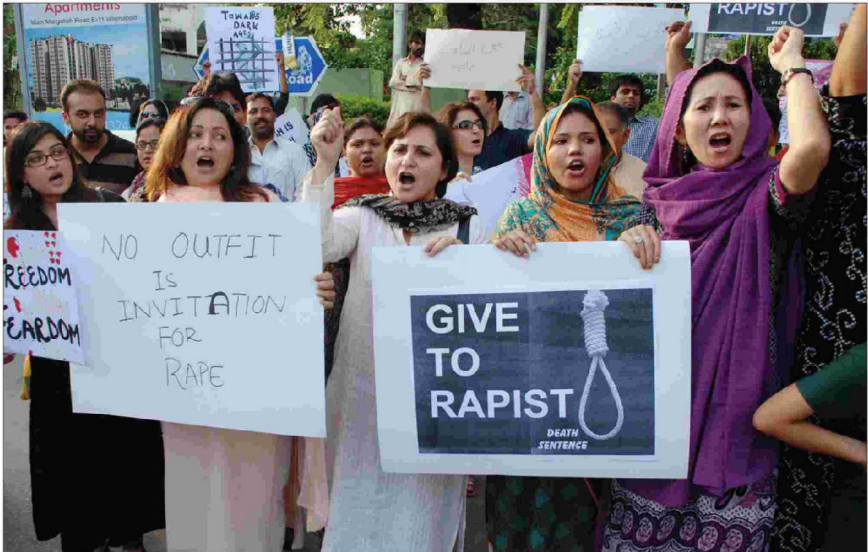


Tuesday, September 17, 2013

Girl raped in Lahore Protesters demand arrest of culprits

By A Reporter



CIVIL society activists protest in Islamabad on Monday against the rape of a girl. — Photo by Ishaque Chaudhry

ISLAMABAD, Sept 16: The civil society on Monday staged a protest against the rape of a five-year-old girl in Lahore, vowing to continue it till the culprits were arrested.

The demonstration was held on the call of a coalition of three non-government organisations – Insani Haqooq Ittehad, Aurat Foundation and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

The protesters blocked the main road in F-6 Markaz. They demanded that legislation should be carried out to award harsher punishment for rape.

Prominent parliamentarians and civil society activists including Nafisa Shah, Marvi Sirmed, Tahira Abdullah, Samar Minallah, Farzana Bari, Naeem Mirza and television ar-

tist Jamal Shah took part in the protest.

A five-year-old girl was left outside Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Lahore on Friday after being raped by unidentified men.

The girl was reported missing on Thursday evening.

The protesters, who were chanting slogans against the incident, said the culprits had paedophilia, a psychiatric disorder which made a person abuse a child.

They said during the last one week as many as six cases of similar nature had been reported.

Talking to mediapersons, Tahira Abdullah said it was an inhuman act and culprits should be arrested as soon as possible.

Some women protesters stopped

vehicles and requested drivers and families to participate in the protest because it aimed at protecting children of their families as well.

The participants announced that they would protest everyday at F-6 Markaz at 4pm.

This is the only way the Punjab police would be compelled to arrest the culprits, they said.

Former director-general, Ministry of Human Rights, Farukhanda Aurangzeb, told *Dawn* that it was unfortunate that the police had not been able to arrest the culprits.

"A sudden increase in rape cases shows in what direction we are heading. Rape is a bigger crime compared to murder because it devastates the entire life of a woman, especially a child. This crime has a psychological

affect on the child," Ms Aurangzeb said.

She said although the civil society was against capital punishment, through legislation death penalty should be fixed for culprits of rape cases.

"There are so many loopholes in our investigation and judicial system which go to the advantage of the culprits who manage to prove themselves innocent," she said.

"When I was the director-general, Ministry of Human Rights, many cases used to be lodged with the ministry but most of them were closed after the victims were forced to go for a patchup. So I suggest that legislation should be carried out to ensure maximum punishment for culprits," she said.