



WOMEN IN LAW
INITIATIVE PAKISTAN

100 YEARS

1923 - 2023

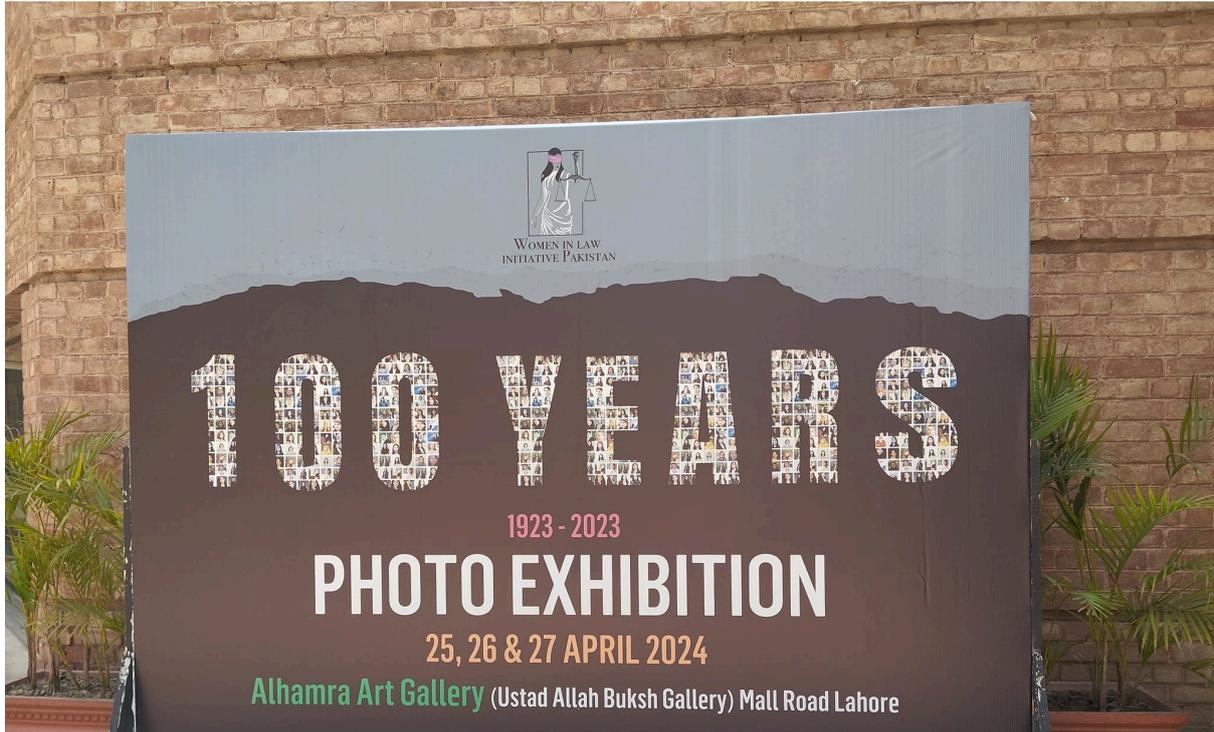
PHOTO EXHIBITION

25, 26 & 27 APRIL 2024

Alhamra Art Gallery (Ustad Allah Buksh Gallery) Mall Road Lahore

100 YEARS PHOTO EXHIBITION REPORT

2024



Introduction

The 100 Years Photo Exhibition was held at Alhamra Art Gallery Lahore from April 25-27, 2024 by Women in Law Initiative Pakistan. The exhibition was held to mark the 100 years of the Legal Practitioners (Women) Act of 1923 – a law which removed restrictions on women’s right and eligibility to practice law in the region.

From Saidu Sharif to Turbat and Muzafarabad to Larkana, the exhibition showcased an important repository of history and contributions of female legal professionals. It showcased over 200 female legal professionals including, judges, practitioners, academics, researchers, in-house counsels, prosecutors, and students amongst others from remote areas of Pakistan to urban city centers as well as Pakistani female lawyers working abroad.

The primary objective behind the exhibition was to bring visibility to the work of female legal professionals and students in their respective fields in law.

The exhibition is part of Women in Law Initiative-Pakistan’s broader campaign titled #VisibilityMatters that kicked off in the year 2024 with the release of a tabletop ‘Calendar of Firsts’ featuring 12 trailblazing women who had made history to be the first in their roles in the justice sector.

The idea behind the exhibition was to build on that campaign and provide an answer to an ignorant myth about a lack of qualified women in the justice sector worthy of being considered for appointments in leadership roles.

Guest of Honour – Opening Day: Ms. Sumaira Samad, Secretary - Women Development Department, Punjab | 25 April 2024



The exhibition was inaugurated by the Secretary, Women Development Department, Punjab Ms. Sumaira Samad on 25 April 2024.

“I am in a trance. Don’t have the words to express how fantastic this exhibition is. The hard work that went in researching, compiling, curating this can only be imagined. This is great education. Going through the exhibition, the diversity and history it captures, the different themes, clusters, contexts, and their range is so educative and inspiring. Nida Usman Chaudhary, Women in Law Initiative, the team of volunteers have all done a remarkable job. This is an initiative that needs to be thoroughly publicized, published, and talks and discussions should be based upon it. From the Women Development Department we would be delighted to extend any support we can. Thank you. All the best.”

– Sumaira Samad, Secretary, Women Development Department, Punjab.

Key Highlights

1. The wall featuring historical struggle of women starting from the first women – Regina Guha - to challenge the discriminatory definition of ‘persons’ which at that time did not include ‘women’ to the Act for “removal of doubts” regarding women’s eligibility to practice law – the Legal Practitioners (Women) Act of 1923.
2. The wall featuring women in judiciary and the women in bar leadership.
3. The AGHS Wall which was a tribute to the four founding partners of Pakistan’s first female led law firm established in the 1980s by Asma Jahangir, Gulrukh Rehman, Hina Jillani and Shahla Zia. It also had the profile of their current executive director, Nida Aly.
4. A special section including women in niche or pathbreaking areas. This celebrated women working in space law, animal rights, media, data security, stateless persons, climate change, energy, prosecution, enforced disappearances and minority rights amongst others.
5. The walls dedicated to Pakistani women working abroad and those who had served in official or constitutional positions.
6. The special categories featuring in-house counsels, practicing lawyers, academics/researchers, young lawyers, and enterprising students.
7. Diverse representation in exhibition of both young and experienced womxn from local and foreign educational backgrounds, urban and remote areas, different faiths and communities including Christians, Hindus, Sikh, Hazara Community and other tribes as well as differently abled women and transgender community.
8. The ‘who have we missed’ section for attendees to help build the repository of female legal professionals.
9. Child and family friendly event.
10. Presentation by Digilawyer showcasing their AI based platform to assist lawyers and public at large in legal research and drafting.

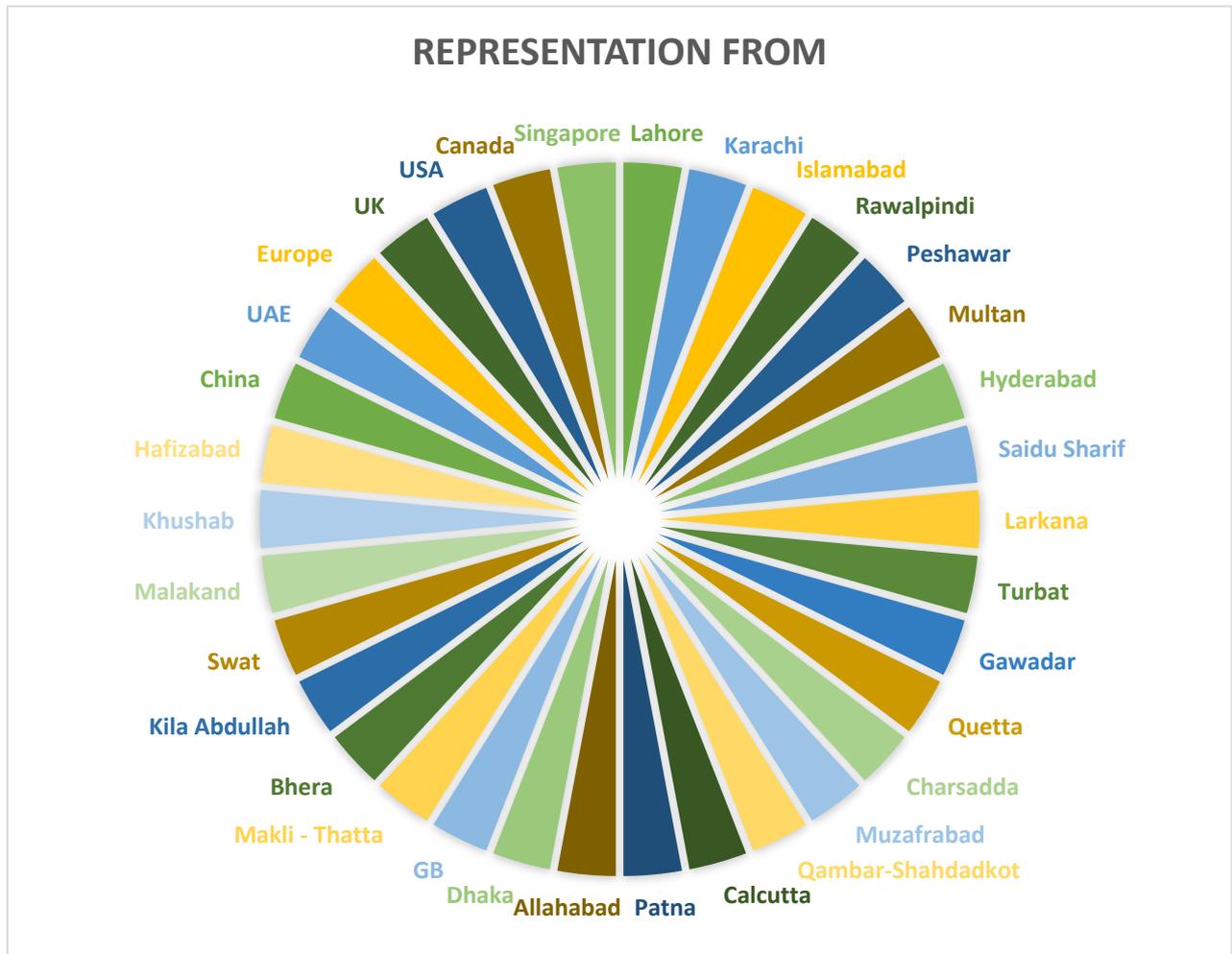


Figure 1: This chart shows the places from where female legal professionals and students were featured in the 100 years photo exhibition.

Attendance and Engagement

Total Number of Pre-Registrations: 241	Total Number of Attendees: 500 +
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Visitors attended from all over Pakistan including, Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan Islamabad and KP.

Foreign delegates, head of missions and ambassadors from Netherlands, Denmark, FCDO and Canada also attended the exhibition.

Delegations from schools & colleges such as LACAS, LGS, Bloomfield Hall, Quaid e Azam Law College, Lahore School of Law and Khushali fellowship members also attended the exhibition.

Women in Law Initiative Pakistan 100 Years Photo Exhibition Report 2024 | Lahore

Among others the visitors included Justice Nasira Javed Iqbal (retired), Salima Hashmi, Nayer Ali Dada, Nasrene Rehman, Nighat Said Khan, Mary James Gill, Nighat Dad, Bushra Qamar, Rabbiya Bajwa (a former Lahore High Court Bar Association vice president), Sabahat Rizvi (a former LHCBA secretary), Muhammad Ahmad Pansota, Usama Malik (the Directorate of Legal Education director), Syed Muaz Shah, representatives from Prime Minister's Youth Programme and prominent members of the bar and judiciary.

Media Coverage

All mainstream and digital channels covered the exhibition including

- ARY News
- Lahore News
- Express News
- Hum News
- GNN
- The Friday Times
- The News on Sunday
- Margallah News
- Pakistan On Air



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7. Litigators and Practicing Lawyers
8. Academia, Law School Heads & Researchers
9. Pakistani Women Working Abroad
10. Womxn Pursuing Niche Areas in Law
11. Young Lawyers
12. Enterprising and Inspiring Law Students
13. Others which featured women from prosecution, international law, ngo and development sector etc

The organisers had made calls for recommendations of female legal professionals from South Asia and Pakistan in particular, as early as August 2023.

The responses to the form enabled the organizers to reach out to many women that were featured, for their consents and details. Information in public domain was also used to collect details of historical figures and other veterans.

Guest of Honour - Closing Day: Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan | 27 April 2024

The Guest of Honour for the closing day of the exhibition was the hon'ble Justice of the Supreme Court, Mrs. Justice Ayesha A. Malik.

She gave a powerful speech stressing on notions of equality of women and the importance of visibility. She said, visibility matters because “you cannot include what you cannot see”.

“To the Women in Law Team, great work, giving visibility to the work and voices of so many women in the legal profession. Tracing back 100 years testifies to the fact that we have always been there but neither visible nor included in the profession. Bringing out the work and efforts of the women gives us hope and resolve to believe we can be the change we want to be.”

– Mrs. Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.



Some Comments and Feedback

“Wonderfully executed. All the best” – Mariam Rajper

“Keep doing this amazing work” – Syeda Kashmala

“This has been inspirational, moving and utterly astounding. It confirms one’s belief in the courage, intelligence and power of Pakistani women, especially those in the legal profession” Salima Hashmi

“A wonderful initiative. Need more of this” – Ahmad Abdullah

“Astonished by the rich history of women in law and honoured to be included in the story. Well done to Women in Law Initiative – We’ve come a long way!” – Mavra Ghaznavi

“This is a great way of appreciating the struggles of female lawyers to carve a path for young women to enter legal profession and reach the top. Best of luck for future” – Huma Ejaz Zaman

“Thoroughly enjoyable and informative” – Bloomfield Hall School

“Well done! It is incredible to read about all these powerful women in our profession. Keep inspiring” – Barrister Noor Ahsan

“Such a fantastic and meaningful initiative for chronicling the innovation and brilliance of women in law!” – Dr. Maryam S. Khan

“In a country where we are told that women lawyers can’t be successful, it is so inspiring to be proven wrong on this idea” - Sarah

Acknowledgements

- The management and staff at Alhamra Art Gallery.
- In Person and Online Volunteers
 - Amina Iftikhar, Harum Akhtar, M. Waleed, M. Hanzala Hussain, Sahira Adil, Rameen Shahzad, Fatima Mehr, Sania Hanif, Minhail Ali, Zainab Akram, Maham Nadeem Bhatti, Aina Nadeem, Anousha Imtiaz, Eman Noor, Manahil Shahid, Rida-e-Zainab, Tuba Jahangir, Saira Muzahir, Syed Ali Saadan, Sakshi Kumari, Rizwan Khan, Afifa Chaudhary, Falak Sehar, Gashmira Naeem, Sarikha Saif, Wayena Bhaur, Mariam Rehman, Aneel Kumar, Eman Khurram, Priscilla Mukhtar, Noor Naz Malik, Daniyal Shaukat, Aqib Ali Ghunio, Qudsia Iqbal, Hina Shahid, Rameen Ayesha, Rizwan Khan Yousafzai and Aisha Warraich.
- Exhibition Team Members
 - Areeha Ijaz, Fatima Sajid, Tabeen Sarmad, Ibrahim Ahmad, Zohra Ahmad.

Parting Thoughts

It was important for the organisers to bring out inspiring stories of resilient women in law within their own settings and context as opposed to having a single standard of ‘success.’ For instance, the exhibition featured some women for whom just completing their law degree was a huge achievement as they did amidst a ban on girls’ education. With this exhibition, the Women in Law Initiative Pakistan wanted to make the point that there have been and in fact are many women in justice sector doing wonderful work in various spheres.

The 200 + list of those who have been featured is by no means exhaustive. It should be seen as the start of a process of compilation of such a repository that can showcase the tremendous, niche and diverse work that women are pursuing in law.

The initiative looks forward to continue the process of collection of profiles and find ways to feature women in additional categories in subsequent phases of the visibility matters campaign.

To support us in this process please share recommendations at:

<https://forms.gle/yZGZP2qX3kUHisYR9>

We hope to develop and take this endeavour further and showcase it in other cities as well.

This is just the beginning.

