with women and girls at
Centre'

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An Open Letter to Pakistani Politicians

Uks wrote an open letter to Pakistani politicians in response to the repeated deprecation of women in their statements and rhetoric. The trigger for the letter was a prominent politician's remarks about a woman politician who he referred to as 'low IQ'. As we highlighted in the letter, such remarks are de rigueur for politicians, regardless of their political leanings and they need to stop.



Discussion on Digital Rights

On June 15, 2022, Uks was invited to attend a discussion hosted by Media Matters for Democracy, a non-profit that works on media literacy, digital democracy, and progressive media. The discussion focused on the key challenges (regulatory, security, infrastructural, literacy and others) which occur while working with the Internet and which should be addressed on a policy level. The purpose of this event was to inform MMFD's and the digital rights community's policy advocacy on digital rights, its routine submissions to UN bodies, and various public and private national and international engagements on the situation of internet governance in Pakistan. Ali Nisar represented Uks at the event.

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In Memory of Noor Muqaddam

It has been a year since Noor Muqaddam was brutally murdered in a crime that rocked the country. On 20 July 2022, Uks' entire team attended the gathering and expressed support and solidarity for the memorial that was held at F-9 Park in Islamabad. Credit for pictures: Uks Team



Pakistan Startup Cup 2022

The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Islamabad joined forces with the United States Embassy in Islamabad to host the Grand Finale of the 2022 Pakistan Startup Cup at a local hotel. The Pakistan Startup Cup is a local business model competition designed to increase the quality and quantity of entrepreneurs throughout the community. Uks was represented by Zafran Awan and Neha Jerry at the event on 21 July 2022.



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Event organized by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The event "Gender Justice: Advancing Pluralism and Free Speech for All" was organized by OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). Representatives on July 13, 2022. This was a panel discussion which aimed to identify transformative change to remove systemic inequalities, barriers and discrimination in view of achieving gender justice and an enabling environment for pluralism and freedom of expression for all. Tasneem Ahmar represented Uks at the event.

Link: <https://youtu.be/0v0-wMamWyQ>

Meeting with Pakistani women journalists

On 28 June 2022, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), in collaboration with the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) and the Centre for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ), held a consultative meeting with women journalists from across Pakistan. The purpose of the meeting was to give female journalists space to air their concerns and to collectively address the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis. According to World Press Freedom Index 2021, Pakistan is one of the most dangerous places for a journalist. The conditions for women journalists are worse because of the patriarchal norms in society. Women journalists regularly bear the brunt of abuse in the form of widespread online harassment, hatred and physical violence. Threats of rape, physical violence, and intimidation are commonplace and women have to work harder to reach positions of authority and earn equal wages. Uks was represented by Tasneem Ahmar at the meeting.



UKs Projects

Uks publishes paper on COVID impact on Women

Uks published a brief paper summarizing the findings of the collaborative Uks-Oxfam Bridging the Information and Knowledge Gaps project. The research project does a deep dive on the impact of COVID-19 on Pakistan's women home-based workers, health workers, and domestic workers and gives recommendations for stakeholders. The report maps the increased socio-economic vulnerability of women as a result of the pandemic, which has manifested in the form of increased GBV, early child marriages, and forced marriages. It also throws a spotlight on (the lack of) media reportage on women during the pandemic. The report is intended to be a guidebook to enable policymakers to institute pro-women policies, social and economic reforms on emergency basis.



Link:<https://uksresearch.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Infographic-UKS-Research-Project.pdf>

Uks and IFJ Collaborate for Mentorship project

Uks collaborated with IFJ (International Federation of Journalists) for the Women in Media Mentorship Pilot project. The project sought to enhance and support women's leadership in Pakistan's media industry. Three women journalists from Karachi, Quetta and Hunza were selected as mentees. The mentees were tasked with desk and field research on the evolution of reporting and content production between 1980 and 2021. The journalist were mentored to create innovative and gender-balanced content and to support women as activists, unionists and decision makers.



UKs Projects

Link: <https://uksresearch.com.pk/news/>

DW Project

There is a worldwide discourse on constructive journalism, yet it is still a novelty in Pakistan's media landscape. This was the premise behind Deutsche Welle Akademie and Uks Research Centre's collaborative internal organisational and academic discourse on constructive journalism in the context of Pakistan. Uks conducted a media analysis on print and electronic media reportage through the lens of constructive journalism with the help of self-designed peer-reviewed metrics for content analysis. The report is a stepping stone for future research on constructive journalism.



Link: <https://uksresearch.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Pakistani-News-Media-through-the-lens-of-Constructive-Journalism-A-%E2%80%98message-system-analysis.pdf>

Mediamatters for Women

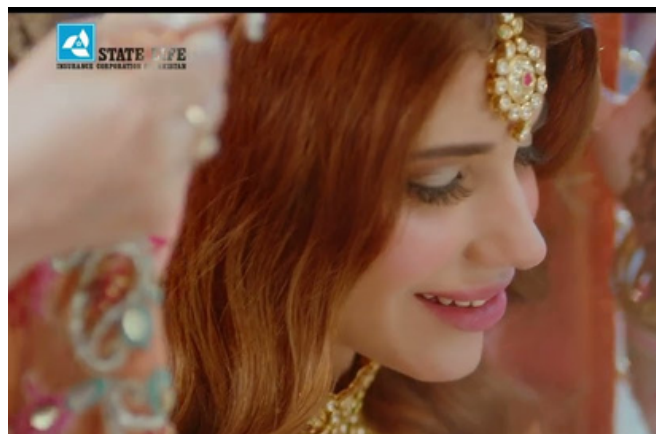
Our pick of the positives, the downright dangerous and the cautionary tales that turned up in the media in the last 6 months

The Good

To drive gender inclusivity, Lifebuoy has created the 'Mein Choti Si Aik Larki Hoon' (I am a little girl) campaign. This ad takes Jameeludin Aali's famous children's poem, 'Mein Chota Sa Aik Larka Hoon', which encourages young boys to dream big and turns it on its head to give a modern twist. Lifebuoy engaged poet Zehra Nigah to rewrite Aali's poem from a female perspective, inspiring young girls to dream big, and we are loving the result!



Not one to be left behind, State Life Insurance, also did its bit for gender inclusivity with its latest TVC. The original State Life Insurance Jingle 'Ae Khuda Mere Abbu Salamat Rahein' (Dear God May my Father Be Safe) is etched in the memory of many Pakistanis. The insurer recently revisited the iconic jingle and used it in its TVC, adding the lines 'Ae khuda meri ammi salamat rahein' for a 2022 gender-inclusive refresh.



Mediamatters for Women

The Bad

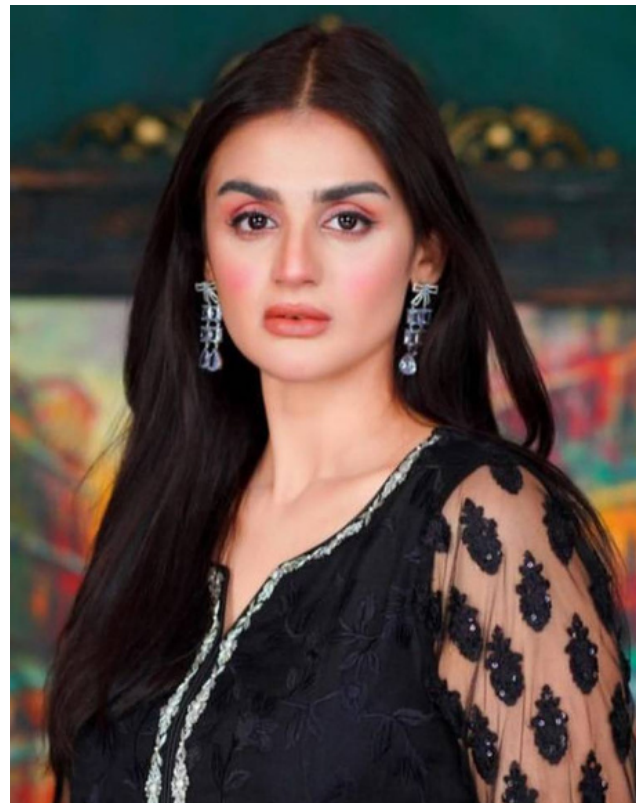
Drama serial 'Kaisi Teri Khudgharzi' tops our Bad list for propagating toxic male behaviour and misogyny in general. The serial glamourises stalkerish behaviour and promotes the concept that a woman saying 'No' does not mean 'No' and instead means 'Keep trying'. The plot revolves around a man named Shamsheer played by Danish Taimoor, who will do anything (literally anything) to 'possess' Mehak (Dur-e-Fishan), the girl he 'loves'. The entire premise of the plot is questionable and blows to smithereens the idea of consent which women have fought hard for. The ideas this serial is promoting are those that lead to rape culture. Please wake up PEMRA!

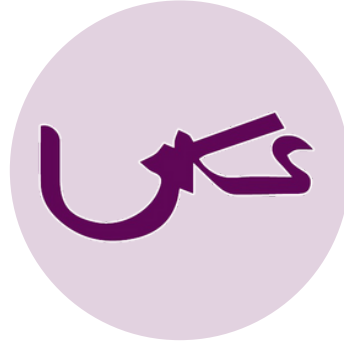


Mediamatters for Women

The Ugly

Actor/Singer Hira Mani, who had nothing to do with the Dua Zehra case jumped into a minefield when she chose to air her ill-informed views on the case. Hira landed in the middle of a controversy when after watching Youtube interviews with Dua Zehra and Zaheer, she took to Instagram and wrote “I want Dua and Zaheer to never separate. I am sure Allah will listen to my prayer”. The IG story attracted a barrage of flak and Hira had to issue an apology on video. The Dua Zehra case exploded in the media in April 2022, when Dua went missing from her house in Karachi and was later recovered from Lahore where she had supposedly “eloped”. She was allegedly forced into marriage with Zaheer Abbas, and a DNA test confirmed she was not old enough to consent to marriage. When will celebrities like Hira Mani learn to be socially responsible? When will they learn that they don’t have to have to comment publicly on everything especially if they don’t understand it?





A research Resource and
Publication Centre on
Women & Media

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