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Megha Middha, Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar

Megha Middha, is working as an Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar (Rajasthan). She has an experience in the teaching of almost 3 years. She has completed her graduation in BBA LL.B (H) from Amity University, Rajasthan (Gold Medalist) and did her post-graduation (LL.M in Business Laws) from NLSIU, Bengaluru. Currently, she is enrolled in a Ph.D. course in the Department of Law at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur (Rajasthan). She wishes to excel in academics and research and contribute as much as she can to society. Through her interactions with the students, she tries to inculcate a sense of deep thinking power in her students and enlighten and guide them to the fact how they can bring a change to the society

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ANALYSIS



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Mrs.S.Kalpana

Assistant professor of Law

Mrs.S.Kalpana, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law, Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr.Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted 1Moot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration. 10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Avinash Kumar



Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC - NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR - Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and learning.

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
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“A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY OF ACID ATTACK IN INDIA”

Authored By-Riya

ACID ATTACK IN INDIA

Abstract

Acid attacks are a particularly heinous type of violence directed toward women. The severity of acid attack is tremendous, leaving the person with visual scars and severe emotional difficulties. Acid attacks cause severe agony, permanent disfigurement, infections, and often blindness in one or both eyes, in addition to causing psychological distress. Acid attacks on women are becoming more common with each passing day, mostly among girls aged 11 to 30. Because cheap acid is so readily available, criminals see it as an excellent weapon against this horrific crime against women. Although illegal selling and purchasing of acid is a non-bailable offense, it is still easily available in most grocery and hardware stores in both urban and rural regions. There has also been evidence of perpetual trauma and social isolation. According to the findings, the majority of those who had been subjected to acid attacks had also been subjected to other forms of violence, such as exclusion from society, difficulty arranging marriages, work issues, and so on. This study aims to shed light on the causes and consequences of the acid attack on helpless women, as well as the difficulties or obstacles faced by the victims.

Keywords- acid attack, illegal sale, psychological distress, violence against women

1. Introduction

Every society in the world is currently dealing with various issues relating to women on a societal level; yet, acid throwing has emerged as a new form of aggression. Acid violence is one of the most terrible crimes against women, in which acid is thrown on a woman's face or body in order to disfigure her. The purposeful acts of violence in which attackers toss, spray, or pour acid on the victim are known as acid violence. It causes instant injury to the victim, as well as disfigurement, suffering, and long-term medical issues. Though an acid attack can be perpetrated on either a man or a woman, the majority of documented acid assaults have been committed on women, particularly young girls, for spurning suitors, refusing marriage proposals, denying dowry, and other reasons.

The term "acid attack" refers to an assault on a person in which a corrosive liquid is used as a weapon to inflict serious burns. Gender-based violence includes acid attacks. It has its origins in our patriarchal society, which is based on men's ruthless desire to dominate women's lives. Acid is available over-the-counter, giving misguided males a sinister weapon to seek 'vengeance.' Jilted lovers have ruined, deformed, and crippled man women's lives, both psychologically and physically.

The crime of acid attacks on women is becoming increasingly widespread in India. It is almost always the case that such crimes against women are either localised or personalised. It is the system's perpetuation of women's dismal status that is to blame for such atrocities. Women are viewed as second-class citizens in India, as they are in most countries, and are never given the option to assert themselves by denying so-called love propositions and advances.

These assaults are intended to subjugate and control women. According to a special report by an Indian nongovernmental organisation, 80 percent of victims are women, with 40 percent of these being girls under the age of eighteen.

1.1. Literature Review

"Textbook of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology: Principles & Practice"¹ Defines vitriolage as the intentional application of vitriol (concentrated sulphuric acid) to a person's body with the goal of hurting or disfiguring him out of envy or retribution. The face of the victim is usually the target, with the intention of disfiguring him or her. This could result in eye damage and permanent vision loss. If the victim survives any of the consequences, such as loss of sight or lifelong disfigurement, the act of vitriolage is said to have caused grievous harm. However, if the area of participation is large enough, death may result, making the offence homicide.

"Socio-legal Status of Women in India"² is a book that discusses the socio-legal status of women in India. The book discusses the various reasons why women are treated as inferior to men, such as physical, economic, and psychological factors. It claims that men's physical strength and alleged dominance has been a key tool in restricting women's freedom of action. It examines the views of western philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke, and Bentham on the status of women. According to the book, the nineteenth century marked the beginning of the era of social reform for women.

Sital Kalantry and Jocelyn E. Getgen's report "*Combating Acid Violence in Bangladesh, India, and Cambodia*"³ explores acid violence in Bangladesh, India, and Cambodia from an international human rights viewpoint. This report is the first complete, comparative examination of acid violence, looking at the causes, repercussions, and various impediments to justice for victims. Acid attacks, like other forms of violence against women, aren't a result of chance or nature. It pinpoints the root reasons of acid violence and offers effective ways for dealing with them. Acid violence is common in these countries due to three factors: gender inequality and discrimination, easy access to acid, and impunity for those who commit acid attacks.

¹Krishan Vij, Textbook of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology: Principles & Practice, (Elsevier Publishers, New Delhi, 2011)

²Rama Mehta, Socio-Legal Status of Women in India, (Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1987)

³Kalantry, Sital and Getgen Kestenbaum, Jocelyn, Combating Acid Violence in Bangladesh, India and Cambodia (June 9, 2011). Cornell Legal Studies Research Paper No. 11-24

Jales Welsh's thesis, *"It Was Like Burning in Hell: A Comparative Exploration of Acid Attack Violence"*⁴ examines acid attack violence, a sadistic and cruel kind of violence that involves the purposeful throwing of corrosive acid against another person with the intent of disfiguring them. Acid attack violence is a form of intimate terrorism in which someone intentionally throws sulphuric, nitric, or hydrochloric acid at another person. The goal of this thesis is to gain a better knowledge of the motivations and aetiology of this type of violence, as most existing discourses and interventions are centred on the victims of these crimes and do not address or analyse the underlying fundamental causes.

1.2. Objectives

- To investigate and analyse the issue of acid attacks on women in India.
- To investigate and identify the reasons that are contributing to an increase in the number of acid attacks against women.
- The aim of this paper is to examine the legal framework in relation to acid attacks.
- To investigate the legal approach to acid attacks.
- To propose recommendations for improving current laws in order to combat the problem of acid attacks on women.

1.3. Methodology

The area of this research is acid attacks in India and to conduct this research both legal as well as socio-legal method is used. This study comprises both doctrinal and non-doctrinal method. Secondary data has been used in doctrinal method which comprises textbooks, legal journals, legislations, reports, judgements, and Law Commission Reports as well as legal commentaries, newspapers, websites, etc. Non-doctrinal method also used secondary data which consisted of data collected from National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, etc. This paper uses content analysis for analysing data from year 2014-2020 where it focuses on number of acid attack cases each year.

⁴ Jane Welsh, *it was like burning in Hell: A comparative exploration of acid attack violence*, 2009.

2. Acid Attacks On Women

"Acid attack" is defined by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women as any act or omission caused by corrosive substance/acid being thrown or administered in any form on the victim with the intention of causing permanent or partial damage / injury, deformity or disfigurement to any part of the body or organ, or causing death of such victim.

2.1. Reason For Acid Attack

One of the most serious offences a person can do is throwing acid. The offender usually has no intention of killing the victim, but rather of torturing him or her for the rest of his or her life. Because of a personal relationship problem such as a failed love affair or marriage, unfaithfulness, or rejection, acid throwing is frequently an act of revenge driven by jealousy or hatred. The perpetrator holds the victim responsible for the problem and seeks to cause the victim as much physical and mental pain as possible. Usually, the acid is thrown in the victim's face.

The following are the reasons for such attacks, as determined by the examination of several cases:

- **Easy availability of acid:** Since concentrated acid is cheap and readily available, it is employed as a weapon in a number of countries. A litre of hydrochloric acid costs between Rs. 16 and Rs. 25 in India. Even after the order of the Supreme Court on the selling of acid, the scenario has not been improved. Acid is still easily available as it was before and no prohibition is being made.
- **Rejection in love/proposal:** Another major cause of acid assaults is rejection of love and marriage offers. Such crimes against women are sometimes concealed behind rhetoric of love. Men rationalise their disfigurement of women, which generally stems from her inability to reciprocate their love. Men are not conditioned to hear the word "no" from a woman. They have the vanity to believe that if they propose, the woman must accept. It was good with society as long as women could not muster the strength to say 'No,' women remained vulnerable and exploitable, and society could retain its status quo. Regardless of education or sophistication, a
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woman's confidence in rejecting a man's "proposal" remains the most "humiliating" experience for a man.

- **Suspicion of infidelity:** In number of situations, suspicion of adultery is the catalyst for an acid attack. In one case in India, for example, Hazara Singh suffered from a profound illusion over his wife's infidelity. He used to mistreat his wife out of suspicion, and one night, out of suspicion, he poured acid on her. The witness discovered Anant Kaur (Hazara Singh's wife), who had been burned nearly all over her body by acid. Acid was used to burn the deceased's forehead, face, chest, abdomen, external genitals, thighs, buttocks, and most other bodily areas.⁵
- **Dowry demands:** In India, the reluctance of a wife's parents to provide extra money for dowry is frequently stated as a motive for acid attacks by the husband or his family. In one such instance, Harinder Singh went to his wife's father's house, where his wife was staying at the time. He had a one-litre can of acid. He demanded dowry from his wife, but when she refused, he poured acid on her. She died the next day as a result of injuries.⁶
- **Lack of laws controlling the sale and purchase of acids:** In India, there are no laws restricting the sale and purchase of acids. In the case of Laxmi v. UOI, the Supreme Court of India issued guidelines in July 2013 to limit the sale and purchase of acid. But even after the guideline, there have not been much improvement and acid are still in market like it was before.

2.2. Effects On Victims

Acid victims are subjected to a life sentence that drives them to avoid society and live in continual fear. Acid dissolves a person's flesh and even bones, as well as causing excruciating pain to the victim. Her body is disfigured and scarred, and she sometimes suffers lasting afflictions such as blindness as a result of the acid attack. It permanently alters the victim's physical appearance. Victims suffers physical, social, psychological, and economic effects for the rest of their lives.

⁵Hazara Singh v. The State, AIR 1958 P&H 104

⁶ Harinder Singh v. State of Punjab, AIR 2009 SC 913.

i. Physical effects on victims

Acids are corrosive chemicals that induce apparent necrosis (death) of human skin tissue and can corrode metals at high concentrations. Exposure to powerful acids can result in significant poisoning, as well as scorching and serious damage. The skin is the primary organ of contact during an acid attack. Acid can cause skin irritation such as redness and burns. It could result in shock and death in severe cases. Permanent hair loss and scarring are two more side effects. It can potentially cause lung problems if inhaled in big amounts. Acid consumes the skin's two layers, namely the fat and muscle beneath it, and can sometimes not only devour but also disintegrate the bone. However, because assaults frequently target the victim's face, the consequences extend far beyond skin injury. "It's possible that the eyelids and lips will completely burn off. The nose may shrivel up and close the nostrils, and the ears may melt." Survivors are typically rendered blind, deaf, or unable to use their hands fully.

ii. Psychological effects on victims

Attack victims experience not only significant physical pain, but also devastating alterations in their feelings and thoughts. Both the terror victims experience during the attack, as they feel their skin burning away, and the deformities or disability that they must live with for the rest of their lives, induce psychological trauma. Depression, insomnia, nightmares, fear of another attack and fear of facing the outside world, headaches, weakness and exhaustion, difficulties concentrating and remembering things, and other psychological problems affect victims. They are miserable, humiliated, worried, and lonely all of the time. They live in constant terror of being attacked once again.

iii. Economic effects on victims

Acid attacks leave victims with such severe disfigurement that they are usually left with severe disabilities. This is undoubtedly one of the most difficult problems for survivors of such attacks, since they must adjust to life with these physical limitations, frequently without the specialised assistance that is required in such situations. For acid survivors, life might be a "constant struggle to survive." Many survivors become reliant on others to provide for them because they are no longer able to study or work. The burden of providing this support will often fall on family members, and because the majority of acid survivors are from low-income families, this

might add further stress to already overburdened families who may not be best placed to give it. Because of their inability to work or study, the victims lose their jobs and drop out of school or college. Their medical costs are so expensive that they have become monetarily reliant on others and live in poverty.

iv. **Social effects on victims**

Victims experience persecution from society for the rest of their lives, and they become isolated. They feel humiliated by the possibility of being stared at or laughed at, and they may be hesitant to leave their houses for fear of a negative reaction from the outside world. Victims find it difficult to move around freely in society. They have to disguise their burns and deformed looks by wearing masks. People stare at them as though they are strangers. They are unable to imagine leading a normal life in society. They are unable to marry.

In our society, women's beauty is valued above anything else when it comes to marriage. They are unable to function in society because they are unable to confront it.

3. Legal Perspective On Acid Attack

Acid attacks in India frequently make the front pages of Indian newspapers. Prior to the passage of The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, there was no distinct statute in India to deal with acid attacks. The offence was previously prosecuted under Sections 320, 322, 325, 326, and 307 of the Indian Penal Code (I.P.C).

Section 320 deals with grievous hurt: According to this, grievous hurt is considered only to emasculation, permanent privation of the sight of either eye, permanent privation of 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 period of twenty days in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.

Section 322 deals with voluntarily causing grievous hurt: According to this, whoever voluntarily causes grievous hurt with an intention to cause it or knows himself to be likely to cause grievous hurt is said to “voluntarily to cause grievous hurt”.

Section 325 deals with punishment for voluntarily causing grievous hurt: This section provides punishment for grievous hurt which shall be imprisonment of either for a term which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine. This section provides exception on account of section 335 which deals with voluntarily causing grievous hurt on provocation.

Section 326 deals with voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means: According to this, whoever causes grievous hurt by means of any instrument for shooting, cutting, or stabbing, or instrument used for weapon of offence which is likely to cause death, or by means of fire or heated substance, by means of corrosive substance or poison, or explosive substance or substance which is dangerous for human body to inhale, to swallow or to receive into blood, or by means of any animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life or imprisonment extending to ten years and also be liable to fine.

Section 307 deals with attempt to murder: According to this, whoever commits any act with intention or knowledge, and under such circumstances that if he by that act caused death then he would be guilty of murder. Punishment for such act is imprisonment for term extending to ten years and shall be liable for fine.

In May, 2006, Laxmi, the victim of a heinous acid attack, filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court of India, with the Law Commission of India named as Respondent No. 2. Despite the fact that the Law Commission informed the Court that the reliefs requested in the petition could not be granted by the Law Commission, it opted to take up the subject suo moto due to the gravity of the acid attack offence.

The Law Commission addressed the issue of acid attacks, stating that because there is no distinct section in the Indian Penal Code dealing with acid attacks, incidents are not even documented separately. Section 326 of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with causing grievous hurt by throwing corrosive substances, etc., is insufficient to address the situation. For starters, the concept of grievous hurt is too narrow to encompass the numerous types of injuries produced by acid attacks. Second, the Section excludes the act of administering acid from its scope. Thirdly, the Section grants the courts broad discretion in terms of punishment. The examples of acid attacks in India reveal that in most cases, insufficient punishment is meted out. Fourth, if no injuries are sustained, the Section of the Indian Penal Code does not penalise the intentional act of hurling acid. Finally, the section also does not clarify who should receive

the fine. As a result, the Law Commission suggested the addition of a new section 326A of the Indian Penal Code.

As a result, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on March 19, 2013, and the Rajya Sabha on March 21, 2013. The Bill obtained Presidential assent on April 2, 2013, and went into effect on April 3, 2013.

Section 326A: Whoever causes permanent or partial damage or deformity to, or burns, maims, disfigures, or disables, any part or parts of a person's body, or causes grievous hurt by throwing acid on or administering acid to that person, or by using any other means with the intention of causing or knowing that he is likely to cause such injury or hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term not less than ten years but which may extend to life imprisonment with fine. Provided, however, that such fine shall be sufficient and reasonable to cover the victim's medical treatment expenditures, and any fine imposed under this section shall be paid to victim.

Section 326B: Whoever throws or attempts to throw acid on any person, or attempts to administer acid to any person, or uses any other means with the intent of causing permanent or partial damage, deformity, burns, maiming, disfigurement, disability, or grievous harm to that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term not less than five years, but which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

3.1. Victim Compensation Scheme

Every state is required to create a Victim Compensation Fund under Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. These funds are used to reimburse crime victims. Compensation is distributed in accordance with the schemes that each state has implemented. Amounts of compensation have been set under various schemes to pay victims of crime. The notification and execution of the Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS) in the States/UTs is overseen by the Ministry of Home Affairs. A Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) with a corpus of Rs. 200 crores had been established. This Fund also has a provision for awarding up to 5 lakhs to victims of acid attacks. Special financial support of Rs 5 lakh has been offered to acid attack victims under the Central Victim Compensation Fund.

4. Indian Judiciary On Acid Attacks

4.1. Indian Judiciary On Acid Attacks Before 2014

Prior to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013, cases were filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including those dealing with hurt, grievous hurt, grievous hurt by corrosive chemicals, and attempted murder and murder. In addition, felons were easily released on bail. Victims of acid violence were rarely compensated, and even when they were, it was insufficient.

*Awadhesh Roy v. State of Jharkhand, 2006*⁷, In this case, the victim was standing with her friend at a bus when the accused approached and threw acid over her head and face. The accused was blackmailing the victim with a photo of her, but she refused to comply with his demands. The woman was hospitalised after suffering burns to the left side of her eye, neck, and chest. Under the Indian Penal Code, a case was filed for the crimes of hurt, grievous hurt, and attempted murder. The police investigated the case and eventually filed a chargesheet under the aforementioned sections against the appellant. The learned 2nd Additional Sessions Judge, Dhanbad, found the appellant guilty of the offence of hurt and sentenced him to three years of imprisonment. The Hon'ble High Court upheld the appellant's conviction. But victim received no monetary recompense at all.

*Mahadeva Madeva Shisthu v. The State of Karnataka, 2012*⁸, In this case, an Anganawadi worker was married to Kyathaiah for nearly 18 years and had one son and a daughter from the union. Later, the couple's problems arose, and when she was transferred, she began an illicit relationship with the accused. Later, the victim realised that continuing the illicit relationship with the accused might not be appropriate. As a result, she told the accused to end their relationship and not to come to her residence. Angry by this, the accused threw acid on her face, chest, back, and other body parts. She was left with acid burns all over her body as a result. The accused was found guilty of attempted murder under the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to 5 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.50,000/-, with a further year of rigorous imprisonment if he did not pay the amount. The defendant filed an appeal against the District and Sessions Judge's verdict of conviction and punishment. The appeal was dismissed.

⁷ Cri.App.0568 of 2006

⁸ Cri.App. 2273 of 2005

*Balu v. State Represented Inspector of Police*⁹, in this case, A husband who threw acid on his wife was sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 2,000. The couple had children at the time, and they were living together. Vaithi was a friend of the accused. He used to come to the accused's residence and have regular conversations with her. The accused suspected her of having an extramarital affair with him. A distressed cry came from the deceased's residence on the fatal day, and it was heard by a neighbour. He went over there right away. At the time, the deceased was taken in an automobile by a group of people. The accused attempted to flee the scene of the crime. Later, she told the doctor that her husband had poured acid on her and that she had suffered burn injuries as a result. On the same day, the accused arrived with burn injuries to the hospital and was hospitalised by the same doctor. The case was referred to the Court of Session, where the accused was charged with murder under the Indian Penal Code, tried, found guilty of the accusation, and sentenced to life imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 2,000/-. The Madras High Court dismissed the appeal.

4.2. Indian Judiciary On Acid Attacks After 2014

In the case of *Laxmi v. Union of India*¹⁰, the judiciary attempted to construct a new Jurisprudence in 2014. In May of 2006, Laxmi, the victim of a horrible acid attack, filed a writ suit in the Supreme Court of India, in which the Law Commission of India was named as Respondent No.2.

In the case of *Naeem Khan v. State*¹¹, Laxmi, who was 15 at the time, worked as a sales agent at Khan Market's New Janta Book Depot and had completed class 8. Naeem Khan (Guddu) was a youngster who worked in her neighbourhood. Guddu was well-known and familiar to Laxmi's family, having known each other for several years. Laxmi claimed that the appellant began talking about falling in love with her over the phone and sent her a few messages about it. The accused also made a marriage proposal to Laxmi's family, but she declined due to the significant age difference between them. Following that, the accused began pressuring Laxmi to marry him and keep telephonic ties with him, which she either avoided or declined. On April 22, 2005, about 10:30 a.m., when she was walking from her residence to Khan Market, a motorcyclist stopped beside her. The motorcycle's driver wore a black helmet and had a lean

⁹ Cri. App. 1078 of 2004

¹⁰ (2014) 4 SCC 427

¹¹ Cri. App. 980 of 2009 (Delhi HC.).

figure similar to the appellants. Laxmi went on to say that the pillion rider was a lady in her late twenties who got off the motorcycle and threw acid on her face, causing her face and chest to burn.

The accused was arrested after the injured Laxmi implicated him. The two accused, Rakhi and Guddu, were charged with attempted murder and sentenced to 7 and 10 years imprisonment, respectively, by the Trial Court. Later, the accused filed an appeal in the Delhi High Court, which ordered the appellant to pay a fine of Rs 3 lakhs, which will be forwarded to victim Laxmi as compensation under the Code of Criminal Procedure's compensation clause.

Following this, Laxmi filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme Court in 2006, requesting that the sale of acid be regulated. She had asked for the formation of a new legislation or amendments to existing criminal statutes such as the Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure to deal with the offence, as well as compensation, in her plea.¹²

Guidelines By The Hon'ble Supreme Court For The Regulation Of Sale Of Acid

Although there was no explicit law in India to restrict the sale of acid, the Supreme Court of India directed the federal and state governments to limit the sale of acid on July 18, 2013, in an attempt to curb attacks on women. The following guidelines were issued by the Court:

Until such rules are framed and made operational in the States/Union Territories where rules to regulate the sale of acid and other corrosive substances are not in place, the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States/Administrators of the Union Territories shall ensure that the following directions are followed with immediate effect:

- The sale of acid over the counter is banned unless the seller keeps a log/register of the sale of acid, which will include the name(s) of the person(s) to whom acid(s) is/are sold, as well as the quantity sold. The address of the person to whom the log/register is sold must be included in the log/register.

¹² Laxmi v. Union of India, (2014) 4 SCC 427.

- All sellers must only sell acid once the buyer has presented the following: a government-issued photo ID with the buyer's address.
- and identifies the cause for obtaining acid.
- The supplier must notify all acid stocks to the concerned Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) within 15 days.
- No acid shall be sold to anyone under the age of eighteen.
- In the event of an undeclared stock of acid, the concerned SDM has the authority to seize the stock and levy a punishment of up to Rs. 50,000 on the vendor.

The following guidelines must be followed by educational institutions, research laboratories, hospitals, government departments, and departments of Public Sector Undertakings that are required to preserve and store acid:

- A record of acid usage must be kept and lodged with the appropriate SDM.
- A person is responsible for the custody and safe storage of acid on their premises.
- The acid must be stored under the supervision of this individual, and all students/employees leaving laboratories/storage areas where acid is utilised must be checked.

The concerned SDM will be in charge of taking necessary action in the event of a breach/default/violation of the foregoing directives. Any person who violates the following provisions may be fined up to 50,000 by the concerned SDM.

5. CURRENT SCENARIO ON ACID ATTACK

Acid attacks are now being recorded as a separate offence under sections 326A and 326B of the Indian Penal Code, which was amended in February 2013. Prior to this, there were no separate statistics for acid attack violence because Indian criminal law did not recognise it as a separate offence.

The following are the data collected by National Crime Record Bureau on acid attack and attempt of acid attack on women through the year 2014-2020.¹³

¹³NCRB Data

YEAR	Acid Attack (Sec. 326 A of IPC)	Attempt of acid attack (Sec. 326 B of IPC)
2014	244	
2015	222	46
2016	223	60
2017	244	65
2018	228	59
2019	249	67
2020	182	60

As per the data provided by NCRB, it can be clearly said that despite all of the advisories, judicial orders, and legislative measures taken to reduce the threat of acid attacks, the number of instances has not decreased.

Because 60% of acid assaults in India go unreported, these data do not reflect the true scale of the problem. Many victims are hesitant to disclose because they are ashamed and stigmatised, and many rural regions lack the resources to deal with the crime. In India, the annual number of cases is estimated to be approximately 1000.

While there have been reports of acid attacks on men in India, the crime is often seen as a type of male violence against women because women are the victims in more than 80% of cases and men are the perpetrators in 84 percent of cases. The majority of victims are between the ages of 18 and 22, and over 84.48 percent of crimes are conducted in urban areas.

Even after the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013, and the guideline provided by the Supreme Court in *Laxmi vs Union of India*, it can be clearly seen that the offence of acid attack has not decreased. It is still happening because the guideline is not been followed. People are still selling and buying acid openly in the market without any intervention from any authority. There is no law working to regulate the sale of acid and to stop its misuse.

6. Conclusion And Suggestion

Acid attacks are the most heinous type of violence, and they are almost always gender specific. While acid attacks have been documented in various places of the world, they have become more prevalent in India. Although the introduction of law amendments in the acid attack laws is encouraging, there is still a long way to go until these provisions are effectively implemented. In light of the nature and intensity of the offence, the present acid attack provisions and judicial approach to the quantum of damages are quite limited. As this appears to be a premeditated crime requiring a great deal of malice on the part of the criminal, and as such, it should be punished harshly. Furthermore, adequate compensation for the victim is an important requirement for ensuring justice. Because the victim had to undergo multiple operations and medical procedures, the compensation is critical. The compensation amount should be sufficient to cover good medical treatment and prompt resolution from government bodies.

It is critical to precisely quantify actual incidence rates in order to effectively deter the crime; yet, the numbers are inaccurate because many acid attacks are never reported, and resources to remedy low reporting rates are insufficient. The patriarchal society of India and its ineffective legal system are the key drivers of rising acid attack rates. Despite the fact that the Supreme Court of India imposed new criteria for controlling the sale of acids in *Laxmi v. UOI*, acids remain inexpensive and easily available since the court's guidelines are routinely abused.

The following are few suggestions to prevent acid attacks and to provide justice to the victims:

- To ensure that victims of acid attacks do not struggle to obtain justice, they should be provided with free legal assistance.
- When it comes to acid attacks, the criminal justice system needs to be stricter. In cases of acid attacks, harsh punishment should be applied, and any type of leniency should be avoided.
- In the case of acid attacks, speedy trials should be conducted. Courts should begin proceedings as soon as possible and provide decisions as swiftly as possible so that the victim receives justice.
- The Court should avoid granting bail to the perpetrator, otherwise the victim will be at risk of further violence.
- Police must be directed to conduct investigations and resolve cases as quickly as possible, allowing courts to spend less time deciding matters.

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