

## A Study on Acid Victim Women in Karnataka

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### Abstract

The current qualitative study explores the psychological, economic, social and cultural aspects of acid attacks on women in Karnataka. The study aims to investigate the effects of acid victim women, which have become a serious threat to our society. Purposive sampling is used to approach 50 respondents (married and unmarried women). Their age ranged from 10-40. Semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted to collect the data. An interview guide is used for semi-structured interview which was prepared after literature review. Thematic analysis was done through all transcribed data of interviews. Major themes which emerged were physical and psychological violence. However, occurrence of eternal trauma and social isolation has also been found. The findings showed that most of the respondents who had faced one type of violence had faced other forms of violence too. Findings are the contributing source in community awareness programs.

**KEYWORDS:** Objectives, Methodology, Data analysis, Health Effects

### Introductory background

Acid throwing, also called an acid attack or vitriol age, is a form of violent assault defined as the premeditated act of throwing acid or a similarly corrosive onto the body of another "with the intention to disfigure, maim, torture, or kill." Perpetrators of these attacks throw acid at their victims, usually at their faces, burning them, and damaging skin tissue, often exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. The most common types of acid used in these attacks are sulfuric, nitric, or hydrochloric acid. The long term consequences of these attacks may include blindness, as well as permanent scarring of the face and body, along with far-reaching social, psychological, and economic difficulties.

Acid has been used in metallurgy since prehistoric times and also for etching since the Middle Ages. The use of acid as a weapon began to rise in many developing nations, specifically those in South Asia. Since acid can be easily purchased in these countries and is relatively cheap as compared to weapons like guns or machetes, it was a preferred weapon. Still, acid is occasionally used in Western nations as well by men scorned by women. In other nations, poisons may be employed as a preferred weapon for lack of other means readily at hand. For instance, in Africa poisons put in food are frequently the weapon of choice. The first recorded acid attacks occurred in Bangladesh in 1967, India in 1982, and Cambodia in 1993. Since then, research has witnessed an increase in the amount and severity of acid attacks in South Asia. However, this can be traced back to significant underreporting in the 1980s and 1990s, along with a general lack of research

for this phenomenon during that time period. Currently, research shows acid attacks increasing in many developing nations, with the exception of Bangladesh which has observed a decrease in incidence in the past few years.

### **Hypotheses**

This study seeks to explore the issue of acid attack violence and to highlight cultural, historical, societal and individual influences that underpin it. It also extrapolates upon the findings of data collected from organizations and individuals with the purpose of proving the following hypotheses:

- That socio-cultural, situational and individual determinants contribute to acid attack violence.
- That motivations and causes for acid attack violence vary from location to location.
- That shame, loss of face or loss of honor are imperatives that perpetuate attacks and marginalize acid survivors.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To collect the information from acid victims in macro level.
- To Study the problems of acid victims women.
- To examine the legal compensation for acid victims women.
- The role of Govt. & Non-Govt. Organization in making policies and rehabilitation programmes for acid victims.

### **Significance of the Study**

By this research peoples, teachers and institute might get benefit from the study. Because now days this crime is intensively common. By the study of this research pupil-will aware about this serious issue and take some computable-steps. This research may help the people how we can get rid of it. And also by the study of this research people know about the seriousness of this criminal act. By this law of this crime is also used to amend and also use to enforcement of this law on equal level. Teachers, people and other authorities will considered this topic as an important issue and also will take some important steps to beware of it. Through this research pupil will organize some kind of seminar to aware more on this topic.

### **Methodology**

95 acid victims are reported in different districts, police station and state commission for women of Karnataka. Among them researcher has selected 50 acid victim women for research study. For this Researcher has prepared interview schedule for collection of data and conducting, group discussions.

### **Data Analysis**

Data is the elementary facts which constitute our knowledge according to their relation and our interest. Data is the term used to refer to the raw numbers (facts and figures) which are thrown out from the occurrence of any event-physical, social,

economic, corporate, geographical, individual and all miscellaneous kinds of events that have the potential to throw out numbers and figures. In our daily life, we come across figures, statistics and statements of all sorts. These could be anything ranging from, India's exports of various commodities to different countries, to the travel plans of any executive. In fact rarely can we do without facts and figures.

**Table-1 information on acid attackers**

<b>Details of acid attackers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
<b>Husband</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Lover</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Colleagues</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Relatives</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows the number of acid victims from various relations. Majority of the acid victims or cases, women faced from her own husbands i.e. for about 48%, the reasons for extra-marital affair, expecting dowry, due to over drunk by the husband. 28% acid cases are taking place by the lovers, 14% of the cases from the colleagues due to jealousy, 10% of the cases from the other relatives within the family.

**Table-2 Age group of the respondents**

<b>Details of age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>10 to 20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>21 to 30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>31 to 40</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>40 above</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

In the following table majority 36 % of the acid victims are in age group of 21 to 30, the reasons given by the respondents are due to not accepting the proposals marriage. 26% of the acid victims are in age group of 10 to 20, the reasons given by the respondents are due to not accepting the proposals love.

**Table-3 The places of taking aid attacks**

Details of places	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Besides of road	26	52
Bus stops	08	16
Homes	07	14
Other places	09	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The places in which the acid attacks are taking place, majority of them had their acid attack on the road side for about 52%. Since there is lack of security and initiatives by the govt.

**Table -4 Effected body parts of the respondents**

Effected details	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Head	04	08
Face	32	64
Hand-leg	06	12
Chest part	05	10
Other parts	03	06
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that acid victims have majority 64% of the respondents got wounded on the part of the face, because of a easy accessibility in throwing acid and to make or look women more ugly through her entire life. 12% of the respondents are wounded on hand-legs, 10% of the respondents are wounded on the part of the chest, 06% of the respondents are wounded of the other parts of body.

**Table-5 Respondents affected parts by acid attack**

Affected details	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Dum and Duff	18	36
Blindness	25	50

<b>Locomotive</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents affected parts due to acid attack as the throwing of acid majority of the cases on faces, they 50% respondents duly are affected/lead to blindness among the acid victims. 36% of respondents are facing Dum and duff problems, 16% of respondents are locomotive but no one not claiming handicraft quota.

**Table-6 Respondents of job nature**

<b>Details of job</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
<b>Aganwadi worker</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Activist</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Self employees</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Unemployees</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The women after the acid attacks, the profile of the victim is seen in a decreased level. The victims with acid attacks majority of them are unemployed ie about 56% the victims have placed themselves as working in a NGO's as an activists that is for 24%. Government has recognized the acid victims through an amendment in the constitutional law but very few for about 04% of them are placed as an aganwadi workers and for about 16% of them are entrepreneur's, in a micro level.

### **Health effects of acid victim women**

The most notable effect of an acid attack is the lifelong bodily disfigurement. According to the Acid Survivors Foundation in Pakistan, there is a high survival rate amongst victims of acid attacks. Consequently, the victim is faced with physical challenges, which require long-term surgical treatment, as well as psychological challenges, which require in-depth intervention from psychologists and counselors at each stage of physical recovery. These far-reaching effects on their lives impact their psychological, social and economic viability in communities.

### **Medical Effects:**

The medical effects of acid attacks are extensive. As a majority of acid attacks are aimed at the face, several articles thoroughly reviewed the medical implications for these victims. The severity of the damage depends on the concentration of the acid and the time before the acid is thoroughly washed off with water or neutralized with a neutralizing agent. The acid can rapidly eat away skin, the layer of fat beneath the skin, and in some cases even the underlying bone. Eyelids and lips may be completely destroyed, the nose and ears severely damaged. Though not exhaustive, their findings included:

- The skull is partly destroyed/deformed and hair lost.
- Ear cartilage is usually partly or totally destroyed; deafness may occur.

- Eyelids may be burned off or deformed, leaving the eyes extremely dry and prone to blindness. Acid directly in the eye also damages sight, sometimes causing blindness in both eyes.
- The nose can become shrunken and deformed; the nostrils may close off completely due to destroyed cartilage.
- The mouth becomes shrunken and narrow, and it may lose its full range of motion. Sometimes, the lips may be partly or totally destroyed, exposing the teeth. Eating and speaking can become difficult.
- Scars can run down from the chin to neck area, shrinking the chin and extremely limiting range of motion in the neck.
- Inhalation of acid vapors usually creates respiratory problems, exacerbated restricted airway pathways (the esophagus and nostrils) in acid patients.

In addition to these above-mentioned medical effects, acid attack victims face the possibility of septicemia, renal failure, skin depigmentation, and even death.

### **Psychological Effects:**

Acid assault survivors face many mental health issues upon recovery. One study showed that when compared to published Western norms for psychological well-being, non-Caucasian acid attack victims reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and scored higher on the Derriford appearance scale, which measures psychological distress due to one's concern for their appearance. Additionally, the women reported lowered self-esteem according to the Rosenberg scale and increased self-consciousness, both in general and in the social sphere.

In some countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, acid attack victims are psychologically persecuted after the acid attack. The media overwhelmingly avoids reporting acid attack related violence; if covered, the description of the attack is Spartan, and often implies that the act was inevitable or even justified.

### **Social Effects:**

In addition to medical and psychological effects, many social implications exist for acid survivors, especially women. For example, such attacks usually leave victims handicapped in some way, rendering them dependent on either their spouse or family for everyday activities, such as eating and running errands. These dependencies are increased by the fact that many acid survivors are not able to find suitable work, due to impaired vision and physical handicap. This negatively impacts their economic viability, causing hardships on the families/spouses that care for them. As a result, divorce rates are high, with abandonment by husbands found in 25 percent of acid assault cases in Uganda (compared to only 3 percent of wives abandoning their disfigured husbands). Moreover, acid survivors who are single when attacked almost certainly become ostracized from society, effectively ruining marriage prospects.

### **Research Findings:**

- The main causes for acid attacks are follows: Rejection of love (40%), Rejection of Marriage proposal (20%), Sexual rejection (20%), land disputes (10%) of doubt extra marital affairs Etc.
- Most of acid attack victims were adult women 40% and middle aged women were 60%.
- After acid attack victims were facing socio-economic and psychological problems 90%.
- 90% acid attacks intended to deform.
- Acid attacks were done by those associates of women such as husband (50%), lover (40%), strange youths (10%).
- After acid attacks also we can see they are posing murder threat to acid attack victims.
- 70% acid attack victims living away from family and guardians. And 30% victims leading their life as orphans and with their children some times.
- 80% of victims were not aware of government facilities and they are suffering from mental depression.
- 50% of acid victims were living homeless and jobless.

### **Suggestions of Research**

- If an women, who has been harassed by acid attack, in order to get treatment, public should be support her. By creating “Jeeva Rakshaka” or “life Saver” committee.
- The amount which is been given by the government is not so useful for the women who is been subjected for the acid attack. So the amount should be increased for their further treatment.
- The government should treat her medically, mentally and judiciary by appointing an person as a “protector”.
- The victims should be given savoir punishment because the old method of punishing is so inance, Indian punishing system IPC 326 should be modified.
- Monthly amount which is given by government is 3000, this should been increased to 10,000 in that 5000 is been separated for medical treatment and 5000 for life/daily wages, and this amount should be kept as saving account.
- The women who is been attacked by acid. Instead of sitting simply in home, she should be trained in such a way to build her own life style Ex: tailoring, cloth designing, Bamboo box manufacturing etc.
- If the government has been living any tender means, this people should be participate in that.
- They should also permitted to get loan in National and Rural Banks.
- To start small scale / home industry, government should provide subsidy loan.
- Reservations should be given for the children of the acid attacked victim.

### **Conclusion**

Acid violence is widespread and prevalent in our society that remains often invisible. Women are unsafe and are frequently victim even in their homes and often by their

immediate family members. Women are vulnerable to every form of violence. The researcher concludes that acid attack is present in society of Karnataka, which has been reported in different appearances like psychological effects as well as social isolation. The study aimed to investigate the causes of acid attacks as well as their consequences. Refusal of marriage proposal and family disputes are one of the major causes of acid attacks practiced against women. Another major cause reported by respondents was they did not bring enough dowries with them. This present study uncovered that our society is lacking of sense of belongingness which often results in insecurity and unstable environment. That is why women of our society are much suppressed.

We have established the gravity of acid attacks in this paper, focusing extensively on the physical, psychological and socio-economic effects that they have on the victims. Also, we have exhibited how acid attacks are related to gender inequalities and are an expression of a man's self-assumed superiority over a woman. A discussion has been carried out in the Indian Law and how essential it therefore is to have specific legislation to cover acid attacks. Considering the impact and increasing incidence, the crime appears more atrocious than on the surface. It is a premeditated crime – one which requires tremendous ill-will on the part of the perpetrator, and therefore, it should be punished severely. In addition to this, establishing a sound victim compensation scheme in the country for such crimes is vital for the provision of justice.

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