



GENDER & MEDIA WATCH

May 2025



A monthly round-up of news stories about women and women's representation in Pakistan's news industry

EDITOR'S NOTE

Why Gender Representation in Pakistani Media Can't Wait

Across Pakistan's media landscape one thing remains persistently underdeveloped: gender representation. While there is no denying that we now see more women in media, especially on television, where they report from conflict zones, anchor prime-time bulletins, and moderate talk shows, some critical gaps remain. Women are still too often absent as stories and as decision-makers behind the scenes.

The need to further expand gender representation in Pakistani media has never been more urgent. At a time when women are leading households, businesses, classrooms, and protests, they remain underrepresented in the spaces that shape public discourse. From political reporting to budget analyses, from bylines to soundbites, there are still far too many untold stories.

Where the Gaps Lie

Pakistani media continues to fall short in two critical areas: what is covered, and who gets to speak. While there is visible progress,

particularly in television newsrooms, the exclusions persist especially when it comes to in-depth, gender-aware reporting.

Sidelined Subjects

Gender-specific issues such as the wage gap, online harassment, women's health, discriminatory laws, and the gendered impact of climate disasters are often superficially covered. Even when these stories appear, they frequently lack context and urgency.

How often do we see sustained reporting on:

The impact of inflation on female-headed households.

Barriers to women's political participation at the local level.

The rise of online misogyny and its offline consequences.

Working conditions for domestic workers and factory women.

Mental health, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence outside of high-profile cases.

EDITOR'S NOTE

These are not soft stories, they are urgent public interest concerns. But in newsrooms which are still overwhelmingly male, these subjects are too often sidelined.

The Voices We Do and Don't Hear

Encouragingly, more women are speaking out through independent digital platforms and social media. Many are using these spaces to highlight taboo or sensitive issues from sexual violence and body autonomy to military overreach and digital abuse. Journalists like Asma Shirazi, Munizae Jahangir, and Reema Omer have consistently used their platforms to challenge dominant narratives, confront power, and amplify marginalised voices. Others like Lubna Jerar Naqvi, Maria Memon, and Benazir Shah bring attention to online harassment, gender violence, and public health failures.

Their presence shows that a growing number of women are not waiting for traditional media to catch up, they are putting themselves out there and creating new conversations.

Yet, in mainstream media, there remains a troubling pattern: when gendered issues do make headlines, women's perspectives are frequently missing. Panels on child marriage need to feature young women. Debates on reproductive health need to feature female doctors and rights advocates. Budget analyses need to talk about the economic impact on women.

Even on issues that affect women like domestic violence we often see men dominating expert panels.

Why Representation Matters

We need more women reporters covering all beats, not just women's stories. We need editors to actively seek out female experts, community leaders, and activists. And we need women behind the camera, on the mic, and at the decision-making table.

More importantly this growth needs to be conscious and it must be both horizontal, as in across all genres and platforms, and also vertical, meaning we need to see more women in editorial leadership and ownership positions.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Gender representation is not about optics. It's about fairness and credibility. Without women's voices, perspectives news remains partial and in some cases, misleading.

if Pakistani media hopes to remain relevant, responsible, and reflective of the society it reports on, it must begin by fully including everyone in it.

The Way Forward

At Uks Research Centre, our Gender Media Watch tracks these patterns through media monitoring and content analysis. While progress is visible it is not enough.

We call on:

Editors to mainstream gender-sensitive reporting across all beats.

TV producers to balance their panels with diverse voices.

Media owners to invest in women journalists, particularly those from underrepresented regions and backgrounds.

Journalism courses to integrate gender-sensitive reporting into their curricula, not as an option.

MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

02

May

The Nation

RWU'S MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN EDUCATORS CONCLUDE

Rawalpindi Women's University (RWU) celebrated a significant development with the successful conclusion of two major academic initiatives, the National Outreach Program for Faculty Development and the Women's Empowerment and Mentoring Program. Both the initiatives are aimed to boost capacity building of the academia in collaboration with HEC's National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE). The programmes brought together educators and administrators during the in-depth deliberations throughout the sessions.



03

May

Express Tribune

BNP DEMANDS RELEASE OF DETAINED BALOCH WOMEN

The BNP has demanded the immediate release of detained Baloch women as it vowed to continue its protests till its demands are accepted. Addressing a rally in Quetta on Friday, BNP President Akhtar Mengal said the Baloch people had endured 75 years of injustice, declaring that the party would not back down until their legitimate demands were acknowledged and addressed. "The prisons are not new to us. We will not back down," Mengal asserted. He slammed the government for stopping the BNP's long march at Lak Pass, Mastung and barring the party from entering Quetta.



07

May

The News

5 WOMEN PUBLIC PROSECUTORS APPOINTED IN CHARSADDA

In a major development, five women public prosecutors have been appointed for the first time in Charsadda district to improve access to justice for women in the region. The inauguration of a dedicated office for women prosecutors took place at the office of the district public prosecutor (DPP), where additional chief secretary of the Home Department, Muhammad Abid Majeed, officially launched the new facility.



09

May

Dawn

AURAT MARCH POSTPONED DUE TO 'WAR-LIKE SITUATION'

The organisers of Aurat March Karachi announced on Thursday the postponement of this year's march, originally scheduled for May 11, Mother's Day, citing the "war-like situation between India and Pakistan", Dawn.com reported.

It may be noted that this year's Aurat March in Karachi was shifted from March to May 11 because of Ramadan.

"This decision was not made easily or quickly," read a statement issued via the Aurat March Karachi's Instagram account. "Especially in light of how hard we voluntarily work all year round to bring people out on the streets."



MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

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May

Express
Tribune

BALUCHISTAN APPOINTS FIRST HINDU WOMAN AS

In a landmark moment for Baluchistan, Kashish Chaudhary has made history by becoming the province's first Hindu woman to be appointed as an Assistant Commissioner. Hailing from the remote town of Noshki in district Chagai, Chaudhary's achievement is being hailed as a powerful symbol of inclusion, diversity, and meritocracy in the province. Chaudhary secured the position after successfully passing the highly competitive Baluchistan Public Service Commission (BPSC) examination at a notably young age. Her accomplishment was recognized in a formal meeting with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti at the CM Secretariat in Quetta, where she was accompanied by her father, Girdhari Lal.



15
May

Dawn

8M WOMEN COME ONLINE IN 2024 AS DIGITAL GENDER DIVIDE NARROWS

The country recorded a significant rise in mobile internet usage among women in 2024, as the gender gap in mobile internet adoption narrowed from 38 per cent to 25pc, according to the GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report 2025 released on Wednesday. This means that women in Pakistan are now 25pc less likely than men to use mobile internet — an improvement from previous years.

In contrast, the gender gap across South Asia remained largely unchanged at 32pc, with an estimated 330 million women in the region still not using mobile internet. Pakistan also outperformed neighbouring countries in women's mobile internet adoption, with 45pc of women using mobile internet, compared to 39pc in India and 26pc in Bangladesh.



17
May

The News

'LET THERE BE FEMALE UN SG AS WOMEN HAVE MORE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN COST OF WAR'

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), has said that without women's leadership, the cycle of conflict continues, whereas the One for Eight Billion is not just a move about a woman in the UN's top job, rather it is about rewriting the rules of leadership for the 21st Century. One for Eight Billion" campaign is a global movement calling for the election of the first female United Nations Secretary-General.



18
May

The Nation

MICROFINANCE EMPOWERING WOMEN, UPLIFTING COMMUNITIES

In a country where economic inclusion often falters at the margins, microfinance has emerged as a quiet revolution—empowering women, uplifting communities, and reshaping local economies. It is the gendered dimension of this work that truly stands out. "Over 98% of our borrowers are women," Khokhar stated, highlighting RCDP's unflinching focus on empowering women as economic agents. Through targeted microloans, women across rural Pakistan have launched businesses.



MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

21

May

Daily Times

SC UPHOLDS DEATH SENTENCE FOR ZAHIR JAFFER IN NOOR MUKADAM CASE

The Supreme Court has dismissed the appeal of Zahir Jaffer, the convicted murderer in the Noor Mukadam case, and upheld his death sentence. The top court passed the order on an appeal filed by Zahir Jaffer against his death penalty in the Noor Mukadam murder case. During the proceedings, the convict's lawyer, Salman Safdar, argued that the prosecution's entire case relied on CCTV footage and the DVR, and that evidence against the appellant must be beyond reasonable doubt. He maintained that the court cannot go beyond the footage presented as evidence. He further stated that the footage shown by the prosecution could not be played in the Islamabad High Court.



24

May

Dawn

NAILA SETS BAR HIGH WITH THIRD HIGHEST PEAK SUMMIT

Naïla Kiani has become the only Pakistani female mountaineer to summit 12 mountains with a height of over 8,000m. Ms Kiani achieved the feat on Friday with her summit of Mount Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest mountain, in Nepal. A press release issued by Ms Kiani's team said the achievement "cemented her place not only in Pakistan's mountaineering history but also on the global stage, etching closer to a rare and elite global record: becoming one of fewer than 20 women in history to summit all 14 of the world's 8,000m peaks".



28

May

The News

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION: THE PART OF MOTHERHOOD WE DON'T TALK ABOUT

My experience with postpartum depression was one of the darkest and most challenging periods of my life. It felt like I was living in a deep, isolated hole-grappling with my identity as a new mother, trying to drown out the unsolicited advice from everyone around me, and battling a relentless undercurrent of rage, sadness, and confusion. There were moments when I questioned my decision to become a mother.



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May

The Nation

SINDH GOVT COMMITTED TO WOMEN'S HEALTH'S WELLBEING: SINDH CM

Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to improving women's health across the province. In his message on the occasion of the International Day of Action for Women's Health, the Chief Minister stated: "This day serves as a reminder to highlight the health challenges women face and to encourage effective and sustained action to address them. A healthy woman is the foundation of a healthy society."



EDITORIAL ON GENDER

What have editors said about gender issues in Pakistan? Click on the boxes and find out!

DAWN

[Overdue solace](#)

[Justice for Noor](#)

[Captive women](#)

[Straight to the top](#)

[Patriarchal views](#)

[Save the girls](#)

THE NATION

[Justice Served](#)

[Safeguarding Girls](#)

EXPRESS TRIBUNE

[Little focus on child welfare](#)

[Our vulnerable children](#)

[Honour killing disgrace](#)

[BISP reforms](#)

[Curbing child marriage](#)

[Women online](#)

[Justice for Noor Mukadam](#)

EDITORIAL ON GENDER

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DAILY TIMES

[Honour Killings](#)

[Child Marriage](#)

THE NEWS

[A balanced life](#)

[Future for our girls](#)

[Justice prevails](#)

[Protecting childhood](#)

STORIES IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

A roundup of this month's trends and viral stories on gender-related issue on Pakistan's internet

#EndChildMarriage

Unicef launched a video campaign featuring Unicef's National Ambassador for Child Rights Saba Qamar to raise awareness about the urgent need to end child marriage in the country. The video called on communities to speak up against the practice and reinforced Unicef's commitment to protect the rights of children and empower girls across Pakistan.



#JusticeForNoor

The Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld on Tuesday the death sentence of Zahir Jaffer in the brutal 2021 murder of Noor Mukadam. The ruling announced nearly four years after the high-profile killing, has been met with a nationwide sigh of relief.

Across social media, celebrities, legal experts, and everyday users, expressed solidarity with Noor's family, applauded the perseverance of her father, and called the verdict a symbolic victory not just for Noor, but for women across Pakistan.



MEDIA STATISTICS

Data derived from media-monitoring throughout
May 2025

Descriptive						
	Total	Daily Times	The News	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation
Women Specific Stories (WSS)	567	71	143	122	162	69
Front Page WSS	13	0	9	0	4	0
Back Page WSS	17	4	12	1	4	0
Women Specific Columns	18	2	7	4	5	0
Columns by Women Writers	163	39	42	34	29	19
Women Specific Editorials	23	2	5	7	7	2
Female Reporters (FR)	284	4	111	73	95	1
Front Page FR	34	0	13	2	19	0
Back Page FR	21	0	19	1	1	0

Comparative Mean					
	WSS	Editorial(WSS)	Female Reporter	Columns (WSS)	Columns by Women
Daily Times	2.290323	1	0.1290323	0.064516	1.25806452
The News	4.612903	1	3.5806452	0.225806	1.35483871
Daily Dawn	3.935484	1	2.3548387	0.129032	1.09677419
Express Tribune	5.225806	1	3.0645161	0.16129	0.93548387
The Nation	2.225806	1	0.0322581	0.032258	0.61290323

1. Women-specific includes all the news stories, columns and editorials that are dedicated to women's achievements, problems, status etc.
2. All female sources that are named and not named (such as lady reporter) are considered female reporters.

PICTURES OF THE MONTH



Lahore: A large number of deserving Women gather at Government High School in Baghbanpura to collect money being distributed under the BISP programme - NNI.

Courtesy: The Nation

Women police personnel take human rights activists Tahira Abdullah and Samina Omer into custody from outside the National Press Club.

Courtesy: Dawn



Islamabad: Artists playing musical instruments during the class of 'Opera singing Courses' at PNCA.

Courtesy: The News



PICTURES OF THE MONTH



Islamabad: Visitors savour a variety of international delicacies at Taste the World, a cultural diplomacy event organised by the Islamabad Foreign Women's Association at a local hotel.

Courtesy: The News

Rawalpindi: A health worker administers polio drops to a child in a locality in Rawalpindi on the first day of Nationwide week long polio virus eradication campaign.

Courtesy: Dawn



Faisalabad: Women farmers picking fresh vegetables from a field to take them to market for sale.

Courtesy: The Nation



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GenderWatch

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