

Pakistan: Young Christian Girl Was Murdered By Her Employer

Wednesday 24 February 2010, by [Minorities Concern of Pakistan](#) (Date first published: 1 February 2010).

LAHORE: Shazia Bashir, 12, was killed by her Muslim employer, Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, a rich lawyer, in

Lahore on Jan. 22. Naeem is a former president of the Lahore Bar Association. Shazia had been working for 8 months as a domestic (child) worker at Defense Colony in Lahore. There are more around 10 millions child laborers in Pakistan where physical violence was a common at work.

Despite the existence of legislation such as the Employment of Children Act 1991, child labor is on the rise because of increasing poverty,' daily *Dawn* says. According to *The News* of Jan. 25, statistics show that 70 per cent or more female domestic servants suffer abuse in some form. All domestic servants remain unprotected by labor laws with no regulations in place as to their hours of work, leaves and other rights. Shazia worked for only Rs1,000 (US\$12) per month as a domestic worker of that family which had been continuously tortured her. Her body was badly maimed when she was brought to the Jinnah Hospital Lahore where she died.

According to the local Christians, she was died after severe tortured. She belonged to a very poor family and was their only source of income. She had one younger brother of 8 years age while her two elder sisters are married.

"We were not allowed to see her for a long time" her parents told the media. The alleged killer, in the first instance, tried to pressure her father to compromise with him and offered Rs. 20,000 (US\$250) for the family's silence in the matter. After facing a strong resistance from the Shazia's family, he brought an officer to intimidate Sindh Assembly members' protest the family but the family did not compromise on their daughter's murder. Christian leaders say that police did not apprehend the accused because Shazia's family was poor and belongs to a religious minority group. Many Christians and Muslims on Jan. 23 protested outside the Punjab Assembly for hours, demanding action against the alleged killers. Due to public pressure, an First Information Report (FIR) was lodged by police after at least 18 hours.

And the accused was arrested at least 24 hours after the registration of the FIR. RESOLUTIONS: The National Assembly and the Punjab Assembly on Jan. 26 passed Shazia's family members resolutions against the brutal killing of Shahzia.

LAWYERS: —The lawyers, accused supporters, on Jan. 26, who thronged the Cantt court from all

parts of the city, not only barred Shazia's family members and sympathizers from the court room but also the media persons.

They literally pushed the media persons and restricted them to a corner of the court. Policemen present on the court premises visibly sided with the rowdy lawyers,|| daily *The News* reported.

SECRETS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: Kamila Hyat writes in *The News* on Jan. 28 - The fact that harassment, molestation and occasional murder are a routine part of the life of many domestic servants. This is a documented reality. According to the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA), 91 per cent of female domestic workers say they have suffered sexual abuse at one point or another. Those like the unfortunate Shazia, who are young and belong to a minority community, are especially vulnerable. Each year, there are indeed complaints of abuse from other maids. A few Muslim NGO's protest in Multan months ago, a group of wealthy women in Lahore 'helped' a young girl who complained she was being 'rented out' almost each night to friends of her employer, in exchange for money paid to him, to find other employment. What they did not do was initiate any action against the man and his wife - who, it would appear, abetted him.

P.S.

From "Minorities Concern of Pakistan" 47th issue (February 2010).