

Centre for Human Rights



In November 2020, The Centre for Human Rights proudly participated in the global campaign of 16 Days of Activism for the second time.

This year, our focus was on how to empower the Pakistani citizen to take meaningful action towards ending harassment and violence against women in their daily lives through our Bystander Action Campaign.

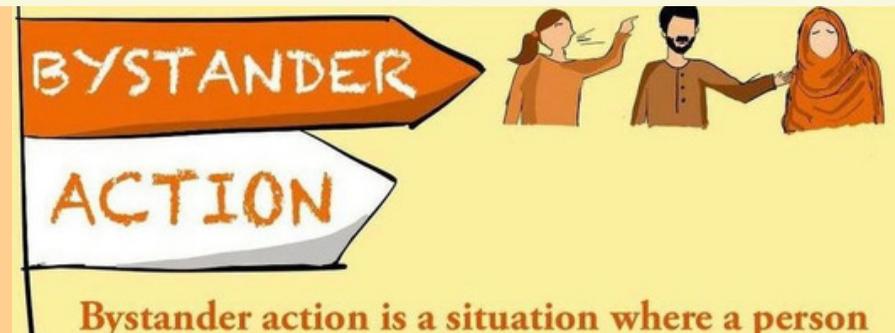
Moreover, taking two trends forward from our 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2019, we continued to bust myths surrounding harassment and GBV and raised awareness among young men about issues that women face through our Myth vs. Reality and HeForShe campaigns respectively.

BYSTANDER ACTION CAMPAIGN

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We began our 16 Days of Activism campaign this year by targeting an issue all too relatable for women not only in Pakistan, but across the globe; harassment in public spaces! At CFHR, we believe in the power of the community as a catalyst for social change. It is this belief which inspired our Bystander Action Campaign.

Through this campaign, our goal was to promote a culture of active bystanders who step into situations which can actually or potentially be dangerous for women. In the first five days of this year's 16 Days of Activism, we launched a social media campaign to increase awareness regarding who is a bystander, how they can identify where their action is needed, ways to be active bystanders and why bystander action matters in the eventual pursuit of ending violence and discrimination against women in all forms.

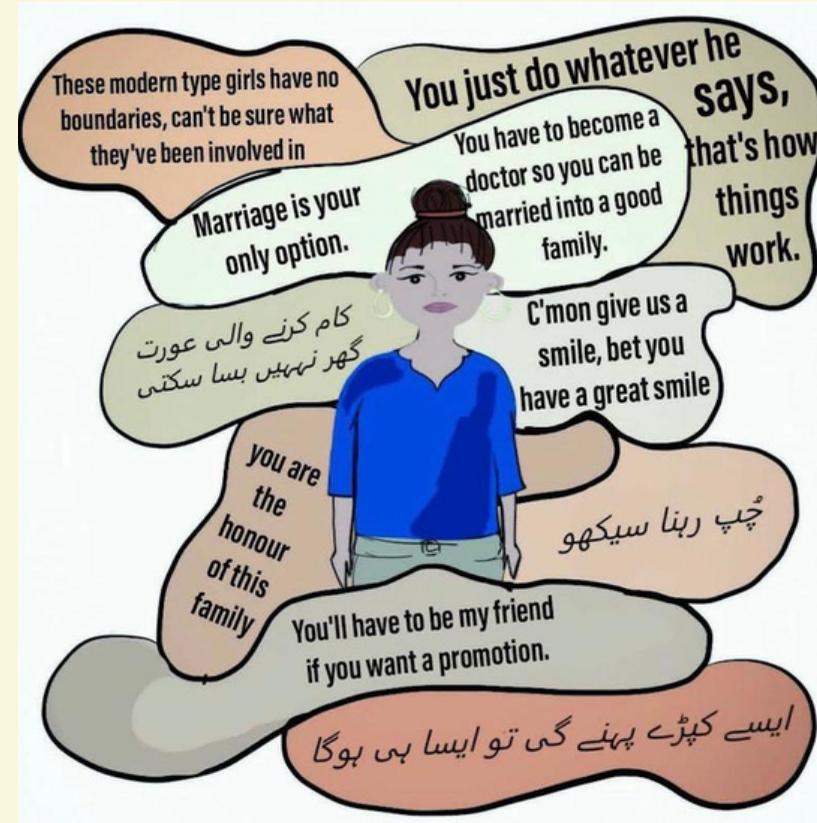
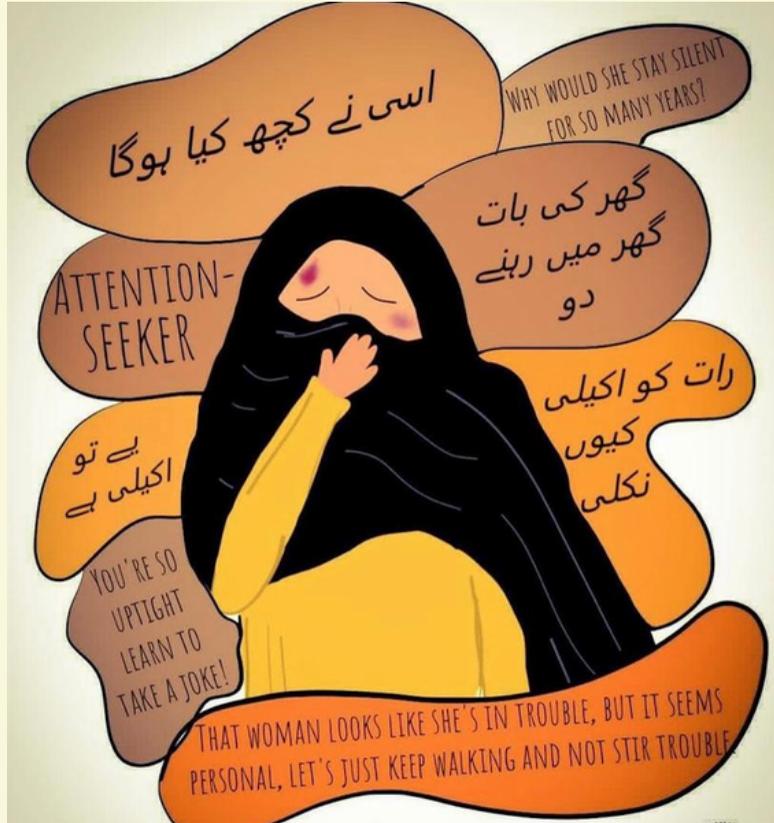


Bystander action is a situation where a person who is not directly involved steps in to change the outcome. A bystander can be a witness of sexual assault, violence, discrimination and all other forms of harassment against women.

Such bystanders should intervene and respond by calling it out and engaging others to do the same. Bystanders should take action to address attitudes, behaviours, norms, policies and structures that increase violence against women.

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Things we say, the way we behave, and our attitudes towards each other, can all be intrinsically sexist. Language and behaviours that victim-blame and victim-shame are prevalent in our culture. They can reinforce the vicious cycles of violence and discrimination in our community. The aim of highlighting this in our campaign was to underscore the need for active intervention of common citizens when they hear or witness such acts and attitudes towards women. By raising awareness, we focused on the need for an active bystander culture in Pakistan where every individual contributes towards creating a safe space for women whether in the public or private realms.

MYTH VS. REALITY CAMPAIGN

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We grow up listening to gender stereotypes and myths that we are conditioned to believe in. Such beliefs only get stronger as we grow. Continuing our 16 Days of Activism campaign, we also launched a #MythsVsReality series on social media where we debunked common myths surrounding gender-based violence, discrimination and harassment in Pakistan. The goal was to help our communities to unlearn the myths and break free from patriarchal ways of thinking by exposing them to the female-centric reality of the myths they grew up with.

MYTH

Calling someone out for abusive behaviour does not change the situation for the victim.

REALITY

Interventions can have both short-term and long-term effects. They can empower survivors, deter perpetrators and encourage a safe, protected community where everyone stands up for wrongs.

MYTH

A sexist joke or remark is harmless if it causes no physical danger or violence to a woman.

REALITY

Sexist language contributes to and reinforces the preexisting norms of gender bias, objectification, stereotyping and discrimination.

Sexist jokes also run the risk of desensitizing us towards discriminatory behaviour and normalizes it as well.

MYTH

What happens in the family should stay inside the family.

REALITY

Most cultures ensure domestic violence and/or abuse inflicted by family members is both silenced and concealed.

Speaking up about these issues empowers the victim and encourages other victims to break their silence too. This fosters the development of a new culture of sharing and calling out, eventually creating deterrence against such violence within the family setting

HEFORSHE CAMPAIGN

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Following our trend from 2019 to mobilise young men and educate them about, and sensitise them towards, women-specific issues, the Centre ended the 16 Days of Activism through the HeForShe Campaign. The students at our Human Rights Clinic held virtual events to inform young law students about harassment and violence against women that are prevalent in the Pakistani Society.

Since 2019, the Centre for Human Rights has encouraged 350 people in Pakistan to commit to the HeforShe cause.

