



LUMS

Saida Waheed
Gender Initiative

SAIDA WAHEED GENDER INITIATIVE

FALL NEWSLETTER 2022



OVERVIEW

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The Saida Waheed Gender Initiative (SWG I) had an exciting and busy Fall semester. We were especially thrilled about our return to in-person events as they allowed us to come together again for insightful discussions and continue conversations over chai. We are very grateful to our audience from within the LUMS community and beyond for their time and active participation in all discussions.

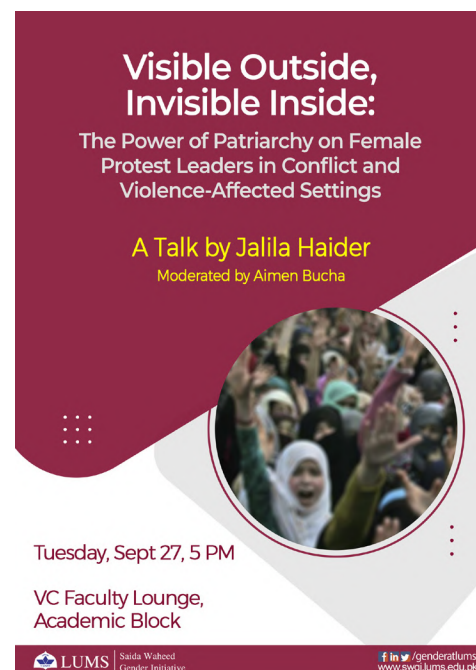
VISIBLE OUTSIDE, INVISIBLE INSIDE

The Power of Patriarchy on Female Protest Leaders in Conflict and Violence-Affected Settings

A Talk by Jalila Haider

The literature on women's participation in public protests and movements shows that even when they are prominent actors within these, most women are excluded from the male-dominated decision-making spaces within which negotiations with the state occur. In this talk, Jalila Haider, a human rights advocate and activist from Hazara, unpacks this through the learnings from her research on an ethnic struggle for rights in a conservative and conflict-affected region in which women have gained prominence over time, to the extent that

they are the face of the protests. Drawing on 13 in-depth interviews with 13 Hazara women leaders, key in mobilising other women in the city of Quetta in Pakistan, she shared how the intersection of patriarchy, identity politics, and social structures play a key negative role on Hazara women's influence in decision-making processes. In conclusion she emphasized that women within movements cannot be empowered in the absence of wider shifts in patriarchal social norms even when they actively take on the state.



BEYOND BONDAGE

Hari Women's Communities of Struggle

A Talk by Dr. Sarah Suhail

For our second talk, Dr. Sarah Suhail, an advocate, queer feminist organizer and researcher discussed the life stories of women who have escaped bonded labor in Sindh, describing their conditions of carceral labor and their strategies and tools of escape. This discussion was part of her larger project that explores the tools and strategies of resistance used by people relegated to the margins of society by the social conception of their womanness as a form of loss that is compounded by their religious, caste, and class-based status.

Dr. Sarah narrated the stories of Hari women liberators who mount rescue expeditions to free other Haris from bondage. She shared, how a majority of

Kohlis amongst other Dalit castes find themselves in bondage in the lower Sindh after their displacement from Tharparkar. She highlighted the precarity of peasants by sharing how, *"according to the research done by the Hari Welfare Association on the state of peasants, Pakistan ranks about number eight out of one hundred and sixty-seven countries on the Global Slavery Index."*

Through the life stories of landless freed women, she was able to deconstruct the operating gender regime and regimes of monopolized social, economic, and political resources by elite classes that contribute to structures that render certain lives less than human and disposable.

Beyond Bondage:

Hari Women's Communities of Struggle

A Talk by Dr. Sarah Suhail

Moderated by Dr. Chazal Asif



Tuesday, 4th Oct, 5 PM

VC Faculty Lounge,
Academic Block

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Gender Initiative

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THE TRANSGENDER TRUTH

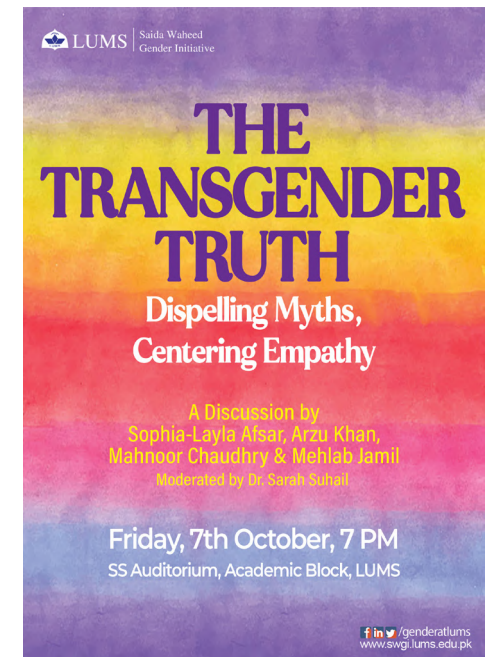
Dispelling Myths, Centering Empathy

Trans (Khawajasira) activists, who are leading the fight for their rights, spoke at SWGI's discussion forum about the concerted disinformation campaign launched against the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018. This campaign has endangered the lives of Transgender people (Khawajasiras) across Pakistan and threatens to roll back hard-won legal protections.

Arzu Khan, President of Trans Community Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chairperson of Manzil Foundation, shared that two Khawajasiras were brutally murdered within just two weeks after the disinformation campaign was started. She shared harrowing details of violence the community faces due to the pervasive dehumanization of Transgender people (Khawajasiras) which renders violence against them justifiable. While entrusting us with her life story, she

shared how despite being a government employee for ten years, her colleagues encouraged her to leave her job so they wouldn't have to face any difficulty.

Mehlab Jamil, a queer researcher and activist from Pakistan, clarified that the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018 does not have any punishments in it and that this law only prohibits discrimination against a



person/community. She explained how this law is an anti-discrimination law that protects fundamental rights, while also illuminating how the law fails to address the



violence faced by Transgender people (Khawajasiras).

Dr. Sarah Suhail, an advocate, queer feminist organizer and researcher, described how trans activists and community members worked hard to draft Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018 and among many issues, they also talked about quotas for the trans community in the educational sector. She expanded on how they

experienced backlash and resistance from senators, policymakers, and especially the Council of Islamic Ideology.

Sophia-Layla Afsar (she/they), a gender therapist and lecturer, highlighted the importance of empathy, care and extending support, not just towards trans people (Khawajasiras) but also towards the society in general. She said we don't necessarily

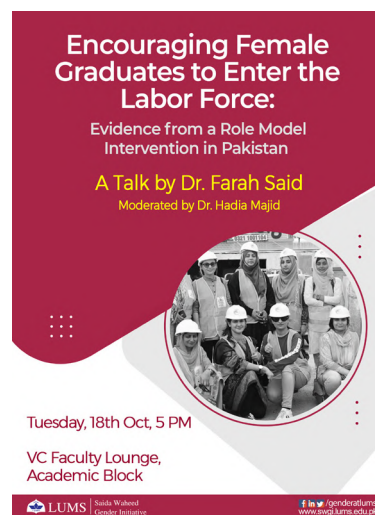
need saviors and people to decide for us what we need: *"You are not deciding what the other person needs, that person knows what they need, you ASK them what they need."* The discussion, in general, led towards a call for urgent action by those who believe in the right to life and liberty, who are committed to empathy and respect, and who are alarmed by fake news filling our society with hate.

ENCOURAGING FEMALE GRADUATES TO ENTER THE LABOR FORCE

Evidence from a Role Model Intervention in Pakistan

A Talk by Dr. Farah Said

In this talk, Dr. Farah Said, Assistant Professor Economics and Associate Director, Mahbub ul Haq Research Center at LUMS discussed her research where they randomly selected half of the sample to watch videos of relatable female role models to encourage students to enter the labor force. The treated students had a significantly higher growth mindset immediately after watching the video. This did not translate into significantly



higher job search effort or likelihood of working for the first 15 months after the intervention. However, eighteen months after the intervention, at the onset of the first nationwide COVID-19 lockdown, treated students were 4.7 percentage points more likely to be working. Evidence suggested this may have been driven by students stressed about loss of household income due to the lockdown.

Based on a randomised control trial with 2,500 final year female undergraduate students in Lahore, the researchers learnt that a large majority expressed a desire to work after graduation. Pakistan has gender parity in tertiary enrollment, yet labor force participation rate of female graduates is one-third that of the male graduates.

The researchers tested if exposure to role models can encourage female graduates from low-income households to enter the labor force. 1225 randomly selected students watched a 10-minute motivational documentary on 'successful' alumni, followed by a brief guided discussion on the video. The video consisted of the stories of 5 women who belonged to different occupations from similar backgrounds to the sample. The video showed a mix of professions: a lawyer, a librarian, lecturer at a public university, a curator at an art gallery and police officer. The video message motivated the students that effort and persistence pays off and that economic empowerment leads to higher individual and household welfare.



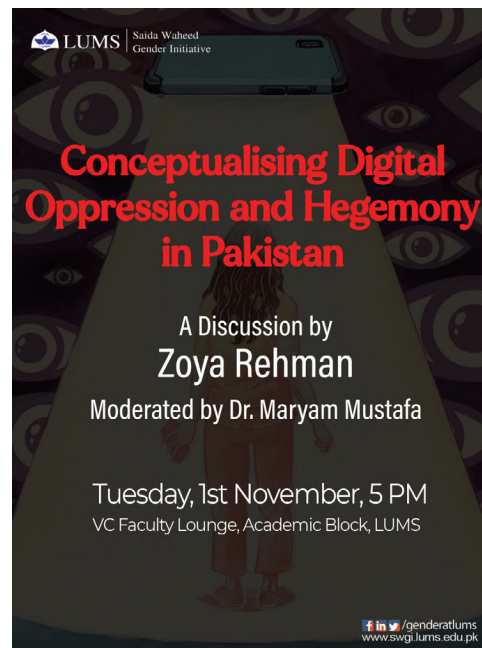
CONCEPTUALISING DIGITAL OPPRESSION AND HEGEMONY IN PAKISTAN

A Talk by Zoya Rehman

Zoya Rehman, a feminist organizer and independent researcher-writer, focused on the unequal power relations and ideological differences that govern online spaces, while observing how colonialism is being reinvented in Global South countries through digital technology. Pakistan was used as a case study to demonstrate how US-based tech multinationals exercise imperial control over the Internet, and how there is an inextricable link between state oppression and the way these corporations operate. While speaking about the violence experienced by activists in Pakistan and apathy of tech companies, she shares, *"We are experiencing violence in online spaces; we are being trolled but our experiences are not even taken into account by big-*

tech companies. They use our reports of harassment and blackmail as data."

Through the discussion, Zoya pushed the audience to think about how the internet can be dismantled and redesigned through the work of anti-oppression movements, to advocate for a progressive ecosystem that decentralizes technology by placing control directly into the hands of people.



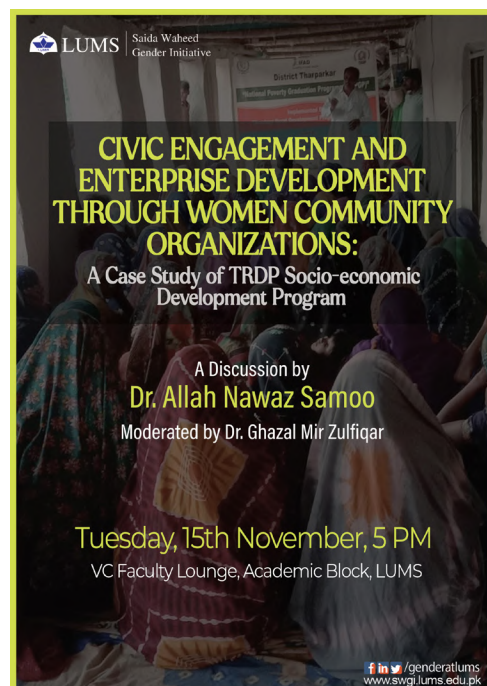
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WOMEN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

A Case Study of TRDP Socio-economic Development Program

A Talk by Dr. Allah Nawaz

In this talk, Dr. Allah Nawaz, CEO Thardeep Rural Development Program (TRDP), discussed the case study based on the work of TRDP that explains the evolution of women community organizations. He highlighted the contribution of these organizations in enhancing participation of the poor and marginalized communities in civic services and enterprise development initiatives. He discussed the value of community women

organizations in leveraging the public and private investments in rural areas of Sindh.



WHY ARE GENDER FRIENDLY INHERITANCE REFORMS NOT HAVING A DIRECT IMPACT ON WOMEN'S ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER LAND?

A Look at Decision Making Preferences of Women from Punjab, Pakistan

A Talk by Dr. Hana Zahir

Despite a spate of gender friendly inheritance reforms, there has not been a significant improvement in the gender gap in land rights. Feminist theory proports that such reforms are ineffective due to micro and macro factors which reduce women's bargaining power within the household which conventional bargaining models do not account for due to the context- specific and qualitative nature of most of these factors. Dr. Hana Zahir, PhD Candidate in the Economics Department at SOAS in UK outlined an expanded version of the household bargaining model which encapsulates the many layers of pre-existing social relationships and institutions which influence women's bargaining power specifically within the context of landed

families. This framework was then used to analyze the case of women's land rights in Punjab (Pakistan) through a comparison of the three administrative regions of the province (North, South and Central) which have differing patterns of social relationships due to their specific historical experience with land rights. The findings indicate that access to land does not always equate control over land for women. The results also show that high literacy of individuals and households, creation of new political and economic networks and women's strong historical role within the household and family can improve women's bargaining power which ultimately translates into greater access and/or control of land rights.



MANAGED GENDER

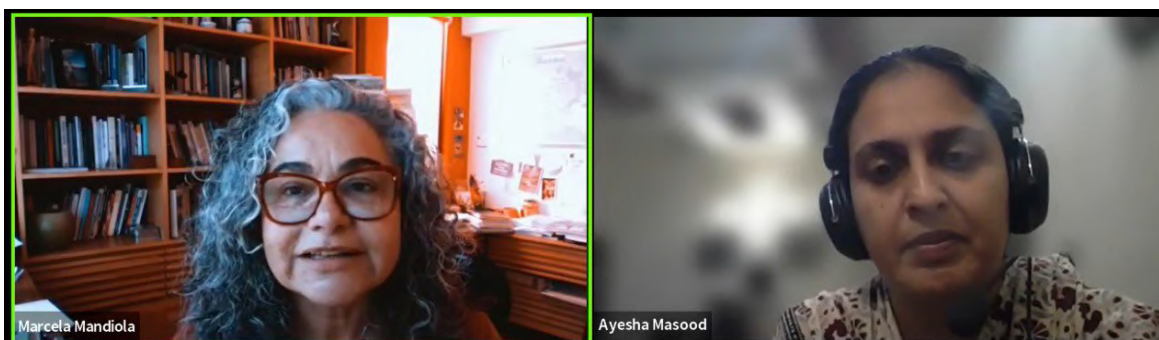
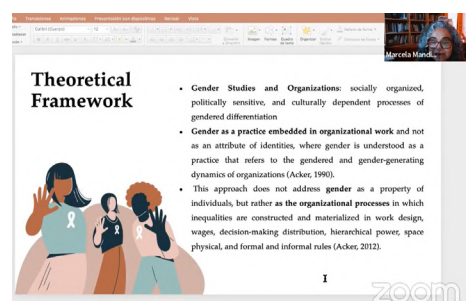
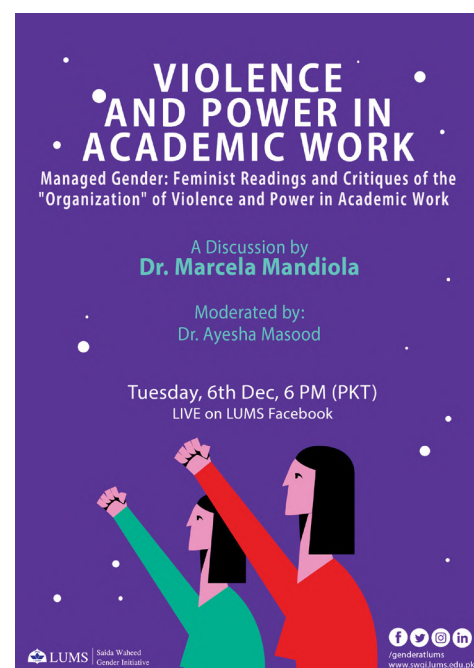
Feminist Readings and Critiques of the "Organization" of Violence and Power in Academic Work

A Talk by Dr. Marcela Mandiola

Dr. Marcela Mandiola, Coordinator of Management and Organizational Thought Area, 17, Institute of Critical Studies, work focuses on the articulation between academia, organization and gender. More specifically, the articulation between academic practices, managerial management, and hegemonic masculinity in universities. As gender violence in the university becomes a political issue, higher education institutions have had to transform their agendas. However, Dr. Marcela points out that this transformation may have brought significant measures in programmatic and institutional areas, but the field of academic practices and the logics that govern their organization have

remained untouched. She goes further to point out how in a managerial, masculine and heteronormative organizational context, gender often runs the risk of becoming an issue to *'manage'* in the university and the scientific world, exempting the organizational process co-opted by management from any feminist interrogation.

In the conclusion of her discussion, she emphasized on the need to redirect focus from individualistic change processes to the more structural and institutional aspects of inequality and, in particular, exclusionary politics and non-participatory decision-making.



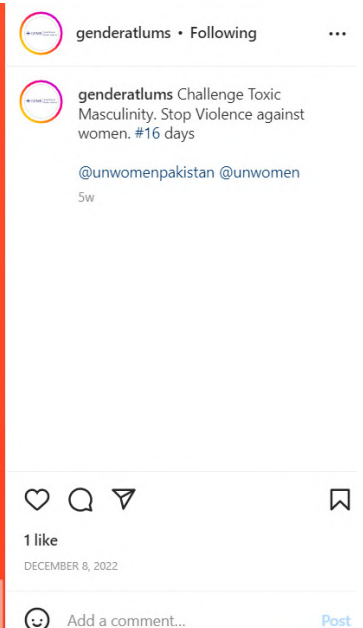
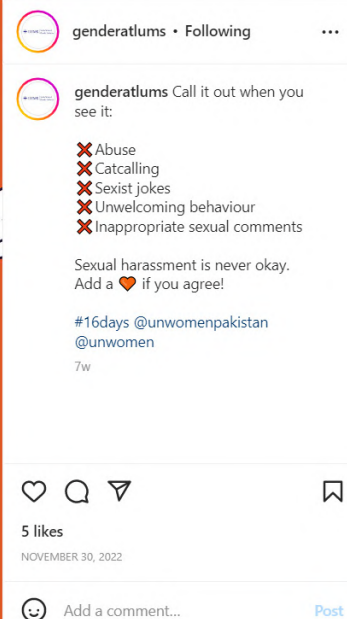
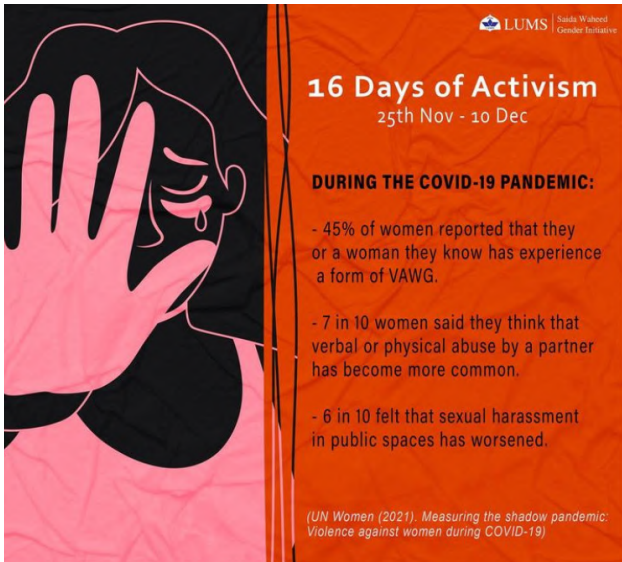
SWGI DIGITAL PLATFORMS

As we rolled into Fall 2022, SWGI rebranded its website to provide its audience with a modern and up-to-date experience, together with better functionality.



SWGI also established its digital media presence on Instagram and connected with relevant audiences and organizations on the platform. SWGI has also participated in the UN Women campaign '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, with the following posts.





SWGI also participated in the Humans Rights Day campaign of “Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All” and posted a video on Instagram with reference to messages from the students of LUMS.

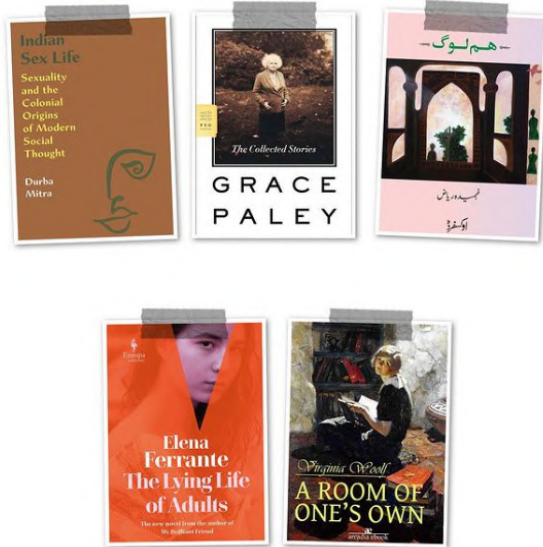


SWGI also initiated a campaign over the winter break and gathered recommendations for books related to gender and sexuality. Dr. Shayan Rajani, Dr. Bilal Tanweer and Dr. Sadia Zulfiqar shared their five book recommendations.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



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genderatlums Here are the five books recommended by @BilalT:

1. Indian Sex Life: Sexuality and the Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought by Durba Mitra
 2. The Collected Stories by Grace Paley
 3. Hum Log (3 novellas) by Fahmida Riaz
 4. The Lying Life of Adults by Elena Ferrante
 5. A Room of One's Own by Virginia Woolf
- Edited · 2w



9 likes

DECEMBER 30, 2022

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



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genderatlums Five books recommended by Dr. Sadia Zulfiqar:

1. An Unusual Grief by Yewande Omotoso
2. Black Women And Public Health: Strategies to Name, Locate, and Change Systems of Power by Stephanie Y. Evans, Sarita K. Davis, Leslie R. Hinkson, and Deanna J. Wathington
3. Black and Female by Tsitsi Dangarembga
4. Bless The Daughter Raised By The Voice In Her Head: Poems by Warsan Shire



9 likes

JANUARY 5

GENDER BI-ANNUAL

SWGf released the fourth issue of the Gender Bi-Annual, featuring a diverse range of voices from multiple fields of work. Across all four themes of the bi-annual, we find gender interacting in unexpected ways with other socio-economic, demographic and even spatial variables to affect outcomes.

From how gender may drive online learning to how it dictates energy usage, our contributors highlighted the powerful ways in which the gender order underlies daily exchanges. In Practitioner Voices, a development practitioner reflected on the various caveats in the ed-tech space and the challenges they bring forth. Academic Work featured two pieces, with one reviewing Rubina Saigol's seminal work, *The Pakistan Project: A Feminist Perspective on Nation and Identity*; and the other looked at marriage ads to chalk out differences between women and men when searching for spouses. In our Gender & Design section, our contributor fleshed out links between energy, gender, and space, emphasizing the need to unpack these linkages for building equitable and just futures. Finally, in Student Features our first set of contributors looked at sexism in academia, while the second looked at the Indian suffragist movement through fiction.



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04. PRACTITIONER VOICES What Online Learning Has Taught Us <i>by Annum Sadiq</i>	10. ACADEMIC WORK Gender Differences in Spousal Search: Evidence from Historic Marriage Ads <i>by Fatima Aqeel</i>	17. STUDENT FEATURES Looking Inwards: Sexism in Academia <i>by Ahsan Mashhood, Faryal Ashfaq, Hajrah Yousaf, Shahbaz Asif and Zoya Hashim</i>	EDITOR: DR. HADIA MAJID SUB-EDITOR: AIMEN BUCHA DESIGN & LAYOUT: IZAH SHAHID COVER & IMAGES: WWW.FREEPIK.COM

We have an interesting
plan for the Spring
semester and will keep
you posted so stay
tuned! Wishing you all a
safe and happy winter!



LUMS

Saida Waheed
Gender Initiative

DHA, Lahore, Cantt, 54792, Pakistan.

Phone: +92 42 35608000

Fax: +92 42 35725048

Email: gender@lums.edu.pk

Website: www.swgi.lums.edu.pk

Twitter: [@genderatlums](https://twitter.com/genderatlums)

Facebook: [@genderatlums](https://www.facebook.com/genderatlums)

Instagram: [@genderatlums](https://www.instagram.com/genderatlums)