**Covering the wrong issues**

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Shocked. Hurt. Speechless. Shaken to the core once again as a few days back, I came to know of a grade 11 student Bushra Rajpar, who was gangraped on the way back from school. I saw the viral video of a broken and a brave father pleading to the government for justice for his daughter. He has registered an FIR, taking all the right steps hoping for justice again. He took this brave step to save another ‘Bushra’ from this devastating and heinous crime.

When I decided to write about this, what shocked me and made my blood boil was that none of the mainstream media channels or print media had covered this news. Was this matter so insignificant that it just slipped under the cracks for our media that will leave no stone unturned to cover newsworthy material? Should I assume that a 16-year-old girl being gangraped isn’t newsworthy to cover?

We are all used to how after hue and cry, any news that covers rape or any other crime especially against women dies down. Do any of us know what happened with the Lahore-Sialkot motorway gang rape? Do we ever get to know what happened to the perpetrators? I also hold myself responsible for moving on from it, for not asking the question after posting a few angry social media posts or writing here.

[PML-N's Mushahid Ullah Khan passes away](https://nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2021/senator-mushahid-ullah-khan-passes-away)

But this time the inattention and callousness of the media with its indifferent attitude towards such a crime makes me lose all hope for any change that can be possible to stop more women being raped in our society.

I always think about what the solution is to stop this crime from happening. I am realistic enough to know that it cannot be completely eradicated but the right steps can be taken to minimise and prevent it.

Post the motorway incident, there was so much noise about capital punishment. There was divided opinion where our PM supported the capital punishment along with half the country, yet there are other factors like violation of the Article 14 of constitution or an international judgment on this on humanitarian grounds.

We can also focus on the lack of implementation of laws for offences like rape and child sexual abuse that causes this crime to go on. There is a case for saying we need to raise our sons better.

I reflected on all these factors that might be enabling rape culture, but in my limited understanding and humble opinion, I feel that if there is any institution that can maybe make a difference in minimising this crime, it is our media. It is one of the most powerful institutions of the country and needs to reassess if it is justifying the role of being an agent of change. Are they misusing the power they have or are they unable to access that power, emasculated by political benefits and the hunger for newsworthy material? And then who decides what is newsworthy? Will the media continue to respond to what our society demands, which might be paying more attention to covering news about Fawad Khan rather than a rape story?

[Libya marks tenth anniversary of 2011 revolution](https://nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2021/libya-marks-tenth-anniversary-of-2011-revolution)

Media on the other hand, can change the mindset of the society by creating awareness about neglected areas. And yes, it would be unfair to say that awareness isn’t created, but the momentum is what is missing. No matter what is more newsworthy, there has to be more media attention consistently given to crimes like rape. These conversations need to go on.

We have to find ways that can make the rapist reflect and contemplate on the gravity of his act and also discourage other offenders from committing the same crime. Social media, print and digital can do that.

You have to understand the psyche of a rapist. It is about power isn’t it, and so a punishment that takes this power away might deter others. Media exposing these offenders and communicating to the rest how powerless these men can be once caught might work.

Shaming them can actually work for them as their fragile egos would probably withstand the death penalty, but not exposure and shame. Being powerless is their biggest fear and they feed into it by disempowering another human being. Media has to be more persistent in exposing these crimes and covering them comprehensively. A story has to be more than a story. It needs to have an end too.

[US to pay more than $200m to WHO by end of month](https://nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2021/us-to-pay-more-than-dollar-200m-to-who-by-end-of-month)

So fully assume the power that you have dear media, and play the position you are meant to play.