



## Aurat March Reviewed: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the Selected Pakistani Feminist Blogs

1. Faryal Amber<sup>1</sup>, Khadija<sup>2</sup>

### Keywords:

*Aurat March Movement  
Feminist Critical Discourse  
Analysis (FCDA),  
Online feminist blogs,  
Pakistani bloggers.*

### Abstract

*The research work employs FCDA to examine Pakistani online feminist blogs that debate the Aurat March Movement (2018-2023). The research uses purposive sampling and thematic analysis to investigate power dynamics, gender inequality and discrimination by employing Lazar's FCDA model (2005, 2007). The analysis suggests that Aurat March pinpointed critical gender concerns in Pakistan. Additionally, the study revealed the ongoing gender inequities in a variety of contexts, including workplace harassment, bodily autonomy, child abuse, transgender rights, health, salary discrimination, politics, education, and injustice. Since, these blog writers harmonize with the sentiments expressed in the Aurat March movement, they recognize the pervasive and ingrained nature of gender discrimination faced by women and marginalized communities in Pakistan, therefore they advocate for changes that challenge existing oppressive structures and traditional ideologies, striving for a society that embodies principles of equality, justice and freedom for all. Their call for transformative societal shifts seeks to create a more equitable and fairer world that values the autonomy and rights of every individual.*

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer (Government Girls Degree College Mathra, Peshawar) Faryal Amber. Email: [faryalamber20@gmail.com](mailto:faryalamber20@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> M.Phil. Scholar (Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology, Peshawar) Khadija. Email: [khadija.hussain5210@gmail.com](mailto:khadija.hussain5210@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

Feminism and gender studies are now the most important component of modern-day research. It has an important role in uncovering the hidden ways of gender bias, moreover, it contributes to unravelling why a woman is always marginalized and kept outside of the social circle. But some of the beliefs related to gender inequality are considered natural and are institutionalized to provide them authenticity and power (Amir et al., 2020). CDA and feminism has one thing in common which is that both aim to work for the emancipation and transformation of social justice (Lazar, 2007). Feminist CDA aims to analyse how gendered assumptions and power imbalances are created, maintained and challenged in specific communities and discourse contexts. It also explores the subtle and overt ways in which societal norms and power dynamics shape and influence interactions and communication. Additionally, its focus is mainly on promoting social justice and transformation by challenging discourse that reinforces gender-based social structures that limit the potential and opportunities for both women and men as individuals. Hence, FCDA seek to create awareness of these issues and work towards creating more equitable and inclusive social environments (Lazar, 2005).

Patriarchy is the central concern of FCDA studies (Attaullah et al., 2021). As, in Pakistani society patriarchy prevails, it is the country where females remain unprivileged and men enjoy power and control over women. Men are considered to be the providers for their wives and children and since men (husbands/fathers) provide and maintain the family, therefore, from both the cultural and religious point of view, man always has the responsibility to take the final decisions for their family members. Additionally, the cultural concept of “obedience” of wives enables men to have authority over women. According to International Labour Organization report, in Pakistan only 3% of women are managers by occupation and that is the lowest percentage of females at the middle and senior managerial level. It shows that women not only suffer in cultural domains but in public domains too (Tauqeer, 2019). Because of these gender-based inequalities and discrimination, women have been fighting for their rights since long.

Moving on, in Pakistan “Feminist consciousness” became more salient during 1980’s, whereas women started making claims for their freedom of expression and for demanding their due rights since

the country's inception in 1947 (Rehman, 2017). Like other previous feminist movements, Aurat March is a newly emerging feminist movement, holding wide range of protests across Pakistan on 8th March, International Women's Day since 2018. The word Aurat is derived from Urdu language which means woman. Hence, the word Aurat March can be understood as Women's March. Furthermore, this protest is organized and headed by female activists and is mostly carried out in the prominent cities of Pakistan that includes Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad. Large number of females often accompanied by men comes out on the streets, holding banners and placards demanding for their basic rights and gender equality (Tuba, 2020). Communities of transgender along with ethnic and religious minorities also demand their rights in the protest. These protests stresses on the ideology that women need to be unchained of oppression and marginalization because she deserves equal opportunities and get empowered in the male dominant society. In addition to physical protests, the activists also make use of online social media platforms because these networking websites also plays a mobilizing role in disseminating the information regarding the protests across the world, foregrounding those incidents and stories which are mostly ignored by the traditional mainstream media (Kugelman, 2012).

It has been understood that Pakistani women have always been subject to prejudice and discrimination because of tribal customs, religious interpretations and ingrained feudal system inflicted on them (Ali, 2006). Women are faced with the socioeconomic, religious, and cultural obstacles that have marginalized their status in society. They are not only the victims of domestic inequalities regarding distribution of resources but also their access to outside resources like employment and education is negligible (Isran et al., 2012). The struggle for achievement of rights and gender equality is not a new debate but the contemporary feminist movement i.e., Aurat March is very latest one in the history of Pakistani feminist movements. This movement intends to create mindfulness and to solve the issues of females (Khushbakht & Sultana, 2020). Despite of the efforts of the activists, Feminism in Pakistan always has to guard itself against the allegations of advocating a foreign agenda and promoting Westernization.

The present research study employs Michelle Lazar's model (2005, 2007) of FCDA for the analysis of selected online blogs about Aurat March (2018-2023). As FCDA foregrounds the issues faced by women, the inequalities based on gender and the stereotypical ideologies that have narrowed

down spaces where they can excel. The study is significant because it illuminates the issues foregrounded in the Aurat March (2018-2023) protests by analysing the Pakistani feminist blogs, in the light of FCDA. Since the aim of feminist theory is to break the stereotypical expectations concerning genders in society so analysis of the online blogs would help to understand the ideological perspective regarding the gender inequality that is prevalent in Pakistani society and is reflected in the protests. Moreover, the current study is conducted on a gap found in literature, where mostly the suppression and marginalization of female is brought to the front. In contrast this research focuses on how women are protesting and demanding for gender equality and empowerment in Pakistan. The struggle of feminists and Aurat March protestors for bringing a positive social change in Pakistan is also highlighted. Furthermore, FCDA has not been done on feminist blogs in Pakistan before.

## QUESTIONS

- i. What are the issues highlighted by the online feminist bloggers in their online blogs written about Aurat March protest (2018-2023)?
- ii. . What is the extent to which the online feminist bloggers agree to the problems raised in Aurat March protest (2018-2023)?

## Objectives

- i. To examine and identify the issues raised in Aurat March (2018-2023) by analysing online blogs of Pakistani feminist bloggers, taken from selected media platforms.
- ii. To analyse the extent to which feminist bloggers agree to the problems raised in the Aurat March Movement (2018-2023).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

FCDA framework has been employed by many scholars on both literary and non-literary texts. Recently, many researches have been done on foregrounding the suppression and marginalization of women, However, highlighting the resistance and solidarity formation of marginalized communities has

been less emphasized. Since, FCDA offers a politically motivated outlook on gender and it is associated with uncovering the link between gender, ideology and power dynamics, hence it impacts all those approaches in linguistics that prefer one mode over another (Lazar, 2005). Feminist CDA reminds us that many social practices prevailing in societies are gendered which are made natural through the operating discourses. It focuses on how some patriarchal patterns are formed in society that privilege men and put women to disadvantage position (Amir, 2020).

Zaidi (2017) used feminist critical discourse analysis to analyze the character of Sin in Milton's *Paradise Lost II*. The study aimed to understand the gender bias in Milton's portrayal of Sin. Whereas, Tauqeer (2019) emphasized the marginalized position of women in Pakistani society in her study, pointing out that they have less access to political representation, work, education, and safety from the outside world. She came to the conclusion that women's rights exist mostly on paper and are rarely put into practice.

Furthermore, using Lazar's feminist CDA and Gayatri Spivak's idea of the subaltern, Khan (2019) explored how patriarchal power structures depict South Asian women as objects of desire and submissive to them in Qaisra Shahraz's book *The Holy Women* while Sohail et al. (2020) used FCDA to examine two Pakistani films and discovered that although Pakistan is a patriarchal country, there is a change in favor of women empowerment and freedom. In addition to that, Attaullah et al. (2021) study highlights gender inequalities and the exploitation of women as a result of predetermined cultural expectations for both genders. While men are valued and occupy prominent positions in society, women are assigned household duties and are deprived of education, economic rights, and freedom however, Nartey (2020) employed Lazar's technique to study blogposts from Ghana, emphasizing the marginalized voices and resistance methods of African women, as well as gender privilege and injustice in Ghanaian society.

After an extensive literature review, the researcher has found out that many researches have been conducted to explore feministic themes using different CDA models but no research has been done on Pakistani blogs especially from the perspective of Lazar's (2005, 2007) model. To fill that research gap, the present study analyses blogs posted on media platforms that highlighted the crucial issues that

Pakistani women are raising in the Aurat March. Due to a lack of law enforcement, Pakistani women still face obstacles in spite of their constitutional rights. Lazar (2014) emphasizes the significance of respectful and inclusive social behaviours, highlighting ongoing initiatives to question conventions and establish fair situations where every person is recognized and given rights. As the blogs seek to tell underreported stories the present study highlights women's struggle to combat gender imbalances produced by patriarchal discourses by focusing on the online blogs of Pakistani feminist bloggers.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

This study employs FCDA as theoretical framework utilizing Lazar's Model (2005, 2007). According to Lazar (2014) "FCDA is basically driven by developments in critical feminist theory" (p.182). Her research is mostly based on critical discourse studies, gender and sexuality, politics, and multimodality. There are five fundamental principles of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Lazar, 2005; 2007; 2014) as theory and practice which are interrelated to each other. These principles include feminist critical activism, gender as ideological structure and practice, discourse and deconstruction of gender, complexity of gender and power relations and critical reflexivity as praxis. FCDA is considered a fitting and suitable framework for the present study because it assists the analysis of discursive approaches of negotiation, resistance, harmony and social empowerment of the marginalized women.

Qualitative method is used for the analysis of online blogs because this study intends to address social problems faced by women in Pakistan. Moreover, the researcher has used thematic analysis as a technique for analysing the data, which is the process of finding patterns and themes in the data collected for analysis within the qualitative research method. This method of analysis is considered suitable for studying different aspects in learning and teaching. The data for this research study consists of fifteen blogposts taken from selected Pakistani online media platform that were written by online feminist bloggers and were purposefully gathered. Depending on the research objectives, the researcher has selected homogeneous purposive sampling methodology. The unit of analysis for the present study will be the blogs posted by several social media platforms whereas the data is gathered and interpreted from all related material collected from media platforms including Dunya news blogs, Hamara internet, Idara Taleem o Aagahi (Aurat March), WordsWorth-The blog, Aware Pakistan, ICNC Blogs, The Reporters

(blog Section), APF Blogs that showcased the representation of women and gender inequalities in Pakistani society. The inclusion criteria for the blogs will be: blogs written by feminist bloggers, blogs written on feminist issues raised in Aurat March (2018-2023), blogs in the English language, blogs posted in the last five years and blogs at least of the length of three thousand words. For this study the comment section of the blogs will not be included due to its authenticity. The main focus of the blogs will be on issues raised in Aurat March Movement (2018-2023), and the extent to which the feminist activists agree to the problems.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The current study analyses the blogs taken from authentic social media platforms under the theme of Aurat March (2018-2023) from the viewpoint of Lazar's (2005, 2007) model of FCDA. Braun & Clark's (2006) Thematic analysis technique has been used to analyse the data. The blogs were separately analysed and themes were identified and reviewed. After doing the analysis, the social, political and financial themes were revealed. The samples of the blogs foreground the atrocities faced by women in male dominant societies and highlights how women are struggling in patriarchal society to protect themselves from misogynistic oppression. These blogs show that women are confronting so many issues including sexual and work place harassment, restriction at public places, child abuse, forced marriages, health problems, low salaries, less political representation and financial crises.

As Feminist CDA aims to bring about social change by raising awareness of gender issues through analysing language and communication (Lazar, 2005). The Disappointing Misogyny of Women Post-Aurat March, a blog written by Sindhu Abbasi where she has mentioned a tweet of a girl criticizing Aurat March that included transgenders, women and men. It said, "Grew up on father's money and now bashing men, hmmm irony" (Abbasi, 2019). Michelle Lazar in her book, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse" (2005) argues that the aim of FCDA is to demonstrate discursive production and gender analysis to interpret human psychology (p.11). It explores how people treat and think about men and women. FCDA of the quote implies that the people participating in Aurat March grew up on their father's money and without the financial support of their fathers (men) they could not do anything. Thus, it has highlighted the power dynamics that men have

the privilege and social power over the opposite gender. A male-centred view of power has been implied where men have more power over women and they depend on their fathers, husband or brothers for financial well-being. FCDA of the statement reveals that the social power and privilege is given to men as in our society the patriarchal patterns dominate where women are always perceived as dependent on men's possessions. Such negative remarks serve to silence women and contributes to gender bias in society.

FCDA is a way of looking at language that how it represents gender and power. It aims to show how language and discourse can affect the way people think about and treat men and women. Its main focus is to highlight how society gives power to men and takes away power from woman and then how this bias is reflected in language and discourse (Lazar, 2005). "Madam jis kisi ne kuch keh dia tu hamari zimadari nahi hai" (Iqbal, 2020). (Madam if someone teased you; we will not take any responsibility.)" Feminist CDA of the quote underlines the gendered interpretation of responsibility, it implies the stereotypical societal norms that are emphasized through the discourse and language that might hold women responsible for being harassed or teased in public places. It shifts blame onto the victim thus propagating victim blaming mind set and devaluing women. The statement also portrays the reinforcement of patriarchal norms, as FCDA intends to analyse how the discourse produce and reproduce such societal structures that maintains gender discrimination. By proposing that the responsibility lies on the women being harassed, it amplifies patriarchal stereotype that sets aside the seriousness of harassment or teasing, especially when it targets female.

FCDA of the blogs also reveals the dismissive attitude towards feminist movement. By portraying Aurat March movement as only promoting Western trends rather than illuminating women issues, such criticism disregards the depth and complexity of feminist interests. It infers that anything that is linked with the Western influence and thought must be intrinsically negative without regarding the fact that Aurat March bring into limelight a wide range of economic, political and social issues that have huge impact on women's progress worldwide. "It was commented that these placards and posters were pushing women to follow Western trends and culture rather than presenting real issues of women in Aurat March" (Noor, 2019). FCDA of the above-mentioned statement portrays a common misogynistic discourse that is usually used to delegitimize the demands of women in Pakistan. The



criticism suggests that the banners and charts displayed in Aurat March are motivating women to follow Western culture and traditions rather than concentrating on the real problems faced by females. The quote implies that the criticism denies the women agency and the right to autonomy in expressing their views. They are accused of pushing Pakistani women to adopt Western culture and are considered the passive recipients of the foreign culture, rather than the individuals who are efficient enough of taking decisions by themselves.

Bloggers have also addressed the mental trauma, threats, employment consequences and hateful rhetoric that the activists face after women's march. Once thought to be a fair and equal platform for women, cyber space has been found to be a platform for cyber bullying, particularly targeting women. Researches show that asymmetries in face-to-face interactions have carried over into online spaces (Lazar, 2005). Hence, FCDA examines the hateful speech as the perpetuation of reinforcing patriarchal norms through discourse. Such hostile environment leads to mental health issues of the activists such as stress and anxiety.

The discussed below is considered as form of "critical reflexivity as praxis" (Lazar, 2007) because it promotes critical awareness and gives voice, agency and power to women in Pakistani male dominant societies, particularly in relation to the gender-based discrimination and dismantling male dominant oppressive structures. The blog is seen as a means of promoting awareness and understanding, as well as advocating for the rights and empowerment of women. A very well-known activist for women rights, Bina Shah published a blog entitled Aurat March, 2020, highlighting the efforts of organizing Aurat March Movement and the backlashes and hatred these activists faced after organizing the rally. As FCDA is an approach to analyze texts and talks that emphasizes gender and social relations and power dynamics, it explores the discursive strategies and the implicit assumptions creating awareness regarding gender inequalities. The blog begins by mentioning that "the organizers making public announcement and inviting everyone to join their inaugural meeting and become a part of the groundbreaking women's rights march across Pakistan" (Shah, 2020). The word organizers in the above statement highlights those individuals who have taken a step to organize and manage this rally. There is also a hierarchical relation, where some women have the power of decision making and higher level of control. Sending an open invitation and calling everyone to be a part of this movement implies an

inclusive approach, encouraging for extensive involvement of people regardless of their gender identity. It is because the activists wanted support from all those individuals who willingly joins the campaign for gender equality and women rights. Blogger has also mentioned a quote saying “you can be a pro women and not anti-men”. (Shah, 2020, p.1). It implies that women and activists who are fighting for women rights are not against men but instead they are just demanding equality and rights for women as well. The phrase “men are trash” is often used by women only for those men who disrespect, harm and discriminate them.

The problems that women in Pakistan encounter includes “discrimination at workplace, domestic violence, child marriages, transgender rights and much more, though what united all who desire to see fairer, more equal Pakistan and an end to the overwhelming patriarchal nature of society where men largely dominate institutions, the justice system is skewed in favor of men and women are general relegated to the sidelines” (Faraz, 2020, p.1). FCDA of the statement reveals that the participants of the movement challenge and resist those male dominant and traditional norms which disseminate gender discrimination and confine women’s involvement in various public and private spheres. The power relations and societal gendered expectations contributes to reinforcing of gender inequalities in societies. The role of legal institutions including the justice system of Pakistan mostly upholds the values that marginalize and undermine women. The aim of Aurat March movement is to eradicate gender discrimination and create a fairer and just country, where both women and men enjoy equal rights and privileges. Feminist approach towards CDA reinforces the significance of amplifying women’s voices in public and media discourses to question these pre dominant discourses that are the cause of marginalizing them.

Different marginalized groups and individuals are given voice and representation in the rally. “These marchers aim to improve the gender gap in Pakistan. Pakistan ranks third to last (151st) on the World Economic Forum’s 2020 Global Gender Gap Index, placing it at the very bottom of nations from all of South Asia” (Rafiq, 2021, p.1). The writer of the blog has mentioned statistic in order to make her point more strong and valid. It suggests that Pakistan’s position in bringing gender equality is weak. She further says that, large number of children become the victim of child abuse and women are harassed and abused not only physically but also online (Rafiq, 2021, p.1).

“Firstly; I suggested that only women rather than men should be asked about their experiences since they are more qualified to speak on women’s plight. Secondly, I urged that we avoid using religion as a pretext for everything, which I found misguided and unproductive” (Dotani, 2023, p.1). Feminist CDA implies that by giving women the opportunity to speak about their experiences is actually advocating for an approach to inclusivity and women empowerment, it is because women can best represent how they are encountering the inequalities and can better explain their own lived realities. Moreover, the blogger suggests that religion should not be brought into such discussions on male dominance. Most often the religious interpretations and traditional norms are used to defend and propagate the conservative systems in society, which confines women’s rights, autonomy and agency.

Feminist activist from Multan, a city of Pakistan, mentions that it was such a difficult task for her to come out on the streets because there is so much influence of religious forces surrounding her area. One of the Pakistani political parties, “Jamaat e Islami formally wrote an application to the authorities dubbing the march immoral and a threat to our religious and cultural values. They even threatened us to use force to stop the march from happening” (Rasool, 2021). FCDA of the above statement underlines the power relations and gendered beliefs in play in association to the Aurat March rally in the city of Multan. The religious influences in the region stopped women from raising voice hence leading to the maintenance of discrimination in the region and restricting women’s freedom. The use of language by a Pakistani religious political party regarded the march as vulgar and immoral and a threat to religious and cultural norms. Islam is the only religion that gives equal rights to women without creating discrimination on the basis of gender, social position colour, creed or cast. Quran says that “The sole basis for superiority of any person over another is piety and righteousness not gender, colour or nationality” (Quran 49:13) (Parvez, 2022). The sexist narratives contribute to the silencing and marginalization of women, disagreeing with their right of moving freely and express their demands without fear. The analysis shed light on the efforts made by the protestors and their determination to dismantle the oppressive patriarchal structures. FCDA uncovers that the slogans and placards represent the true picture of society that some people do not want to see. It represents the issues of women and amplify their voices and agency.

The biased language used against the posters and slogans implicitly portrays the propagation and perpetuation of conservative attitudes that marginalize the voices and experiences of the suffering women. “The backlash against Aurat March and its organizers took a turn when the organizers were severely harassed online and also given rape threats” (Khan, 2019). Their criticism targets specific portion of women group based on their cultural, social and economic background, hence perpetuating further bias and discrimination. The backlashers wanted to silence women and undermine their demand for gender equality and women’s rights. The language and discourse help to understand the criticism faced by feminist after the Aurat March. “What is there to question is that this hatred against women sprung after the movement or has it been revealed through it? (Noor, 2019). FCDA unravels the ongoing struggle to attain gender equality and women’s safety. Women participating in the Aurat March have gone through the criticism both online and offline. It proposes that such negative remarks uncovered the deep-rooted hatred and bias against women that has been uncovered through this movement. These comments have confirmed the discrimination and violence that they are experiencing over the years and has reinforced the stance of women at Aurat March. The negative responses reinforce gender inequalities and the need for women to resist and challenge discriminatory structures and demand for their rights. Despite initiating movements like Aurat March, women still do not feel comfortable and safe in their country but the bloggers believes that “it is the clear indication that one day misogynistic society as a whole will cease to exist. Or well, half of the population believes it will” (Shafiq, 2020). The quote depicts that the writer has optimistic approach towards Aurat March and believes that with the passage of time equality and justice will prevail and there will be no one superior or inferior on the basis of gender. FCDA reveals that there is still a long way to go to attain gender equality and freedom. There is a need to identify the systematic barriers and societal norms that contribute to the lack of women’s safety and highlights the importance of solidarity among women to resist and alter their marginalized position. Women become stronger when united and each step they take together brings them closer to the achievement of their goals.

## **DISCUSSION**

The data analysis of the study underpins that protestors from every city of Pakistan come out on the street to raise voice against the injustice, violations of human rights, physical and emotional violence

against women, child abuse, sexual and work place harassment, cyber harassment, reproductive and educational rights of women, health crisis and lack of facilities for women and transgender communities and equal representation in politics. Women do not want to have superiority over men but instead they demand for equal rights as given to them by constitution and religion. As, protestors and slogans were backlashed by religious political parties and some misogynists for undermining and defaming the movement because they considered the movement as threat to their conservative cultural norms and societal values. Traditional norms and gender roles are more powerful than the country's laws and constitution, it is because the laws and constitution do not bound women's freedom but the society does. In the Holy Quran, men and women are considered equal without any prejudice given to either male or female. There is no discrimination on the basis of colour, caste, social or economic status or on the basis of gender in Islam. In Pakistani societies, women are not treated equally; therefore, they have to struggle and to organize campaigns to get their basic rights.

Analysis show that the feminist activists seek to aware women and the marginalized communities to raise their voice for justice. They challenge those discourses that perpetuates power inequalities within societies. The movement not only comprises of woman but many men and transgender communities considers it as a suitable platform. However, mainstream media and social media play a significant role in changing the perspectives of the masses regarding any issue. Youtubers and small media channel journalists are making misuse of their power and exploiting the march for their own personal benefits. The lack of ethical media reporting and upholding professional journalism standards also negatively portrays and destroys the image of Aurat March movement hence effecting the mental wellbeing of the activists. Media outlets needs to amplify the voices and demands of the protestors rather than making them the targets of hatred and violence. Many posters that are being criticized and depicted as immoral are the true depiction of society. Hence, by displaying only the controversial placards and slogans, media channels in Pakistan have made the movement as debatable and suspicious in the minds of the masses. Because of which the focus of the viewers stuck to the misinterpreted discourses and not on the actual concerns that required the attention and reforms.

Moving on, it is stated that women in Pakistan are deprived of health facilities and education especially in the rural areas of the country because of men's supremacy. These women are not given

basic reproductive rights, even the power of making decisions for taking gap in birth that leads to high rate of maternal death in Pakistan. Girls are deprived of getting higher education. Gender based discrimination is clearly seen when it comes to education of boys and girls and this bias is the prime cause of injustice, ill treatment and abuse. In Pakistan, those women who are actively participating in raising awareness are considered as a threat to the religion and the cultural norms as the society needs less educated and less empowered women that can be controlled easily without showing any resistance. Feminist activists are labelled as indecent because the conservative individuals in Pakistani society seeks to demoralize women and their demands. There is the gender discrimination and the unequal distribution of power that make women susceptible to harassment and violence. The movement aims to challenge and demolish these patterns of privilege and try to eliminate marginalization, hence supporting inclusivity. Moreover, FCDA seeks to examine and eradicate the discrimination on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, race and other social categories.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research examined and analyzed the Aurat March Movement (2018-2023) in recognising and resolving the numerous concerns of gender inequality and discrimination in Pakistan. The analysis of Pakistani online feminist blogs, using Lazar's Model (2005, 2007) of FCDA, reveals that the movement has successfully highlighted numerous social, economic, and political challenges faced by women and marginalized communities. The social issues raised are workplace and public place harassment, abuse, child labour, reproductive rights of women, discrimination, domestic violence, cyber harassment, mental torture, victim blaming, honour killing, limiting their movement in public places and problems in maternity leave. Political issues were denying their right to decision making, unequal representation in government and assemblies while the economic problems were the keeping women dependent on the opposite gender to have an authority over them.

In addition to giving voice to underrepresented groups, the Aurat March promoted important discussions on gender roles, cultural norms, and the goal of gender equality. In spite of disagreements and miscommunications, the movement has brought different groups together around a shared goal, encouraging unity and collaboration. Moreover, the study has provided an extent to which the feminist

bloggers agree to the issues raised in Aurat March (2018-2023). Analysis reveals that the bloggers agree to the issues raised in the Aurat March movement because they have acknowledged the extensive and systemic nature of gender discrimination. They have used their blogs to analyse and question those power structures that reinforce gender bias in Pakistani societies. Hence, the analysis shows that the Aurat March Movement (2018-2023) seeks to address the problems faced by women rather than following any Western agenda or going against religion. The bloggers agree to the fact that the Aurat March movement has a negative side as well but the major aim is bringing equality and justice in Pakistani societies where obstacles are created for women in their way to attain progress and empowerment. As, the goal of bringing a positive social change cannot be achieved at once, it needs struggle and determination to end gender-based discrimination but the feminist activists are optimistic in their struggle to eradicate gender-based discrimination in Pakistan.

## REFERENCES

- Amir, M. A., & Mehmood, A. (2018). Critical Discourse Analysis of Tariq Ali's Novel "The Stone Woman": A Corpus Driven Study". *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(1), 94-106.
- Ali, F. (2006). *Feminist Movement and Legal Framework in Pakistan: Implications for Equal Employment Opportunity*. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/26227/>
- Ahmad, F. (2020) *Aurat March*. <https://itacec.org/Aurat-March>
- Ayub, M., Kazmi, A., & Raza, A. (2021). Gender and Power: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Elif Shafak's 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World. *Psychology and Education*, 58(5), 5770-5782.
- Dotani, R. (2023, March 21). *Women's Empowerment in Pakistan, a Road yet to Travel to an Equitable Society*. <https://awarepakistan.com/opinion/101613/womens-empowerment-in-pakistan-patriarchy/>

- Fatima,B (2020, March 12). Why Was Aurat March Inevitable.  
<http://blogs.dunyanews.tv/26500/>
- Isran, S., & Isran, M. A. (2012). Status of Women in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis. *JISR management and social sciences & economics*, 10(2), 85-99.
- Iqbal, T. (2020). Aurat March: Religion And Feminism In Pakistan.  
[https://www.etd.ceu.edu/2020/iqbal\\_tuba.pdf](https://www.etd.ceu.edu/2020/iqbal_tuba.pdf)
- Iqbal, B. (2020, April 17). Women, public spaces and Aurat March.  
<https://hamarainternet.org/women-public-spaces-and-aurat-march/>
- Imran, M., & Naeem, A. (2022). Language as a Powerful Tool for Women’s Rights in Pakistan: A CDA of Feministic Slogans. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1).
- Kugelman, M. (2012). *Social media in Pakistan: catalyst for communication, not change*. Oslo: Norwegian Peace building Resource Centre. Retrieved on February, 30, 2014.
- Khushbakht, S. M., & Sultana, M. (2020). The Women Activism in Pakistan: An Analysis of ‘Aurat March. *Al-Milal: Journal of Religion and Thought*, 2(2), 50-69.
- Khan, Hadia. (2019). A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Qaisra Shahraz’s The Holy Woman in the Backdrop of Subalternity. *International Journal of English Linguistics*. 9. 249. 10.5539/ijel.v9n5p249
- Khan, Z. (2019, March 30). Spike in Online Harassment Against Women Post Aurat March.  
<https://hamarainternet.org/spike-in-online-harassment-against-women-post-aurat-march/>
- Lather,P. (1986). Lather, Patti, “Research as Praxis,” *Harvard Educational Review*,56



(August, 1986), 257-277.

Lazar, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Feminist critical discourse analysis: Gender, power, and ideology in discourse*. Springer.

Lazar, M. M. (2007). *Feminist critical discourse analysis: Articulating a feminist discourse praxis*. *Critical discourse studies*, 4(2), 141-164.

Lazar, M. M. (2014). *Feminist critical discourse analysis. The handbook of language, gender, and sexuality*, 180-199.

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). *Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step by step guide for learning and teaching scholars*. *All Ireland Journal of higher education*, 9(3).

Malik, S., & Nazir, B. (2021). *Promotion of Women Emancipation in Pakistan*. *Research Mosaic*, 1(1), 12-26.

Mazhar, S. (2023, March 6). *Fighting For Women Rights: The Aurat March In Pakistan*. <https://thereporters.pk/fighting-for-womens-rights-the-aurat-march-in-pakistan/>

Noor, A. (2019, March 28). *Post- Aurat March Dilemma. Can Women Feel Safe?* <https://hamarainternet.org/post-aurat-march-dilemma-can-women-feel-safe/>

Nartey, M. (2021). *A feminist critical discourse analysis of Ghanaian feminist blogs*. *Feminist Media Studies*, 21(4), 657-672.

Pervez, S., & Iraqi, K. M. (2018). *Gender Discrimination—Prevailing State In Pakistan*. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 16(1), 153-170.

Rauf, R. (2021, April 26). Why We Need Aurat March. <http://blogs.dunyanews.tv/28036/>

Rafiq,N. (2021, March 15). The Aurat March is Amplifying Marginalized Voices.

<https://www.americanpakistan.org/blog-main-feature/aurat-march>

Raheel, W. (2021, March 31). Sexist Media Coverage of Aurat March Reaffirms Gender Discrimination In Journalism <http://blogs.dunyanews.tv/27930/>

Rehman,Z.(2017). Online feminist resistance in Pakistan.

<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/online-feminist-resistance-pakistan/docview/2075503095/se-2>

Rasool, S. (2021, MARCH 5). Aurat March Challenges Range from Mainstreamed Misogyny To State’s Disregard For Women Rights. <http://blogs.dunyanews.tv/27917/>

Shafiq, H. (2020, August, 8). Aurat March, 2019.

<https://medium.com/@wordsworththeblog/aurat-march-2019-62d0a543e34e>

Shah,B (2020, November, 2020) Aurat March 2020.

<https://thefeministani.wordpress.com/2019/11/28/aurat-march-2020/>

Sohail, S., Sanzar, B., & Mehboob, S. (2020). A critical study of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of changing Gender pre-defined expectation in Pakistani Movies. *UW Journal of Social Sciences* ,3(2),43-63.

Tauqeer, S. (2019). Feminism and the Practical vs Legal State of Women in Pakistan. *RSIL L. Rev.*,11.<https://rsilpak.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FEMINISM-AND-THE-PRACTICAL-VS-LEGAL-STATE-OF-WOMEN-IN-PAKISTAN.pdf>

Zaidi, S. (2017). "Let Him Who is without Sin Cast the First Stone:" A Feminist CDA of Gender Bias in Paradise Lost.