



# Contemporary Feminist Activism: Aurat March in Pakistan

Quratulain Shah

Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, London, UK

## Abstract

The gender disparities in Pakistan along with the lack of an appropriate channel to discuss women's issues and the state's negligence on policy reforms has led to independent women's activities recently. A new wave of feminist activism for women's rights is emerging as Aurat<sup>1</sup>March which is a socio-political street demonstration of women demanding their basic rights. This feminist activism is relatively independent from the existing work on women's issues due to its eminence and orientation. There have been women's protests in the history of Pakistan, however, a street demonstration across different cities, of this scale and nature, has never happened before. This indicates that feminism in Pakistan is transitioning towards a feminist uprising.

This paper particularly looks into the mass mobilization for Aurat March by looking at the dynamics, changes and trends in women's movements and feminist activism that paved the way to it. It particularly investigates and critically analyzes the emergence of contemporary feminist activism, social media feminism, and intergenerational collaboration for organizing large-scale street demonstrations. Furthermore, it attempts at answering some of the questions around the contributing factors involved in its popularity in terms of visibility, outreach, and the number of attendees. By asking questions around the extent of generational collaboration between feminist activists and existing women's organization, it investigates if there is a generational convergence which has contributed to the mass mobilization of the Aurat March and how is it influential in reshaping the feminist landscape in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Feminist Movements, Gender Equality, Feminism and Politics, South Asian Feminism, Fourthwave Feminism, Social Media and Feminism

**Themes:** Defining Women in a New Decade

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<sup>1</sup> Aurat, the Urdu word for a woman. 'Aurat March' (English: Women's March), is an annually held women's socio-political street protest organized across major cities of Pakistan.