

Case Study Aurat March

“I recently asked a roomful of students in their early 20s what was the defining historical feature of their lifetime. After the war on terrorism, the killing of Osama Bin Laden, Malala’s shooting and TikTok, many women said that Aurat March was what had most affected their lives,”

-[New York Times](#)

In 2018, a group of feminists in Pakistan set their sight on giving meaning to the day, which has been marked in the calendar since 1977 but was widely ignored in the nation: International Women’s Day. On March 8, the same year, the group of women came out of their households to speak up against the violence, suppression, and objectification against them that stripped them of their honour and rights.

The participants of the march huddled in several major cities including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar, under the organization of ‘Hum Auratein’, denouncing gender-based inequality and asking for protection of women’s rights.

A significant day for Pak women

For a long time and even to this day, women have been facing gender-based apartheid, depriving them of some of the basic rights. The demands of the Aurat March, which seemed to threaten Pakistani men include such innocuous asks – such as Right to City, Environmental Justice, Fair and ethical representation of Media, Political participation of women, transgender and non-binary people, Minority Rights, and an end to forced conversions.



#AURATMARCH DEMANDS

1. End sexual harassment and violence - in schools and homes, at work places and from state institutions.
2. A just economic system - free from exploitation and discrimination.
3. Ensure Reproductive Rights.
4. Environmental Justice.
5. Right to City.
6. Minority Rights and an End to Forced Conversions.
7. Political participation of women, transgender and non-binary people.
8. Fair and Ethical representation in the media.
9. Ensure Disability Rights.

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One can also easily affirm that none of these demands include monetary contentment but basic rights which shouldn't have been begged for, rather been lived by without the need for asking for it.

International Support, National Dissuasion

The movement resonated with millions of feminists globally, and in no time, it mushroomed into the mainstream media. A simple rally that was organized by common women in the name of celebrating the International Women's Day actually became a platform for many individuals to raise their voices against the cruelty, partiality, and suppression of their voices.

While the whole movement has become a head turner, and the international media also did a significant coverage on the entire movement and even gave it an optimistic portrayal globally; it did not go well with the conservative sectors of the society in Pakistan. It was clearly evident as the country's Prime Minister (Imran Khan) played it down by saying that it was a result of cultural differences.

<https://www.newsweekpakistan.com/imran-khan-blames-education-system-for-aurat-march-culture/>

The media back at home also showed a tint of negative sentiment towards the movement as could be seen from the headlines:

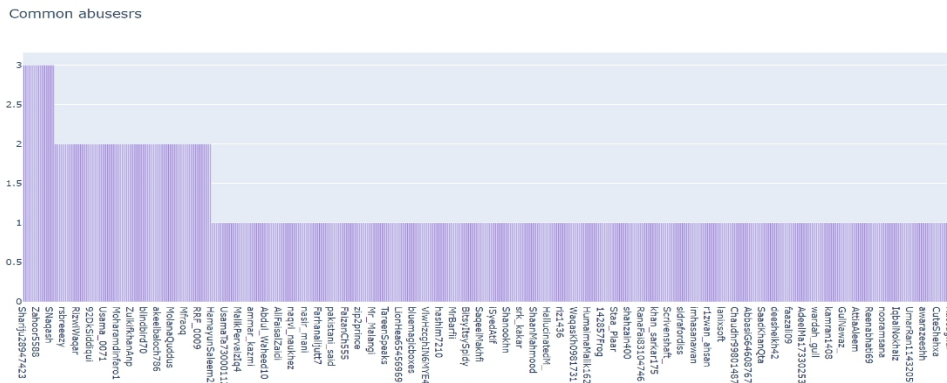
- Then Pineapple TV part (<https://pineapplepakistan.com/everything-that-can-go-wrong-at-aurat-march-2020/>)
- Tribune.pk (<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2285540/explainer-why-is-the-aurat-march-so-controversial>)

People of their home country spewed such level of hatred and showed vehemence of dissent towards the movement using every possible cuss word and hurling defamatory remarks, all of which were targeted on their bodies and re-framing their status in the society.



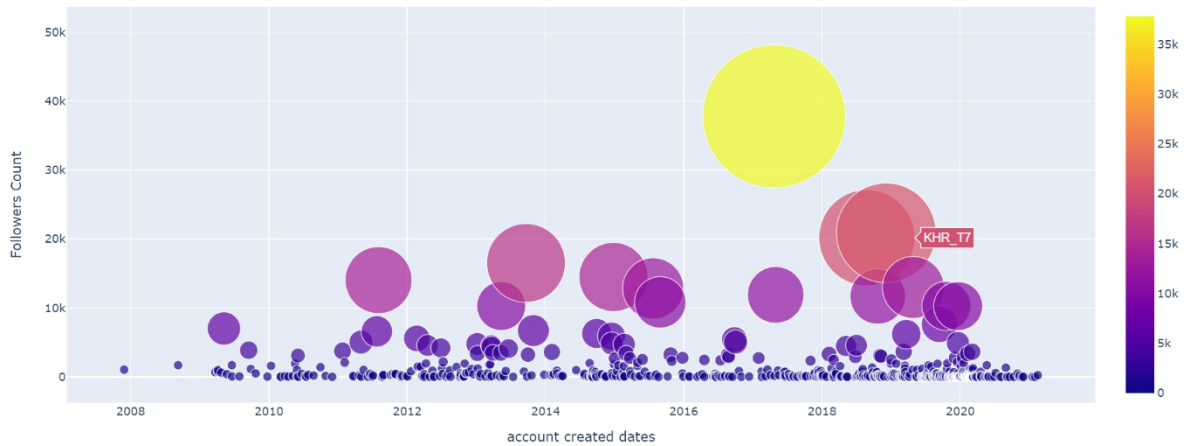


In the database sample that we selected, there were a total of 620 accounts who abused three verified profiles of Aurat March - @AuratMarch, @AuratMarchKHI & @AuratAzadiMarch. Out of those, 120 accounts firmly and repeatedly abused the above-mentioned accounts and the women participating in the movement.



Interactive graph: https://disinfolab.github.io/common_abusers.html

Abusing accounts information



Interactive graph:

https://disinfoLab.github.io/auratmarch_abusing_accounts_bubble_plot.html

The top abuser in this plot, the one with maximum followers (37.7K) is a PTI supporter. The irony is, it is an account in the name of a woman! And while a conservative/ social criticism could be understandable, a woman using vulgar cuss words against a Women's movement is beyond demoralizing and shameful.

m@hi PTI
@HumaimaMalik162

My pride my Army I am die-hard fan of @ImrankhanPTI and his ideology
Member #TeamErtughur & #IK Retweet are not endorsement
Homeland
Work place

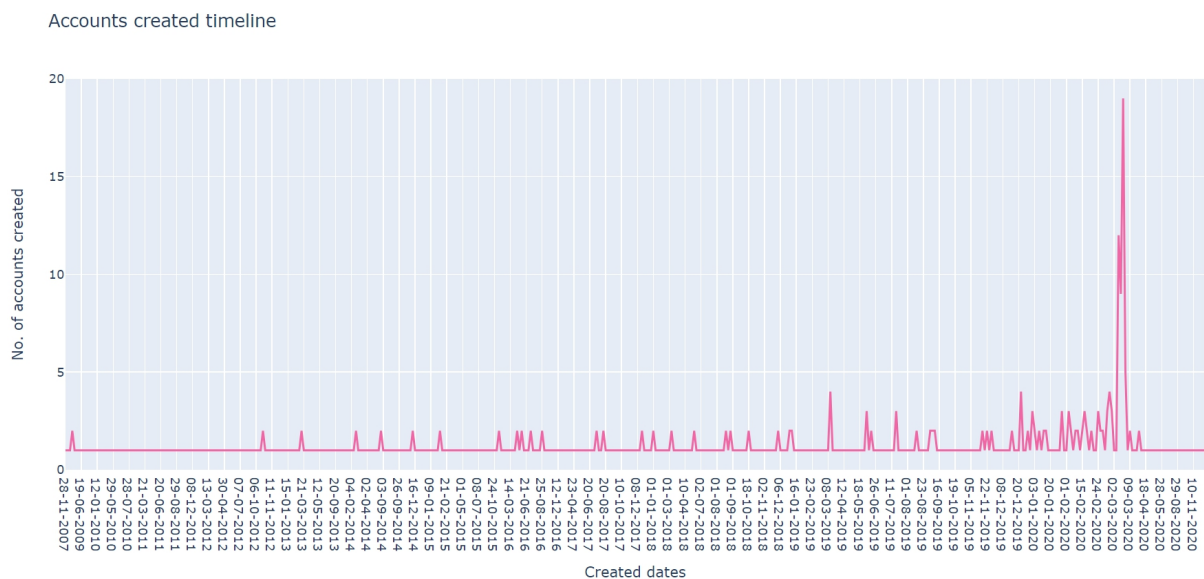
Toronto, Ontario lovepeace.com Born December 20
Joined April 2017

15.5K Following 37.7K Followers

m@hi PTI @HumaimaMalik162 · Mar 8, 2020
Replying to @AuratMarch

تو اگر بے کنجر خاندان سے رو اپنے گھر کا گٹر دنیا کو کیوں دکھا رہی ہے
تجھے جمنے والا بھی تو ایک مرد ہے پہلے اس کا گریبان پکڑ کے تجھ جیسی گٹر
نما اولاد کو جما کیوں ...
تو تو کچھ کہا کے مر جا ..
میرے معاشرے سے ایک گندی سوچ اور ایک گندی عورت ک کا خاتمہ ہو گا

- A total of 101 accounts from the data set who abused the women and the Movement, have followers in single digit, confirming our general observation across South Asia that these handles are created for the purpose of abusing alobne.
- Astonishingly, a total of 64 abusers' accounts were created just a week prior to Aurat March 2020 solely for the purpose of bashing the movement. Out of these 64 accounts, 42 accounts have not updated any other post aside for derogatory comments on the Aurat march and are dormant now.
- As expected, none of the accounts which showed dissent towards the movement by abusing the women community were verified, and barring few exceptions none was a major account or had revealed their true identity.



Interactive graph: https://disinfofab.github.io/auratmarch_accounts_created.html

A Revolutionary Movement, Not a Rival Culture

The women have become the embodiment of fearlessness against oppression thanks in part due to Aurat March in Pakistan. Gone are the days when women still can be labelled as subservient gender, instead they have found their own methods of their voices to be heard. All of this is easily reflected from huge global success in the course of time.

Only thing the movement requires is the acceptance by its own countrymen (and in many cases even by their country-women), who are yet to put their conservatism aside and consider women to the stature they belong to. Naturally, all of this should come from the governance of any nation who have the potential to bind the whole nation with positive ideologies.