

ISSN: 2582-6433



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed 6th Edition

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 7

www.ijlra.com

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
ISSN

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ACID VIOLENCE IN INDIA

*Authored By - Kunal Kumar
& Md. Zaki Ahmad Kaifi*

Introduction:

Acid violence is a brutal form of gender-based violence that involves throwing acid on someone with the intention of causing disfigurement or permanent disability. Acid attacks have become a growing menace in India, especially against women and girls. Acid violence leaves permanent physical and emotional scars on the victims, which often last a lifetime. This article will provide an in-depth analysis of acid violence in India, including its causes, impact, and possible solutions.

History of Acid Violence in India:

Acid violence is not a new phenomenon in India. However, it has gained prominence in recent years due to a number of high-profile cases that have come to light. The first recorded case of an acid attack in India was in 1967 in Kolkata. Since then, the number of reported cases of acid violence has been increasing steadily.

According to a report by the Acid Survivors Foundation India (ASFI), there were 1,483 acid attacks in India between 2010 and 2018. However, this is likely an underestimate, as many cases go unreported due to social stigma and fear of reprisals.

Causes of Acid Violence in India:

There are several factors that contribute to the prevalence of acid violence in India. One of the main factors is the deeply ingrained patriarchal mindset that sees women as inferior to men. Women are often subjected to violence and discrimination in various forms, and acid violence is just another manifestation of this deep-rooted problem.

Another factor that contributes to the problem is the ease with which acid can be procured. Acid is widely used in various industries, and is easily available in the market. This makes it easy for perpetrators to obtain the substance and use it as a weapon.

The legal framework in India is also inadequate when it comes to dealing with acid violence. There is no specific law that deals with acid attacks, and cases are often dealt with under various sections of the Indian Penal Code. This often results in perpetrators receiving light sentences, which further emboldens them to commit such crimes.

Impact of Acid Violence:

Acid violence has a profound impact on the lives of its victims. The acid used in these attacks can cause severe burns, disfigurement, and in some cases, even blindness. The victims are often left with physical and emotional scars that can last a lifetime. The psychological impact of acid violence is also immense, with victims often suffering from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Acid violence not only affects the victim but also their families and communities. The social and economic consequences of acid attacks can be devastating. Victims may be unable to work or engage in social activities due to their injuries, which can result in economic hardship and social isolation.

Acid violence also perpetuates a culture of fear and violence against women. It sends a message to women that they are not safe and can be attacked at any time. This has a chilling effect on women's participation in public life and reinforces gender inequalities.

Response to Acid Violence:

There have been various responses to acid violence in India. Some of the responses are discussed below.

Legal Framework:

In 2013, the Supreme Court of India ordered the central and state governments to regulate the sale of acid and provide compensation to victims of acid attacks. In response to this, the government introduced the Acid Attacks and Prevention Bill in 2014. The bill includes provisions for regulating the sale of acid, providing medical and legal assistance to victims, and imposing strict penalties on perpetrators. However, the bill has not been passed yet, and the legal framework for dealing with acid violence remains inadequate.

Awareness Campaigns:

Various NGOs and civil society organizations have launched awareness campaigns to educate people about the dangers of acid violence and its impact on victims. These campaigns aim to change people's attitudes towards women and promote gender equality.

