**Socio-Legal Aspects of Combating Acid Attack and It’s Regulation in India**

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## Abstract

An acid attack is an act in which an acid is thrown by the perpetrators generally on the victim’s face. It is a very grave situation which is currently hampering the society as whole. In addition to the physical deformity suffered by the victim, the victim also goes through a series of series and difficult situations mentally.According to a report, it can be inferred that much of the accident concerning an acid assault is for failure to marry, rejection of marriage or for any specific reason. Acid attack on women is increasing day by day, mainly on the 11-30-year-old girls. The easy accessibility of cheap acid makes it an ideal weapon for the perpetrators to use against this heinous crime against women. Illegal sale and purchase of acid is considered an offense that can not be redeemed, yet it is readily accessible in most urban and rural grocery and hardware stores. Sulphuric, nitric and hydrochloric acid are the most common forms of acid used in such assaults. Acid attack seldom kills a human but it causes severe physical , psychological and social scarring. Yet there has always been the phenomenon of perpetual suffering and psychological alienation. Research shows that most of the respondents to acid attack who had faced violence faced other forms of violence, such as casting out from society, difficulty arranging marriage, problem with employment, etc. Local authorities and administrative departments are conducting several community awareness programs to make people aware of this heinous crime. This paper attempts to illustrate the reasons and effect of the acid assault on this vulnerable person, and the victims' difficulties or hindrance.

In this following paper the author has tried to examine the effects of acid attacks in the society at a large and how these can be stopped. In recent times self-awareness regarding these incidents have increased mainly giving credits to Bollywood movies like Chappak. Also, the author has tried to resolve the various issues faced by the victims. The author has also undertaken an approach to point out not just the female victims but also, the male victims of these acts.

## Keywords: Acid Attack, Violence towards the victims, Difficulties faced by the victims.

## Introduction

An acid attack is something in which acid is thrown over a person’s face, thereby disturbing their face or body structure. An acid attack generally is involved of a particular act where the criminals throw or spray acidic contents on the parts of the victim’s body be it their face or any other body part which leads of a permanent disfigurement of the that particular body structure.Acid crime includes deliberate actions of abuse poured into by offenders,Sprinkle or pour acid on the faces and bodies of the victims, often intended toDisfigure forever, and inflict severe physical and mental distress to the victim of the act.Acid attacks inflict instant injury,disfiguration, pain and enduranceof victims’ surgical problems.At first contact, acid feels likewater onthe body, but within seconds, it causes a burning sensation that quickly becomesincreasingly intense.[[1]](#footnote-2)If not washed off immediately with water, acid can meltaway a victim’s skin and flesh, going as far as dissolving bones.[[2]](#footnote-3)When thrownat the face, acid quickly burns and destroys victims’ eyes, eyelids, ears, lips,noses, and mouths.[[3]](#footnote-4)“Acid burn victims are found crying in agony until the acid iswashed away.It takes five seconds of contact to cause superficial burns and30 seconds to result in full-thickness burns.Victims suffer the most physicalpain from superficial wounds rather than deeper burns, as deeper wounds burnoff the nerve cells.The acid continues to destroy the skin tissue until it isinactivated or neutralized by water.The burned skin dies, turning black andleathery, and severe scarring results.After the attacks, victims are at risk ofbreathing failure due to the inhalation of acid vapors which cause either apoisonous reaction or swelling in the lungs.In the weeks or even months afterthe attack, acid burn victims may suffer from infections, which can also causedeath if not treated with proper cleaning techniques and antibiotics.Victims must endure painful surgical procedures just to prevent further harm andsuffering.As mentioned, if not washed off immediately, acid continues to burnthe skin, and may eventually cause skeletal damageand organ failure. If thedead skin is not removed from an acid violence victims’ body within four or fivedays, the new skin may grow to cause further facial deformities.”[[4]](#footnote-5)

## Definition of the Term Acid Attack

According to the "Prevention of Crimes (by Acids) Act 2008, (National Commission for Women-Draft Bill)" the concept of Acid Attacks and Acid is used and with respect Section 3 of above act:

“(a) Acid shall mean and includes any substance which has the character of acidic or corrosive or burning nature that is capable of causing bodily injuries leading to scars or disfigurement or temporary or permanent disability.

(b) Acid attack means any act of throwing acid or using acid in any form on the victim with the intention of or with knowledge that such person is likely to cause to the other person Permanent or partial damage or deformity or disfiguration to any part of the body of such person.”[[5]](#footnote-6)

Also, under a study which was carried out by UNICEF:

“Acid attack is a serious problem all over the world, even children are become victim of acid attack in many cases. In an Acid attack, acid is thrown at the face or body of the victim with deliberate intent to burn and disfigure. Most of the victims are girls, many below the age of 18, who have rejected sexual advances or marriage proposals. Acid attack or vitriolise is defined as the act of throwing acid onto the body of a person with the intention of injuring or disfiguring [them] out of jealousy or revenge.”

“Vitriolise or acid attack means an act of throwing acid on the body of a person (it’s basically throwing upon women and young girls). In other words, it can be said that acid violence is a deliberate use of acid to attack human beings.”[[6]](#footnote-7) Also, under the Indian Penal Code or the IPC act of 1860, in the year 2013 there was an amendment done through which under the explanation of part 1 of the section 326B of the Indian Penal Code has defined the acid act as “any substance which has acidic or corrosive character of burning nature, capable of causing bodily injury leading to scars or disfigurement or temporary or permanent disability”.Acid attack can be seen as as “any act of throwing acid or using acid in any form on the victim with the intention of or with knowledge that such person is likely to cause to the other person permanentor partial damage or deformity or disfiguration to any part of the body of such person (National Commission of India, July 2009).”

## Reason Why Acid Attack Takes Place in The First Place

To understand this problem of acid attack we first need to go deep into the root causes by the virtue of which these attacks take place. It is one of important things to know why there is such a lot of social tormenting going on around us, which affects us in this bad manner of way. If we talk about India, the majority of attacks that happen here are on women and thus there have been major laws regarding that but many a times we have not considered the attacks on the opposite gender as well. Although there is no visible support from government on this matter many privately run NGOs have taken this matter into cognizance. In India, it is studied that much of the time this assault affects women and young girls and the apparent cause is the woman's rejection of marriage and affection or denial of sexual harassment and conflict of dowry.These are some of the prime reasons why acid attacks happen in India, however few cases have been reported the other way around too. This part will be discussed later in the article.Most of the time also, innocent kids are targeted as to take revenge from their families and so on.The other stated cause for such an attack could be territory, properties and any business conflicts of some sort.“Additionally, a report written by a leading organisation in India working on acid violence, the Campaign and Struggle against Acid Attacks on Women (CSAAAW), found that sexual harassment or assault in response to a woman or girl refusing such advances or demanding that the violence stop often precede such attacks.”[[7]](#footnote-8)If a report of law commission of India is to be taken into account then the law commission of India 226th report has stated that the majority of the incidents of acid attacks takes place due the reasons stated as “…particularly young women for spurning suitors, for rejecting proposals of marriage, for denying dowry etc. The attacker cannot bear the fact that he has been rejected and seeks to destroy the body of the woman who has dared to stand up to him.”[[8]](#footnote-9)It is the manner in which our culture treats us. Women also cannot battle for their freedoms which are any individual's fundamental human right. Women are often perceived to be "possession," and a man remains the supreme decision-maker in relation to our patriarchal society. And when a woman fails to embrace a man, he is seen as losing his credibility, dignity and respect, and he regain it by burning her face with acid. People pour acid on people as a symbol of manhood and dominance.Man derives a perverted pleasure by impairing her face and his male ego is pleased. Another significant explanation could be issues with the dowry or other marital problems. While taking dowry is a criminal act, in many areas it is still most omnipresent. It is viewed the obligation of the family of the bride and if it is not fulfilled it has to experience a huge social disgrace. In India, several people say to be the strike by acid because of a failure to fulfil their in-law’s financial demands. In fact, land and ownership issues can also be claimed to be the main causes for this barbaric crime being perpetrated.The analysis of newspaper accounts in India reveals that almost 40 percent of the attacks between unknown persons materialized because of commercial competition, trade conflicts, property disputes or family retaliation. Therefore, we may come to the inference from the aforementioned debate that people turn to acid attacks as a way of threatening women and enforcing their power upon her. These nasty attacks raise his male ego and make him believe that he is God's proud creator and the oppressive culture he has developed.Females between the ages of 11 and 30 are the most vulnerable to these assaults, and in 36 per cent of accidents the victims are chosen to refuse marriage proposals. Hence the main cause behind the acid attack is the refusal of sexual advances.Girls are a huge component of our culture. Throughout this patriarchal world, throughout which males are still always the 'strongest class,' and woman has her own role or task, we cannot ignore that the life of a woman is far more complex than the existence of a individual. A woman needs to look after her own personal life and if she's a mother she always has to look after the lives of her babies. Worse still, once she gets married, there might be extra burden on her back. And in certain situations, they'll even do stronger in the job setting than their male counterparts.As our culture has begun to accept women's distinct identities, as such people have are active participants in all walks of life, she is a mum, a wife, an entrepreneur, and a daughter. Now, women not only become a significant unit of society but also influence the course of social change in society.“Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.”[[9]](#footnote-10) If we take into account the violence on women around the world we can notice that being a female gender becomes something the only reason why these crimes are committed against them which in fact is quite wrong. There's a strong amount of official and societal acceptance towards abuse against women as well. Violence against women can be more easily performed due to their lower social, economic, and legal status. Gender-based abuse is prevalent globally, slashing through age, marriage status, ethnicity, gender, race and thereby presenting abuses of civil rights and immense health concerns. Which involves acid attack abuse, child brides, honour killings, forced abortion, female genital mutilation, contraception forced use, pre-natal sex discrimination, sexual assault, abduction, bullying, involuntary maternity sterilization, trafficking in children, sex trafficking, patriarchal and domestic violence of the very same sex and also the same sex domestic violence.This paper would concentrate mainly on violence from acid attacks, particularly in India. The deliberate usage of acid for harming another human being is acid abuse. Victims of acid abuse are massive women and girls aged 11-30 years of age, and perpetrators typically assign head and face to mutilate, disfigure, and blind. Acid aggression is a common phenomenon not confined to a single ethnicity, faith or geographic place.

Acid Assault is an assault or attempt to attack a human with the intent of disfiguring, torturing, or destroying, utilizing acid or some other form of corrosive material. Such an assault contributes to irreversible physical disfigurement, injury to internal organs, and in some instances even death. There's a relentless struggle of survival for people who endure this assault for the remainder of their life, along with total disabilities and debilitating depression. Every year, India records at least 300–500 cases. Indian acid abuse incidents did not have distinct figures until the early 2013 because Indian Statutory Legislation did not recognise it because a specific crime.Since the 2013 update to the Indian Penal Code (The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013), cases of acid attacks are now being reported as a separate offence under Indian Penal Code Sections 326A and 326B. Given the above, the number of cases has been steeply increasing. Though there are rules from the Supreme Court set out in the case of India's Laxmi v Union (2013)1 on governing the selling and purchase of acid, acid is still readily available over the counter. Justice for acid attack survivors evolved over the years with the judiciary taking the lead in setting the tone for survivors' compensation and rehabilitation.The challenges a victim has to fight are relentless, right from receiving constant free medical care to rehabilitation and restoring his life. Ranging from direct psychiatric help to clinical support facilities for patients and their relatives and seeking legal advice for redress, following the court process, delivering letters of reference to the governments of the States and the agencies involved on behalf of the perpetrators and/or making formal demands for reimbursement and provision of said redress and recovery.

## Laws Regarding Acid Attack in India

Before the case Laxmi vs. Union of India of not many incidents of acid attack came to prominence mostly because they're not mentioned and the scant visibility of this crime in mass media, among legal professionals as well as the mechanism for the administration of justice. It was in Laxmi 's situation that Indian Supreme Court ordered compensation of rupees 3 lakhs. All though it is still meagre compared to the expenses to be incurred by a survivor, Laxmi 's Case set a precedent for free acid treatment, remuneration and selling of acidic products in India. The next major development in litigation was in the case of Parivartan Kendra vs. Union of India, where the survivor Chanchal had to undergo at least eight reconstruction surgeries for which a sum of three lakhs would not be sufficient in any way. Only after presenting the bills and predicted spending reports did the Supreme Court decide to order rupees 13 lakhs for compensation. It is known from practical experience that even a sum of 13 lakhs is still not enough to compensate for this. Therefore, it is the best moment for the anti-acid assault campaign to come together and challenge the justice limits established by the constitutional courts.With regard to hearings and criminal investigations, if someone were to compare India 's law to Bangladesh 's rule on acid attack, on the one side, acid attack is a non-refundable offense in Bangladesh, whereas in India, more often than not, accused persons are easily granted bail. The never-ending hearings and shortage of legal assistance attorneys to support witnesses are only a couple of the problems that occur even when it comes to law enforcement. It is necessary for the anti-acid attack campaign to explore whether to strengthen the legislation as it exists in India and found both effective and dissuasive outcomes as these cases are taken to court.

## Legal Perspectives of Acid Attack In India:

In India the incidence of acid attacks often captures Indian media headlines. Unfortunately, before the passage of The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, there was no separate legislation in India to deal with acid attacks. 2013. 2013. The offense was registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 320, 322, 325, 326 and 307. We will start withSection 320 Grievous Hurt- “The followed acts are designated as ‘grievous’: -

* Emasculation
* Permanent privation of the sight of either eye.
* Permanent privation of the hearing of either ear,
* Privation of any member or joint.
* Destruction or permanent impairing of the powers of any member or joint.
* Permanent disfiguration of head or face.
* Fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth
* Any hurt which endangers life or which causes the sufferer to be during the space of twenty days in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.”[[10]](#footnote-11)

**SECTION 322 - Voluntarily Causing Grievous Hurt –** “Whoever voluntarily causes hurt, if the hurt which the intends to cause or knows himself to be likely to cause is grievous hurt, and if the hurt which he causes is grievous hurt, is said to voluntarily to cause grievous hurt. Explanation - A person is not said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt except when he both causes grievous hurt and intends or knows himself to be likely to cause grievous hurt. But he is said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt, if intending or knowing he toe likely to cause grievous hurt of one kind; he actually causes grievous hurt of another kind.”[[11]](#footnote-12)

**SECTION 325 - Punishment For Voluntarily Causing Grievous Hurt** “Whoever, except in the case provided for by section 335, (Voluntarily causing grievous hurt on provocation), voluntarily causes grievous hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.”[[12]](#footnote-13)

**SECTION 326 – Voluntarily Causing Grievous Hurt by Dangerous Weapons or Means**

“Whoever, except in the case provided for by section 335, voluntarily causes grievous hurt by means of any instrument for shooting, stabbing or cutting , or any instrument which , used as a weapon of offence , is likely to cause death, or by means of fire or any heated substance, or by means of any poison or any corrosive substance, or by means of any explosive substance, or by means of any substance which it is deleterious to the human body to inhale , to swallow, or to receive into the blood, or by means of any animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.”[[13]](#footnote-14)

**SECTION 307 - Attempt to Murder**

“Whoever does any act with such intention or knowledge, and under such circumstances that, if he by that act caused death, he would beguilty of murder, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine; and if hurt is caused to any person by such act, the offender shall be liable either to imprisonment for life, or to such punishment as is herein before mentioned.”[[14]](#footnote-15)

When any person who offends under this section is sentenced to life in prison, he may be put to death if damaged is induced.The Indian Penal Code was amended on 2 April 2013 with the passage of the 2013 'The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act. The modification resulted in the insertion of Sections 326A and 326B specifically for the management of acid violence.

**SECTION 326 A** – “Whoever causes permanent or partial damage or deformity to, or burns or maims or disfigures or disables, any part or parts of the body of a person or causes grievous hurt by throwing acid on or by administering acid to that person, or by using any other means with the intention of causing or with the knowledge that he is likely to cause such injury or hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than ten years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and with fine. Provided that such fine shall be enough and reasonable to meet the expenses for medical treatment of the victim and any fine imposed under this section shall be paid to the victim.”[[15]](#footnote-16)

**SECTION 326 B** – “Whoever throws or attempts to throw acid on any person or attempts to administer acid to any person, or attempts to use any other means, with the intention of causing permanent or partial damage or deformity or burns or maiming or disfigurement or disability or grievous hurt to that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.”[[16]](#footnote-17)

## Issues Faced by The Current Rules Of The Indian Penal Code

Pursuant to Sections 320, 322,325,326 and 307, the Indian Penal Code has given reassurance to these victims. It is, however, evident that these sections do not reach the scope needed for the severity of these offences. The word "acid attack" has still not been specified anywhere, and the regulations still limit it to acerbic substances.The United Nations General Assembly passed the ‘Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993’, and India has accepted the following declaration and is under an obligation to follow it. Article 4(f) of this declaration states that, “all member states should form certain recommendations, for the safety of the women and formulate ways to prevent them. There should also be separate provisions for granting exemplary damages to the victims of the attack.”[[17]](#footnote-18) And if we look into, “Article 253 of the Indian Constitution, the Parliament has the power to make laws to give effect to these international agreements. Hence India is under an obligation to rein in the peril of acid attack.”[[18]](#footnote-19)Now it is seen that the definition of grievous hurt as set out in section 322 of the Indian Penal Code does not include certain acid attack circumstances as the definition clearly states the injuries that constitute grievous hurt. Hence, if the delinquent only causes skin damage to the victim of an acid attack, with no substantial damage to other organs, it would not come under the compass of grievous hurt. Furthermore, there are no safeguards when there is a depletion of the victim's profits. Even if the perpetrator is not convicted with grievous harm, then he may be injured, which in effect requires a three-year incarceration minimal penalty that is rather unrelated to the victim's huge damage. Furthermore, there was even a lacuna which did not allow for the penalization of the convicted for throwing acid. In the light of the aforementioned debate, it was thought that there was a need for new, new and relevant legislation to be introduced on the subject of acid attack and to close all the gaps present in the old current legislation.

An analysis of the amendment of the Act in the year 2013 also, known as the Criminal Amendment Act 2013. The 2013 Criminal Amendment Act passed on the recommendations of the Study of the Verma Committee which illustrated the importance of coping with this crime of acid assault. It put in two new sections i.e. Parts 326A, and the Indian Criminal Code Section 326B. The latest law is also a positive move towards restricting this criminal offence. For recovery purposes, restitution can also be offered to offenders as provided for under Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The incorporation of Section 357C in the Code of Criminal Practice was another laudable move brought on by the Penal Reform Act, 2013.It notes that all hospital, publicly or privately, be operated by the Federal Government, the Government of the State or local authorities, shall immediately provide first aid or medical care, free of charge to the victims of any crime covered by Sections 326A, 376, 376A, 376B, 376C, 376D or 376E of the Indian Penal Code, and shall notify the police without delay also. One point is really obvious about mensrea being quickly proved in acid assault, but is also often hard to prove in murder. It is a deliberate act to fire acid at a person's nose. It requires first acquire the acid from the attacker and this proves that the crime is planned in advance.The intruder then throws acid onto the victim's face, becoming well conscious of the consequences of his act. This shows that the actions of the attacker are altogether wilful. Although dreaming about a tougher penalty in acid assault, that may be a high point.

## Results of Acid Attack

The major consequences which an acid attack victim has to go through are:

1. **Physical Appearances**:Like other wounds and illnesses, acid burns are perhaps the most severe accidents that a human being may cause, owing primarily to the extent and severity of the injury are common and often need intensive medical attention. Acid burns, layer by layer, through the skin and flesh, causing great pain and injury. “It cuts through the fat and muscle beneath between the two layers of the skin, and even down to the bone, it will melt the tissue. The depth of the injury depends on the brawn of the acid and the length of contact with the skin-the burning continues until the acid is scrupulously washed away with water. Additionally, if dropped on a person's forehead, acid easily spreads through the eyes, ears, nose, and lips.[[19]](#footnote-20) The agony is agonizing, as a strong burning fire burns like a fiery knife into the victim's skin. Eyelids and lips will completely melt off. The nose can melt, shrivelling in the nose and mouth and ear. Acid can quickly destroy the eye, which makes the victim blind. Skin and skull bone, forehead, cheeks, and chin can melt together. Normally, the acid on which or drips across the face, stomach, back, arms or legs and burns anywhere it hits.
2. **Mental Health Issues**: Psychological effects in contrast with physical implications may be much more profound and unpleasant. It only has the immense effect on the survivor but also on the victims' relatives. A trauma seizes the survivor and culture as well and has a deep core effect on the people. The victim is suffering a psychological trauma when she perceives that her skin is burned off and the defacement and disabilities they have to bear with for the remainder of their lives after the attack. Any of the psychiatric symptoms experienced by the attackers include anxiety, hallucinations, stress, apprehension of facing the environment, pain, nausea, apprehension of more acid attacks. They even feel dismayed and discouraged because they fear they have spurned away an outcast from society. The life of the survivor is ruined as each time she looks in the mirror she is aware of her current depression as well as the future despondency. The conventional and conservative Indian philosophy believes more in outer attractiveness than in inner beauty. Not only that, but society considers the victim to be an 'alien.' Consequently, this casts a detrimental light on her independence and strength.
3. **Social and Economic Consequences**: Survivors who may not be married are unlikely to get married as they struggle from other illnesses, such as blindness, hearing loss, and many other challenges, and the mentality of our community is not as simple as recognizing a disabled individual as their partner. They don't even get a position while being eligible because they can't fulfill their employers' standards of not getting the 'personality.' We make their lives extra irritating rather than assisting humans, as we commiserate them because we don't like to look at their faces for long. This approach needs to be changed, however, as they suffer not because of their mistake, but because of the fault of some wild animals that walk freely all-over social order. As for financial impacts, when it comes to providing jobs, such survivors receive a significant prejudice. So, in this situation, it can be assumed that the perpetrators of an acid attack go to torment, and their lives are worse than death. Their physical scars keep reminding them of the crimes perpetrated on them and they are always haunted by a sense of emptiness and inadequacy.

## Role of Police and Judiciary

Ideally, a country's police force would be a secure refuge for the country's people, and will play a constructive and vital function in nabbing and curbing offenders and violence. But the view remains in India only on paper and not in the real environment. Also, in Indian society, where females are rising as representatives, the police response to crimes against women is revoltingly inadequate unfitting. For instance, one of policeman's most popular questions regarding violence against women is that it is precipitated by victims. As a consequence of this worsening the victim's stress, they keep posing all sorts of immutable queries like about code of conduct, why walking in the darkness etc.They remain unsympathetic about the ways they interact with the perpetrators of abuse and other types of violence against women, given the clear guidance of the Supreme Court on the issue. Acid perpetrators often felt hesitant to register acid assaults because they fear the police officers' abuse and ridicule. Officers can orchestrate investigations of acid abuse in relation of a person’s sexual background and ethical issues. Several victims of acid attacks reported that their assailants manipulated the law enforcement officers to impact the enquiry.To counter the callousness of police officers in incidents of abuse against women, Legal Reform Act, 2013 incorporated a proviso in Section 154 concerned with reporting the First Information Statement. For instances of abuse against women, the victim's complaint will be reported in front of a female police officer pursuant to this rule. Yet the City has far less female police personnel. Women police officers are to be trained to deal delicately with the issue. Moral teaching must be emphasised as well. They must be told the value of their work, not just in combating crime as well as in supporting their fellow citizens.

Until the passage of the Penal Amendment Act, 2013, the individuals convicted of the acids assault were not harshly prosecuted, they were partially charged under hurt and demanded a minimum sentence of 3 years, moreover, they were also quickly released on parole. The perpetrators were still not given sufficient compensation. In Ravinder Singh vs. Haryana State case acid was spilled by her spouse onto a woman for failing to divorce her. The husband engaged in the extramarital affair. The survivor also sustained several acid injuries on her whole body as a consequence of this assault, which eventually contributed to her death. The convicted was indicted pursuant to IPC Section 307. Though the death occurred, life without parole was not enforced, even so. In Syed Shafique Ahmed vs. Maharashtra Claim a personal hatred with his wife was the explanation behind the husband's brutal acid assault on his wife and on that male. This caused both the wife's face as well as that of the other person to be disfigured, and the wife's right eye loss of vision. The defendant was charged under IPC Sections 326 and 324 and earned Rs. 5000 as penalty and 3 years in jail. Again, this case demonstrates that the penalty sometimes given does not take into consideration the intentional and horrific essence of the assault, and is based on the injury techniques. But with the passage of times and after Laxmi Aggarwal case in the Supreme Court, the Court also laid down some guidelines, namely:

* “Counter sale of acid is absolutely prohibited, until and unless the vendor maintains a record which contains the name of the purchaser.
* No acids should be sold to a person who is below 18 years of age. Proper ID card should be shown by the consumer at the time of acquiring the acid.
* All the stock of acids should be confirmed by the vendor with the concerned Sub-Divisional Magistrate within a time of 15 days. If it is not affirmed, then the goods will be sequestered by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate and a fine of Rs. 50000 will be obtruded on him.
* The acid victim should be specified a compensation of at least 3 lakhs from the concerned State/Central Government as the aftercare and rehabilitation cost. Of this amount, a sum of Rs 1 lakh shall be paid to the victim within 15 days of the phenomenon of such incident to lubricate instant medical concentration and the rest 2 lakhs must be given within two months as early as possible.”[[20]](#footnote-21)

There is no doubt that the role of judges in verifying that the offenders of this crime are efficiently punished severely and prosecuted and in efficiently remedying the conundrum of the survivors about such an attack and also in hindering others from having to resort to the same. Indian judicial authorities have come a very long way in dealing with cases of acid attack. But even several things keep persevering. One of issues affecting the retrial of acid attack cases seems to be the nation's lack of judges. An estimate puts Indian judge-to-person ratio at 12.5 judges per a million people. The issue with such a reduced jury ratio is that it requires the excessive postponement to tilt the cases and postponed equality is treated unjustly. It takes years for courts to dispose of the cases thus exhausting the prosecution's purpose altogether. Gender insensitivity at lower judicial levels also poses a unique challenge when dealing with the acid attack cases.

## Financial Help: The Indian constitution grants any individual's right to liberty under Article 21. This was interpreted to include right to live with dignity and will include the right to live with dignity of all, such as alleged assault victims. Article 41 of the Constitution states that the State shall make adequate provision, within the limits of economic potential and growth, for the safeguarding of the right to jobs, schooling and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, illness and disease and in other cases of underserved desire. “Victim rehabilitation is also becoming a major issue. In its order dated 18.07.2013, the supreme court ordered that the victims of an acid attack be paid compensation of at least Rs. 3 lakhs by the State / Union territory concerned as the cost of aftercare and rehabilitation, out of which a sum of Rs. 1 lakh would be paid to the victim within 15 days of such incidence to facilitate immediate medical care and expenses.”[[21]](#footnote-22) The court also stated that in the case of any demand for redress brought by the survivor of an acid assault, the matter should be dealt with by the local legal support agency, who would involve the district judge and any other co-opted individuals that the district judge thought were of assistance, in particular the district attorney, the police superintendent and the civil surgeon or the chief medical officer of the district.

## Conclusion

Acid attacks are the most pernicious and often gender-specific type of abuse. Though acid attacks are registered in several parts of the world, India's acid attack cases have increased. Although the beginning of law reforms in the legislation on acid attacks is a positive sign, there is still a long way to go in implementing these provisions effectively. While it is accepted that after a new law has been adopted, it needs time to calm in and is eventually transformed by the dynamism of the courts, some of the shortcomings that prima facie faces need to be resolved. In consideration of the complexity and severity of the crime, the legal acid attack laws and judicial response to the quantity of damages are very restrictive. The writer of this article reflects thoroughly on the physical, social, and economic impact that have on the perpetrators. There was also a debate on the Indian Law lacunae, and how relevant it is to have a clear law in this regard. This offense seems to be a premeditated one involving considerable ill-will on the part of the victim, and will thus be harshly punished. On top of this, a fair crime settlement is a critical mechanism for ensuring justice. The compensation is very important because the victim had to undergo several surgeries and different medical treatments. The amount of insurance would be adequate to get a decent medical attention accompanied by swift recourse from government departments. The formation of new rehabilitation schemes is another important aspect which requires immediate consideration. Better job opportunities, training etc. should be given to the victims of such crimes, enabling them to meet their day-to-day life-support needs at least. There are several precautions that can be taken to prevent acid assault. Women will step forward to strengthen the circumstances of victims of the acid assault. Another important method may be increased understanding and media coverage of such situations more sensitively and maturely. It is our deepest hope that the terrible state of the justice system in regards to acid attacks will be improved; so that the concerns of the survivor can be alleviated and the Indian community is a better environment for women. It is time to give some serious thought to these questions above. The government should take more corrective action on the sale of acid over the counter, as the shopkeeper had to keep a ledger or register with the details of the person to whom it was sold and the quantity in which it is sold to the people. The buyer was expected to display government identification card and should be over 18 years old. The shopkeeper had to produce the ledger in front of the sub divisional magistrate (SDM) within 15 days but in case of undeclared acid stock and unsuitable ledger maintenance only a fine is imposed up to Rs. 50,000, heavy imprisonment must also be followed. The educational establishments, testing laboratories, schools, government offices, and public sector enterprise units, which are necessary to retain and store acid / corrosive, shall establish a registry of acid use and the same shall be registered with the SDM in question. Any checkpoints ought to be placed in these above listed areas since acid was handled from these locations in most of the instances. The government should impose a severe punishment and the trial procedure should be minimized as the majority of the accused took advantage of long trial proceedings in India.

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