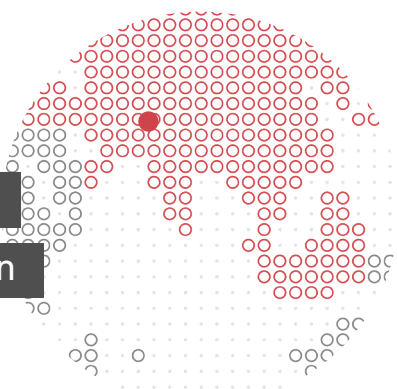




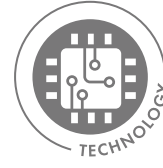
GENDERED  
DESIGN IN  
STEAM

Lahore,  
Pakistan



ID38

# Designing For Support Against Workplace Harassment For Low-Income Women in Pakistan



The project aims to understand the potential of technology to provide women in Pakistan equitable access to employment opportunities and safe spaces for their narratives of workplace violence and harassment. The research team conducted a qualitative study of female factory workers in regions of Lahore and Faisalabad districts to understand their experiences of harassment and marginalization. Design methods were used to explore ways in which to support addressing their negative experience of harassment and abuse while allowing them to navigate patriarchal barriers to work.

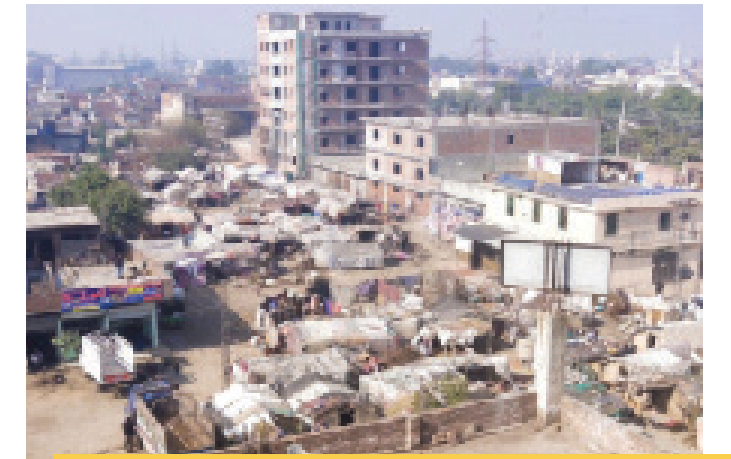


Image taken during team's qualitative data gathering in one of their target communities

## Team

### Maryam Mustafa

Principal Investigator  
PhD in Computer Science

### Hadia Majid

Co-principal Investigator  
PhD in Development Economics

## Institution

Lahore University of Managements  
Sciences

**“Technology has such great potential for connecting women, in context where their mobility in public spaces is very limited.”**

— Maryam Mustafa

## Outcomes

- The project contributed in creating interdisciplinary opportunities by establishing a new research cluster named GenTech: The Gender and Technology Research Cluster at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)
- This project has led to long-term collaborations with community organizations (Akhwat, HomeNet, and the Labour Education Foundation) and researchers across Pakistan and reduced the information asymmetry between researchers and NGOs in creating effective policy.
- A research paper has been accepted in various prestigious conferences, including the ICGSA gender conference in Africa.
- Findings from this project were also showcased and discussed in a journal article that has been accepted by Gender and Development for this year's November Issue on 'Women, Work, and the Digital Economy.'
- Finally, insights from the project were discussed during a workshop arranged by the Principal Investigators with representatives from women's and digital rights organizations.



Image taken during one of the interview session with participants

## Methods

- To explore women factory workers' experiences of harassment in their workplaces and on the commute to and from work, as well as their ideas surrounding digital technology use for addressing harassment, the team used qualitative data collection methods, i.e., semi-structured interviews and participatory design activities.
- The team conducted 69 interviews facilitated by the established not-for-profit community organizations (Akhwat, HomeNet, and the Labour Education Foundation) in Pakistan that work towards empowering low-income, working-class women using snowball sampling.
- The team conducted six participatory design workshops with a median of five women per workshop in five locations across the Lahore and Faisalabad districts using video, visual cues, and a card-based game.



Images of visual cues and game cards used in participatory design activities

## Lessons

- The most significant learning has been in understanding co-design with low-literate women in patriarchal restrictive contexts. This includes understanding and testing different visual mediums, starting from a simple video and images to a more restrictive card game and finally a more open game with modifiable components.
- Another important lesson learned on the importance of creating safe spaces for interviews with female participants, especially when discussing sensitive topics like harassment, and curating safe physical and emotional spaces where women can unpack their experiences in a supportive way.

Learn more



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