



LUMS

Saida Waheed
Gender Initiative

**SAIDA WAHEED GENDER INITIATIVE
SPRING NEWSLETTER
2021**

OVERVIEW

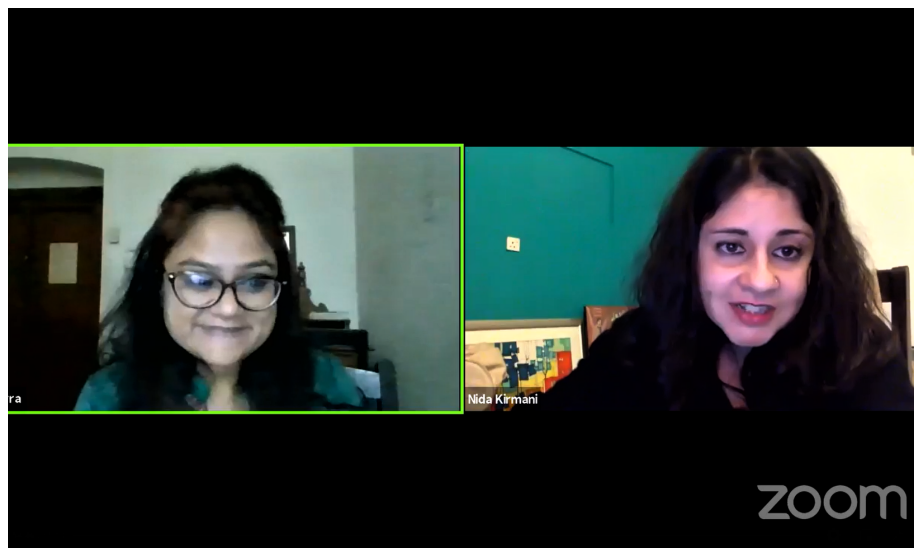
IN THIS ISSUE:

Webinars	1
Film screening	5
Research	7
Collaborations	8

The Saida Waheed Gender Initiative (SWG I) had a busy spring semester, which included several exciting events. Keeping in mind the pandemic and the overall risk of holding in-person events in enclosed spaces we kept all our events online, live streaming them on our [Facebook page](#). We wanted to send along some of the highlights and thank you for supporting the Initiative, and showing interest in our events. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay updated!

Intersection of Caste, Gender, Religion and Work: A Case of Christian Female Sweepers in Lahore

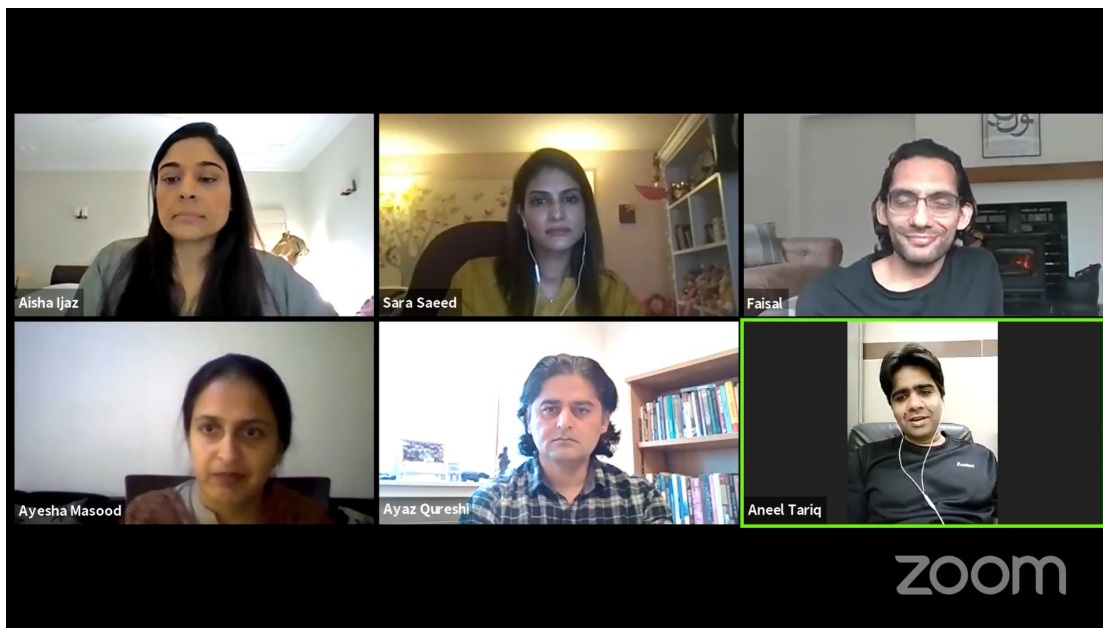
For the first talk of our Spring 2021 Webinar Series, we were joined by Dr. Ayra Indrias, to discuss how the historical baggage of caste-based prejudices coupled with socio-religious inequalities have been quite detrimental for low hierarchy laborers/sweepers in janitorial occupation, which is overwhelmingly dominated by Christians in Lahore. Dr. Ayra is a Professor of Women Studies at Kinnaird College for Women and is engaged in women welfare projects at Women's Desk of the Lahore Diocese Church of Pakistan. Her work on issues pertaining to religious minorities and women has been occasionally published in national dailies and academic journals. Dr. Nida Kirmani, who is an Associate Professor of Sociology at LUMS was the discussant for this session. She has published widely on issues related to gender, Islam, women's movements, development and urban studies in India and Pakistan.



Drawing insights from the theory of intersectionality, Dr. Ayra shared the findings of her doctoral thesis, describing multiple social divisions based on religion, caste, class, skin-color, and gender-bias shaping peoples' subjective realities and synergies that in turn lead to disadvantages, discrimination, and social alienation. You can watch the talk [here](#).

Pakistan's Health Sector: Gaps and Innovations

A diverse panel of health professionals and experts from both Pakistan and the UK joined us for our second webinar 'Pakistan's Health Sector: Gaps and Innovations' to discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility and precarity of health systems across the world and recommend steps towards rethinking the way Pakistan, and the world, approaches care.



The session began with Dr. Aneel and Dr. Faisal talking about the responses of the governments of Pakistan and the United Kingdom (UK) towards the COVID-19 health crisis, respectively, by sharing their experiences of working at different medical facilities during the pandemic. Dr. Faisal and Dr. Ayaz shed light on some of the gaps in the UK government's response to COVID-19 around racial, ethnic and gender lines and its effect on access to health services for minority groups. Focusing on Pakistan's rural areas of Pakistan, Dr. Sara and Dr. Aneel commented on the response of the public health sector in those areas and the opportunities for the private sector to intervene. For instance, Dr. Sara shared her experience of partnering with the government to help provide health care to people living in remote areas using telemedicine and digital health during the COVID-19 crisis.

Pakistan's Health Sector: Gaps & Innovations

Discussion Panel:

Aisha Ijaz
(Aahung)

Dr. Aneel Tariq
(Anesthesiologist, Activist,
Owner of Doctors' Republic)

Dr. Ayaz Qureshi
(University of Edinburgh, UK)

Dr. Faisal Bashir Chaudry
(University Hospital North Midlands, UK)

Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram
(Sehat Kahani)

Moderator:

Dr. Ayesha Masood (LUMS)

March 2, 2021 • 5PM (PKT)

Apart from health sector's response in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Ayaz and Ms. Aisha talked about the how the focus on COVID-19 effects overall access to health services especially for chronic diseases, mental health and reproductive health. The session concluded on a hopeful note, as panelists shared the opportunities in public health sector that have emerged due to the pandemic but also the issues that need to be addressed before those opportunities can be realized. Watch the panel discussion [here](#).

Gender, Inequality and Microfinance – A consultative session

Saida Waheed Gender Initiative partnered with Kashf Foundation and Mahbub-ul-Haq Research Center at LUMS, to organize a consultative session on 'Gender, Inequality and Microfinance.' The webinar aimed to bring together academics and practitioners to theorize on and understand the reasons behind the gender gap in Pakistan, and discuss the success and limitations of possible interventions through a consultative session.



Saida Waheed
Gender Initiative



Kashf
FOUNDATION



Mahbub ul Haq
Research Centre

SWGI - MHRC - KASHF CONFERENCE
Gender, Inequality and Microfinance

Women face a myriad of challenges with respect to their economic and social role across the world, however, the situation is much more exacerbated in the Global South. Pakistan has consistently ranked amongst the worst on global gender parity indexes. The conference brings together academics and practitioners to theorize on and understand the reasons behind the gender gap in Pakistan, and discuss the success and limitations of possible interventions through a consultative session.

Keynote Speech by Ms. Sima Kamil
- Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan



Ms. Sima Kamil
Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan

Date: 30th March, 2021
Time: 2:45 PM - 5:15 PM

Register now via the following link:
[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Heduq34DRH68U_We192AfA](https://zoom.us/join/https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Heduq34DRH68U_We192AfA)

Panel Discussion on Challenges to Women's Economic Role and Efficacy of Existing Solutions



Dr. Hadia Majid
Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Lahore University of Management Sciences



Mr. Mudassar Aqil
Chief Executive Officer, Telenor Microfinance Bank



Dr. Maryam Mustafa
Assistant Professor, Department Of Computer Science, Lahore University of Management Sciences



Ms. Roshaneh Zafar
Founder and Managing Director, Kashf Foundation



Ms. Zainab Saeed
Moderator, Head of Research, Kashf Foundation

Ms. Sima Kamil, Deputy Governor at State Bank of Pakistan, gave a keynote speech on the state of financial inclusion in Pakistan and the challenges and opportunities ahead. This was followed by a panel discussion titled '*Challenges to Women's Economic Role and Efficacy of Existing Solutions*' which included our Director and Associate Professor at LUMS, Dr. Hadia Majid, Dr. Maryam Mustafa (Assistant Professor at LUMS), Mr. Mudassar Aqil (Chief Executive Officer of Telenor Microfinance Bank), Ms. Roshaneh Zafar (Founder and Managing Director of Kashf Foundation) as panelists. The session was moderated by Ms. Zainab Saeed, Head of Research at Kashf Foundation.

Dr. Hadia spoke about how women's access to labor markets impacts gender equality and what are some of the ways it can be improved. She talked about the disconnect between productive and reproductive roles of women and how this causes negative multiplier effects for women in the productive economy. She revealed how it results in higher chances for women of losing their jobs than men since they are considered to be secondary workers. She also shared three design considerations for products and services aimed at addressing existing gender

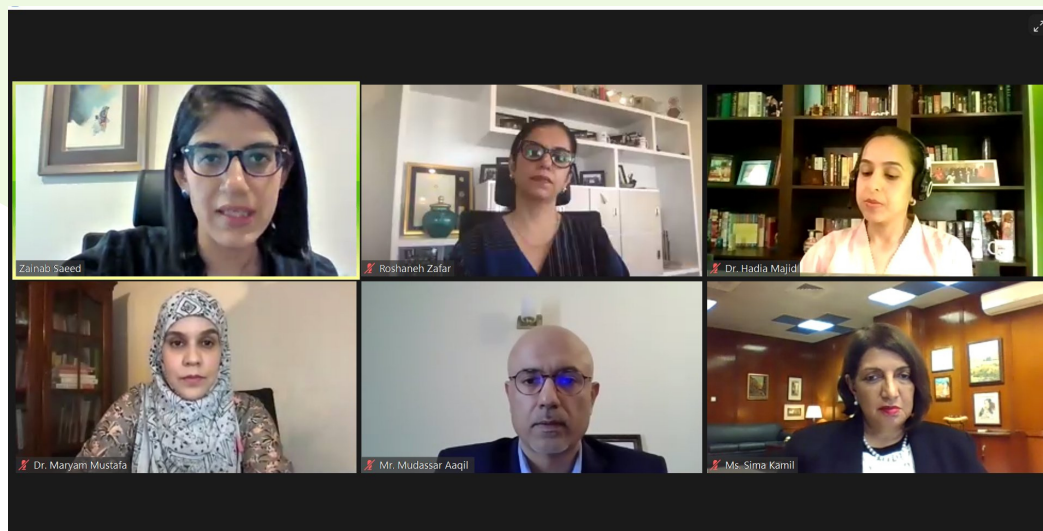
3

disparity. One of them was the need to talk to women about their point of view and incorporate the solutions adopted by them in the design of services.

Dr. Maryam shed light on the role technology can play in bridging gender parity in economic access. She spoke about digital financial solutions for women and emphasized on the need to customize them according to the requirements of the women being targeted. She gave examples from her field work, to share both the advantages of technology such as its role in providing safe and productive online spaces for women where they can learn and grow at their own pace as well as the challenges like the lack of confidentiality for women due to transparency offered by online platforms, especially when it comes to common practices such as saving money while providing for their family.

Mr. Mudassir spoke about the specific challenges that are faced by microfinance banks in accessing and retaining women borrowers and depositors. Having the experience of running a Microfinance Bank and exploring online banking solutions, he spoke about why branchless banking is needed in Pakistan. He highlighted the immense potential it holds for women and revealed the gaps that still remain to be addressed. He felt that the internet is the ultimate solution nowadays however to generate real impact, there is a need to create an ecosystem that can support it.

Giving examples of the various projects conducted by Kashf Foundation over the last 30 years, Ms. Roshaneh shared some of the steps that can be taken to bridge the gender gap in Pakistan.



She emphasized on the need to focus on financial education for women and their families, enhancing businesses through business incubation projects and similar efforts, promote consumer protection, work on gender dynamics; with constant need to educate both men and women about how to interact with each other at the workplace as well as in context of households and most importantly the dire need for collaborations between the different organizations working in the field. Watch the discussion [here](#).

FILM SCREENING

Exploring Feminism and Fun through Film

Saida Waheed Gender Initiative organized a virtual film screening and panel discussion with Dr. Nida Kirmani, Associate Professor of Sociology at LUMS and Dr. Shilpa Phadke, Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at Tata Institute of Social Sciences based in Mumbai, India. The session was moderated by Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali, who is a Professor of Anthropology, Middle East Studies and Asian Studies based in University of Texas in USA and previously served as the Dean of the Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS.

The live event featured two short films including '*Khel Khel Mein*' (Playing at the Boundary) by Dr. Nida Kirmani and '*Khule Aasman Ke Neeche*' (Under the Open Sky) by Dr. Shilpa Phadke which explored themes around gender, space, and fun.

Exploring Feminism and Fun through Film (Film Screening)

Panelists: Dr. Shilpa Phadke & Dr. Nida Kirmani

Discussant: Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali

20 April, Tuesday / 6PM (PKT)

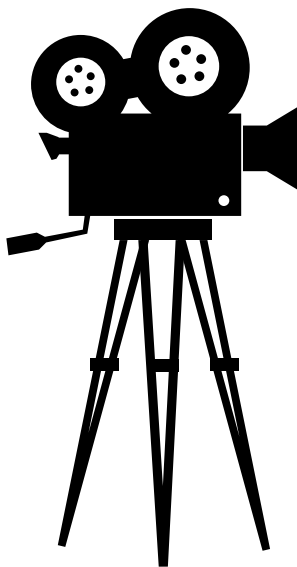


'*Khel Khel Mein*' (Playing at the Boundary) tells the story of three young people from the area of Lyari in Karachi - one of the most conflict-ridden yet oldest, most diverse and vibrant parts of the city. These young people are pushing gender boundaries in their own unique ways. Mehreen is a champion boxer. Zulekha teaches girls and young women how to cycle and takes them out for regular rides, and Sidu is an activist who challenges gender roles and binaries.

All three are struggling to bring a change in their communities and in society in general and having fun in the process.



'Khule Aasman Ke Neeche' (Under the Open Sky) follows the Parcham women's football team as they play and coach a younger generation of girls, in the process transforming not just the way they see themselves and their bodies but potentially transforming the way we see our cities. The film shows how the occupying open public space in the city to play becomes an act of feminist claim staking.



The film screening was followed by a discussion about the concept, narrative, cinematography and themes of the film. Dr. Nida and Dr. Shilpa also talked about their affiliation with the two cities, Mumbai and Karachi, which inspired them to choose the locations, Mumbra (Mumbai) and Lyari (Karachi), respectively. Watch the film screening and panel discussion [here](#).

Student Research: Moving Through this 'Portal'

Saida Waheed Gender Initiative launched a web scroll 'Moving Through this 'Portal'' to showcase seven student projects about the experiences of women, queer folks, and trans persons amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.



The projects include both academic research and artistic work that look at the pandemic beyond the framework of crisis, and offer new analytic perspectives and experiential insights. The SWGI team worked with the students to develop the scroll and two video presentations for their projects. By publishing the projects online, we hope to make this important research accessible to all and start conversations on a range of subjects that came to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The projects include:

- *'Amidst the Pandemic: Lady Health Workers of Sindh'* by Uswah e Fatima
- *'Domestic Violence in an Age of Online Spaces and Pandemic'* by Noor Fatima, Minahill Khan, and Swaiba Saeed
- *'Female Commuters and Covid-19 in Karachi'* by Ushna Khan
- *'Flitting through time 1918/2020: A study on women and pandemics in the subcontinent'* by Noor Fatima Bokhari
- *'Pandemic Archives: Charting Queer Pakistani Identities'* by Zainab Azfar, Urooj Mirza, Rameen Saad, and Mashael Shah
- *'Parchhayian'* by Amna Rauf, Huda Mehdi Shah, Kanza Hassan, and Zil E Huma
- *'The Gendered Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health of Healthcare Workers in Pakistan'* by Hira Farooq, Rida Fatima, Zainab Farooq, and Zumer Zia

Explore the projects [here](#).

COLLABORATIONS

At SWGI we value collaborating with other centers and initiatives across LUMS. We also believe that engagement and dialogue between academics and practitioners has increasingly become limited and endeavour to break through these silos by partnering with practitioners on the ground and pushing forward conversations that can help expand our ways of thinking and being.

The Economic Role of Women in Pakistan: Vulnerabilities and Hurdles

Our Faculty Director, Dr. Hadia Majid was invited to speak at a virtual round table discussion organized by Kashf Foundation, titled: *'Impact of COVID 19 and Inflation on Low-Income Households, especially Women'*. The online event aimed to bring together different stakeholders to understand how the economic recession coupled with rising inflation has impacted low-income households, especially women and brainstorm solutions and strategies that can help low-income households alleviate the effects of food inflation and enable the most vulnerable from slipping further into poverty.

Speaking at the second panel, *'The Economic Role of Women in Pakistan: Vulnerabilities and Hurdles'*, Dr. Hadia discussed the existing vulnerabilities and hurdles faced by women in their working lives in particular, and how these have been exacerbated by the pandemic. She shared findings from her projects with informal workers and home-based workers and the vulnerabilities and hurdles they face vis-à-vis the labor market. Using a gendered lens on Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2014-2015, Dr. Hadia revealed stats about female labor force participation, female employment and the wage differential between men and women including some staggering figures like women earning 70% of what men earn for the same work.



ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: IMPACT OF COVID 19 and INFLATION ON LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN

The Covid-19 pandemic and measures to counteract its spread have disproportionately affected poorer people and women. The Institute of Women's Policy Research has called the recession stemming from Covid 19 a 'she-cession'. A majority of low-income individuals, especially women, are employed in the informal economy with limited or no options for working remotely and thus had to forego earnings as result of missing work due to illness, quarantine, or government mandated closures.

20 January, 2021
3:00 PM - 4:35 PM

Join our esteemed panelists as they share insights from their work

Panelists

			
Dr. Hafiz Pasha	Dr. Hadia Majid	Dr. Ali Cheema	Ms. Roshaneh Zafar
<i>Covid 19 through a Gendered Lens</i>	<i>The Economic Role of Women in Pakistan: Vulnerabilities and Hurdles</i>	<i>The Economic Outlook for Pakistan in a Post Covid World</i>	<i>The Role of Microfinance in Post Covid Recession</i>

Register now via the following link:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_E5d6ht8tSvWudNwXEby2ag

Discussing the impact of COVID-19 on women, Dr. Hadia explained that since women workers occupy a secondary status compared to men, elasticity analysis shows that women are the first to be laid off during economic crisis as also recently seen. Moreover, since a majority of women work in the informal sector, there are minimal legal or contractual requirements to retain or compensate women workers. She gave the example of domestic workers, who were negatively impacted as a majority of them were laid off to limit risk of infection. Apart from employment, the double burden of household management which women carry, had exacerbated even more during the lockdown.

With respect to the policy recommendations, Dr. Hadia stressed that a majority of issues faced by women in the labor market result from the social set-up in Pakistan which is geared against women. She emphasized the need for gender disaggregated data; leveraging it to understand issues faced by women workers; and create strategies to address them. More work needs to be undertaken to not just ensure the creation of women centric legislation but enabling conditions to guarantee the implementation of the legislation is required.

Abolishing Archaic Processes: Rape Investigations in Pakistan

Saida Waheed Gender Initiative in collaboration with Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law (SAHSOL) at LUMS and LUMS Office of Advancement arranged an online session about Lahore High Court's recent judgment on the banning of the 'Two-Finger Test', a virginity test for rape victims.

The decision came after two petitions were filed in Lahore in March and June 2020 by a group of women's rights activists, academics, journalists, advocates, and a member of the National Assembly, seeking to ban such tests for rape survivors.




The team that has been instrumental in this landmark case joined the discussion as panelists, including Dr. Sadaf Aziz (SAHSOL), Ms. Sahar Bandial (SAHSOL), Ms. Maria Farooq (Axis Law Chamber & SAHSOL), Mr. Sameer Khosa (Axis Law Chamber) and Mr. Hammad Saeed (Bhutta and Saeed & SAHSOL), while Ms. Syeda Zehra Zaidi, Adjunct Faculty at SAHSOL moderated the session.

The panelists discussed the timeline of the events that led to filing the petition, the experience of the panelists as petitioners in the process and the next steps required to improve rape investigations in Pakistan. It also shed light on the history of the test and how the practice was unnecessary and medically irrelevant for proving a rape crime, making it unscientific, invasive and demeaning for the victims. Watch the panel discussion [here](#).

Human Development, Climate Change, and the Anthropocene

We collaborated with the Mahbub-ul-Haq Research Centre for a panel discussion on the new Human Development Index. The panel discussed the implications and limitations of the Planetary-Pressures Adjusted Human Development Index introduced in UNDP's 2020 Human Development Report.



LUMS | Saida Waheed Gender Initiative

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE ANTHROPOCENE

GLOBAL CHALLENGES WEBINAR SERIES

SPEAKERS:

DR. ADIL NAJAM
(BOSTON UNIVERSITY)

DR. FRANCES STEWART
(UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

DR. AJAY CHHIBBER
(GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY)

MODERATOR:
DR. HADIA MAJID (LUMS)

MARCH 15, 2021 / 6 PM (PKT)

Institute of Development Studies cdpr LUMS Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre

In doing so it examined the importance of climate change for how we think of and measure human development. It uses these new findings to discuss policy measures, state commitments and societal actions that are needed to mitigate the human devastation of the planet.

The panel included Dr. Ajay Chhibber (IIEP, George Washington University), Dr. Adil Najam (Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University), and Dr. Frances Stewart (University of Oxford). The discussion was moderated by Dr. Hadia Majid (Associate Professor and Faculty Director, Saida Waheed Gender Initiative). Watch the discussion [here](#).

We are already planning an exciting line-up for the Fall semester and are keeping our fingers crossed that the situation improves so that we can safely hold in-person events. Till that is not a possibility we will be holding online events. We will keep you posted and share our calendar after the summer. In the meantime, we wish you and your loved ones well during these trying times and hope you are taking all necessary precautions to get through this in the best possible health and spirits!



LUMS

Saida Waheed
Gender Initiative

D.H.A, Lahore Cantt 54792, Lahore, Pakistan

Phone: +924235608000

Fax: +924235725048

URL: swgi.lums.edu.pk

Email: gender@lums.edu.pk