Representation of Feminism through the Images on Banners and Postcards Displayed at Aurat March in Pakistan: A Multimodal Perspective

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Abstract

In this digitalized society where communication has moved from written texts to images and videos, people are more comfortable in seeing images and scrolling videos as compared to reading textual data. Among all the fields of life affected by this digital revolution significantly, one is the feminist movement. Feminism has taken many forms in a patriarchal country Pakistan where women have always strived for their rights as equal to males in the society. A modern form of these feminist movements is "Aurat March" being celebrated by Pakistani female community on "International Women's Day" by walking on the roads carrying banners and postcards protesting and asking for the equal rights for their gender (Batool, 2021). The current study aims to analyse these banners and postcards through the multimodal perspective. The objective is to unveil the true representation of feminism through the images of these banners and postcards. five images (banners or postcards) displayed in the "Aurat March" have been selected as the sample of the study through purposive sampling technique. It is a descriptive qualitative study that uses Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar (2006) framework. The multimodal discourse analysis has been used as the method of the study. The results of the study revealed that the majority of main participants in these images were women, and they were performing different gestures to represent the notions of feminist resistance, the hate for patriarchy the demand for gender equality, and the strength of female solidarity, conveyed through powerful visual and symbolic representations.

Keywords: Feminism, Patriarchal, solidarity, symbolic

Introduction

In the 21st century, the digital revolution is primarily driven by the evolving preferences of viewers and their consumption patterns in the entertainment industry during the past several years. There is more inclination towards pictures and videos as compared to written articles and essays. This digital transformation has blown away every social field from medicine, media (Ramzan et al., 2023), education (Akram et al., 2021, 2022; Akram & Abdelrady, 2023), entertainment to business and marketing. One genre is approaching people through posters, banners, and postcards having images on them to express your opinions and thoughts (Chakraborty, 2022).

Globalization has significantly impacted the political landscape for women worldwide. The correlation between the growth of the global women's movement and the advancement of women's rights activism in Muslim countries is evident. Feminism is evident in various countries through a range of manifestations. The concept of feminism has become more intricate due to its globalization in the twentieth century. Historians have proposed many systems based on the philosophy of gender, specifically on perceptions of women's differences or similarities to males. The feminist movement, commonly referred to as the Women's Liberation Movement, is the most transformative and influential in modern history. It is reshaping the entire social structure and fundamentally altering the foundation of human interactions (Walby, 2011).

Feminism has been instrumental in the profound changes observed in contemporary civilizations. Feminist movements worldwide have transformed conventional patriarchal mindsets and empowered women to advocate for their social and political presence in a society predominantly controlled by males. What have feminist movements sought to achieve, among other objectives? To be on an equal level with the male gender in society (Chesler & Hughes, 2004).

In Pakistan, gender-related issues are consistently marked by complexity and contestation. In addition, feminism in Pakistan has consistently faced accusations of Westernization or advocating for a foreign agenda (Batool, 2021).

The feminist movement in Pakistan has evolved, transitioning from a focus on reform in its early years to engaging in secularist and street politics in the 1980s. In the 1990s and 2000s, there was a shift towards diffusion, co-optation, and the rise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Currently, the movement has entered a new phase where it addresses issues related to sexuality and body politics, as symbolized by the slogan "my body, my choice". The influx of knowledge, extensive use of social media, and worldwide events such as the "#MeToo" movement in the 2010s have had a role in reshaping modern Pakistani feminism. This school of feminism aims to confront and dismantle all manifestations of patriarchy by placing women's sexuality and body politics at the forefront. One of the most notable methods it employs is through the use of memorable slogans, such as "personal is political" and "mera jism, meri marzi", which translates to "my body, my choice" (Batool & Malik, 2021).

The Pakistani Aurat March is an annual event that takes place in various places throughout the country on March 8th, which is International Women's Day. During the marches, women, gender minorities, and cis-male allies convene to engage in singing, dancing, and marching on the streets while displaying their vibrant homemade signs adorned with witty phrases in both Urdu and English. Images of the protesters and their slogans rapidly spread over Pakistani social media, sparking intense debate and a widespread discussion on women's rights, societal gender norms, and the visibility of women in public areas within the Islamic Republic (Iqbal, 2020).

The slogans and the women who advocate for them are frequently criticized as shameless, vulgar, and obscene, allegedly reflecting the interests of a godless secular liberal elite rather than those of "authentic" Pakistani women. Even within the feminist community, influential figures have raised concerns about whether the slogans are excessively radical, perhaps isolating the larger portion of the population that is religious and conservative (Dawn Images, 2019).

The advent and advancement of multimedia technologies have significantly transformed the methods of human information exchange (Abdelrady & Akram, 2022; Chen & Ramzan. 2024). During the 1990s, the term "multimodality" gained significant attention and was extensively researched in the field of semiotics and linguistics in Western countries. Researchers have recognized that while language is crucial in the process of creating meaning, it is just one of several symbolic systems used in conversation. It is imperative to integrate the study of language in discourse linguistics with other disciplines like vision and hearing, to have a comprehensive understanding (Jones, 2012).

Multimodal discourse analysis is a method of analysing discourse that emphasizes the creation of meaning through the utilization of several forms of communication, rather than solely relying on language. The term "multimodality" highlights the significance of non-linguistic symbolic resources. For instance, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, the importance of multimodal research lies in its ability to highlight the necessity of studying modes beyond words and speech. This research emphasizes that these modes are integral to realistic communication, rather than being merely supplementary to language research (Kress, 2010).

Turning to the theory of Visual Grammar for multimodal analysis of texts, Kress and Leeuwen argue that images can function as social symbols and can be examined and characterized using Halliday's social semiotics theory. The two men utilize the three metafunctions of language to construct the visual grammar of the analytical image. This grammar encompasses representational meaning, interactive meaning, and composition meaning as its central

components. It serves as the foundation and analytical approach for multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

This study aims to analyse the images on banners and postcards displayed at the Aurat March on International Women's Day in Pakistan from the lens of multimodal discourse analysis. The objective is to unveil the true representation of feminism through the images of these banners and postcards.

Research Questions

1. What do the images on banners and postcards displayed in Aurat March represent?
2. How do these images represent the feminist movement in Pakistan?

Research Objectives

1. To identify the images shown through banners and postcards displayed in Aurat March in Pakistan
2. To identify the representation of the feminist movement through the images displayed in Aurat March in Pakistan

Literature Review

Aleem et al. (2023) conducted a multimodal discourse analysis to investigate how Pakistani women's identities were mediatized. Pakistani media experienced a dramatic shift in how it presented sociocultural activities and how identities were constructed (Bhattacharya, 2104). The main goal of the research was to investigate how identities were created by the media and how women were encouraged to choose different positions. The study selected 3 Pakistani TV commercials through a purposive sampling technique that embodied the multi-semiotic images of women, spanning from 1980 to 2000 to the present day (2000-2017). Kress and Van Leeuwen's multimodal social semiotic approach (2006) was adopted to carry out the investigation. To learn more about how advertising encouraged Pakistani women viewers to adopt different roles, interviews with 20 female viewers were also conducted. The results showed that Pakistani women's mediatized identities had completely changed and that the mediatization process resulted in the stereotyped representation of Pakistani women being turned into new identities that motivated women to take on successful roles in other fields.

Rahmawati & Suyudi (2023) studied music through the perspective of multimodal critical discourse analysis. Music is utilised to sway listeners towards feminism or the representation of women. This study aimed to investigate how feminism was portrayed in Ariana Grande's music video for "God Is a Woman." Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) was used in this qualitative study to analyse the data. The results showed that the God is a Woman music video, which featured Ariana as the lead character with complete control over her body, the ability to express herself freely, and the strength to oppose patriarchy was a symbol of post-modern feminism philosophy. Furthermore, by showing women as superior to men, the music video promoted the radical feminism philosophy. Ariana used music videos as a platform to influence people with messages that were a combination of radical feminism ideology and post-modern feminist concepts.

Another study examined social media material produced by Red Bull Media House using multimodal discourse analysis. The research aimed to identify the postfeminist sensibilities discourses and how the energy drink companies supported female action sports athletes are framed. Multimodal discourse analysis was specifically used to examine Instagram posts, YouTube videos, and the biographical websites of the 23 athletes. The results showed that, in the end, Red Bull repackaged the discourses about femininity in sports contexts, even though action sports could challenge prevailing discourses around it. Red Bull eventually bundled the discourses into distinct storylines (Kernz, 2021).

Batool & Malik (2021) explored the rebirth and development of Pakistan's feminist movement. It probed into the nation's modern feminist movement against the backdrop of the vocal hostility that the "Aurat March" protestors faced on International Women's Day. It suggested how the backlash against bringing up sexuality and body politics had revitalised the feminist movement in Pakistan by weaving the story via interviews with well-known religious right figures and notable feminists. Regarding Aurat March Khushbakht & Sultana (2020) presented Western feminism, its goals at the outset, and its achievements to date. This study examined women's activism in Pakistan, the 'Aurat March, and the hostility that organisers and supporters encountered from the public due to the event's bizarre placards and odd slogans by using a discourse analytic approach to the event. It also investigated the issue, from the standpoint of the social, cultural, and religious evolution of society, the relationship between the activism of the 'Aurat March' and Western feminism. The study concluded that, rather than concentrating on unimportant issues, it is necessary to raise a rational and constructive voice for women's rights with the backing of the general public to abolish social problems. It has also suggested that a framework be created so that it could be possible to distinguish between women's rights in the context of Western feminism and the restrictions on women's liberation in the context of Islam.

Moreover, a study carried out by Kelso (2024) presented the argument that the Aurat March, also known as the Woman March in Urdu, originated as a one-time event and had since evolved into a social movement that follows Ernesto Laclau's (2018) populist logic. They explained how separate communities of women could come together to form a chain of equivalency connecting a wide range of women's needs. Here, protesters united against a shared enemy: patriarchy, which made it possible for a diverse range of marginalised gender, ethnic, and religious identities to unite under the Aurat March banner. Mera jism meri marzi, which is called "my body, my choice" in Urdu, serves as a signifier that is more and more void, making it possible for a range of demands to be projected upon it. To show how right-wing critics try to replace the vacant signifier with morally weighted content that weakens the solidarity ties binding the Aurat March coalition together, the research examined conservative discourses surrounding the march.

As the feminist movements face backlash in Pakistani society, Sarwar & Huma (2021) made an effort to explain the disagreement between the religious leaders and the organisers of the Aurat March. Religious leaders and the organisers of the Aurat March were interviewed in-depth. To analyse interviews, thematic analysis was employed. According to the study's findings, the Aurat March was seen by its organisers as a symbolic movement for fierce opposition to the exploitation, discrimination, and repression of women in both their private and public lives. The legacy of the feminist movement in the nation is being carried forward by the Aurat March. The actual voices of women's everyday struggles and undressed issues were represented on the Aurat March posters. Conversely, religious authorities thought that every demand made during the Aurat March was immoral and contradictory to Islam. According to them, the goal of the Aurat March was to demolish the family unit and spread disarray against religion.

Further talking about the Aurat March, it brought about a variety of activities in Pakistan and sparked a contentious discussion between individuals of differing views inside the nation. A study examined the multitude of viewpoints and perceptions of women to address the reasons for the contentious and controversial nature of the Aurat March. It also aimed to comprehend women's empowerment, the purpose of the march, and its achievements. It was a qualitative theoretical study that employed discourse analysis as a methodology and suggested a theoretical framework of feminism theories contending that while the Aurat March was an obvious example of women's empowerment in Pakistan, the narratives and notions surrounding

it were fundamentally contradictory, having a detrimental effect on women's lives, and turning feminist movements into contentious rhetoric with no real gains. The study identified the necessity for developing a positive and successful feminism model that will help Pakistani women (Khaliq & Bhatti, 2021).

Hassan et al. (2023) investigated the Aurat March 2020 slogans in light of the right to free speech. One of the essential rights protected by the 1973 Pakistani constitution was the freedom of speech. This quantitative analysis of the slogans' SFL was carried out with the aid of UAM Corpus Software. Scholars examined the slogans using Halliday's ideational meta-functions. Through random sampling, information from websites and social media platforms had been gathered. A thorough examination of every procedure was carried out in the study applying the SFL modal. The findings showed that the Material Process was utilised the most in the slogans that denoted actions. The data also indicated a strong relationship process, indicating that the purpose of the slogans was to draw a comparison between two entities. This work opened the door for future research on PDA from the standpoint of SFL linguistics. The protesters addressed women's rights, a hot topic in Pakistan, and their slogans drew criticism from the press and social media.

The 'Aurat March' movement for social, cultural, and religious change in Western civilisation along with its connection to feminism was examined in the article written by (Khushbakht, 2022). The study also highlighted the necessity for women's rights activists to have a logical, persuasive public voice with broad support to ultimately eradicate social problems, as opposed to concentrating on trivial matters. Women's rights in the context of Western feminism were compared with restrictions on women's liberation in the Islamic environment.

Research Methodology
Research Paradigm
The study adopted a qualitative research paradigm as it analyses the images in terms of three main categories of visual grammar.

Population and Sample
The overall population of the study consists of images displayed via banners and posters presenting the theme of Aurat March in Pakistan. Four images were selected through purposive sampling technique to conduct the analysis of images.

Theoretical Framework
The research study uses the theoretical framework of Visual Grammar presented by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) as it is the most widely used framework to analyse the intended meaning behind the images. According to this framework, 3 main visual categories were interpreted: representation, interaction and composition.

Research Method
The study employed the multimodal discourse analysis as the method to carry out investigation of the images related to Aurat March in Pakistan.

The multimodal discourse analysis examines the structure of multimodal texts and the ways semiotic devices, such as colour, framing, focus, and element placement, contribute to the meaning that these texts convey (Paltridge, 2012).

Drawing from the metafunction ideas of M.A.K. Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen developed the three-dimensional theory of visual grammar: compositional meaning, interactive meaning, and representational meaning. These three main categories are as follows: representation, interaction and composition. Each of these main categories is clearly and briefly explained below:

  1. **Representation**

Representation signifies the participants involved such as people, figures, or things thereby creating the syntax of an image from a visual perspective and creating a relationship among the participants. These visual representation elements can be divided into two categories: narrative representation and conceptual representation. The narrative representation presents actions and events, changing processes, and transient spatial structures, while the conceptual representation presents participants with relevance to a more general and timeless essence representing class, structure or interpretation (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

A) Narrative Representation

Words belonging to the category of "action verbs" are utilised to realise the story, and these words are visually represented by elements that fall under the formal definition of vectors. When it comes to visuals, a vector is an oblique line that joins people and conveys actions or events as they happen, made by arrows, tools, bodies, or limbs. The participant from whom the vector initiates is known as the actor while the participant receiving the impact of the vector is called a goal. This representation is also referred to as the transactional process. When the goal is absent, the process is non-transactional.

The second is reactional representation where the reactor reacts to someone or something, as responding to something is an inherent characteristic of all living things, the respondent must be either a human or an animal that resembles a human (that is, a being with eyes that can be seen and facial expressions that can be made). The specific form of this reaction is recorded in the direction that the reactor is looking at the phenomenon. The focus of this reaction (a look or gaze) follows a vector to the receiving participant or entire process, identified as the phenomenon. It can also be transactional or non-transactional.

B) Conceptual Representation

Participants are portrayed conceptually in terms of their class, structure, or meaning in the conceptual representation. It addresses a notion or concept that is vividly recounted by the participants. "Tree structures," which are used to realise "kind of" relations, are used to convey it. It is divided into three subprocesses: symbolic, analytical, and classificational. The symbolic process represents the meaning conveyed by the participant, and the entities involved are carriers and symbolic attributes. The analytical process represents whole-part relationship, while the classificational processes classifies the participants in a picture and assigns the same ones in the same group (Torres, 2015).

2. Interaction

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), visual communication uses resources that create and sustain interaction between the creator and the audience. They propose that when someone reads or watches a graphic, two types of participants are involved: represented participants and interactive participants. While the latter denotes the participant who communicates with each other through visual means (e.g., the photographer and the viewer), the former refers to what is shown in a visual (maybe the people, places, and things exhibited). Interaction is divided into three classes: contact, social distance, and attitude.

A) Contact

The ways that images either directly or indirectly approach their viewers are what constitute the contact between the image and the viewer that is created and sustained by the visual resources. Whether there is eye contact or not, there are two types of image acts associated with contact (gaze): offer (not gazing at the viewer) and demand (gazing at the viewer). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), pictures, where participants establish "eye contact" with the viewer, are referred to as "demand" images because, through speaking directly to the viewer, the represented participants figuratively "demand" that the viewer establish an imaginary relationship with them (Torres, 2015). Moreover, an act of demand can be cumulated with facial expressions such as smiling, making pouts, or pointing with fingers (Brady, 2015).

B) Social Distance

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the viewer's perception of their social proximity to the people in the picture might be influenced by the frame's size. Through the use of close-up shots, which highlight the subject's head and shoulders, medium shots, which show the represented participant's body roughly down to the knees, and long shots, which show the entire figure occupying about half the height of the frame, these social relations are realised (Hu & Luo, 2016).

C) Attitude

It is possible to convey an attitude or "point of view" towards the participants in visuals by using specific visual resources. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), there are two types of visuals: long shots (where the entire subject takes up roughly half the height of the frame) and objective (without perspective) (with centre viewpoint). They look closely at certain subjective qualities of images, splitting them into two simultaneous options they call "power" and "degrees of involvement." Thus, the angle, or "point of view," is a third component that illustrates the relationships between the spectator and the portrayed actors. They talk about the horizontal and vertical angles in this same spirit.

The relationship between the frontal planes of the represented participants and the interactive participant (the person creating the image or the viewer) is what is referred to as the horizontal angle. The images can be either in a frontal angle or an oblique angle, both represent points of view. The frontal angle means involvement while the oblique angle represents detachment. Talking about the vertical angle, it is concerned with the concepts of superiority, inferiority, and equality towards the participants (Yao & Zhuo, 2018).

3 Composition

Kress and van Leeuwen examine the many compositional techniques used in images as well as the messages they express. Three related principles—information value, framing, and salience—help composition connect the image's representational and interactive meanings.

A) Information Value

Certain informational values are attached to the various "zones" of the image, such as left and right (Given and New structures), top and bottom (Ideal and Real structures), and centre and margin (Centre and Margin structures), based on the arrangement of elements (participants that relate them to each other and to the viewer). As a result, many compositional parts have distinct informational values associated with each of the several "zones.""

B) Salience

Salience is achieved by using elements that are designed to draw the viewer's attention to various points, as determined by things like placement in the background or foreground, colour contrasts, relative size, sharpness variations, etc.

C) Framing

The existence or lack of framing devices, which are represented by components that draw dividing or framing lines and connect or isolate different visual parts to indicate whether or not they belong together. Typically, frames are used to draw attention to text or images (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

Data Analysis

Image 1

This poster is hand made showing a image and a text "Time's up with different pens.

In terms of representational main represented a picture of a basically a drawing woman's saying Patriarchy" coloured structure, the participant is female, other represented objects include a watch around the woman's wrist, two pony tails in the women's hair, the ring on the woman's finger, and gender representing ear rings in the woman's ears. This woman is performing a vector with her middle finger as she is trying to abuse the patriarchy in the society. Therefore, in terms of Narrative action, it is a transactional representation as both actor and goal are in place, the woman is the actor and her finger is the goal. No narrative recreation is in place in this poster as there is neither a reactor nor a phenomenon.

Regarding the conceptual representation, the analytic and classificational processes have not been used in the image as there are no taxonomies or whole-part connections are evident in the picture. However, the symbolic conceptual representation is present in the picture. The red coloured dress of the participant is symbolic of femininity, similarly watch, ring, hair ties, ear rings, red lipstick, red nail polish, coloured eyes are all the symbolic attributes associated with female gender. The woman acts as carrier and all other objects already mentioned represent the symbolic attributes.

Regarding interactive meanings, image represents "demand" because the gaze of the participant is towards the viewers thus asking for the rights for her gender. The image invites the viewer to identify with the female gender.

Concerning the social distance, a close shot is created in which the face and half body of the participant have been taken into the frame taking an intimate and close personal approach. Regrading horizontal angle perspective, the main participant is photographed at the frontal angle eliciting the viewers' attachment with her.

Regarding vertical angle of the attitude, the participant is at eye level with the viewer which depicts the equality between the viewer and the participant. Concerning compositional meaning, the image employs information value systems and the participant equally contributes to the central value being in the middle of the image. It appears as the nucleus focusing on the participant in the image. The text has been given place above of the picture being given the status of ideal information. Talking about salience, the woman, her finger and the text are all in the foreground. Talking about the colour contrast, the participant is coloured as red while the background colour is light thus making the participant more noticeable. The text is written in red and blue colours on off white background being prominent. No framing line divides the

image into two equal classifications, as the whole central place is occupied by the participant and the text.

Image 2

This poster is designed image image and a text deewar ko ek dhaka language. پدر شاہی کی دیوار کو translation: Give Patriarchy).

basically a graphically showing a woman's saying "Pidar shahi ki aur do" in Urdu (English ایک دھکا اور دو another blow to

In terms of structure, the main is a picture of a represented objects include a large hammer with a long stick, two golden bangles around the woman's wrist, and golden round ear rings in the woman's ears. This woman is performing a vector with her middle finger as she is trying to abuse the patriarchy in the society. Therefore, in terms of Narrative action, it is a transactional representation as both actor and goal are in place, the woman is the actor and her finger is the goal. No narrative recreation is in place in this poster as there is neither a reactor nor a phenomenon.

representational represented participant female, other

Regarding the conceptual representation, the analytic and classificational processes have not been used in the image as there are no taxonomies or whole-part connections are evident in the picture. However, the symbolic conceptual representation is present in the picture. The red coloured dress of the participant is symbolic of femininity, similarly watch, ring, hair ties, ear rings, red lipstick, red nail polish, coloured eyes are all the symbolic attributes associated with female gender. The woman acts as carrier and all other objects already mentioned represent the symbolic attributes.

Regarding interactive meanings, image represents "demand" because the gaze of the participant is towards the viewers thus asking for the rights for her gender. The image invites the viewer to identify with the female gender.

Concerning the social distance, a close shot is created in which the face and half body of the participant have been taken into the frame taking an intimate and close personal approach.

Regarding horizontal angle perspective, the main participant is photographed at the frontal angle eliciting the viewers' attachment with her.

Regarding vertical angle of the attitude, the participant is at eye level with the viewer which depicts the equality between the viewer and the participant. Concerning compositional meaning, the image employs information value systems and the participant equally contributes to the central value being in the middle of the image. It appears as the nucleus focusing on the participant in the image. The text has been given place above of the picture being given the status of ideal information. Talking about salience, the woman, her finger and the text are all

in the foreground. Talking about the colour contrast, the participant is coloured as red while the background colour is light thus making the participant more noticeable. The text is written in red and blue colours on off white background being prominent. No framing line divides the image into two equal classifications, as the whole central place is occupied by the participant and the text.

Image 3

This poster is graphically drawn paint colors showing a text saying "برابر" (English translation: of the scale carry the the symbol of female while the male side thereby carrying equality of both In terms of structure, the main participant is a basically a image with different a measuring scale and in Urdu language Equal). The two sides number 50 showing gender at one side gender on the other the message of genders. representational represented picture of a scale, acting as the main actor and thus is a non-transactional process. No narrative recreation is in place in this poster as there is neither a reactor nor a phenomenon.

Regarding the conceptual representation, the analytic process has not been used in the image as there are no taxonomies shown. The classificational process is presented as the scale is a whole and its sides are the parts that carry equal weight. The symbolic conceptual representation is also present in the picture.

The symbols on both sides represent different genders and the scale represents the measurement of value and place assigned to each gender in the society. The scale acts as carrier and both sides represent the symbolic attributes.
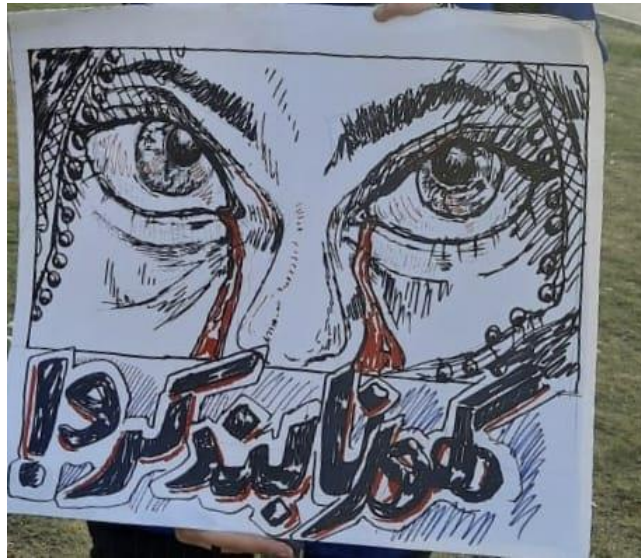
Concerning the social distance, a close shot is created taking an intimate and close personal approach. Regrading horizontal angle perspective, the main participant is photographed at the frontal angle eliciting the viewers' attachment with it.

Regarding vertical angle of the attitude, the participant is at eye level with the viewer which depicts the equality between the viewer and the participant. Concerning compositional meaning, the image employs information value systems and the participant equally contributes to the central value being in the middle of the image. It appears as the nucleus focusing on the participant in the image.

Talking about salience, the scale is in the foreground being the only participant. Talking about the colour contrast, the participant is coloured as red and yellow while the background colour

is purple thus making the participant more noticeable. The framing line divides the image into two equal classifications.

Image 4

This poster is basically a drawn painting image showing a woman's eyes and a text saying "Ghoorna band kro" in Urdu گھورنا بند کرو language. (English translation: Stop staring).

In terms of structure, the representational main participant is a represented picture of a female's eyes. The eyes are shedding blood as tears so the vector is shedding tears. These tears may be perceived as the goal. Therefore, in terms of Narrative action, it is a transactional representation as both actor and goal are in place, the eyes serve as the actor and tears represent the element of goal. No narrative recreation is in place in this poster as there is neither a reactor nor a phenomenon.

Regarding the conceptual representation, the analytic and classificational processes have not been used in the image as there are no taxonomies or whole-part connections are evident in the picture. However, the symbolic conceptual representation is present in the picture. The pattern on the sides of the head shows the shawl on the woman's head representing the femininity. The eyes act as carrier and all other objects already mentioned represent the symbolic attributes.

Regarding interactive meanings, image represents "demand" because the gaze of the participant is towards the viewers thus asking for the rights for her gender. The image invites the viewer to identify with the female gender.

Concerning the social distance, a close shot is created in which the face of the participant has been taken into the frame taking an intimate and close personal approach. Regrading horizontal angle perspective, the main participant is photographed at the frontal angle eliciting the viewers' attachment with her.

Regarding vertical angle of the attitude, the participant is at eye level with the viewer which depicts the equality between the viewer and the participant. Concerning compositional meaning, the image employs information value systems and the participant equally contributes to the central value being in the middle of the image. It appears as the nucleus focusing on the participant in the image. The text has been given place below the picture being given the status of real information. Talking about salience the eyes are in the foreground.

Talking about the colour contrast, the drawing is in black colour and paper is of white colour representing the black and white contrast thus making the participant more noticeable. The text is written in black colour on white background being prominent. No framing line divides the image into two equal classifications, as the whole central place is occupied by the participant and the text.
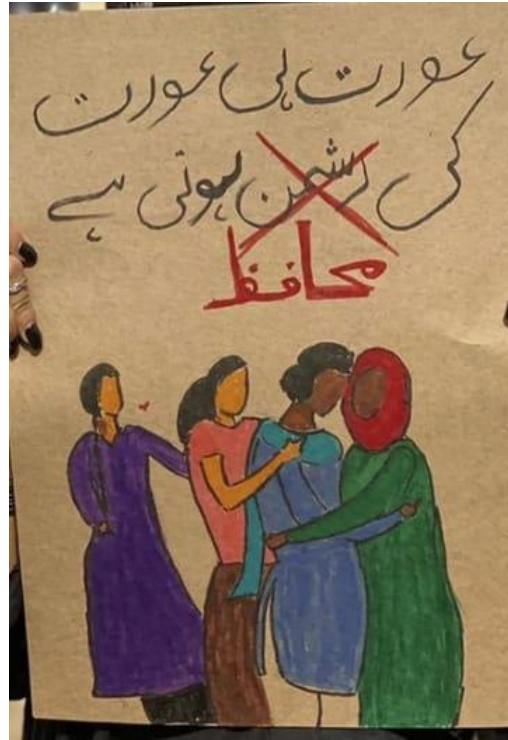
Image 5

This poster is basically a hand drawn painting image showing four women and a text saying "Aurat he aurat ki muhafiz hoti hai" in عورت Urdu language. ہی عورت کی محافظ ہوتی ہے۔ (English translation: A woman is the protector of the other woman).

In terms of the main representational structure, the main represented participants are four women. Three women are performing a vector with their bodies as they are hugging each other. One woman is just standing and she is performing the vector with her hand as she is supporting the other woman. These women act as actors in this image and the vectors and hugging and supporting, similarly their vectors are directed towards one another so they are the goals. Therefore, in terms of Narrative action, it is a transactional representation as both actor and goal are in place.

In terms of narrative recreational process, all the women are looking at one another, so they are the reactors and also the phenomenon and makes it a transactional recreational process.

Regarding the conceptual representation, the analytic and classificational processes have not been used in the image as there are no taxonomies or whole-part connections are evident in the picture. However, the symbolic conceptual representation is present in the picture. The bright coloured dresses of the participants are symbolic of femininity, similarly dupattas are the symbolic attributes associated with female gender. The women act as carrier and all other objects already mentioned represent the symbolic attributes.

Regarding interactive meanings, image represents "offer" because the gaze of the participants is not towards the viewers.

Concerning the social distance, a long shot is created in which the full bodies of the participants have been taken into the frame taking formal and impersonal approach. Regrading horizontal angle perspective, some participants are photographed at the frontal angle eliciting the viewers' attachment with them, while others are photographed at an oblique angle showing detachment with the viewers.

Regarding vertical angle of the attitude, the participants are at eye level with the viewers which depict the equality between the viewer and the participant. Concerning compositional meaning, the image employs information value systems and the participants equally contribute to the central value being in the middle of the image. It appears as the nucleus focusing on the participants in the image. The text has been given place above of the picture being given the status of ideal information. Talking about salience, the women and the text are all in the foreground. Talking about the colour contrast, the participants are coloured as bright while the background colour is light thus making the participants more noticeable. The text is written in black colour on light coloured background being prominent. No framing line divides the image

into two equal classifications, as the whole central place is occupied by the participants and the text.

The overall analysis of the text presents the themes of representation of gender equality, feminist resistance, and solidarity through visual symbolism in handmade and graphically designed posters. Each poster focuses on a different aspect of women's empowerment and societal critique, using a blend of narrative, conceptual, and compositional elements to convey powerful messages against patriarchy.

The first theme is the defiance against patriarchy, several posters depict women performing assertive gestures like raising a middle finger, symbolizing resistance against patriarchal norms. These posters emphasize women taking a stand, asserting their rights, and challenging oppressive systems. Secondly, the concept of gender equality is visually represented through a balanced scale, symbolizing equal value and importance of both genders. This poster highlights the call for equal treatment in society. Another significant theme is the unity and support among women, showcased through images of women embracing and supporting each other. This emphasizes that women can be protectors and allies for one another in the face of societal challenges. Overall, the posters employ strong visual demands, like a woman's eyes shedding tears of blood or calling out societal behaviours like objectifying stares. These visuals are designed to challenge and provoke thought about harmful gender norms.

In summary, the theme revolves around feminist resistance, the demand for gender equality, and the strength of female solidarity, conveyed through powerful visual and symbolic representations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Living in this digitalized era has brought various changes transforming each and every field of knowledge. Communication is a basic need in society and the major variation that took place due to the modernity is the digital revolution in communication activities. In the past, the communication used to be limited up to the texts in the written form, however, now the advent of images and videos has made it very convenient for people to just watch a video and gather their desired information instead of spending hours on reading the written texts. Since the start of digital modernity, every field of life has been highlighted and one aspect that especially came to light is the feminism movement. Female gender in the society started raising voices for the protection of their rights and due to digital platforms, the movement has involved a great majority as more and more participants get added to the movement when it is publicized.

Talking about patriarchal countries, this movement has taken many shapes in Pakistan and women have been struggling for their rights for a long period of time. In recent times, a modern form of these feminist movements is "Aurat March" being celebrated by Pakistani female community on "International Women's Day" by walking on the roads carrying banners and postcards protesting and asking for the equal rights for their gender (Batool, 2021). The current study analysed these banners and postcards through the multimodal perspective. It unveiled the true representation of feminism through the images of these banners and postcards. Five images (banners or postcards) displayed in the "Aurat March" were selected as the sample of the study through purposive sampling technique. The study followed a descriptive qualitative study employing Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar (2006) framework. The multimodal discourse analysis was the method of the study. The results of the study revealed that the majority of main participants in these images were women, and they were performing different gestures to represent the notions of feminist resistance, the hate for patriarchy, the demand for gender equality, and the strength of female solidarity, conveyed through powerful visual and symbolic representations. Through these images, female gender showed that they should be treated as equal to men in their rights and the patriarchal norms in the society should be shed down. These images presented not only the broader themes of feminism but also trivial matters like stare that they get from males should be stopped. The cultural associations of the country were also taken into account while choosing the pictures such as dupatta was presented in almost all the pictures to show that it was a symbolic attribute of women in Pakistan.

The researcher recommends to analyse other countries' feminist movements with the perspectives of multimodal discourse analysis. The current study has analysed the images of banners and posters, the other modes such as videos can also be researched for further analysis.

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