ICT for women in Pakistan

Designing a safe haven platform for women in rural Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality is a problem that many women in developing countries still face, one of these countries is Pakistan. The women in Pakistan face gender inequality in real life as well as digital gender inequality. Most times the women are harassed and bullied through digital platforms, which results in them not feeling safe in today’s digital world. This research aims to bring into context what gender inequalities they face in their daily lives, as well as digitally. Furthermore, the digital needs and wishes of these women have been analyses and prioritized, to eventually develop a digital safe haven platform. Women from different areas in Pakistan have expressed their interest in a digital safe haven platform, that is for women only.

Keywords: Pakistan, Gender inequality, women, digital safe haven platform, needs.

1. INTRODUCING GENDER INEQUALITY IN PAKISTAN

Many of women in least developed countries (LDC), also known as third world countries, rely on a male figure in their daily lives. Culture and religion in these societies are often intertwined, which results in a mostly man dominant society, where men are allowed to work outside of the house and take on any activity outside. The social norm for women in these societies is to mainly contribute to household chores, take care of the children and family members in the same household. Moreover, gender inequality is not only seen in households, but also outside home.

For instance, a woman who has been sexually molested or abused is often blamed for it instead of being seen as the victim of the abuse. In the aftermath this often results in less opportunities for her to become independent or to earn an honest living in Society. However, if her molester is a man, there are hardly any consequences for him in Society. The abuser still has the same opportunities and no one soul will question him, thus, aiding to the gender inequality1, installed in Society.

However, there are also positive trends towards more gender equality in Society. For example, in Pakistan different foundations and organizations, with the help of digitalization, are supporting minority gender groups in their fight for independence and equality.

"On March 8, Pakistani women across the country’s major cities celebrate International Women’s Day by gathering to protest the country’s patriarchal norms that make it difficult for women and marginalized communities to take up the same space as men."2

In my research, as an information engineer with roots in Pakistan, this topic is close to my heart. I have seen gender inequality first hand and I have even experienced it myself from a very young age in different areas of Pakistan. I have always wanted to contribute to a better life for women.

1.2 WOMEN IN NEED FOR HELP

Women in least developed countries (LDC) such as Pakistan, often do not have the resources to get a proper education or are held back from it by Society. The influence of extremist political parties, religion and the presence of the Taliban in Pakistan, makes it even harder for girls and women to get an education [Ahmed, 2012]. The lack of education for women in these LDC’s is one of the main reasons why women cannot find a

1 Social process by which people are treated differently and disadvantageously, under similar circumstances, on the basis of gender.
good job. The few women that do work outside the home often do not have an academic degree. They do so by performing small tailoring jobs or performing household chores in different houses [Faces Pakistan, 2020].

In rural areas of Pakistan, many women find it hard to express or ask for help from family members whenever they find themselves in a tough situation. There are, in Pakistan various organizations that provide humanitarian support for women. However, contacting them by phone or physically visiting them can be hard for women in need. A digital platform where women could apply for support does not yet exist. Providing one is exactly the purpose of this research project. My research project aims to bring into context the environment and situation these women find themselves in, and possibly empower them through ICT solutions.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research is inspired by a real world problem in a digital divide exists that specifically affects women. Based on my background, literature study and experience I have taken up the idea to propose a digital safe haven platform for women in Pakistan. However, to do this the needs assessment is necessary with local stakeholders and experts.

The ICT4D 3.0 framework fit the research project best, as the needs assessment is part of the framework. And the framework was developed with the purpose of addressing a set of specific concerns. ‘Namely, the situatedness of ICT systems and system developments requires the capability to cater for situations specific to developing regions and emerging countries [Bon et all, 2016]. This research project focuses on the first two components of the framework, particularly context analysis and needs assessment.

Two focus groups have been established beforehand, namely women living in rural areas of Pakistan and women living in the urban area in Pakistan. To make the scope of this research even more feasible, the rural area women from the city of Abbottabad and the urban area women from the city of Lahore will be the main focus.

Therefore, the research question is as follows:

Can we propose a communication platform that serves as a safe haven⁴ to help women in rural areas express themselves?

Other questions that aided in answering the main research question are:

- “Are women interested in a digital safe haven for women only?”
- “Do women in Pakistan really experience gender inequality with respect to current ICT’s?”

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⁴ A place where people find refuge, help or safety
1.4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF MY RESEARCH

Over the years, many efforts have been made to create a safe space from which women can get advice and help, when needed. Non-profit organisations, such as Bedari\(^5\) and the aurat foundation\(^6\), have created a way for women to gain awareness on equality and surviving abuse. However, these organizations have not managed to get women digitalized as a way to connect to the safe haven.

On the other hand, there is Free Press Unlimited\(^7\) that is founded in the Netherlands, and has managed to set up a network of female journalists in Pakistan that need advice or support, in the case that they face digital abuse or sexual threats online [Free Press Unlimited, z.d.]. These women come together in a WhatsApp group chat and also maintain a website called Hamara internet, ‘Our internet’ translated from the Urdu language. Likewise, my research aims to set a first step in establishing a digital safe haven for women in Pakistan, by doing a needs assessment and bringing the topic under the attention of many people.

2. RELATED LITERATURE

Critelli and Willet performed a case study in 2010 on women’s shelter in Pakistan, in which they researched gender discrimination in Pakistan and how a women’s shelter serves as a physical safe haven for women that face gender discrimination [Critelli & Willett, 2010]. There are four main non-profit organizations that are working to minimalize gender gaps by raising awareness and resources in Sub-Saharan Africa, namely Africare, Make Every Women count (MEWC), Asante Africa foundation and Men engage [Parikh, 2020].

Several case studies have been executed regarding gender studies in Pakistan, that show the inequalities that women in Pakistan face in contrast to the men in Pakistan. Gender inequality is mostly studied in the field of education, career and household. In 2012 S. Ahmad conducted a case study on girl’s education in Swat, Pakistan, which is controlled partially by the Taliban. His research concluded that the Taliban discriminated against girl’s education by using religion as their means, while there is no such command in the religion of Islam [Ahmed, 2012].

Ur Rehman et al (2018) researched if there was a connection to poverty in the household with the inequality in education in Pakistan. The research consisted of a case study in Multan, Pakistan. Their research suggested that inequality towards women in pursuing an education results in more poverty households. While they also suggested that women could be empowered and more career opportunities targeted to women in Pakistan, may result in less poverty ridden households [Rahman et al, 2018].

In 2013 Bukhari and prof Dr. Ramzan performed a study in Pakistan to better understand the presence of gender discrimination, in Islamic perspective. The study further examines the possibility of a relationship between gender roles that are practiced and described in the Islamic religion. Also the reasons for discrimination in Pakistan is explored in the paper [Bukhari, 2013].

Many scholars and researchers have conducted research throughout Pakistan on gender inequalities and the safety of women. However, none of them focused on putting the digital needs and safety of the women in Pakistan into context. This research project aims to do so by gathering information on women in Pakistan and having in-depth conversations on their needs.

\(^5\) https://bedari.org.pk/
\(^6\) https://www.af.org.pk/
3. RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND RESEARCH METHODS

To answer the research question, various methods were used. These methods are mentioned in the following paragraphs as well as the phase of the research they will be performed in. Phase A of the research was helpful to collect all necessary information, while Phase B was helpful in analysing the information that was collected and answering the research questions.

3.1 RESEARCH PHASE A: COLLECTING INFORMATION ON WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

Phase A within the research was intended to collect all necessary information on gender inequality and women in Pakistan. To form a better context of the situation the rural and urban area women in Pakistan find themselves in, a survey was set up. The survey was then published online through social media, as well as send to NGO’s with the intend that they had a reach in the rural areas, where most woman do not own a technical device. This way, the survey could reach both focus groups.

The survey ended with a question, that if the woman taking the survey, wanted to participate in the interview, she could leave either her email address or phone number. This way I could contact the women that were open to taking an interview. I send out an email or text message requesting for an interview and a date for the interview. The women that replied to me, were set up for an interview. Through one of them, I was able to set up an interview with a Pakistani male, which was helpful in understanding the mindset that the men carry. The interviews were conducted through either zoom or a WhatsApp call, and was recorded with the permission of the interviewee’s. To upkeep the privacy of the interviewee’s, only the microphone was on during the interviews, the camera function was turned off.

3.2 RESEARCH PHASE B: ANALYSE DATA AND REQUIREMENTS

The second phase in the research, phase b, put focus on analysing the information that was obtained during phase A. The results from the survey were analysed, and the interviews were transcribed. The interviews led to the collection of metadata, such as the date of the interviews, the location of the interviews, the duration of the interview. After that, the interviews were summarised, including the important details. Putting the transcription and the interview summaries next to each other, aided in the needs assessment per ICT4D 3.0. The needs were written down, after which they were put into their respective category, also the needs were prioritized using the Moscow method.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

To guarantee that the privacy of the participants was not exceeded, there were certain steps taken, such as:

- The survey was partially anonymous, the only link to the identity of the women was their email address or mobile phone number, which they could leave willingly.
- The interviews were anonymized.
- If the participant had the resources, the interview results were send to them to be confirmed.

In addition to privacy of the participants, the safety of these participants should be taken into consideration as well. The participants are from a country, that has some areas which are run or occupied by either extremist political groups or terrorist organisations. To maintain the safety of the
participants, the participants were allowed to wear either a niqab\(^8\) or a burqa\(^9\), so that the participants do not get recognized. If the participant felt safer with their video camera turned off, then only the voice of the interviewee was recorded. However, if at any point, the participant does not feel safe, the participant can withdraw their participation in the research.

The anonymization of the data will aid in maintaining the safety of the participants, as the results will not aid in tracking down the participant.

\(^8\) A piece of clothing that covers the face, only leaving the eyes uncovered. Also known as a veil.

\(^9\) A piece of clothing that covers the whole head and body, with a hole for the eyes, worn by some Muslim women.
4. OUTCOMES OF THE SURVEY

The first method of data collection used for this research, is the use of an online survey. The survey had been set up in google forms (see appendix A), an online application that allows users to create up and send out surveys to potential participants. If the women were willing to share some more information their names, email addresses and mobile phone numbers were collected. The survey that was created for this research (see appendix A) was distributed through different media. The media outlets were owned by myself, family, friends, and non-profit organisations. The media outlets used were Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Telegram, and WhatsApp. The survey was distributed at the end of February, however at the end of March there were only 28 replies to the survey in total. Thus, making the results not very representative for a large population. The results are summarised as follows.

- The women that took part in the survey were between 17 and 34 years old.
- 8 out of 28 women that took part in the survey live in Abbottabad.
- 16 out of 28 women that took part in the survey live in Lahore.
- 4 out of 28 women live in other cities.
- 96.4% of the women that took part have completed some form of education. For the exact numbers consult figure 1.1.

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

![Figure 1.1](image)

- 100% of the women that took part own their own technical device such as a smart phone, laptop, tablet or computer.
- 14.3% of the women share their technical device such as a smart phone, laptop, tablet or computer.
- 100% of the women that took part use social media platforms in their daily life. For the exact numbers per platform, consult figure 1.2.

11. Which of these social media applications do you use?

![Figure 1.2](image)
• 39.3% of the woman that took part were certain their data was not safe online, whereas 50% had doubts. Only 10.7% thought their data is safe online.

• 60.7% of the woman that took part feared their own safety when making online contributions. For exact numbers consult figure 1.3.

13. Do you fear for your safety, when making online contributions?
28 antwoorden

![Figure 1.3](image)

• 75% of the woman that took part find that woman face threats to their safety when making online contributions online in Pakistan.

• 100% of the woman have experienced some sort of harassment or bullying online from the opposite gender. For exact numbers consult figure 1.4.

15. Have you ever experienced any of the following?
28 antwoorden

![Figure 1.4](image)

• 78.6% of the woman that took part is interested in an all-women’s platform.

• 64.4% of the woman that took part would post pictures, whereas 503.6% would post video’s. 60.7% would post chat messages and 10.7% would post other things.

What we can make up from the results of the survey is that the majority of the woman who participated are interested in an all-women’s platform. The majority of woman is harassed or bullied online. Also, something noticeable is that the woman that participated in the survey are all educated and that more than half of the participants lives in the big city.
5. SUMMARIZING THE INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

This chapter will give a short summary of each interview. There are a total of 9 interviews, that were conducted for this project. Each summary will give the gender, the age, the city they live in, as well as information on needs and wishes regarding the digital safe haven platform for woman. The interviews were conducted through Zoom and WhatsApp call and were recorded for future use. The interviews were done in both English and Urdu, and later on transcribed and translated.

The transcription of each interview can be found in Appendix B - I. The transcriptions have a speaker label that represents if the speaker is a male of female and a number for the order they were interviewed at. Miss represents a Pakistani female participant, while Mr represents a Pakistani male participant. The transcriptions also have a timestamp whenever the speaker in the recording switches.

Interview 1: miss.i1 and miss.i2

The interviewee’s are both 24 years old woman that live in Lahore, Pakistan. Miss.i1 has a bachelor’s degree in law and miss.i2 has completed her BSA. Both of them have completed their studies from the University of London. They mentioned some of their concerns regarding social media and online contributions of male users to the harassment of woman in Pakistan. One of the main concerns that was mentioned, was the fact that male users from within and outside of their families bully them online or even use their online content to blackmail them. The two woman showed interest in a digital safe haven platform and would be keen to use the platform once it’s build. The main requirement the two woman had, was that the platform should empower woman and that woman in Pakistan should be able to express themselves safely in any way that they want.

Interview 2: miss.i3

Miss.i3 is a 29 year old woman living in Lahore. She has obtained a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in computer sciences, and has since been working full time as a software engineer. She has six years of experience in the field of IT. She own her own technical devices such as a laptop and mobile phone, however her sisters do share a laptop. Miss.i3 thought the idea of an all-women’s platform was great, as this will give woman in Pakistan some privacy to post their content and gain support from other woman. She has already joined an all woman’s Facebook page, in which she and other woman share their life stories and support each other. The main requirements that came through from this interview is that a NADRA ID registration would come in handy, but only when signing up. Meaning that it will be unnecessary and not user friendly if the users have to log in every time with their NADRA ID. Another requirement is the platform should offer audio or video explanations for the help feature. Also, the platform should be provided in different main languages that are spoken in Pakistan.

Interview 3: miss.i4

Miss.i4 is a 33 year old woman who lives in Karachi, Pakistan. She has done her bachelor’s degree and works as a pharmacist and also does some freelancing work in e-commerce. She owns her own technical devices and does not have to share with anyone else, which she has never seen happening. She has social media accounts

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10 National Identity Card (NIC) is issued to the citizens of Pakistan. It is a blend of state-of-the-art technology and well-defined business rules to guarantee its authenticity and validity. The unique 13 digit identification number is recognized all over the country. It is the first requirement of individuals as it is mandatory to obtain documents like license, NTN, bank account, passport, cellular connection etc. Every citizen of Pakistan, 18 years and above, is eligible for NIC. [https://www.nadra.gov.pk/identity/identity-cnic/]
but doesn’t use them often. She mentioned that she does not experience any kind of fear when making online contributions, as she is from a well-educated family. However, she did mention that experiencing fear could be the case for rural area woman when they make online contributions. She hasn’t heard of rural area woman using social media, like they use it in the big city. If the rural area woman uses social media, such as Facebook, then according to miss.i4, it is to stay in touch with family members or friends. Miss.i4 would be interested in an all-woman’s platform, only if the platform has some meaning behind it. She would not join the platform for fun purposes, but for educational or supportive purposes for woman. One of the requirements that she mentioned is that the platform should have a chat option, and it would be nice to have a normal chat or live chat. Something miss.i4 mentioned is that she does not want the account on the platform to be connected to the NADRA ID in Pakistan, as most of the things digital things they use in their life is already connected to the NADRA ID. Also, she would like the platform to have a feature which allows woman on the platform to report suspicious activities.

**Interview 4: miss.i5**

Miss.i5 is a 20 year old female that is studying computer sciences and lives in Faisalabad, Pakistan. She owns her own laptop and mobile phone. Upon asking her she told me that there is a certain male dominance in Pakistan over woman. The rules that men apply to woman, with the excuse of maintaining their honour, do not apply to the men themselves. She mentioned how she has already been in a situation in which her having some fun online with friends, got mistaken for ruining the honour of the family. She said that this was a cultural thing, and not backed up with the religion in Pakistan, which most men use to back up their ‘honour’ argument. She mentioned that she would be interested in an all-woman’s platform. She mentioned three requirements that should be included in the platform. The first one being that the platform should include the most spoken languages in the platform from each area in Pakistan. So if the platform is launched in Khyber Pakhtun, then the Pashtun language should be included in the platform. The second requirement she mentioned, was that of the platform having a user-friendly user interface. Adding to this, miss.i5 said that the platform’s usability would increase when audio or visual aids in the different languages are added to the platform, since the platform is for the rural area as well. The third requirements, is actually a suggestion she made, which was that the platform should have a cloud based database. In her opinion this would decrease the risk of being hacked and sensitive data being stolen, as well as easy to maintain.

**Interview 5: miss.i6**

Miss.i6 is a 30 year old woman that lives in Lahore, Pakistan. She has followed an education till the 16th grade and has worked as a makeup artist after that. She has her own salon, whose clientele is mostly woman. She has her own mobile phone, but shares a laptop with her sister for personal use. Miss.i6 uses social media, of which she uses WhatsApp the most for contact with her clients. She is interested in a save have platform for woman. The requirements that miss.i6 mentioned were mostly related to woman being safe on the platform and being able to share their personal experiences. She would want the platform to be safe, meaning that no content on the platform should be able to be forwarded. She finds that woman will join the platform and the platform will be meaningful, if woman can share their personal experiences and stories on the platform to gain support and help. One thing miss.i6 mentioned was that the phone numbers in Pakistan are connected to their ID cards, which makes phone numbers easy to use for the registration of an account on the platform. Another benefit of using a phone number she mentioned was the fact that in smaller areas of Pakistan not all woman have a email id, but they do have a mobile phone number. She also mentioned that audio or video’s as a way to help woman use the platform in their native language, would be helpful and increase it’s usability. Miss.i6 also gave me insight on the fact that woman often find themselves in situations in which men want to be the dominating one. According to her men in Pakistan often use religion as an excuse to forbid woman from doing things, which is actually not justified at all. For example, the harassment woman face on a daily basis is Pakistan is not at all justified by the religion of Islam, the religion in fact states that woman should be respected at all costs.
Interview 6: mr.i1

Mr.i1 is a 24 year old male that lives in Abbottabad, Pakistan. He started off as a computer science student and switched to business IT. He lives in a household with both his parents, younger brother, older brother and his sister-in-law. Mr.i1 uses social media, but not that often. He told me that the household, mainly his brother, does not allow his sister-in-law to use social media. She is not allowed to make online contributions, neither is the mother, they do however have their own mobile phone. The reason given behind this, is that the brother does not like for the woman to be active on social media. Upon further questioning mr.i1 mentioned that he would allow his future-wife to have a social media account, but he would not want her to post personal content. He said that she will be allowed to post pictures with her husband or the family, but no pictures in which she will be seen alone. According to mr.i1 his future-wife would have to dress modestly if she posts content online and he would not allow her to be immature (in this case, what would be seen as normal content in the west, is seen as immature by mr.i1). Mr.i1 did however tell me that he would be okay with his future-wife using the platform, but that he would want to check her account once in a while and she cannot refuse that. He mentioned that using face ID as a way to log in on the account, would keep other males out of the platform. He further mentioned not to feel any kind of fear when he makes online contributions as a male, but has seen some online bullying of women in Pakistan.

Interview 7: miss.i7

Miss.i7 is a 34 year old woman that lives in Lahore, Pakistan. She had a master’s degree in Business and is currently pursuing a PhD. She has been married for 9 years and is a mother to two children, aged 6 and 2. It is expected that she takes care of the household and the children, while her husband does not help out. She mentioned that she started her PhD 9 years ago and has since been trying to pursue her PhD, despite the circumstances she faced. Miss.i7 mentioned that her in-laws did not wholeheartedly approve of the idea that she wanted to go outside of the house and pursue her PhD. They have since been creating issues in the matter, and since miss.i7 has two young children it has been harder to find time to complete her academic studies as she has no one to help her. Now that the children are at an age where they both sleep through the night, miss.i7 finds herself studying at night since it is the only time that she gets to herself. She further mentioned that she has seen different female friends of hers and other female PhD candidates quit their academic studies, due to pressure or duties from their in-laws. Pakistani society member often use Islam as an excuse to stop women from going outside of the house to work or educate themselves. While miss.i7 explained that education is seen as an important part for women from an Islamic point of view. She further explained that some of the most highest ranked humans in Islam are actually women, and that women have more rights than men in this religion. However, this is often misinterpreted and used as a way to repress women.

Miss.i7 expressed her fear of posting online, as pictures or videos can be edited and a woman can be bullied till even death. She likes the idea of an all-women’s platform and would be interested in using such a platform as this would eliminate most of the fear of posting online. She was very enthusiastic about the idea of other women sharing their experiences and asking for advice, while at the same time she can also get advice and support from other women. She would like to see some educational content, but would also enjoy content on health and lifestyle. Also adding content on the platform on women’s right in Pakistan and in the Islamic law that is also followed in the country, was suggested to be more interesting than cooking videos. However, miss.i7 mentioned that women in tribal areas of Pakistan would be hesitant to share their personal experiences on the platform, because if a male member from the tribe would see it, then they can even take the women’s life.

Interview 8: miss.i8

Miss.i8 is a 22 year old computer sciences student that lives in Lahore, Pakistan. She owns her own mobile phone, but shares her laptop which she also uses for her studies. She mentioned that students in Pakistan have
to take their technical devices such as a laptop and mobile phone to their universities for studies, this includes both male and female students. She uses social media accounts, but only for professional use. For example, she uses LinkedIn to search for a job. Miss.i8 did mention that it is very common in Pakistan for people to take your pictures of your social media account and misuse them by making fake accounts. She was interested in an all-woman’s platform, and said that a key requirement should be that the platform combats hacking of female accounts and profile pictures. She further mentioned that connecting the NADRA ID with the platform would be okay, and that there would be no governmental issues that would arise from it. Miss.i8 also mentioned that she would like to see a feature that will aid in grooming young women, in regard to online safety but also to get confident with themselves.

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS FOR THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

After conducting the in depth interviews with the participants, some things remained unclear. Such as who did the woman on the platform want to communicate with and do you want to make their own (education) content for the platform?

To get an answer to these questions, the questions were written down and send to the woman that participated in the interview. The questions were send by e-mail and by WhatsApp. The answers from these woman were send to me on WhatsApp, as this was more convenient for them.

The follow up questions consisted of 5 or 7 questions, depending on the amount of knowledge on ICT the woman were send 7 questions. The first question was if the woman use any WhatsApp groups, to which the most frequent answer was that the woman do use WhatsApp groups.

The second question asked was if they want the platform to be like Facebook, but then for women only. Most of the women answered that they want the platform to be like Facebook for women only. There was one answer that stood out which was that of miss.i8, who said that she ‘likes Facebook as an informative material for men and women both. otherwise for other purpose use I am against social media for both genders’. Hinting that the platform should be more than just a means to get informative material through a social media medium.

The third question that the women were asked was whether they would like to create content themselves or that they would like a third party to create the (educational) content for the platform. To this question the women’s answers are divided. As they mentioned that they would like to create their own content, but would enjoy reading content from third parties as well.

The fourth question was if they had any fear that other women, a stranger to them, could harass them on the platform. Adding to the question they were asked if they would prefer to communicate within their own social circle or not. It was evident from their answers that they would like to communicate within their own circle. A reason given by miss.i3 was that she has seen women harass other women with abusive speech. While miss.i5 thinks that communication between friends and family is safer, than communicating with strangers on the platform.

The fifth question the women were asked was if they think that the use of the platform in Pakistan could stir up any problems. The answers that the women gave hint that there is a risk that the platform could start some controversies or problems in Pakistani society. Miss.i3 mentioned in her answer that she sees that ‘that most men in our society are not willing to accept it. They have shown concern that these type of platforms will harm society’. While miss.i5 and miss.i6 think that there will be no problems caused in society with the use of the platform.

The sixth question was only presented to the women with a background in IT. They were asked why an ‘in cloud’ would be safer to use for the platform. Miss.i8 mentioned that an ‘in cloud’ database gives the platform a better chance of growing, than a SQL database. An example that miss.i8 gave was ‘If the platform is launched in one or two cities, and decides to be launched in the whole county of Pakistan, then it will be easy to grow to database ‘in cloud’, rather than a SQL database’. Adding to the benefit of using an ‘in cloud’ database, miss.i5 found that a cloud database would be safer than an SQL database.
The last question that the women with an IT background were asked was regarding government surveillance and if they think that the government would monitor the platform. Miss.i8 mentioned that she thinks the government would monitor the platform, as problems in Pakistan are increasing by day. While on the other hand miss.i3 and miss.i5 mentioned that they do not think the government would be concerned about the platform, thus they will not monitor the platform.

These questions gave more insight in the wishes and requirements that the women have regarding the platform. The first being that they would like the platform to give a Facebook feel, that they can use to post content themselves, but also read or watch content from third parties. The women mentioned that they would prefer to communicate within their own circle, due to fear of harassment from other women and personal preference. From this a requirement can be extracted, which is that the platform should have a feature that allows communication within a women’s circle. This can be achieved by the common feature that most social media platform also use, which is that of sending friend requests to another user. The user can either accept or decline the friend request, which will give the women the right to choose who they communicate with and who sees their content.
6. NEEDS AND WISHES OF AN ALL-WOMEN’S PLATFORM FROM WOMAN IN PAKISTAN

The in-depth interviews and follow-up questions with Pakistani woman and one Pakistani man gave me insight into the daily gender inequality woman in Pakistan face. To give a better understanding of the situation faced by many woman in Pakistan a graph has been made, with the Pakistani woman in the middle and the problems they face on the outside.

Figure 4.1

The in depth interviews have brought up certain difficult situations that women in Pakistan face, the main problem being that of online harassment by male users and that of the mindset that the society in Pakistan carries with them.

The following requirements have been extracted after analysis of the in depth interviews and follow-up questions.
6.1 SERIOUS CONTENT

One thing that stood out from the interviews that I had with the woman in Pakistan, was the fact that some of them mentioned that they would want the platform to be meaningful. Meaningful in a way that the platform serves a purpose in society for woman. The platform should not only exist to entertain woman in Pakistan, but to provide them with a digital safe haven platform which serves as a support mechanism to these woman. When the women use this digital safe haven platform, it should not only be to share pictures and video’s for entertainment. The platform should be a medium where woman can take something from other woman’s stories and experiences. They should be able to share their personal experiences, without any fear, and as a result gain support from other woman that use the platform. Woman should be able to educate themselves on different matters, from content shared by other woman.

For example, a female IT specialist could share a video explaining different ways one can increase their online safety. Other woman can watch the video and implement the ideas given by the IT specialist. The same can be done in different fields, from IT to simple cooking video’s. Anything that has an educational addition to the platform would increase the chances of a woman educating herself on the platform and standing up for herself in different ways. A woman could simply get educated on the rights she has been given within her religion and within her countries laws, but she could also just educate herself on a matter and start to make a living from it.

The fact that the platform is for all woman in Pakistan, makes the platform more meaningful. Because not only will woman in the city profit from the content and support on the website, but also woman in rural areas of Pakistan will benefit from it. Woman is rural areas of Pakistan could use the platform to learn how to read or write, which would increase the literacy rate in Pakistan, but it would also help the woman understand their rights and give them a chance to do something for themselves. The woman in rural Pakistan are known to be quite good crafts that require delicate skills like sewing, knitting, pottery or waving baskets and hut. These woman could make a living out of these crafts for themselves by using the platform as a medium to showcase their goods. Woman that live in the city could even take this a step further if they decide to work together and expand the sales of the goods to the city.

The problem with the male dominant society in Pakistan, is the fact that not only men are guilty. There are a lot of woman, mostly from previous generations, that have upheld the cultural norms to give the men the upper hand in society. The platform could also fulfil its purpose of educating other woman from these previous generations. When these woman hear stories from other woman and what they face on a daily basis, the woman from the previous generations might change the way they think. This could be helpful if they have daughters, daughters-in-law and grandchildren, as they can break the chain of gender inequality in the household. It could also be helpful if they have sons, because with the experiences they hear from other woman, they could educate their sons on how to respect and treat woman. That there are boundaries that should not be crossed, if a woman says no then that means no.

Not only did woman express their interest in the online safe-haven platform, but men showed interest in the development of the platform. These men were shop-owners, labourers, teachers, fathers and brothers. The key to their interest was that they want a safe place for their daughters, sisters and students to communicate and talk to other woman, without the fear of the woman being bullied, or society looking at them differently. The main concern for father figures and brother figures was that if god forbid a woman would find herself in a situation in which her online post is being misused, misinterpreted or bullied then that would affect her future marriage prospects. Even when wanting to give their daughters the freedom, within the limits of their religion, the male figures have a fear for
society members. The idea of having a platform on which only women can participate was a great idea to them, as long as there would be security on no male trespassers.

Thus, making the platform meaningful for all women in different stages of their life and in different situations.

Another way that the platform adds meaning to the lives of these women, is by providing the woman with information from third parties, such as different woman-focused NGO’s. As mentioned in the follow-up questions by the woman, they would also enjoy and appreciate content that is created by a third party. The third party could be a NGO that has content on domestic abuse for example. The NGO can post content on what to do when you face domestic abuse, where you can get help, what legal help you can get and more. The same goes for other matters such as sexual assault. If a woman is sexually assaulted, but is scared to get physical help, then an NGO could offer the woman help through the platform. They could tell her what to do, what after-care she needs and if the woman wishes to legally act on the assault, the NGO can tell her where she can get legal help.

There are far more problems that women face and for which different NGO’s can offer help, other than domestic abuse and sexual assault. Some NGO’s can offer their skills to women that are being harassed online, face depression or are being forced into marriages for example.

The point is that women in Pakistan, should be able to get information, support and help through the platform. Be it from a third party, such as an NGO like the Bedari foundation, or from other women on the platform.
6.2 ACCESSIBILITY: LANGUAGE, SPEECH AND TEXT

The platform has to be accessible in different ways. The first being that the platform should be accessible for all woman, regardless of their educational backgrounds. Thus, meaning that the platform should allow all woman to use the platform without any language problems. The safe haven platform will be for all woman in Pakistan, which means that all woman have to be given access by providing different languages on the platform. The most important languages that the platform should launch in are Urdu and English. The reason for this is that Urdu is Pakistan’s national language since 1973 and is used in official matters, as well as English which is the second option for official matters and first in educational institutes [See appendix L: Article 251].

Other than these two languages, several other languages are used in Pakistan. And since the platform is for woman in rural areas, one should keep in mind that these woman most often do not speak the national language well, but instead are fluent in their native languages.

In 2013 Manan and David did research on literacy in Pakistan, for which they build a table with the most used languages in Pakistan. The languages that are presented in this table should be taken into account and the platform should be available in these languages. The fact that the platform will be available in these languages will increase usability and accessibility for woman across Pakistan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage of speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>44,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pashtun</td>
<td>15,42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>14,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraiki</td>
<td>10,53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>7,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochi</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4,66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The written language that is most common in Pakistan is the Persio-arabic script. The languages present in the table can all be written with the help of Persio-arabic script. Which means that the platform should be available in Persio-arabic script as well as the English scripture.

Another way to increase accessibility and usability of the platform is by providing a feature that reads out aloud the text on the platform. Since the literacy rate in Pakistan is not that high, one can assume that not all woman are able to read, especially in the rural area of Pakistan. Adding a feature that reads text out aloud, will help woman understand what the text on the platform says and will help them in using the platform in the way that it is intended. Also adding an extra visual feature in the help bar of the platform is important for the platform to be accessible to all woman. The woman that cannot read, can however understand the language when it’s spoken, thus helping them understand with audio and visual guidance how to use the platform. Not only is this an important feature for woman that cannot read or write, but also for woman that have a disability that makes it hard for them to read, hear, see or understand things.
An important feature of the platform should be that women should have access to help at any time when they need it. The platform should provide women with contact numbers of non-profit organisations that help women. There should also be a way to connect to the authorities if a woman needs any help or finds herself in a life threatening situation. The woman that use the platform should be able to access discrete female physicians for help, for example when they have been sexually assaulted. Also, giving the woman access to female therapists through the website, could eliminate the fear of getting help as it will be discrete and through the platform.

6.3 SECURITY OF THE PLATFORM

The digital safe haven platform is for women only, which means that no male is allowed to access the platform. To make sure that no male enters the platform, safety precautions need to be taken. The first one being that the accounts on the platform should be linked to a mobile phone number, as the mobile phone numbers in Pakistan are all connected to the digital ID in Pakistan, also known as a NADRA ID. This way a check can ensure that the person creating an account is indeed a woman. To add to this safety feature a 2 factor authentication could be implemented when a woman creates an account. She could be asked to upload a picture of herself, or a voice recording could be submitted, which would then be checked by the administrators. There is of course also the fact that not all women own a smart phone with a camera, in this case when creating an account, it can be suggested that the woman receives a call from an administrator to confirm her identity as a woman.

The safe haven platform should give women a feeling of safety when they use it. The woman should be able to post any type of content without fearing that there online contribution on the platform will become dangerous to them. The content that the women post should not leave the platform. The posts that these women make should not have the option to be shared outside the platform or within the platform. Also, there should be a feature that will deny any user to create a screenshot of the content of the page. For example, most banking applications on today’s smart phones do not allow users to take a screenshot in the application as a safety measure. The same feature could be duplicated and implemented in the platform, adding to the online safety of the women in Pakistan.

Implementing a cloud based database for the platform will add to the security of the platform as well as it’s maintainability.

The first benefit that a cloud based database bring to the table is the fact that there is no need to set up hardware, as the database is managed in cloud. This takes reduces the time that is needed to launch the platform, as time to set up the hardware of a database will be eliminated. Risks could be reduced by using the cloud database as a service, this way the focus can be put on the platform and its main purpose. Also a cloud database is more secure, than a traditional database as most in cloud databases have pre build-in security features.

Implementing a cloud database will give the woman in Pakistan one less thing to worry about when they are setting up the platform and maintaining it [Montgomery, 2021].

However, a concern that was raised during the in depth interviews was that a husbands would like to have the possibility of checking their wife’s account on her activity. This would raise the concern of security as the platform promises to be for female use only. When a man would like to take a look at the activity of his wife, then we put other woman at risk and would also break the trust that woman put into the platform when participating.
6.4 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN WOMEN

The woman that I spoke to during the in-depth interviews mentioned that they would like to talk to other woman through the platform. They would like to see a feature which allows them to place a comment under the post that another woman makes. You could compare it to the comment feature that already exists in many online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Reddit and other blogging websites. This way the woman want to communicate with each other by supporting each other, asking for advice, giving advice and just simply empower other woman.

The Pakistani woman also mentioned that they would enjoy a live chat feature on the platform. This feature will allow them to communicate with each other in real time. Allowing the woman on the platform to create a bond with each other. However, the live chat feature should only allow woman to talk to their own circle, meaning that both parties would have to give their consent before a live chat can be started. This will reduce the risk of woman cyber bullying other woman that they do not know.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude the research I would like to come back to the sub-research questions and answer them one by one. The first sub-research question was ‘Are women interested in a digital safe haven for women only?’ The answer to this question is yes, women are interested in a digital safe haven for women only. Throughout the research many women have spoken up and shared their opinion on the digital safe haven platform with me. Most women have shown interest in such a platform, so that they may feel safe when using an online communication platform. Besides the women that have shown interest, some Pakistani men have also shared their feelings on the platform. Their answers suggested that they do not oppose the build and use of a women’s only digital safe haven platform. However, their might be a security concern when it comes to a man in a Pakistani woman’s life, that wants to see her digital activities.

The second sub-research question was ‘Do women in Pakistan really experience gender inequality with respect to current ICT’s?’. The addition of a digital safe haven platform will bring security to many women in Pakistan. It will encourage them to voice their feelings, opinions, etc through the platform without any hesitation of being harassed or bullied for it. The digital safe haven platform will be a platform onto which no male will be allowed to enter, making the platform a safe place for women to place content without being sexually harassed. They can post their content online, without fear from what society will say or what men in society will do to them. The addition of the digital safe haven platform will give women a voice, but will also serve a support system for women throughout Pakistan.

The research showed that the woman in Pakistan do have certain needs and wishes that they would like to see back in the digital safe haven platform. Their needs were vocalized during the in-depth interviews with. These needs and wishes have been translated into user stories, as per the scrum method from the agile development methods used commonly for software and applications. The choice to convert the requirements into user stories was made so that the priority of the requirements could be shown explicitly. Also, converting the requirements into user stories, makes it easy to start a follow-up on this research, so that the digital safe haven platform can be build.
See figure 5.1 for the needs and wishes of the women in Pakistan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>user story</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want the digital safe haven platform to have a meaning, so that I have a purpose to use it.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to use a digital safe haven platform, so that I can communicate and post content within a safe environment.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to share educational content on the digital safe haven platform, so that other women may acquire skills or knowledge from it.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a woman in Pakistan, I want to post video's and photographs on the digital safe haven platform, so that I can showcase them to others on the platform.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a woman in Pakistan, I want to access to NGO's, so that I may find help when I need it.</td>
<td>(S)hould Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to post meaningless content, so that the platform is for entertainment only.</td>
<td>(M)just Not Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want the digital safe haven platform to be in my language, so that I may understand it.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to access information on different woman empowering laws, so that I may help myself.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to hear the text on the platform out loud, so that I may understand it as I cannot read.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want the platform to be available in persio-arabic scripture, so that I can understand and use it.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want a visualization on how to use the digital safe haven platform, so that I can use the platform.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to alert the authorities when needed, so me and other woman can be safe.</td>
<td>(S)hould Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want the digital safe haven platform to be in English or Urdu only, so that I can use it.</td>
<td>(M)just Not Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to chat with my friends through the digital safe haven platform, so that I can safely communicate with them.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to the option to comment underneath content of my friends on the digital safe haven platform, to advise them or support them.</td>
<td>(M)just Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want the option of a live chat on the platform, so that I may connect to other woman.</td>
<td>(S)hould Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a woman in Pakistan, I want to talk to strange woman through the platform, so that the chances of being bullied are increased.</td>
<td>(M)just Not Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a woman in Pakistan, I want the digital safe haven platform to be accessible to women only, so that no male can harass or bully me. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I want my account to be connected to my NADRA ID, so that I am sure that only females are using the platform. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I want to log in with my phone number, so that I may feel safe. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I want only my friends to see my account, so I feel secure. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I do not want my online content to be shared through the digital safe haven platform, so that I know my content is safe. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I do not want my online content to leave the digital safe haven platform, so that I know my content is not being misused. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I want my data secured on a cloud database, so that I know personal data is secured safely. (M)ust Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I do not want the option to take a screenshot within the digital safe haven platform, so that I know that the content is safe and not being misused. (S)hould Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I want an administrator to double check the identity of the safe haven platform users, so that I can be sure that no male is entering the platform. (S)hould Have

As a woman in Pakistan, I want my data to be easily accessible, so that others may access my personal data easily. (M)ust Not Have

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**Figure 5.1**

To answer the research question that started this

**Can we propose a communication platform that serves as a safe haven to help women in rural areas express themselves?**

Yes, we can propose a communication platform that serves as safe haven to help women in rural areas express themselves. We can even conclude that the communication platform will not only help women in rural areas, but will help women in all of Pakistan, no matter what area they live in. The communication platform will help both the educated and the uneducated women, the young and the old, the free and the ones captivated in a man dominant society, the ones that help others and the ones that are the victims of abuse.
8. FUTURE WORK

The future of the digital safe haven platform seems promising as plans to build the platform have already been made by the women that contributed to this research project. Miss.i8 herself asked to build the digital safe haven, along with other IT students in Pakistan. Both male and female students are enthusiastic to build the platform and make their contribution to society. The Motivation of these students is that they want the females in their lives and themselves to enjoy the possibilities that digitalization brings with it. As IT students they are very keen on helping others access and use their rights of freedom to browse the web and post content on any topic they want.

Personally, I think further research has to be conducted in Pakistan itself, by someone on the ground. The fact that I executed the research from afar, had some hurdles, such as not being able to talk to women living in rural areas of Pakistan. When someone in Pakistan takes it upon themselves to go deeper on this research, the access that they have being in Pakistan, will reveal many requirements and wishes from women in Pakistan. Only after this, can the digital safe haven platform be build.

It would be possible for a female IT student in Pakistan to take upon the continuation of this project, like miss.i8. The project could be divided into two phases, phase one being the research phase and phase two being the phase where she and the other IT students actually develop the platform.
APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your name? (if you do not wish to enter your name, please leave three stars ***)
2. What is your age?
3. Which city of Pakistan do you live in?
4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
5. Have you studied IT?
6. Do you own a technical device (such as a smart phone, tablet, laptop, computer)?
7. Do you share your technical device or is it for personal use only?
8. What kind of device do you use?
9. Do you have a data plan or do you use Wi-Fi to browse the internet?
10. Do you use public Wi-Fi?
11. Which of these social media applications do you use?
12. Do you think your data is safe online?
13. Do you fear for your safety, when making online contributions?
14. Do you think women in Pakistan face threats to their safety when making online contributions?
15. Have you ever experienced any of the following?
16. Would you be interested in an all-women’s online platform?
17. What would you post on an all-women’s online platform?
18. Would you be open to an interview regarding the online platform and how IT serves women in Pakistan?
19. Would you be interested in developing a digital safe haven platform for women in rural Pakistan?
20. If you answered with yes or maybe on the two questions above, please provide your email or phone number for further contact.
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW MISS.I1 AND MISS.I2

Interview-ICTForWomanInPakistan-22April2022-Recording-Transcript

Fri, 4/22 18:00PM • 11:36

SUMMARY KEYWORDS
women, ict, research, thesis, Pakistan, male, harassment, bullying, fear, safety, Islam, platform, NADRA ID, suspicious activity, Instagram, data.

SPEAKERS
Alina Saddiqui, Miss.i1, Miss.i2

[00:04] Alina : Hi guys
[00:06] Miss.i1: Hi
[00:06] Miss.i2: Hello

[00:07] Alina: So I think maybe English is fine, because each of you is qualified enough. So let me just introduce the project first. The project is actually a master’s project at the Vrije Universiteit or free University of Amsterdam. It’s for the masters information science and it’s related to IT. Therefore I’m doing my masters project and trying to get as much women as possible to participate in my research. The research is based in Pakistan, mostly Lahore and the FATA area so rural Pakistan. Yeah, maybe you can introduce yourself briefly, you don’t have to state your name, because the interview will be anonymized.

[00:59] Miss.i1: Okay
[00:59] Miss.i2: Okay, I have done my BSA from university of London, but I live in Lahore and I’ve always lived here.

[01:12] Alina: Okay, yeah

[01:14] Miss.i1: I have actually done my bachelors abroad in the UK, but before that I was living in Lahore going to school over here. So, most of my schooling was done here.

[01:26] Alina: Okay, great. So both of you have a bachelor’s degree right?

[01:30] Miss.i2: Yes
[01:32] Alina: Okay, and can you maybe tell me what your age is?

[01:37] Miss.i2: I am 24
[01:40] Miss.i1: I am 24 as well.

[01:43] Alina: Okay, and you are both currently living in Lahore right?

[01:46] Miss.i2: Yeah
[01:47] Miss.i1: Yes

[01:48] Alina: Perfect. So do you have any knowledge of IT studies at all?

[01:57] Miss.i1: Frankly, yes to an extent. Not like IT, I have studies ICT, communication and technology and that was pretty good. I did very well in that actually.

[02:09] Alina: Okay great, so can you maybe briefly tell me what you know?

[02:15] Miss.i1: No, itna nahi yaad (I can’t remember that much)

[02:22] Alina: Okay, no problem. So next question, okay so the platform I’m building is mainly for women only. Because from research we found out that data is not very secure in Pakistan and we have already seen some
cases, such as the famous Qandeel Baloch case. And, actually she got murdered by her family because of liberal posting online. So, do you fear for your own safety when you post online? Like any harassment from male audience or any reposting from male audience, any fear that your family might see something and do something?

[03:12] Miss.i1: Who’s going to go first?

Alina: Yeah so, let me repeat the question. Do you fear for your own safety when you make online contributions?

[03:25] Miss.i2: Yeah

[03:27] Alina: Yeah, so for example I was saying, we have a famous case in Pakistan of Qandeel Baloch who made liberal posts online and got unalived for it. You said you fear for your safety, what kind of fears do you have regarding your safety online?

[03:48] Miss.i2: Basically in Pakistan there are too many different kinds of people. And you can never trust any other guy especially guys. They go to different kind of lengths to hurt you in any way that is possible to them. And that is not safe for any girl or any young girl that has power of social media in her hands and everything. But it’s not, it’s just not safe, we cannot help it because it’s happening from generations and generations, and in Pakistan our society is very male dominant, so whatever you do a woman cannot stand in front of a man.

[04:37] Alina: Okay, yeah. So do you have.. have you ever experienced something of this kind yourself?

[04:44] Miss.i2: Yes, I have.

[04:47] Miss.i1: I have been cyber bullied before and those were people from my own family, like people that are your blood they are bullying my family and my mother for no reason, okay. Then they weren’t getting anything out of it. They were just enjoying the show and it’s frankly really sick to look at it, why people want to get entertained by something so filthy.

[05:11] Alina: And were those mainly male family members?

[05:13] Miss.i1: Yes, one male.

[05:17] Alina: Okay, so is there any connection to their bullying which they think is justified with the religion that is in Pakistan, because there is mainly an Islamic religion and do you see any connection, or do you feel very liberal in your religion and in practicing it?

[05:34] Miss.i2: No, we feel very liberal in our religion. Islam is a very liberal religion and there is nothing in our religion that supports bullying or being harassed or anything like that our religion says to protect woman at all cost, at any cost protect your woman. But that’s not the case here in Pakistan anymore.

[06:04] Alina: Okay, so the idea is to set up an online platform, you think of like Instagram, snapchat, Facebook but for only woman. So no male is allowed to access the platform. Would you be interested in using that kind of a platform?

[06:20] Miss.i2: Yeah, I will be.

[06:23] Miss.i1: I would as well. I think it’s a great idea.

[06:27] Alina: Yeah so if such a platform comes to be build, what kind of things would you post for yourself?

[06:36] Miss.i2: Women empowerment to enhance all your other gender equality and everything that is related to woman that can take them to the next step or other lengths to uplift other woman.

[06:55] Alina: Okay, so you would use blogpost for example? Or would you make video’s, like TikTok one minute videos.

[07:00] Miss.i1: Everything. In any way a woman can express herself openly.

[07:07] Miss.i2: Yeah

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Miss.i1: Without worrying about what people are going to say.

Alina: Okay, perfect. You have a NADRA ID in Pakistan, right?

Alina: The digital ID, would you like to log in with your NADRA ID so the government knows you have logged in as well. Or would you just make a personal account and report any suspicious activity regarding male content?

Miss.i2: I think, the idea of registering online by your ID card number is a better idea because that way you can keep a list and no one can get hurt. Because there will be a proper record in our books or in whatever social media’s books and that would keep a proper record of who would sign in and whatever the other person is doing. If someone is going to harm you, you can actually locate them.

Alina: Yeah okay

Miss.i1: That’s nice but I have to disagree with that, because reporting something like this with your personal information. You are going to be used as a witness as well and that could also result in problems at home for different woman who cannot open up to their families and be... even if they are trying to help someone else.

Alina: Yeah, so that a very good point actually. Your ID can of course be misused and a male user can make an account on behalf of your ID, on your NADRA ID. So there are different things, would you like a feature in the app you can report if you see some suspicious activity. For example if you think the account is actually handled by a male?

Miss.i2: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Alina: Yeah, so in the platform for example if you have a suspicion that the account that is posting is actually run by a male, would you like to report this in the app or how would you like to approach this if you were a woman using the app?

Miss.i2: I would report it.

Alina: And what kind of lengths would you go to, to report it? Would you just like want to report it like Instagram that has just one button that says report it. Or would you report it and write your full suspicion on it.

Miss.i2: No, I will write full document on it or I will report it properly and keep a check on it. Because if something is for woman, then woman should be there not men.

Alina: Yeah, let me just check. So those were basically my main questions. Do you have anything to add, like wishes or requirements that you think are important in an all-women’s platform?

Miss.i1: Instagram is not girly, we all use it.

Alina: Yeah so, if you would use it. Would it be attractive to use it if it was for example a full pink app?

Miss.i2: No, no, no moderate, moderate normal design. Normal colours. Pink is just symbolic, I think it’s nothing. I think even men can wear pink or like pink. There is no colour scheme that is just in our mindsets. You can use any colour.
[11:10] Alina: Perfect, so.. just a last question. If the platform is developed, would you be okay with trying it out, for the pilot version?


[11:24] Alina: Okay, great. I would like to thank you ladies for your time. I will stop the recording and wish you a very nice day.


SUMMARY KEYWORDS
women, ict, research, thesis, Pakistan, male, misuse, honour killing, fear, safety, platform, NADRA ID, suspicious activity, Instagram, multilingual

SPEAKERS
Alina Saddiqui, Miss.i3

[00:00] Alina: Hello. Good afternoon
[00:04] Miss.i3: Good afternoon, how are you Alina?
[00:08] Alina: I’m fine, thank you. How are you? [00:00:10]
[00:12] Miss.i3: I’m good thank you.
[00:13] Alina: So, uh, let me start by introducing the project a little bit.
[00:19] Miss.i3: Yeah sure.
[00:20] Alina: Uh, so this [00:00:20] is, uh, for my master’s thesis and, uh, the main goal of this project is to bring into context. How we can help woman in Pakistan through IT.
[00:36] Miss.i3: Okay.
[00:37] Alina: So the purpose of this research specifically is to bring into context as well what the situation is that these woman live in, so rural woman who have a bit more of a strict lifestyle, than of course the city girl. And what kind of wishes and requirements do they have? Um, If, for example, a digital safe heaven platform will be build. So can you maybe tell me something about yourself? And I would request not to state your name, uh, just for privacy reasons.
[01:12] Miss.i3: Sure, so I have been in the IT profession for the last six years and I’m a software engineer and I’ve been looking at projects. But like this is new for me too, to bring IT in the field for woman empowerment. So, it’s great that you are doing some research. And that’s it about me.
[01:34] Alina: Sorry?
[01:35] Miss.i3: I said, I said that’s it about me.
[01:38] Alina: Okay, yeah great. So, um, let me just see here. So what is your age?
[01:48] Miss.i3: I am 29
[01:50] Alina: All right, so 29. And you said you have a background in IT. can you maybe tell me what you studied?
[01:59] Miss.i3: Yeah sure, I have done my bachelor’s in computer science and also done my master’s in computer science and now I have a fulltime job and I have around six years of experience in the field of software engineering.
[02:13] Alina: Okay. So, um, of course you’re using your laptop I think or your phone, um, You have different, uh, technical devices, right?
[02:28] Miss.i3: Yes. I own a laptop in MacBook and a phone
[02:34] Alina: So, okay, um, are you aware or do you know anyone that has to share their technical device?
Miss.i3: Like, uh, I didn't get the question. I own actually. Everyone owns their personal mobile phones. My sisters share their own laptop, but my laptop is for professional use and I don't share with anyone.

Alina: okay, do you know any case or anyone that has to share, um, yeah, their laptop with their husband or family at home?

Miss.i3: Uh, no, I didn't see this kind of case anywhere.

Alina: Okay. Um, the next question is, uh, do you have any social media accounts and do you use these often?

Miss.i3: Yes, I have social media on like any platform, like Facebook, Instagram, snapchat. But I use one of two often, other than that I don't use much.

Alina: Okay, And, um, the social media accounts [00:03:50] that you use, um, do you fear, or are you concerned about your online safety on the platform?

Miss.i3: Yes. Obviously, I am concerned. This one time that my pictures was misused by some other account and I had to report it. So yeah, it's still sending the safety of your own personal information online, when you use these kind of platforms.

Alina: so, um, if you're open to share about it, um, the account that was misusing your picture, resharing it, did you know if it was a male account?

Miss.i3: I don't know. But, uh, it was, uh, um, my friend once told me that do you have another account and I said no. Then she said that this person is misusing your picture. And it was on WhatsApp the picture, so I don't know if it was him or her. So I just reported it to the WhatsApp and I stopped using my WhatsApp profile picture or Facebook profile picture publicly.

Alina: Okay. So, um, after you reported, um, the matter to WhatsApp, did they come back to you and how long did it take?

Miss.i3: No, there was no report from the WhatsApp, but um, I asked that lady they report it to me and asked if that person is still using my picture. And she said that the account is not on WhatsApp anymore. So I don't know about it.

Alina: Okay. Okay. Uh, and so, um, that's of course, by misusing your picture, there are also different cases in, [00:05:40] uh, of course we have a very famous number one case of Qandeel Baloch in Pakistan. She posted very liberal content for Pakistanis of course. In the west it isn’t seen as liberal. And she was actually unalived by her own brother , uh in the form of honour killing. So do you fear that any of these things can happen to you if you share or overshare something within your family, the society or just Pakistan itself?

Miss.i3: Yeah. The thing that she shared is considered unethical in every family here in Pakistan. But it depends on family to family, on how they react. rea how they give it that. Uh, [00:06:30] for example, my family is liberal, but not that different that they would accept this kind of thing. And if I god forbid, did something like that they will not honour kill me. But obviously they will make me sit and understand that it is not good. They will be doing some therapy work for me and not honour killing. It’s not in my family.

Alina: Okay. So, [00:07:00] um, Yeah. You said you have, of course some fears. Do your sisters, or do you know if your sisters are experiencing some of the same fears?[00:07:10]

Miss.i3: I can't say confidently. Yes, but my sister is, my little sister is professionally in digital marketing and in blogging. So she uses every app for content and to post it publicly. I think there is a less sign of fear to people that are in those fields like digital marketing and blogging, and like me I'm in IT so I have this fear more than her.

Alina: Okay. Um, so yeah, of course. The question is now, would you be interested in an all woman's platform?

Miss.i3: Sorry?,

Alina: would you be interested in an all woman's platform as well?

Miss.i3: Yeah, that's a great idea. It will be so much helpful in understanding where woman stand in Pakistan and in the field of IT and everything. That’s a great idea.
[08:18] Alina: Yeah. So, um, if there was an all woman’s platform, what old wounds platform, what kind of posts would you make? So for example, um, you have Instagram, you can share stories and photos, and then on Facebook you can also make mini blog posts.

[08:34] Miss.i3: Yeah. I can give you an example. There is a Facebook page that I have joined and like it’s all woman. No men is allowed. So the idea of being in that group is that every woman share their own personal trauma’s and stories, what they are going through and of course ask for suggestion and help. Obviously woman are getting help from other woman. And they share their life stories and trauma by listening to other people that share the same trauma. They get some kind of therapy and help is there. So, I think it’s just a part of Facebook group page but if there is woman’s platform, it will be great.

[09:23] Alina: Yeah. So, um, one of the ideas, uh, to log in on such a woman’s platform, uh, is by using your NADRA ID.

[09:33] Alina: So, um, online, uh, Pakistani ID, Uh, you can log in with that, in to the platform. Would you be okay with the government knowing that you have logged in, in, into an all woman’s platform or would you just make a separate account by using your email for example?

[09:51] Miss.i3: I think I am open with it, but I think can give a suggestion that if you have to log in, if you have to use your NADRA ID just for the sign up process and not on every log in that would be more comfortable for every woman, because not every person knows their NADRA ID by heart or by mind. So they have to pick their ID card and read it and then put the numbers in the log in. It will be hectic so I suggest that you put it down for sign up only.

[10:29] Alina: Okay. Yeah. [00:10:30] Great. So, um, yeah. So, uh, let me just come back to the NADRA ID. If when signing up the NADRA ID is used are there any restrictions from the government that you know about? Like would they keep an eye on the platform after that, because you have used your NADRA ID?

[10:54] Miss.i3: Um, I am not sure about it because I haven’t experienced such kind of.

[11:02] Alina: Okay, So, um, yeah, by using your NADRA ID, the idea is that only females can, uh, make an account. Um, but of course there are cases that an account can be misused.

[11:14] Alina: Uh, for example, a brother can use his sisters account or a husband can use his wife’s or daughter’s NADRA ID. So if you had to report such a suspicious activity within the platform. Um, how would you like to report it or would you just like to press a button and report it, or would you write your own suspicion?

[11:39] Miss.i3: Uh, I think that there should be a score check or something like, if it’s a husband or brother using someone’s account then you just email the platform that this kind of misusing is being done by the husband or brother.

[12:03] Alina: Yeah. So, um, not every woman has of course access to the platform. Um, we, of course, as a city girls do have more access to internet or a technical device, laptops, mobile phones. In rural areas this is most likely not the case. For example the FATA area in Pakistan, the tribal areas. Woman aren’t really literate in that area. So, as a software engineer, how would you tackle it? Would you suggest there is a translating function in the app as well.

[12:46] Miss.i3: Yes, I think it wouldn’t be bad to be multilingual and it will great. I can slack for my convenience because not many people use English on their daily life, even my father sometimes use Urdu in some apps. So I think will be better if it’s multilingual.

[13:10] Alina: Okay. So, um, if you would suggest, or if you know any, uh, from the top of your head, uh, what languages, Yeah. Would you see in the app? So you have Urdu English.

[13:26] Miss.i3: Um, we have Urdu English. And uh if it’s a worldwide platform then obviously the main language of every country. And if it’s for specific countries then I think I think it should be in their own local languages. For example, in Pakistan we use multiple languages, we have Urdu, Saraiki, Pashtun. So that’s it.

[13:53] Alina: Um, yeah. Do, do you have any other wishes or requirements that you see that need to be in the app?

[14:02] Miss.i3: No. I think that what you suggested all makes sense and I think that there should be a feature or a button or a form, that we can use to suggest what more extensions we would want in the platform.
[14:23] Alina: Okay. So, um, a few technical questions as a software engineer yourself. Uh, how would you suggest the app is built up from the backside? If you have any suggestions for that?

[14:39] Miss.i3: It all depends on. Um, what is your team? For example, if your team is comfortable with. I cannot possibly say a hundred percent, uh, that this platform is better or this platform is better. It all depends on your team what they are comfortable with.

[15:13] Alina: Okay. Yeah. Um, so yeah. Do you have any other, uh, Suggestions for the app or any other wishes? Um, like for example, um, it’s an all woman’s platform. So would you like it to be all pink, for example, um, or neutral colours? Uh, would you like, uh, of course it has to be easy to use as you have a rural woman.

[15:43] Miss.i3: Yes. Um, no, it shouldn’t be like that much funky, pink type. And just introduce the major features by that time and if it’s more accessible you can also add themes. So every woman can add her own theme.

[16:05] Alina: And, um, for example, there, um, sometimes you don’t know what a button does or where you can do something.

[16:12] Alina: Uh, and of course, um, go to the help, uh, page. Uh, now the thing is with rural women, they cannot always read even their own native language. Uh, so, uh, would you say..

[16:29] Miss.i3: You can use video. In your app for help that how to use the app.

[16:38] Alina: Okay, great. Great. So, um, yeah, I think I have. Asked everything that I could, um, if you have any suggestions or wishes or you bump into something in the future, please contact me as well. You have my contact number. And I would like to thank you very much for your time.

[17:06] Miss.i3: Sure, all the best for your project.

[17:08] Alina: yes, thank you.
[00:51] Alina: Okay. And, uh, have you done any bachelor’s or master’s for this?

[00:55] Miss.i4: Yes it’s already a bachelor’s degree.

[00:58] Alina: Okay. Uh, so do you have any knowledge or interest, uh, in IT?

[01:06] Miss.i4: Yeah, I am doing freelancing in e-commerce so definitely I am into IT, you can say.

[00:14] Alina: Okay. And, um, so yeah. Do you have your own devices? Uh, for example, do you have your own mobile phone, own laptop, or do you share?

[01:23] Miss.i4: No, I have my own.

[01:28] Alina: And, uh, do you know anyone that shares their laptop or phone?

[01:32] Miss.i4: No, everyone have their own.

[01:34] Alina: Okay. And do you have any social media accounts?

[01:37] Miss.i4: Yeah.

[01:40] Alina: Yeah, which ones do you use?


[01:49] Alina: Okay. Great. And, um, do you use this often? Like how many times would you say you would log in approximately on a day?

[01:58] Miss.i4: You’re already logged in all day, but I check frequently. You can say. Whenever I’m free.

[02:02] Alina: Okay, so you have different kind of social media accounts. Do you have any fear for your own safety when you’re posting online? For example, um, that any other males would see something and misuse it or anyone in the family or society?

[02:23] Miss.i4: Uh, no, we are from an educated family and we don’t have any of these kind of issue, you can say.

[02:25] Alina: Okay. So, um, a few years back there was this case in Pakistan. That was very famous of Qandeel Baloch. Uh, she posted quite some liberal pictures and video’s online. And she got unavilived for it by her own brother in the name of honour killing. So, do you have any fear regarding that, or do you know anyone that that’s going to happen if they found their social media accounts.

[02:58] Miss.i4: Uh, no we are from an educated family and we don’t have any of these kind of issue, you can say.

[03:06] Alina: Okay, and.

[03:07] Miss.i4: It depends on the area and the culture you are living.

[03:12] Alina: Okay. And, um, is there any other, uh, case that you know of that has happened in Pakistan? Like the Qandeel Baloch. Honour killing because of social media?

[03:22] Miss.i4: Um, not because of social media, but there are a lot. We hear a lot of them on the news, frequently you can say.

[03:30] Alina: Okay, and are these honour killings mostly in big cities like Lahore, Karachi or Islamabad? Or more in the small rural country side?

[03:43] Miss.i4: They are more towards the rural area, where there is less education. There is less awareness you can say.

[03:51] Alina: So yeah. Uh, would you be interested to join an all woman’s platform?

[03:56] Miss.i4: Yeah, why not.

[03:58] Alina: And if you had an account on such a platform, what kind of things would you post, only pictures, only videos, a mix, blog posts?

[04:11] Miss.i4: I would prefer something which have some meaning or like beneficial posts. It can help others, not just pictures or you can say video’s. I am into the stuff that is beneficial, not things like selfies or video’s. I’m not into that kind of things.

[04:34] Alina: Okay. So would you say you would be more interested in blog posts? So for example, a post on how you can do something.
[04:42] Miss.i4: Yeah, so on how you can help others. We can discuss like woman issues on the blogs. But yeah.

[04:48] Alina: Okay, great. And, um, how would you like to interact with the woman? So if you have made a blog post on the platform, would you like them to leave voice notes on it? Would you like a chat underneath, a live chat?

[05:05] Miss.i4: Chat, definitely.

[05:07] Alina: Okay, a chat. And would you like a live chat underneath on the blog posts or would you like a chat where everyone can leave comments?

[05:13] Miss.i4: uh, live chat is also okay. And, uh, Otherwise is also okay.

[05:20] Alina: Okay. And, um, so when you have an account, of course you have to log in, uh, with an id and a password. Um, would you like. Would you prefer it to be connected to your, NADRA ID in Pakistan or would you just make a separate account like you do for Facebook with your email address?

[05:40] Miss.i4: Um, definitely without the NADRA ID.

[05:43] Alina: Okay and can I ask why?

[05:46] Miss.i4: uh, we cannot just connect everything with our id’s. you know we have a lot of personal information that is connected to our id’s, like our accounts or things like that. We cannot just leave the id everywhere. They can get the number, our mobile numbers are there, our account numbers, our id. So we cannot use for this preference.

[06:16] Alina: Yeah, so there is for example.. there could be of course some males on the platform, just going by as woman. So they make an account and pretend they are woman and go on the platform and browse. If you see such a suspicious account in what way would you like to report this?

[06:41] Miss.i4: I would just block them. Or definitely if there is a system, with the proof I will report and they can block.

[06:50] Alina: Okay, so you would like a report option at least?

[06:56] Miss.i4: Yeah, definitely because this happened a lot, like people pretend to be a woman.

[07:03] Alina: Yeah, okay, so yeah do you have any other features that you would like to see in such a platform? Can you tell me what would be attractive for you to use a woman’s platform only?

[07:21] Miss.i4: Okay, so for me the only reason I would join that it’s not just for see the post or can post on any account, it does not matter if a woman has posted or a boy has posted, as long as the content is funny. This is only woman a woman platform that it should have some meaning in it, something meaningful that woman can share their problems or discuss the issues or whatever. But there is not only for fun purposes, you know.

[07:53] Alina: Okay, yeah. So it really has to be meaningful.

[07:57] Miss.i4: Meaningful, yeah definitely. Otherwise I will just join it for the fun purpose. There are a lot of other video’s on Facebook you can see or on every social media account you can see. But if there is no purpose then there is no meaning for me to at least join.

[08:12] Alina: okay. And for example if Okay. And for example, if there is a case of someone in the rural area or just a city area, and they are telling you about a big problem, they have, and it’s actually in your eyes, a big emergency. they’re actually explaining a threat to their life to you. Would you like to have an option that you can for example, click on a button and then some, someone to help with it. so inform the authorities for example.

[08:43] Miss.i4: You know, if this is only related to Pakistan then I won’t take it seriously. A lot of people here do that for fun. You know, if they have like. First, if you want to add that kind of button then you have to create an awareness about that, that this is only for that purpose.

[09:05] Alina: Okay, So, uh, what you mean to say is, did they will just click on the button for fun?

[09:10] Miss.i4: Definitely. They are not aware and they are not sure that okay, this will only help. They would really help na, they would really test like it’s social media, it should be for fun or it will be for that. These kind of thing happen a lot on social media. We all know.

[09:31] Miss.i4: So first if you want to add that kind of a button into that, you first have to make awareness that this is only for this purpose and we are really going to help if you press this

[09:46] Alina: Okay. Yeah, yeah, good to hear. So, uh, another question I have for you is, um, If you joined the application, uh, would you like a written help area, or would you enjoy pictures with it or maybe a video recording? For example, we have women in Pakistan that are not literate at all, so they can’t read. Um, so would you like to see a mix or just video help is fine.

[10:18] Miss.i4: I think the mix would be better. Because it’s true that if you go to the rural area, the woman don't use that much kind of a social media stuff, you know, and it will take a lot of time for them to join this platform. First of all, to be very honest.


[10:39] Miss.i4: Because in the rural area, the girls, now they do use Facebook and all this stuff, but that is kind of to connect with others and the family members, or you can say the friends, college friends, school friends, but, uh, these kind of the things I haven't seen most of the girls will be part of. You know, there are a lot of other platforms, uh, not related to that, but there are a lot of other platforms which are related only towards the woman. It’s not like there is nothing like that, but still, I haven't seen much of the rural area girls interested into that.

[11:16] Alina: Okay, okay. Good to hear. So, uh, yeah, those were actually the main questions I had. Do you have anything to add? Any suggestions, any wishes, requirements, anything?

[11:29] Miss.i4: No, I just hope that if you are planning to have for Pakistan and for the rural area then it should be something meaningful that they can at least get some kind of education through this or awareness through it.

[11:42] Alina: Yeah. So would you suggest that maybe, that if they are getting education for example.

[11:50] Miss.i4: No, the education and awareness are both a little bit different and everyone want to get an education of a different background. The thing is it should have a mix content, like woman problems, something to learn, something in which they are interested as well or something related to cooking or home decoration. That will be very interesting.

[12:15] Alina: Okay, yeah. I get it. Very interesting to hear about it. So, if you don’t have anything to add to the conversation right now, then I will stop the recording?

SUMMARY KEYWORDS
women, Pakistan, misuse, picture, fear, threat, honour, Islam, features, language, platform, NADRA ID, Instagram, data.

SPEAKERS
Alina Saddiqui, Miss.i5

[00:00] Alina: Asalaam Alaikum
[00:03] Miss.i5: Walekum Salaam.
[00:06] Alina: how are you?
[00:08] Miss.i5: I’m fine thank you.
[00:10] Alina: Good, good. So would you prefer the interview to be held in English or in Urdu?
[00:15] Miss.i5: In Urdu.
[00:17] Alina: Okay, Perfect. So my first question is, how old are you?
[00:25] Miss.i5: I’m 20 years old.
[00:27] Alina: 20 years, okay. And where do you live in Pakistan?
[00:30] Miss.i5: Faislabad.
[00:32] Alina: And do you attend any school or university?
[00:37] Miss.i5: yes, I attend university.
[00:38] Alina: Okay, and what do you study at the university?
[00:40] Miss.i5: I’m doing my Bachelor’s in honours in computer sciences.
[00:42] Alina: Computer sciences, so that means that you have an interest in IT and you have quite the knowledge on IT?
[00:51] Miss.i5: Yes.
[00:53] Alina: Very good. And which technical devices do you use?
[01:00] Miss.i5: I have a laptop and a phone.
[01:06] Alina: Do you share your laptop or phone with anyone else?
[01:10] Miss.i5: No, These are for my personal use.
[01:15] Alina: Okay, do you have any social media accounts that you use?
[01:19] Miss.i5: Yes, I use Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and LinkedIn.
[01:24] Alina: Okay, and how often do you use these? How many times a day do you check your account?
[01:30] Miss.i5: Many times. I mean I check them many times a day but not for a long period at a time.
[01:45] Alina: Alright, And when you are using these social media accounts, do you have any fear regarding your online safety?
[02:02] Miss.i5: Yes, it occurs mostly that pictures are being misused in Pakistan.
[02:08] Alina: Okay, can you explain this to me?
Yes, People take your pictures from your account and misuse it by creating fake accounts with it, or they misuse it in another way. It is very common in Pakistan that your pictures are misused by creating fake accounts or that they are edited in an inappropriate manner. So this is the reason that not all girls are comfortable with sharing their pictures, even if it’s on a private account. We feel fearful all the time when we want to post something online.

Okay, so there is one scenario in which your pictures are being misused. But is there also a fear that your family members or society members might see a online post?

Yes it happens. It’s not fear, but more that they might misinterpret our chats or pictures. Because this has already happened to me. So I know this can happen. Even when you have some fun talk with your friends, you need to be careful. Because if a family member might see it, than they can get the wrong message from it.

So you’re telling me that family can misinterpret your online posts. Are these family members mostly female or male?

If I talk about my personal experience, then it has mostly been males. Females were involved as well, but mostly males. Because the males want to show that they care about us and our safety, but they do not understand that it’s just for fun. They want to fulfil the duty of a male or a brother towards you.

Yes, of course. It’s just like that.

Can you give me an example of this?

For example, like she is my sister and if anyone else will see her online posts, then it will give a bad image. They say that this isn’t something that happens in our Islam. That it’s a matter of their honour. They take it very seriously, however we as girls are only having some fun with our friends, for example by sending each other memes. They make it a issue of their honour.

So this issue of it not being allowed in Islam. Do you know if that’s true, or is it something cultural that has been created by them?

if it’s there, then in Islam the same rule applies to men as well. But they do not apply the rules to themselves, only to woman. Both men and woman should think of their honour, but in this case they only apply this to woman. To give an example, if a woman’s picture is misused by a male, then the blame will still go to the woman. They will say that it’s her mistake, because she uploaded the picture, and if she wouldn’t have uploaded it, then it wouldn’t be misused. But no one will say ask the male why he misused the picture of the woman. This is the scenario here.

There is a lot of male dominance? Meaning that men have more say in matters than woman in Pakistan?

The men have more to power than the woman here.

Okay. So the topic for my thesis is, if there is a possibility to create a online platform that is only accessible for woman, there will be no male allowed on the platform. So they can post pictures, video’s, blogs for example like Facebook or Instagram, but only for woman. If such a platform is created, would you be interested in joining the platform?

Yes, absolutely. It’s a great idea, because there will be a female community and you won’t feel a threat to your safety. So it’s good.

And if such a platform is build, and you want to create an account, what kind of things would you like to post? Would you post things for fun or would you like more of an education post?

Yes, everything will be posted. So if it’s like Facebook or Instagram then we can post things for fun, you can post anything randomly. But we won’t be stressed when posting things, as it’s a safe place. We can just use our freedom and post freely without fear.

And would you like to see some educational content on the platform as well?

Sure, if that can happen then that’s great. If woman can get the opportunity to do something remotely for herself through the platform, then that will be a great chance for woman. Because here, in
Pakistan, many women are not allowed to go out and work. And if they can work remotely from the platform and show her parents that it’s only woman on the platform. Then woman can fulfil their dream of working through that.

[08:28] Alina: So that they can be independent?

[08:29] Miss.i5: Yes.

[08:32] Alina: good, good. So you have a NADRA ID in Pakistan. When you want to create an account on the platform, would you like it to be linked to your NADRA ID, where the government can also see that you are using the platform. Or would you create an account by using your email address like Facebook or Instagram?

[08:59] Miss.i5: This is used a lot here. I would prefer it to be linked to my phone number or ID, because that’s easier to use.

[09:08] Alina: Okay. Of course, you are studying IT so you might know. But would you be okay with the government knowing that you are using a platform that is explicitly for woman?

[09:25] Miss.i5: Yeah, that’s a good point. I think they should know.

[09:30] Alina: You wouldn’t mind if the government knew about you using such a platform?

[09:37] Miss.i5: No, there is no problem at all.

[09:40] Alina: So since you are studying IT, you might have some ideas. But what kind of features would you like to see in an all-woman’s platform? What would be important for you to have in such a platform?

[09:54] Miss.i5: Like, what kind of features? Uploading, stories should be on there.

[09:58] Alina: And on the back side of the platform? You are studying computer sciences so maybe you know what should be on the back side of a platform. For example what kind of database would be right for such a platform, in Pakistan? Some data requirements in Pakistan?

[10:26] Miss.i5: Can you give an example?

[10:29] Alina: So would you like a cloud database for this, or something else?

[10:35] Miss.i5: Yes, cloud will be best for this.

[10:40] Alina: And why would cloud be the best for this?

[10:42] Miss.i5: Cloud will be easy and good for this.

[10:49] Alina: Okay, and can you maybe elaborate some more on why a cloud database would be best for such a platform?

[10:54] Miss.i5: Because cloud is best, because we know where the data is being stored and it can keep on adding data. There is less chance of someone hacking the database and stealing the data., that’s why.

[11:21] Alina: Okay, do you have any other features, that for example if you were to make the app yourself, what would you add on the platform?

[11:31] Miss.i5: The platform’s interface should be quite attractive, not dull at all, more like interesting. It should be attractive to the eyes, so that it attracts a lot of users. It should have the basic features that are in most apps, that is a must. So that users do not feel the need to use other apps anymore. So for example if the platform has a audio call option and no video call option, why would someone use it if they can use another app for it. It should have all things that we are already using from different apps.

[12:12] Alina: Yes, okay. The platform is not only being built for big cities, but also for small cities, so..

[12:22] Miss.i5: Then I think you should also consider the languages. There shouldn’t only be Urdu and English, They speak Punjabi in Punjab mostly, So Punjabi should be added in. And if we talk about smaller cities then it depends in which city you are launching the platform. You should include the language that is spoken in the smaller areas. Because overall in Pakistan Urdu is not used that often, people talk in their mother language, so majority uses, except for student, they use mother languages. So if someone is from Sindh they would use Sindhi, if someone is from Khyber Pashtun then they would use Pashtun or Hindko. And in Punjab they will use Punjabi. So these languages should be included, because in smaller areas not everyone speaks Urdu.

[13:20] Alina: Okay, and if we look at the more rural areas, for example Abbottabad or the FATA area, or Khyber Pashtun area, we know that not all woman are literate. They can only communicate through speech.
For example, if they want to use the platform, how would you facilitate their interaction on the platform? Would you use plain text, or would you use a video that explains the platform features in their language?

[13:53] Miss.i5: The preference would go to audio and video, because they can look at the text and not understand it. But they will understand for sure if they can see the video and hear the audio in their own language. If we are talking about their needs, then the audio and video would be better for them. If the video or audio can explain something in their language, then it would be easier for them to use.


[14:14] Miss.i5: Because language is something that if someone does not know how to read or write it, at least they can speak and listen to it and understand it. So for smaller areas, they can speak and listen in their languages, so they can understand it. And it would increase the use of the app in smaller areas with this feature.

[14:40] Alina: And of course, we discussed if you would prefer to create an account with your email or phone number. So anyone can make an account, what would you suggest we do to make sure that males cannot enter the platform?

[14:56] Miss.i5: Then it should be like this, the account should be linked to our NADRA ID. So that we do not have any doubt if it’s a male or female. Using the account. And if someone does not have a phone, then they do have their NADRA ID for sure which they can use to create an account. Because I don’t think that woman in smaller areas use Gmail as much, and not all woman have phones there, so using the NADRA ID is better for such small areas.

[15:49] Alina: So creating an account with your NADRA ID would be better to you?

[15:50] Miss.i5: Yes. It will be better.

[15:52] Alina: Okay, and another thing that happens in smaller areas, is that if you have an ID and you are a woman, then you are not allowed to use it. So my question to you is, can anyone access your online NADRA ID, or only yourself?

[16:15] Miss.i5: We could say that only we have access to it.

[16:19] Alina: Okay, okay. That’s good. So these were the questions I have regarding the platform. If you have any suggestion, wishes or requirements then please let me know. Or any further comments on the platform.

[16:38] Miss.i5: I have already told you what I think is best to tell you about the features, and the language barrier. So that’s also clear. And also about the NADRA ID. I don’t think there is a gap, it’s a complete plan.

[17:02] Alina: I have one last question. If the platform is build, you said that you would use the platform. From the top of your mind do you think your relatives, friends or college friends would use it as well?

[17:21] Miss.i5: Yes, I can personally tell this.

[17:25] Alina: Okay, good. So I’ll just stop the recording and then we can finish.
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW MISS.I6

Interview-ICTForWomanInPakistan-24May2022-Recording-Transcript

Tue 5/24 22:00PM • 16:49

SUMMARY KEYWORDS
women, Pakistan, business, social media, picture, fear, harassment, Language, safe, story, NADRA ID, Islam.

SPEAKERS
Alina Saddiqui, Miss.i6

[00:03] Alina: Asalaam Alaikum
[00:05] Miss.i6: Walekum Asalaam
[00:07] Alina: How are you?
[00:08] Miss.i6: I’m fine, how are you?
[00:10] Alina: I’m fine as well. Let me just get the questions. So can you start off by giving me an introduction of yourself. For example what’s your age and where do you live?
[00:30] Miss.i6: Yes, I’m 30 years old and I live in Lahore, Pakistan. And my profession is that of a makeup artist.
[00:40] Alina: Okay, a makeup artist. So do you work for yourself or do you work for a company?
[00:48] Miss.i6: Yes, I have my own salon. I do my own business.
[00:52] Alina: Okay, is the salon for only woman or is it mixed for both men and woman?
[00:56] Miss.i6: No, it’s only for ladies work. There are no men.
[01:03] Alina: Okay, and what’s your highest level of education? Till what year did you study?
[01:11] Miss.i6: I have done my graduation.
[01:12] Alina: In what did you graduate?
[01:16] Miss.i6: Graduation, what do you mean with that?
[01:25] Alina: so with that I meant that for example here in Europe you have high school, college, bachelor..
[01:32] Miss.i6: In Pakistan graduation is till 16th standard. This education is called graduation.
[01:41] Alina: Okay. That’s good. Do you have any knowledge on IT?
[01:50] Miss.i6: Not really, but somehow I know a little bit about it.
[01:54] Alina: Are you using your mobile phone right now?
[01:59] Miss.i6: Yes, I am using my mobile phone.
[02:00] Alina: Okay, do you have a laptop, iPad or tablet of your own?
[02:04] Miss.i6: Yes, I have a laptop.
[02:06] Alina: do you share the laptop at home or is it for your own personal use?
[02:10] Miss.i6: I share it with my sister.
[02:13] Alina: You share with your sister, okay. And is that for personal use or do you share for business purposes?
[02:20] Miss.i6: No, it’s for personal use. I do not use a laptop for business.
[02:25] Alina: Okay, do you have any social media accounts that you use?
[02:30] Miss.i6: Yes, I use Facebook, Instagram. I also use Snapchat. I have these social media accounts.

[02:39] Alina: Do you also use WhatsApp?


[02:43] Alina: How many times a day do you use these accounts? Meaning approximately one or two hours a day or less?

[02:50] Miss.i6: I think for business purposes WhatsApp is something I use a lot. Because clients message and call me through WhatsApp. Other than that, if I look at my social media accounts then I use Instagram for like one or two hours.

[03:07] Alina: Okay, Do you have any fear when you post something online? Like some fear within your heart that if you post something then a male member of society will see that?

[03:24] Miss.i6: Like you are talking in the sense that the links we share on social media or the people that message you and harass you?

[03:32] Alina: Both ways, So one point being that of harassment, if you are scared..

[03:38] Miss.i6: It happens a lot that boys message you on social media. Meaning that they message you so much in a harassing manner on Instagram or Facebook, And we also get a lot of spam from them. Other than that there are a lot of links that are being send, especially in Pakistan and on Facebook.

[04:11] Alina: Okay, and for example if you post a picture online. Do you have any fear that a male member of society, your family or in Pakistan might see it?

[04:27] Miss.i6: In Pakistan, it’s in the culture now that a girl has to think twice before posting anything online. Because she does not feel safe, as it can become a big problem, that your pictures can be leaked and you can get harassed, then blackmailed. This happens here.

[04:47] Alina: Okay, and has this ever happened to you?

[04:51] Miss.i6: No, I have not personally experienced this. But if I upload a picture of myself, then I make sure that I take proper safety measures. For example Facebook has guards and on my followers on Instagram are people that I know, there are no strangers that have access to my account.

[05:12] Alina: Okay, let me just see. Yeah. So the idea for my project is that we want to create a app for your phones or you can use it on the laptop that is only accessible for woman. So woman only. Would you use it?

[05:35] Miss.i6: Of course, I will use it. If there is a platform where girls can safely share anything, Where they can safely discuss something with each other, then of course I will use it. Because nowadays there are a lot of cases on depression and harassment, and some people are not able to share it. So if there is a platform where girls are safe to share these kind of things, then of course they will use it for sure.

[06:03] Alina: Okay, and when such a platform is build. What kind of things would you like to see in the platform? For example you can share pictures and video’s on Instagram, and on Facebook you can even share blogs. So what kind of things would you like to share on the platform?

[06:22] Miss.i6: If there is such a platform, then I will at least like to do some blog writing, regarding my own personal experiences. And if there is any woman that can not share her story in real life, then she should be able to share it on the platform. And she should feel safe when sharing it, knowing that her story and identity won’t leave the platform. This would be very important. Even if she wants to make a video on her story and share it, then it should be safe and it should not be able to be forwarded. If these things will be on the platform, then I’m sure woman would use the platform.

[07:06] Alina: And would you.. So you have a NADRA ID in Pakistan, that you can use to log in online.

[07:15] Miss.i6: No, no. All our accounts on social media are mostly linked to our Hotmail or Gmail. And the ones that have an iPhone also use their appleID to log in.

[07:30] Alina: Alright, but for example if we say that only woman are allowed to access the platform, then how would you suggest that we make sure no male accesses the platform?

[07:39] Miss.i6: if you look at mostly.. like you just talked about ID cards, so you can verify that a person is a male or female. Then I would suggest to use phone numbers, as they are registered to our ID cards.

[08:00] Alina: Okay, so you are saying that..
[08:03] Miss.i6: Yes, that we can access with our phone numbers, meaning that.. I have also seen a lot of Facebook pages, which are like girls group pages. They like use proper verification that it’s a girl, before they add her to the group. So that’s the thing, you will have to be alert on security. And with the ID card matter, of course our phones are registered to the ID cards. And any other accounts like Instagram or Facebook are not registered to our ID cards.

[08:35] Alina: Okay. So this platform is not only for educated woman, it’s also being built for smaller areas, like Khyber Pashtun...

[08:49] Miss.i6: I think that woman in smaller areas, even if they don’t have access to Instagram or Facebook, then at least they have a mobile phone. Everyone has phone number, so using a phone number would be easier for the woman that are not that literate.

[09:12] Alina: Okay, and I got this suggestion from someone else. But in Pakistan they do not only speak Urdu, so if we go to smaller areas then...

[09:26] Miss.i6: Yes, if we go to smaller areas then different languages are used, like Hindko, Pashtun, Sindhi. This is indeed true. In Pakistan even if you use a telephonic helpline or bank helpline, then there is a option to choose a language by clicking on a certain number. Like press 1, press 2. For your own convenience. And if you are making an app like yours, then to facilitate smaller area woman, you should keep in mind all the different languages as well.

[09:58] Alina: Yes, and mostly woman can understand and talk the language, but they cannot always read the language. So would you like to see to some kind of feature in the app..

[10:09] Miss.i6: I think voice, like video or voice notes. These would help you grow your app. Because indeed most people cannot read. The literacy rate in Pakistan is not that high. Most of the woman, which are housewives are not educated enough that they can read or write. But of course they can understand it if they can see a video, and speak it.

[10:37] Alina: And for example if you are scrolling on the platform, just imagen, and you see a video or post that shows that a woman is in danger, like with the honour killing of Qandeel Baloch, it's dangerous on that level. So would you like to have a button or feature that can alert the authorities that the girl is in danger.

[11:08] Miss.i6: Yes, of course. Sometimes there is not a lot of honour killing cases going on. But there are it’s very common and there are a lot of cases on domestic violence. And if you file a complaint with the authorities on a domestic level case, then it can create some issues for some people. I think if this feature is in the app then it could be helpful, but not that much.


[11:39] Miss.i6: Because you do not know how much truth there is in the video that you are watching.

[11:47] Alina: Yes. And if we just circle back to the social media accounts, you said that there could be bullying and harassment. To what level does the harassment go from males to you females?

[12:00] Miss.i6: If we are talking about social media, then from males there are mostly texts. And they use words that are upsetting and uncomfortable to a woman. And on Facebook they can send pictures, which can be very irritating and uncomfortable. This thing is getting very common in our society, to share such pictures and video's which have a sexual tint.

[12:32] Alina: Okay. And if we look at the normal life, do you feel that woman have less rights than men in Pakistan?

[12:45] Miss.i6: In Pakistan they are working towards more equality for woman, but if we look at smaller areas then woman are still miserable. Even now if a woman is driving a car in Pakistan in the big city like Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad. Then men can still not accept that a woman is driving a car and being independent, it hurts their ego. They just throw comments at you when they are passing you. They will stare at you. They do not get their peace until they have harassed us. This thing is very common in Pakistani society and it has been normalised in the mind sets here.

[13:25] Alina: Yes, so are you comfortable in telling me what religion you believe in?

[13:35] Miss.i6: Sorry, can you repeat your question?

[13:37] Alina: Which religion do you belong to?

[13:44] Alina: Okay, so if we look at it from the Islamic perspective would it be wrong for woman to post things online on social media? Are the men that are using Islam as an excuse, to stop woman from using social media by telling them it is not permitted, right?

[14:05] Miss.i6: If we look at it from a Islamic perspective then we believe that God has made a woman for the house, meaning that she is not to be shown in the public eye. But the requirements that our society has nowadays, like woman are competing with men and they are getting equal education. Thus, they should have at least the liberty to choose how they want to spend their life. Although it’s not allowed in our religion, but the woman that want to follow Islam and still get their liberty, they should get to choose for themselves how they want to spend their lives.

[14:49] Alina: Okay, but the harassment that woman get from males, is that justified by your religion?

[14:57] Miss.i6: No, it’s not justified. Even in... our Islam states that if a woman says no, then no means no. If she is clothed or not, no means no. The point is that a woman’s hijab or clothes do not invite a men to come and harass us.

[15:23] Alina: Okay, so this is more of a cultural..

[15:25] Miss.i6: She is not available to anyone if she doesn’t want to.

[15:27] Alina: So this issue is more of a cultural issue, rather than a religious issue, right?

[15:34] Miss.i6: Yeah, it’s.. basically it’s a cultural issue, because our religion doesn’t teach us how to degrade woman. In our religion woman have been given a lot of respect, be it that she is in her hijab or without a hijab. Woman should always be respected. However, our culture has made everything so negative. It tries to justify everything by religion, but society does not take a look at the negative things they have adapted.

[16:00] Alina: Okay, okay. So these were my questions for you. Do you have anything to add to this conversation?

[16:10] Miss.i6: No, only that your app should be a place where woman can be comfortable and won’t hesitate to share anything. There are also some young girls that have been sexually abused, and they can’t share it with anyone in life, not even their parents. But the platform should be able to give them a safe place where they can share their story, they should get support from it and regain their confidence. They should get a safe haven, that’s all.

[16:41] Alina: Okay, thank you very much for your time. I will stop the recording now.

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW MR.I1

Interview-ICTForWomanInPakistan-2june2022-Recording-Transscript

Thu, 6/2 00:00AM • 17:43

SUMMARY KEYWORDS
Abbottabad, Woman, ict, social media, wife, platform, bullying, scarf, clothing, male, Islam, NADRA ID.

SPEAKERS
Alina Saddiqui, Mr.i1

[00:00] Alina: Asalaam Alaikum.
[00:05] Mr.i1: Walekum Salaam.
[00:06] Alina: How are you?
[00:08] Mr.i1: I’m fine, how are you?
[00:09] Alina: Yes, I'm fine. As well. Is English okay for the interview or would you like to speak in Urdu?

[00:15] Mr.i.1: No English is fine. Don't worry about it.

[00:16] Alina: Okay, great. So, uh, I have two sets of questions for you. Uh, the first set is just average questions, uh, about who you are and, uh, where you live to get a little bit of insight. And the second set of question is related to the platform.

[00:33] Mr.i.1: Okay.

[00:34] Alina: So, uh, my first question to you is actually, how old are you?

[00:39] Mr.i.1: I'm 24.

[00:40] Alina: Okay. And where do you live?

[00:43] Mr.i.1: Live in Abbottabad. And, uh, it's a small mountain area in Pakistan.

[00:49] Alina: Okay.

[00:49] Mr.i.1: Yes. That's it.

[00:50] Alina: And, um, what's your highest level of education?

[00:57] Mr.i.1: At the moment I'm doing my bachelor of science.


[01:01] Mr.i.1: Uh, it's my last year and yeah that's it.

[01:03] Alina: Yeah. So, uh, is your bachelor related to IT?

[01:10] Mr.i.1: Yeah, it's, uh, it's, it's related to it.

[01:13] Alina: Okay. And it's, um, in the direction of business it management, or is it, uh, more like software engineering or computer sciences?

[01:22] Mr.i.1: Um, I started with computer sciences, but yeah, I, I noticed that it, it wasn't something for me.

[01:29] Mr.i.1: So now more on the business IT side. So, yeah, I, I like this better for me. It's uh, yeah,

[01:37] Alina: yeah, yeah. And, um, do you have, uh, a technical device? So you're, I think you're using your laptop or are you using something else right now?

[01:48] Mr.i.1: at the moment I'm on my phone, uh, because we have light problems, electricity problems here, so yeah, that's the reason I'm my phone.

[01:58] Alina: Okay. And, um, do you own your, uh, laptop actually, or not?

[02:04] Mr.i.1: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I have my own laptop.

[02:05] Alina: Yeah. Okay. And, uh, do you share that laptop or your mobile phone with any family members?

[02:12] Mr.i.1: Not my mobile phone. Uh, but yeah, they can use my laptop that's okay.

[02:16] Alina: okay. Okay. And is there only one laptop available in your whole family in your household or are there more laptops?

[02:23] Mr.i.1: No. No. My brother also has a laptop. Yeah, that's it.

[02:28] Alina: Okay. And, um, can you tell me a little bit about, uh, the construction of your family? So you have your brother, like you told, uh, do you also live with other family members in house?

[02:42] Mr.i.1: I live with my mother, my, uh, brother, his wife, and yeah, my younger brother. One younger brother.

[02:48] Alina: Okay. And is your father in the picture?

[02:50] Mr.i.1: Yeah. Yeah, of course.

[02:53] Alina: Okay. So, uh, you have three male members and two female members, right?

[02:59] Mr.i.1: Yeah.

[03:00] Alina: Okay. And, uh, can you tell me something about the, the area that you live in? So you said you live in Abbottabad. Can you give me a little bit of inside how the life there is?
[03:10] Mr.i1: uh, it's a mountain area. So you have a lot of green here. Uh, Yeah, we, you don't have a lot of, uh, it's not like in the city, so you don't have a lot of houses or something next to each other. Uh, especially where I live. So, uh, yeah. To go to do grocery or something, it's it's yeah. It's at least a 25 minutes ride from here, but yeah, it's, it's a little farther from the city. Yeah.

[03:41] Alina: And, um, do you guys use, uh, like modern devices such as, do you have everyone has a car, I think, or do you use bikes or buses? Trains, metros?

[03:54] Mr.i1: No, my, my father has a car. I, uh, I use a, I have my bike and yeah, you also have buses and, uh, train, but it's too busy for me, so I like to use the bike.

[04:05] Alina: Okay. And, um, with bike, do you mean like, uh, a motorcycle, uh, like most of Pakistani men use or do you mean like a cycle bike?

[04:16] Mr.i1: No. No. A motorcycle. Yeah,

[04:18] Alina: motorcycle. Okay. And, um, Yeah. So those were the more average questions. Um, do you have any social media accounts?

[04:29] Mr.i1: Yes, I have, uh, Instagram. Facebook? Yeah. That's it. that's about it. Yeah.

[04:36] Alina: Okay. And, uh, do you use those often?

[04:41] Mr.i1: um, Last since last time I'm using Instagram more. Uh, but yeah, before it was Facebook a lot, but I don't have the time anymore to, uh, be on social media. So yeah, it's, it's, it's less than before.

[04:57] Alina: Okay. And, um, so maybe this question doesn't really apply to you, maybe it does. We don't know, but, um, do you have any kind of fears when you post, uh, online regarding your own safety?

[05:12] Mr.i1: Um, No, no, I don't have any fears. No.

[05:17] Alina: Okay. So, uh, I've spoken to a lot of women in Pakistan actually, and they do have some fears concerning their own safety, uh, when they do online posts. So for example, they get bullied, they get harassed blackmailed, um, or their pictures or videos are used inappropriately. Um, do you have any kind of experience with it? Have you ever seen someone get bullied, um, in a way that's only related to woman.

[05:49] Mr.i1: Um, oh, that's a difficult question. Um, to be honest. Yeah, I've seen on social media that, uh, that, uh, yeah, girls, women are being bullied a little bit. Yeah, not that I've seen it very close to me, so, uh, yeah, but I've seen it for sure. Yeah. Okay.

[06:16] Alina: And so you mentioned that you live with your, uh sister-in-law as well in the household, right?

[06:23] Mr.i1: Mm-hmm.

[06:23] Alina: and, uh, I know this is a very personal question, uh, but I would appreciate it very much. Don't take it the wrong way. Um, is your sister-in-law allowed to use social media accounts.

[06:36] Mr.i1: No, I, uh, my, my brother doesn't like it, so, uh, yeah, she understands its completely. So she doesn't have social media to be Frank. Yeah.

[06:45] Alina: Okay. And, uh, does she, does she own her own phone?

[06:50] Mr.i1: Yeah, she does.

[06:52] Alina: She does. Yes. Um, but she doesn't use any social media accounts on them, right?

[06:57] Mr.i1: No, she doesn't.


[07:00] Mr.i1: Yeah. She uses YouTube and stuff, but that's about it.

[07:02] Alina: Okay. And, um, Are you married yet?

[07:08] Mr.i1: No, I'm not married. No.

[07:10] Alina: So, um, personal question for you, if you get married, um, would you be okay with your wife using social media accounts?

[07:20] Mr.i1: Yeah, I think, uh, I will be fine. It's uh, Uh, as long as she doesn't do any inappropriate stuff, I'm, I'm fine with it. So, but I wouldn't like it if she posts pictures every, every time. And she has, uh, uh, photos that she doesn't know, but if it's in the family, I'm okay with it.
Alina: Okay. And you mentioned inappropriate content. What would you consider inappropriate content?

Mr.1: Uh, where she isn't, um, Uh, wearing, uh, yeah. Uh, how do you call where she's in wearing a, uh, a scarf and, uh, yeah, just, just picture with the family with, with, with me that's okay. I don't mind, but not pictures where she's posing and stuff. Crazy poses. Of course she can smile and stuff. That's okay. But nothing crazy, nothing, nothing that would, uh, That I wouldn't like to be honest.

Alina: Okay, so maybe this is a crazy question but how would you like if your wife, for example, if future wife posted a picture, uh, with her doing a duckface for example?

Mr.1: Duck face. I think, uh. I don't know. I don't think I would like it because that's very very childish to do duck face. I think she's, uh, yeah, she should be mature enough to know that that's not, uh, she's not yeah a child, child anymore.

Alina: Okay. So from what I can hear, correct me if I'm wrong, uh, you would just like for your future wife to post like, uh, pictures in moderate clothing and in a moderate way as well.

Mr.1: Yeah. And yeah, in, in, uh, in not revealing clothes, a scarf is nice and yeah, the Islamic way.

Alina: Okay. And so, um, you just mentioned Islam. I was just going, uh, to that topic. Is there, um, is there any ruling that you can think of, or that you know of, um, that restricts women from posting on social media, from the Islamic kind of view?

Mr.1: Yes. Uh, to be honest, it's not even allowed to make photos of yourself, uh, in our religion. And, uh, next to it is, um, for girls. It's it's uh, they have to be, uh, yeah, they have to be, yeah, they don’t, they cannot wear revealing clothes, so they have to be, uh, uh, uh, how do we say it? Um,

Alina: They have to be modest in that way.

Mr.1: They have to be, uh, okay, well, let's, let's keep it that they have to, uh, wear, uh, respectful clothes that they can go out with family as well. And, and that they don't get weird looks with, you know?

Alina: Okay. And, um, okay. So, the main idea is that they have a platform where only they can enter. And you already said, you didn't know any male can make an account. So, um, There's of course, an option to make an account with your phone number, and that is connected to your NADRA ID. And, uh, the NADRA ID is of course, uh, your digital ID. Um, and in that way they can see that you’re a male or female when you make the account and it’s double checked. Would you be okay with that with your future wife or your sister-in-law using their phone number to make an account?

Mr.1: Mm.

Alina: If it protects their safety and only allows females.

Mr.1: I think if you, if you maybe had like a face ID that you log in, like you have on, uh, on your, on your phones, then it'll be okay.

Mr.1: But, uh, yeah, it, it's, it's safer. I'm agreeing with you it's through to, I will also agree more to allow or on, uh, on such a, uh, platform, but yeah, still it has to be respectful.

Alina: Okay. And, um, So the idea is that no male can enter the platform. So for example, if your future wife, uh, had an account or your sister-in-law, um, this also means that whatever they are posting, um, you cannot actually see that as male user, because of course there will be women that are, uh, that, that are there
for their own safety and using platform. So would you be okay with not having any, um, oversight on the platform that your future wife is using?

[13:30] Mr.i1: Okay, let me, uh, explain it in another way. Um, let's say my wife has that, uh, that social, uh, media account or whatever, and she's using it me as a husband if one day I want to see it. She, she, I think she can't refuse me with saying no, you cannot see it. So for that a male eye would see it. Right. I'm just giving you an example for, for a, a husband and wife. Okay. So still there are male eyes looking to, um, the pictures or the posts. So I think you can never completely avoid it. And, uh, that's, it's quite impossible to avoid it, but, uh, yeah, it. Yeah, I rather would. Her want, would want her to be on, on such a platform than on Facebook.

[14:26] Alina: Okay. But would you be okay with let, with giving her the Liberty of using such a platform without you looking at it and just trusting your wife in that case, for example.

[14:39] Mr.i1: Let's say I'm, uh, uh,

[14:43] Mr.i1: A very trusting person. So, uh, I would give her, uh, her, yeah, her space. I wouldn't mind, but as long as I, as I, when I start noticing that stuff is happening, which I don't like then, uh, yeah. Then I, I, yeah. Then, uh, I can also enter a space and ask what's what's happening.

[15:11] Alina: Okay, And, um, can you maybe tell me if, you know, um, are there more, uh, men that, uh, think like you, for example, would you say that, uh, a husband has the rights to, uh, look into his woman's or her his wife's, sorry, his wife's platform at all times when he asks for it?

[15:32] Mr.i1: Mm-hmm sure. I think, I think almost every, uh, man, uh, is like that.

[15:40] Alina: Okay. And, um, would you be okay with convincing, for example, your friends to allow their wives to use the platform or their sisters?

[15:52] Mr.i1: I think it's for either, for everybody can choose for himself. Uh, I'm not going to promote, uh, freedom for other women. I think it's the choice of their men and, uh, and father and husband, uh, To choose, uh, yeah. To choose their own beliefs and what they want. So, no.

[16:13] Alina: Okay. But, uh, don't you think that as a IT student, um, you have some kind of duty towards, um, getting equal, uh, digital safety and freedom for everyone?

[16:29] Mr.i1: Uh, digital safety is different than going out and telling people to behave in a certain way to their wives or their sisters or something like that. Cause I'm not an activist or something. So I want to focus on my life and do my thing. And what other wants do. That's not their that's, that's their choice.

[16:52] Alina: Okay. And, um, do you know anyone, um, that doesn't allow, Like, is it normal, um, in Abbottabad or in the area that you live in for your sisters or wives to not have a phone or social media?

[17:10] Mr.i1: Yes. Yes. That's, that's very normal here.

[17:14] Alina: Okay. Okay. Well, uh, I think those were my questions. Thank you very much for your time and for the insight you have given me. Um, do you have anything to add or any questions for me?

[17:27] Mr.i1: Mm, no, I think, uh, I'm fine if, uh, it's, it's quite late at the moment here, so, uh, yeah. Thank you for your time as well.

[17:35] Alina: Yes. Thank you very much. I'll just stop the recording and then we'll end the call.

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW MISS.I7

Unfortunately, the recording of the interview with miss.i7 had some technical issues, due to which the recording was not recorded properly. However, I did manage to make an overview of the topics that were discussed and the answers that miss.i7 gave.

Miss.i7 is a 34 year old woman that lives in Lahore, Pakistan. She had a master’s degree in Business and is currently pursuing a PhD. She has been married for 9 years and is a mother to two children, aged 6 and 2. It is expected that she takes care of the household and the children, while her husband does not help out. She mentioned that she started her PhD 9 years ago and has since been trying to pursue her PhD, despite the circumstances she faced. Miss.i7 mentioned that her in-laws did not wholeheartedly approve of the idea that she wanted to go outside of the house and pursue her PhD. They have since been creating issues in the matter, and since miss.i7 has two young children it has been harder to find time to complete her academic studies as she has no one to help her. Now that the children are at an age where they both sleep through the night, miss.i7 finds herself studying at night since it is the only time that she gets to herself. She further mentioned that she has seen different female friends of hers and other female PhD candidates quit their academic studies, due to pressure or duties from their in-laws. Pakistani society member often use Islam as an excuse to stop women from going outside of the house to work or educate themselves. While miss.i7 explained that education is seen as an important part for women from an Islamic point of view. She further explained that some of the most highest ranked humans in Islam are actually women, and that women have more rights than men in this religion. However, this is often misinterpreted and used as a way to repress women.

Miss.i7 expressed her fear of posting online, as pictures or videos can be edited and a woman can be bullied till even death. She likes the idea of an all-women’s platform and would be interested in using such a platform as this would eliminate most of the fear of posting online. She was very enthusiastic about the idea of other women sharing their experiences and asking for advice, while at the same time she can also get advice and support from other women. She would like to see some educational content, but would also enjoy content on health and lifestyle. Also adding content on the platform on women’s right in Pakistan and in the Islamic law that is also followed in the country, was suggested to be more interesting than cooking videos. However, miss.i7 mentioned that women in tribal areas of Pakistan would be hesitant to share their personal experiences on the platform, because if a male member from the tribe would see it, then they can even take the women’s life.
SUMMARY KEYWORDS
women, ict, Pakistan, electronic devices, social media, fear, knowledge, male, awareness, online safety.

SPEAKERS
Alina Saddiqui, Miss.i8

[00:00] Alina: Yes. So, uh, first question. Um, the first few questions are general questions. Um, so how old are you?
[00:10] Miss.i8: Uh, I am 22 years.
[00:12] Alina: Okay. And where do you live?
[00:14] Miss.i8: I live in Lahore, Pakistan.
[00:16] Alina: Okay. And, uh, what is your highest level of education?
[00:21] Miss.i8: bachelor in computer sciences.
[00:23] Alina: Okay. So, can you maybe describe for me a little bit how a woman in Pakistan of your age category lives? So do you have your own technical devices, like a mobile phone, laptop, tablet? Uh, do you go to your college alone or do you have someone that drops you off?
[00:46] Miss.i8: So, uh, you want me to tell you about that? How woman carry their electronic devices with them in universities or in schools?
[00:57] Miss.i8: Okay. Basically even Pakistan in universities, there are more student, so we have to take our laptop, electronic devices and all things with us to the university for our projects. Because in universities, there is no proper areas yet we can sit there and use internet or laptops there. Uh, few of them for final year projects, they allow the students to use the university lab and PC's. Uh, otherwise they only research students can use them. So mostly we have, uh, bachelor's students have to take their electronic devices with them, but in school levels, even no one is allowed to take their electronic devices with them.
[01:41] Alina: okay. And do you share your electronic devices within your family?
[01:51] Miss.i8: Uh, yes. we share just like laptop our our brothers and sisters and other family. So, yes we share it.
[01:59] Alina: And, uh, do you or have any social media?
[02:07] Miss.i8: yes, I have social media accounts, that like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.
[02:13] Alina: Okay. And, uh, do you use those social media accounts often?
[02:18] Miss.i8: I basically use it for my, uh, university work because today's in LinkedIn, we got jobs, et cetera there. So we use Linkedin for interviews.
[02:32] Alina: Okay. So apart from that you have some knowledge of IT. Do you have any fear when you're, um, posting something online, for example, your picture or something? And is there any fear that a male member of the society will see this and misuse it?
[02:54] Miss.i8: Uh, yes, because Pakistan is very common that anyone can, uh, can use your profile pics. Even mostly the student post their pics because boys use as their profile pics. And later add fake id's and misuse them due to this, there is a lot of problems in Pakistan, which actually women faces.
Alina: Okay. And, uh, so the idea for my master's project is to come up with a platform that's only for women. Uh, would you be interested in that?

Miss.i8: Uh, yes.

Alina: And if such a platform comes to be built, uh, what kind of features would you suggest there should be in such a platform?

Miss.i8: Uh, as a platform you are working there to avoid these social media hacking or profile pictures of woman.

Alina: Yeah. And, uh, are there any more features that you can think.

Miss.i8: Uh, yes. Uh, I would suggest that, uh, the feature should be introduced that provide more knowledge to the male and females about their privacy policies, which are not common there even, uh, they taking, uh, they take such like they, uh, there is a, like, you can say that they take it very non serious attitude that it's okay. Nothing is, nothing is doing well. They say that, okay. If a woman picture is there, we can use it. We can share it anywhere. It's no problem, but their society, our society doesn't accept it. So I should, there should be a feature that will tell them that they are not going.

Alina: Okay. And, um, so the platform is only for women, so no males allowed to be in the platform. And, uh, one suggestion was to, uh, if you are making an account for the platform for the app that you use your, another NADRA ID, so your phone, uh, to make the account, uh, as a computer science student, uh, how do you look that?

Miss.i8: So you are asking that, uh, uh, can you question me again? Yeah.

Alina: So, uh, in Pakistan you have NADRA ID, uh, would it be an option to make an account on the woman platform with your phone number so that the account or the platform knows that you are female by your ID?

Miss.i8: You are introducing the feature in the platform that would provide the information that you are female, and then you can make the id, and post a restriction on the platform that no male can register on it.

Alina: Yeah, And so..

Miss.i8: There should be a server in the platform that provide the information to them. That there should be no male participant registered on the platform.

Alina: Yeah. And, um, so, uh, you have some knowledge on, um, I think the digital, uh, transparency in Pakistan, is it, uh, would it be okay, um, for you and for other members, if the government knows that you're on such a platform?

Miss.i8: Yes, There is no issue in Pakistan that we are registered in platform. No one can take issue on it.

Alina: Okay, so yeah, those were the basic questions I have. Uh, do you have any suggestions or wishes that you would like to see in the platform?

Miss.i8: Basically, I want to know that in platform, what, uh, what your people introducing in it, like what you plan for introducing type, so that I can give my suggestions there. What should be included in that.

Alina: Yeah, so, uh, we have some suggestions for the women's platform that it should be educational that women in. It's also for women in rural areas. So they can, um, watch videos of women doing certain stuff and get education from that to make a living for themselves.

Miss.i8: And it's also, uh, suggested that it should be a platform that women can get supported in, for example, if they. Uh, being abused sexually or, uh, just in an abusive relationship that they can just, um, go on the platform and gain support from other women or they can get help.

Miss.i8: So I think apart from educational, uh, you should introduce a part of grooming for the women's in that platform.

Alina: So, uh, grooming of a younger woman.

Miss.i8: You mean? Yes, yes. So that they can, they can get confident of their self too.
[07:50] Alina: Yeah. And so you also said that there is, um, oh yeah. Uh, that there should be some kind of awareness created, uh, you said at the start. So is it maybe a suggestion to putting in some kind of, um, It awareness in the platform for young women so that they know what they're doing online and how it is, um, used online,


[08:16] Miss.i8: How they can get that’s, how they can get saved from these issues.

[08:18] Alina: Yeah. Okay. So, uh, those were my questions

[08:27] Alina: and I'll just stop the recording. Thank you very much. Okay.
APPENDIX J: E-MAIL AND WHATSAPP MESSAGE REQUESTING ANSWERS TO FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS.

Email to women without a background in IT:
Hi,
How are you?
I have a few questions as a follow-up to our conversation on the all-women platform.
I would really appreciate it if you could answer these for me.

1. Are you using any WhatsApp groups?
2. Would you like the platform to be like Facebook, but then only for women?
3. Would you like to make the content on the platform yourself? Or would you like a third party to post educational content on the platform?
4. Do you have any fear that there might be women, that are strangers to you, that can harass you on the platform? Or would you like to just communicate with your own circle, such as your friends, family, etc?
5. If there is an all-women’s platform, do you think it could stir up issues in Pakistani society?

I you could number the answers with the same number as the questions, that would be very helpful.
Thank you very much!
With kind regards,
Alina Saddiqui

Email to women with a background in IT:
Hi,
How are you?
I have a few questions as a follow-up to our conversation on the all-women platform.
I would really appreciate it if you could answer these for me?

1. Are you using any WhatsApp groups?
2. Would you like the platform to be like Facebook, but then only for women?
3. Would you make the content on the platform yourself? Or would you like a third party to post educational content on the platform?
4. Do you have any fear that there might be women, that are strangers to you, that can harass you on the platform? Or would you like to communicate with just your own circle, such as your friends, family, etc?
5. If there is an all-women’s platform, do you think it could stir up issues in Pakistani society?
6. Why do you think an ‘in cloud’ database would be safer for the platform?
7. What do you think of the safety of the platform regarding the government? Do you think they would monitor the platform?

If you could number the answers with the same number as the questions, that would be very helpful.
Thank you very much!
With kind regards,
Alina Saddiqui
APPENDIX K: ANSWERS TO FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

**Miss.i1**

1. Yes I am.
2. Yes I would definitely want something only for females
3. Both
4. Yes I am a very private person, I fear at all times. I do mind communicating with people I am not familiar with, maybe if the platform assures security I might interact with others too. To share interests
5. I hope not, but then again anything could become an issue in Pakistan.

**Miss.i2**

1. Yes I am.
2. Why not? I would definitely like that.
3. I would prefer reading content that others have created
4. No I don’t think so
5. I think it would solve the issues. Everyone can share their own experiences and we can learn from them.

**Miss.i3**

1. No
2. Yes sure.
3. I Would do it time to time whenever I can.
4. yes, I have seen it that women also harass other women with abusive speech. But I don’t mind talking to strangers from time to time.
5. Yes I see that most men in our society are not willing to accept it. They have shown concern that these type of platforms will harm society
6. No idea at this point
7. No government is not that much concerned to be honest.

**Miss.i4**

1. Yes I use WhatsApp groups.
2. Yes, that would be good
3. Myself. I will make content by myself, for example by writing blogs.
4. I just want to communicate in my own circle
5. No, I do not think so.

**Miss.i5**

1. Yes I am using.
2. Absolutely yes.
3. Can be done either way.
4. yes, just communication with friends and family is safer.
5. No, I don’t think so it can be a problem. In fact, it might leave a positive impact.
6. because there are less chances of any kind of threat.
7. I don’t think there is any security issue from the government

Miss. I8

1. Yes, A university group
2. Not at all, I like Facebook as an informative material for men and women both. otherwise for other purpose use I am against social media for both genders
3. I would like to post content by myself not from others
4. I am used to socialize only with my close ones but as a professional worker I am communicating with my colleagues and managers without any fears of harassment. I didn’t give them chance to harass or talk abusively!
5. Yes, many organizations in Pakistan are conducting seminars and developing strategies for women’s protection. But they are still in progress
6. An ‘in cloud’ database will give the platform the chance to grow without having to worry about the scalability of the platform. If the platform is launched in one or two cities, and decides to be launched in the whole county of Pakistan, then it will be easy to grow to database ‘in cloud’, rather than a SQL database.
7. Yes, they will definitely be focused on such a platform as issues are emerging day by day.
APPENDIX L: ARTICLE 251

The commencing day for this article was in 1973.

**Article 251: National language**

1. The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.

2. Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.

3. Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a Provincial language in addition to the National language.
REFERENCES


