

Historic primary school curriculum change to drive gender inclusivity

Lifebuoy Shampoo and the Ministry of School Education Punjab have partnered to make an impact on girl-child education with an addition to the school curriculum.

LAHORE, PAKISTAN, April 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There is only 7% of female representation in school curriculums. Lifebuoy Shampoo's groundbreaking campaign 'Mein Choti Si Aik Ladki Hoon' (I am a little girl) has created a movement and inspired policy-makers to revise the curriculum to a more balanced syllabi -for the first time in Pakistan's history.



“

I know that this effort is fueled by a passion to make a real difference by all partners involved ...this actual curriculum change will be the catalyst for better opportunities for girls in Pakistan.”

Shehzad Roy, renowned educationist and founder of Zindagi Trust

To kick off the initiative, Lifebuoy Shampoo and GREY Pakistan revisited Jameeludin Aali's iconic children's poem, which is told from a male perspective. The original poem has been part of the school curriculum through the ages to encourage and motivate all children.

Zehra Nigah, a much-loved and critically acclaimed Pakistani literary figure, has rewritten the poem through a female lens, aiming to inspire young girls to also dream big. The poem has made a big impact in addressing the imbalance of gender content and the lack of female inclusivity.

The collaboration with the Punjab Government Ministry of Education has driven positive long-term change at the grassroot level, with the newly updated poem becoming a part of the national curriculum at government-funded schools. The roll-out to date has included more than 4000+ government schools along with 1000+ Zindagi Trust schools.

The beautifully crafted film conceptualized by GREY Pakistan shows everyday school life from the experience of a young girl whose thoughts are summed up when she reads the original male-intentioned poem in front of the school. She is made fun of as everyone notices how the male gender roles are clearly defined in society whilst the poem is being read out by a girl.

As the story-telling progresses, we see a patriarchal society's prejudiced effect on the young girl and her mother. The young girl is visibly disheartened, prompting her mother to rewrite the poem. The girl is later seen as inspired, motivated and encouraged as she can now relate to the words she recites.

[VIEW THE CAMPAIGN VIDEO HERE](#)

This poem marks the beginning of a much larger movement. Further initiatives include comic books created by female artists (distributed to schools nationwide) and an anthem that showcases a few of the many professions that girls can aspire to enter.

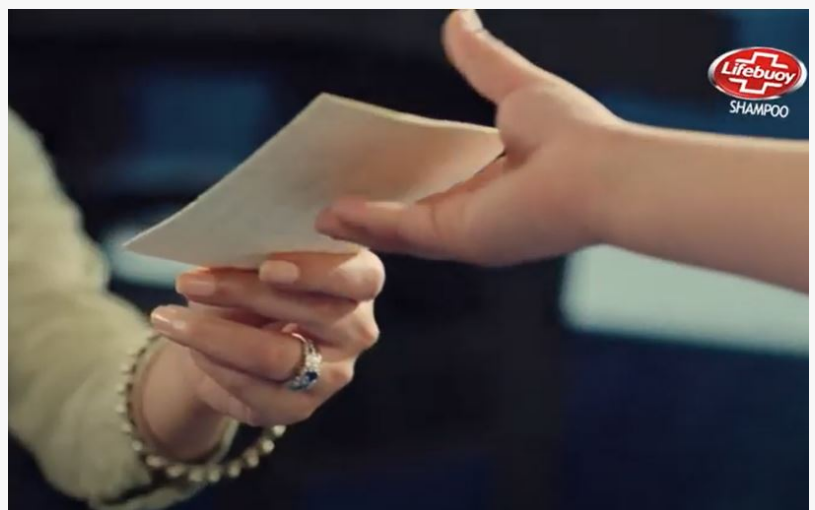
[Read & Hear the FULL POEM here](#)
[Lyrics sung beautifully by Zeb Bangash](#)

The campaign was launched on mass media, including TVCs, social media platforms, print, and prominently placed billboards.

Murad Raas, Honourable Minister for School Education Punjab: "The Punjab government is actively working towards generating better education opportunities for our children. We are



boys laughing at the girl when she's reading the poem



mother handing updated poem to daughter



little Girl with mother

acutely aware of the challenges faced by our girls and are working tirelessly to increase school attendance and retention rates and improve infrastructure facilities.

Asima Haq, Director - Beauty and Personal Care, Unilever Pakistan: "In 2018, Lifebuoy Shampoo embarked upon a journey to leverage education as a key enabler for females in Pakistan. This campaign reaffirms our commitment to girl empowerment at the grassroots level, where the impact is felt and needed most. We strongly believe that by educating a girl, you open up possibilities of a better future for her, her family and generations to come".



little girl happily reading the new poem

Shehzad Roy, singer, musician, renowned educationist and founder of Zindagi Trust: "I am so inspired to be partnering for this cause, and I know that this effort is fueled by a passion to make a real difference by all partners involved; to bring a balance in the educational materials that girls are exposed to. I have witnessed firsthand the difficulties and hardships young girls face in their quest for getting a good education. This actual curriculum change will be the catalyst for better opportunities for girls in Pakistan.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two parties, Lifebuoy Shampoo and the Ministry of School Education Punjab, aims to impact girl child education at the grassroots. This alliance between the Department of School Education, the Government of the Punjab, and Lifebuoy Shampoo will contribute to the government's mission to provide equal access to quality education and lay the foundation for continued efforts to provide and promote girls' education.

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