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THE SUFFOCATION OF ACID ATTACKS: **THE TALE OF SCAR**

AUTHORED BY - TUSHAR ARYAN

Introduction

Women are subject to violence and had to face violence under different name and acts in a patriarchal society, since the ancient times. Women are fighting for their existence and to protect their rights, and the so called civilised society continuously tries to hunt and keep searching a new weapon to exploit her. And while seeking for the new weapon, a new easily available and cheap weapon has been discovered which is known to be as acid. The injury subsequent to pouring of acid on any part of the body is so fatal that the soul of the victim would shake away. The victim of acid attack prays for death rather for a new life. There can be a numerous of reasons for the violence against women but the most influential reason is the patriarchal mind set of the society. Traditionally from the ancient times, women are considered to be a weaker section of the society thus they are humiliated exploited, discriminated in society and in fact in their own houses. A whole litter of asset which could disfigure someone through acid attack remains widely available and affordable across all most every grocery shop in India, even after India's apex court the Supreme Court has banned over the counter acid sales in 2013. There can be several reasons for acid attack which may include refusal for love, marriage, jealousy, and many others. The victim of acid attack sees themselves as the culprit who is only responsible for their own destruction the survivor of acid attack faces lifelong societal discrimination. The social physical economical and psychological lives of the victims are affected. Due to the deformities they are unable to work and even they are frightened and restrict themselves from going outside of their houses. They are abandoned by their own family leading to the victim's emotional breakdown.

Talking about the legal frameworks until 2013, The Indian Penal Code did not recognized acid attacks as a separate offence. However after the Criminal Law (Amendment Act) 2013, the punishment for attempted acid attacks and acid attacks were inserted.

Acid Attacks: Contributing Factors

As there are a number of factors contributing to the atrocities against women, there are many other factors which leads to acid violence. The anti-social behaviour, social problems and other problems particularly violent activities are responsible for such type of heinous crime. One of the major reason is the patriarchal nature of society which leads to acid attack. Depression and disrespect are other contributing factors. If the girl refuses the proposer for marriage or dating it hits the ego of the conspirator and in order to satisfy his so called ego, out of aggressiveness attacks them with acid or other such material which results in disfigurement and collectively ruins the whole life of the victim. Such crimes are strongly condemned. Even women are not safe at their in law's houses for the demand of dowry, they have to face the atrocities of their mother in law or any other people.

The other reason contributing to acid attacks is inexpensive nature and readily availability of acids in the market. Acid is sold at very cheap rate in the market thus it is easily bought hand in furtherance to it the offender is allowed to commit such a heinous criminal activity Further, the male dominated nature society gives priority to men only. They are considered to be superior in the society. In the domain of the family the father and other men have authority over the children and women accordingly. When a woman refuses to act in accordance with any order of men, they create a behaviour of aggressiveness and das the man takes it into consideration as there insult and tries to take revenge in their own way and one of such revenge is of acid attack.

The another biggest reason for acid attack is the rejection of proposal of love and marriage. According to the India's 226th Law Commission report the acid attacker cannot bear the fact that he has been rejected and thus seeks to destroy the whole body of the woman who dared to stand up against him. When a lover madly expressed his feelings they come up with an assumption that it should be accepted in any case, but in return if they receive a denial, they become enraged and thus with a view to get revenge they pour acid on the victim. Dispute over right to use land and other properties is also one of the contributing factor for the acid attack against the victims. A study report specifies that around 40% of the acid attack against woman happens between the unrelated people due to business rivalry, sales dispute, land dispute or revenge between the families.

There are several other social causes which lead to atrocities against the women. Lack of mutual

respect and education, depression, excessive anger jealousy, vengeance all these reasons compelled a person to commit such crime. Many acid attack victims claims that there are several rhythms which are contributing to the increasing rates of acid attack against women. The reasons are failing of insult and revenge men understand their dominance over women, women are physically weak feeling of jealous. The feeling of revenge in man has become so dominant that they don't think before committing such a heinous crime against women. Man thinks that women are there property and have the right over her to enjoy in whatever manner they want. The gender inequality, discrimination, dominant nature of men creates a nexus which leads to create the status of women as secondary in the society.

Status of acid attack victim

A variety of factors i.e. social, economical, political, educational determines the status of the human in a civilised society. In a society not everyone is expected to follow the same standard of living. The standard is based on the position in the social system of the individual. Indeed the survival rate of victims of acid attack is higher but what about their status in the society. The victims have to face the setback of the society and as a consequence victim are compelled to live with a life long scar with catastrophic effects. The categories of the conservancy be divided into 3 categories namely physical, psychological and socio economic.

The physical effect

The concentration of the acid is used for attack decides the suffering of bodily injury and further the time till which the body remains exposed to such concentration of the acid. The more longer the body is exposed to acid, the more damage is likely to be caused to the victim. The acid are very corrosive in nature and when it comes into contact with the skin and muscles it can even reach the bones and organs which leads to partial or complete destruction of the parts of the body such as ear, nose, neck, mouth, lips, eyes, chicks, chin, forehead and even destruction of breast, shoulder and hair which collectively particularly impair the whole life of the victim. It further causes a poisonous reaction in the lungs and other respiratory organs of the victim or swelling of throat which can even lead to death due to asphyxiation. Further it leads victim to face chronic health diseases. The healing of the affected part of the skin by the acid attack leaves very dark and thick layer of scar which causes the skin to be tighter which leads to several deformity on face and the victim have to face difficulties in closing eyelet which is not less than blindness, destruction of ear cartilage which creates a chance for the loss of hearing in future, inability to

move or extend head or neck. reduced range of motion due to fixation of limbs, fixation of the chin to chest etc.

Psychological effect

A tale of psychological effect is associated with the victims of acid attack. Primarily due to the pain and horror they undergo during the attack leads to severe psychological trauma. The realisation of the fact, that their external beauty has permanently been disfigured and their body has been despaired leave them in disguise.

Loss of the physical and social identity due to the deformity exposes the victim to several psychological diseases. Insomnia, depression, nightmare, anxiety attacks, headache, reluctance to face the society and stress to participate in the social events are problems reported by number of acid attack victims

Social and economic effects

The victim of acid attack of fan become financially and physically dependent on their family even for their day to day normal activities as the attack completely destroys them psychologically and physically and thus it also destroys their prospects of life such as marriage employment. Due to the scars and disfigurement they are subject to pity, mockery and stares which completely destroys their confidence, life and any hope for development in future.

Crime and Penalty

Hon'ble Supreme Court has coherently held that "acid attacks are bigger crime than murder". The Criminal Amendment Act was enacted in 2013. To prevent acid attacks, the Supreme Court had directed the government to regulate the sale of acid. Also, under the change in the law after the 16th December gang-rape incident, a provision was made to give strict punishment to the culprits of acid attacks. However, before 2013, there was no separate law on the acid attack in the Indian legal system. Neither was there sufficient provision to punish the perpetrators of acid attack or prevent this crime. Therefore the case was done only under Section 326 of IPC (causing grievous hurt). Later some changes were made in section 326 of IPC. After the change, 326A and 326B came into existence.

For acid attacks the punishment for the offender shall be imprisonment for a minimum of 10 years

and a maximum of life imprisonment. It also provides that the guilty shall be punished with an appropriate fine and that this amount shall be given to the victim and for attempt of acid attack, the guilty can be punished with imprisonment of not less than five years and more than 7 years. The guilty may also have to pay a fine.

Free primary or medical treatment shall be provided to the victims in all government and private hospitals under Section 357C of the IPC, but in the case of these victims, Sections 326A, 376, 376A, 376AB (45 of 1860), 376B of the Indian Penal Code, 376C, 376D, 376DA, 376DB, or 376E. In such an event of a calamity, the police must be informed immediately. These hospitals, whether run by the central government, the state government, local governments, or any other individual or organization.

Conclusion

The incidents of acid attacks are increasing rampantly and the harm caused to the victim is more serious than the care and justice provided by society and the legal system, respectively. Therefore, due care should be taken by the family, relatives, medical staff, police personnel, and other legal authorities, and all possible measures should be taken to help the acid victims reduce their pain and suffering, which may be helpful in restoring their normalcy. The stringent laws must be made to eradicate it completely or to reduce such crimes.