

Views & News

Delhi Rape Case

Shazia Sharafat

A twenty-three years old female medical student was gang raped on December 16, 2012 in a public bus in Delhi, India. The woman, whose name was not revealed due to Indian laws, was taken to the Safdarjang Hospital where she had gone through multiple surgeries and was placed on ventilation. She was sent to Elizabeth Hospital, Singapore on December 26 for the transplantation of her damaged organs but unfortunately she was died while undergoing emergency treatment on December 29.

The details of the incident revealed that after watching a film in South Delhi in the early evening, the woman and a male companion boarded a bus, which was being driven as an unauthorized "joyride", thinking it was a public bus. The only other passengers on the bus were five men who were friends of the driver. All six, including the driver, were charged in connection with the assaults and have been arrested.

The accused threw both the victims from the moving bus. According to their statements, they were partially clothed and unconscious at around 11pm and were found by the passerby on the road.

On the fourth day of incident the male victim testified in the court and a day after the female victim recorded her statement to the police at the hospital. According to victims' testimony, the five adults accused the murder charges and other charges under the Indian Penal Code and the remaining one perpetrator who is teen age and will be treated in a juvenile court.

The statement of the paramedic students spark protest across India and condemned the entire world of such barbaric act.

Many security officials feared that the protests would have escalate if the woman/ victim had died in New Delhi, but the government's consideration was her wellbeing (Reuters: New Delhi, January 8, 2013).

The incident was also condemned by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women but just through a piece of paper in a form of press release. "This attack is an attack against all women in India. Violence against women is not only a women's issue but a human right issue. UN Women joins with the government and people of India in recognizing that we need to take tougher action together to change the

present reality and culture of impunity” according to the press release issued on December 20 by the UN Women.

Rape is fastest growing crime in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the number of rape cases registered in India increasing by a starting 873.3 percent, from 2,487 in 1971 to 24,206 in 2011. In comparison, the murder cases increased by 250 percent over an even longer period, six decades, starting from 1953 to 2011.

Symptomatic of the traditional neglect suffered by rape is the absence of statistics for the crime in the 1950s and 1960s. NCRB started collecting data on rape only since 1971. This is despite the fact that the conviction rate for rape at the national level is lower than the average of 11 "violent crimes" (28 percent). While the conviction rate for murder in 2011 was 38.5 percent, it was substantially lower at 26.4 percent for rape in the same year (The Times of India, December 27, 2012).

Public as well as legislators demanded death or at least life term for the accused in the days after the 23-years old physiotherapy student was attacked on a moving bus. A penal, however, rejected such ideas. “India needs to implement existing laws, not introduce tougher punishment such as the death penalty, to prevent rape”, a government panel set up to review legislation said.” (Reuters January 23, 2013).

The case is so clear, accused persons have confessed their offence: therefore so they should get penalized directly without having hearings and practices in the trial courts again and again this case could be solved directly from the Supreme Court of India because there is no third option left to prevent offenders from punishment. Delhi is completely declared as "unsafe" for women, the court said (Guardian, January 15).

There are fears the gang rape could lead to further restrictions on women, rather than greater emancipation. Students at Delhi University spoke of a new pressure from family to avoid public places or "going out". The government of the union territory of Puducherry in the south was set to order all schoolgirls to wear overcoats to "protect them" until a public outcry forced a U-turn. Delhi police advised women students to "go straight home after college". (Guardian, January 15).

It is something that a girl child should be learned from her childhoods that “don’t get raped”, guard your modesty, instead telling boys that “don’t rape”.

In fact there are two lawyers V.K Anand and Manohar Lal Sharma who offered to defend the offenders. “The accused have a right to seek justice just as the victim has” Lawyer Anand said (Reuters, January 8, 2013). This is the dilemma where the rapist and murderers are being defended and the space is being given to them and other perpetrators

for committing the similar crime several times because people are there who can support them legally because lawyers are suppose to be the government representatives and then what they need else. Meanwhile, "Until today I have not seen a single incident or example of rape with a respected lady," Manohar Lal Sharma said, according to (Bloomberg reports) in this regard, he must evolve the definition of the respectable lady, whereas victim needs justice, instead of this they are defaming or humiliating the women. (nbcnews.com, January 11, 2013)

It often takes years to deliver the justice, as the overall gloomy picture is being showed and we all know "Justice delayed is justice denied".

Honored Women's of Pakistan

Priya Abro

February 26, 2012, Daily Dawn

Filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy has just won her first and Pakistan's first Oscar. Her documentary film Saving Face, co-directed by US-based Daniel Junge, follows Pakistani plastic surgeon Mohammad Jawad who preforms re-constructive surgery on acid attack survivors in Pakistan.

In her acceptance speech Chinoy said she hoped her film will resonate for others in Pakistan.

"It is a story of hope with a powerful message for the Pakistani audience. I felt this would be a great way to show how Pakistanis can help other Pakistanis overcome their problems," she said.

Dawn.com caught up with the Oscar winning documentary maker before she left for Los Angeles to attend the Academy Awards. Here Chinoy speaks about her own aspirations as a film-maker, her documentaries and what Saving Face means for Pakistan.

Female Pakistani Journalist Honored

November 7, 2012, Daily Dawn

Zubeida Mustafa was the first woman to work in Pakistan's mainstream media. That was more than 30 years ago. Today, because of Zubeida's courage to use her voice, report on other women's voices, and argue for hiring policies that would allow women to occupy all positions in the newsroom, life is different for women in Pakistan.

"I wanted to create space for women and I thought if there were more, it would give them strength," says Zubeida.

On Monday night in Los Angeles and last week in New York, Zubeida Mustafa was honored by the International Women's Media Foundation and the U.S. media elite with the Courage in Journalism **Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Biography of Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy and Zubeida Mustafa

Obaid-Chinoy began writing investigative pieces at the age of fourteen as a way to contribute to critical conversation in Pakistan. She was always interested in telling stories of marginalized communities; people whose voices were never heard and whose compelling stories needed to be shared. She continued to pursue journalism while she was at Smith and wrote for a number of Canadian and American publications. In December 2001, Obaid-Chinoy returned to Pakistan and spent time in refugee camps and went back to the US with a documentary proposal in hand. At the age of twenty two, with no prior experience, she sent letters to eighty news companies and organizations in the US, and was declined by all of them. Eventually, Bill Abrams, the president of New York Times Television gave her her big break. She returned to Pakistan to produce *Terror's Children*.

Zubeida Mustafa (born 1941) is a journalist from Pakistan. She became the first woman to work in the country's mainstream media, when she joined Dawn in 1975. Zubeida Mustafa speaks modestly about her 33 years as a journalist in Pakistan, where she worked through extreme political instability, media censorship, gender barriers and social upheaval as the assistant editor of Dawn. When she wrote an article on breast cancer, a group of religious conservatives raided Dawn and accused the paper of printing "obscene" content. Undeterred, Mustafa went on to write about contraception and reproductive health. She also covered the case of rape victim turned women's advocate Mukhtar Mai when other writers were afraid to mention it. A reporter must ignore critics and write the truth, Mustafa said. "Even if it is a tiny little drop in the ocean, you know you have made a contribution

Women's like Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Zubeida Mustafa are the role models for younger generation especially for Pakistani girls who still think that they don't have abilities here to move forward. Women like above are trying hard to change the image of Pakistani women which is being portrayed by some religious leaders and West as a dependent character, submissive and an living object bound in the four walls of house. They are not only trying to change the perception of people on national but also on through international level.

Regrettably, despite of their successes, Pakistani women are often portrayed, especially in the developed countries or in West, as oppressed victims of the social and economic taboos. "There are many stereotypes about Pakistanis and their attitude towards women,"

and these stereotypes have been strengthened by issues like the burning of girls', honor killings, domestic violence and also due to using Islam in wrong ways.

"The brutal customs like honor killings, and Wani (women marriages to resolve old feuds), are still there to smudge our image," actually its our media's draw back and also other countries that they are only depicting news's related to violence and not giving importance to those images which signify the figure of Pakistani women's success and liberty. Just last year, four women joined Pakistan Air Force as fighter pilots, making a precedent in the history of Pakistan. Even it would not be erroneous to quote that in some aspects, Pakistani women even beat women in the world's biggest democracy, the United States.

Pakistan Women Hard Hit by Climate Change

Zubaida Heer

Islamabad: The adverse impacts of climate change are visible among women fold of the country who are fast becoming their victims in respect of resource wars and violence.

Monday, August 20, 2012, The News International

According to a report of International Union for Conversation of Nature, there is a common perception that 'it is men who are farmers'. Contrary to this perception, women in Pakistan produce 60-80% of food consumed in the house.

Due to the phenomenon of Global Warming, the world is continuously going through climate change. This report of IUCN further stated that women are the primary victims of destructive activities against the environment.

A report of the World Bank Showed that in Pakistan, especially in mountainous regions, men (around 50-63% of the households) often out-migrate for livelihood opportunities and it is the women who look after the family's agriculture piece of land along with many other responsibilities. Therefore women have to stay in the areas hit by drought, deforestation and crop failures. Hence they have to bear the harsh environment conditions and get affected by it.

There should be policies for those women who have to face the environment disproportionality regarding their health, livelihood, disaster management and development. Women are very close to nature. In agrarian culture women are over burdened with duties and responsibilities. Along with household chores, bearing and rearing of children, satisfying family's needs, fetching fuel and water, they have to look

after livestock and agricultural tasks. As they are illiterate mostly, they do not have job or working options, and have no access to trade and marketing. That is why they have to stay at home. But men of these families, in the off season of crops, often migrate to urban areas for the purpose of earning money. In all the good and the bad times, women have to stay at the house and face all challenges. Therefore they become the victim of harsh climate changes whether it is drought, flood or famine. Whether they work in the fields and crops or not, they have to live there and look after their family.