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Acid Violence and Medical Care in India: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

India has been facing the highest number of acid attacks every year, however the government has failed to provide adequate medical care and assistance to the victims. The easy availability of corrosive substances, which can mutilate anyone's face and body in just a few minutes, has emerged as a weapon for people who want to disfigure others. The long-standing patriarchal ideology that is prevalent in India and the inadequate legal system are responsible for delivering inefficient remedies to the victims. Therefore, in this article, the researcher will discuss about the facilities of first aid, medical treatment, rehabilitation, and social integration support for acid attack victims. With this, the researcher will analyse and discuss the various struggles of the victims in getting adequate medical care and assistance from the hospitals and other healthcare units in India, and how these shortcomings could be eradicated thus improving the situation of the acid attack victims.

Keywords: Acid, Acid violence, Acid attack victims, Medical care.

I. INTRODUCTION

Acid has been used in metallurgy since prehistoric times and for etching since the middle Ages and antiquity. The rhetorical and theatrical term "La Vitriole use" was coined in France after a "wave of vitriolage" occurred according to the popular press, where in 1879, 16 cases of acid attacks were widely reported as crimes of passion, perpetrated predominantly by women against other women.² Much was made of the idea that women, no matter how few, had employed violence as means to an end. On October 17, 1915 acid was fatally thrown on Prince Leopold Clement of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, heir to the House of Koháry, by his distraught mistress, Camilla Rybicka, who then killed herself. Sensationalizing such incidents made for lucrative newspaper sales. The use of acid as a weapon began to rise in many developing nations, specifically those in South Asia. The first recorded acid attacks in South Asia 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 the region. With the exception of

¹ Author is a Research Scholar at National Law University Odisha, India.

² Dr. Apexa B Patel, Dr. Advaita B Patel, & Dr. Baldev V. Patel, Health Care Management of Acid Attack Survivors: A review, IJMPPR, 4(4) (2016).

Bangladesh which has observed a decrease in incidence in the past few years. However, this can be traced to significant underreporting in the 1980s and 1990s, along with a general lack of research for this phenomenon during that period.³ Research shows that the majority of acid burns occur in developing countries where the ability to treat and provide for this population is severely limited due to limited resources for surgery and rehabilitation.⁴

(A) Statement of problem

India tragically tops the global charts in terms of the number of acid attacks that are perpetrated each year. Despite stringent laws, the number of such attacks continues to be on the rise. The culprits may face harsh punishments, but that doesn't change the painful reality that their victims are forced to live with.⁵ Therefore, this study is an attempt to establish the victim compensation scheme, to check the effective implementation of rehabilitation schemes and other such initiatives available for victims of acid violence.

(B) Research objectives

- To identify the various impacts of acid attack on its survivors.
- To study the legal perspectives of acid attacks in India.
- To analysis the Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS), that grants compensation to the acid violence victims.
- To study about the facilities of first aid, medical treatment, psychological counselling and other such assistances required for the acid attack victims.

(C) Research question

1. What are the various impacts of acid attack on its survivor?
2. What is the legal perspective of acid violence in India?
3. What is Victim Compensation Scheme?
4. What are the various facilities of medical care and other such assistance that are needed for the victims of acid attack?

(D) Research design and methodology

³ Unsa Athar & others, Life Perspective and Social Health after Acid Burn: An Observational Study of Three Victims, *Cureus* 12(8) (2020). (Nov. 14, 2022, 5:30 PM) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7470663>

⁴ Help acid attack survivors avail quality medical care and lead normal lives, *Milaap*. (Nov. 13, 2022, 2:20 PM), <https://milaap.org/stories/support-chaanv-foundation-as>

⁵ Acid Attacks, *UN WOMEN*, (Nov. 14, 2022, 2:00 PM) <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/607-acid-attacks.html>

In order to discover the answers to the research questions, doctrinal methodology has been adopted. Under which, both primary and secondary sources has been referred to. Primary sources include statutes, case laws, etc. and secondary sources include books, journals, online materials and so forth.

II. ACID ATTACKS – A HEINOUS CRIME IN INDIA

Beginning with the genesis of acid violence, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, defines “Acid attack” as any act or omission, caused by corrosive substance/acid to be thrown or administered in any form on the victim with the intention that such person is likely to cause to the other person permanent or partial damage / injury or deformity or disfigurement to any part of the body or organ or cause death of such victim.⁶ Furthermore, according to a proposed scheme drafted by National Commission for Women for relief and rehabilitation of victims of acid violence, the term acid attack means “any act of throwing 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”.⁷ Coming to the legal aspect, Indian Penal Code, 1860 by virtue of Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 under the Explanation 1 of Section 326B has also defined acid to include, “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”.⁸

III. IMPACT OF ACID ATTACKS ON VICTIMS

The scars left by acid are not just skin deep, victims are most often faced with social isolation and ostracisation that further damages their self-esteem, self-confidence and seriously undermines their professional and personal future. The disfigurement of their face or body makes them handicaps in every conceivable way.⁹ The victim is traumatized physically, psychologically, economically and even socially.¹⁰ Therefore, a clear elucidation of the physical, psychological, financial and societal impact of acid attacks has been done below to

⁶ Section 3B of the Proposed Scheme drafted by National Commission for Women in India, which may be called scheme for relief and rehabilitation of offences (by acids) on women and children

⁷ See, The Indian Penal Code, 1860. Section 326B - Explanation 1

⁸ R.N. Karmakar, *Forensic Medicine and Toxicology*. (Academic Publishers. Kolkata, 2003).

⁹ Dr. N. Ahmad, *Weak Laws Against Acid Attacks On Women: An Indian Perspective*, *Medico-Legal Journal*, Sage Publications, 80(3) (2012). (Nov. 10, 2022, 5:00 PM) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1258/mlj.2012.012020>

¹⁰ Meghna Bajpai & Sugandha Singh, *Acid Attack: A Burning Issue in India*, 3(2) *Galgotias Journal of Legal Studies*, 1 (2015). (Nov. 10, 2022, 5:00 PM) http://law.galgotiasuniversity.edu.in/pdf/Acid-Attack-A-Burning-Issue-in-India_Meghna-Bajpai-Sugandha-Singh.pdf

determine the severity of such a phenomenon.

a) **Physical impact-** The deepness of injury depends on the strength of the acid and the duration of contact with the skin. Acid eats through two layers of the skin, i.e. the fat and muscle underneath, and sometimes not only eats through to the bone but it may even dissolve the bone.¹¹ Less severe effects of acid contact with the skin would include redness, permanent hair loss and burning, but if it is of higher concentration, it leads to permanent scarring, disfigurement, dissolution of vital body organs, pulmonary disorders, and even death.¹² The 226th report of the Law Commission of India enlists the physical effects of an acid attack. To mention a few; destruction of the skull, loss of hair, scars in the body, whether it is in the chest, shoulder, face or neck, shrunken or tightly stretched skin, deafness or blindness, destruction of breast and much more.¹³ The physical injury is irreparable and becomes the breeding ground for other dangerous diseases because of the risk of infection on the resultant dead tissue.¹⁴

b) **Psychological impact-** The psychological trauma caused to the victim is not only because of the terror faced by them during the attack, but the realization that they will have to survive with the disfigurement and disabilities.¹⁵ The physical injuries might even heal with time, but the permanent scars left on the mind and soul of the victim stays forever. Victims suffer from perpetual psychological symptoms such as depression, insomnia, nightmares, fear of being attacked again, fear about facing the outside world, headaches, weakness and tiredness, loneliness, difficulty in concentrating and remembering things, and so on.¹⁶ The victim's life gets defaced as every time she looks at herself in the mirror she is reminded of the brutal attack on her and her life's uncertainty as well as the despair of the future. She might even feel traumatized to walk out of the house on her own and carry out simple tasks, fearing even more violence and being socially stigmatized.¹⁷

c) **Financial impact-** It is very difficult for the victims of acid attack, who have got serious disabilities like blindness or physical handicapped, as they will not find jobs and earn a living

¹¹ Anubhav Dasgupta & Akshat Bajpai, Strong acids, weak laws (Nov. 13, 2022, 5:30 PM) <https://www.google.co.in/search?q=strong+acid+weak+laws&oq=strong+acid+weak+laws&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l4j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#>

¹² Law Commission of India, 226th Report on Proposal for the Inclusion of Acid Attacks as Specific Offences in the Indian Penal Code and a Law for Compensation for Victims of Crime, (July 2009)

¹³ *id.* at 11

¹⁴ Aishwarya Deb & Prithwish Roy Chowdhury, A fate worse than death: A critical exploration of acid attack violence in India, 2(5) Law Mantra, International Monthly Journal

¹⁵ Law Commission of India, 226th Report on Proposal for the Inclusion of Acid Attacks as Specific Offences in the Indian Penal Code and a Law for Compensation for Victims of Crime 7 (July 2009).

¹⁶ *id.* At 14

¹⁷ Dr.Ambika R Nair, Acid Attack – Violence against women ‘Need of the Hour’; 1 JIRAS (2014).

and rather become dependent on others for food and money.¹⁸ Moreover, as a repercussion of the attack, they do not get employed in spite of having qualifications. The major ground on which they are rejected is that they lack what is known as “suitable personality” for employment, and some people also say that they aren’t “presentable” anymore.¹⁹ Therefore, due to unemployment it becomes impossible for the survivors to lead a normal life owing to the economic hardships, support their families and also carry out her medical treatments which would cost her till the end of her life.²⁰

d) **Societal consequence-** In our society, when a person’s body gets maimed with acid, that person is looked upon as, nothing but an “alien”. If the victim is unmarried, she can never get married again and certainly become ostracized from society, effectively ruining marriage prospects. Others, who are married, are often abandoned by their husbands and divorce is the common scenario seen.²¹ It is really surprising how, the parents who are our life givers, also fail to acknowledge these victims.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS ON ACID VIOLENCE IN INDIA

1. SECTION 326A of The Indian Penal Code, 1860 – Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid, etc.

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 just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses of the treatment of the victim;

Provided further that any fine imposed under this section shall be paid to the victim.

2. SECTION 326B of The Indian Penal Code, 1860 – Voluntarily throwing or attempting to throw acid, etc.

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

¹⁸ id. At 14

¹⁹ id. At 14

²⁰ id. At 10

²¹ id At 2

damage or deformity or bums 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.

Explanations

(1) For the purposes of section 326A and this section, “acid” includes any substance which has acidic or corrosive character or burning nature, that is capable of causing bodily injury leading to scars or disfigurement or temporary or permanent disability.

(2) For the purposes of section 326A and this section, permanent or partial damage or deformity shall not be required to be irreversible.

3. SECTION 166B of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 – Punishment for non - treatment of victim

Whoever, being in charge of a hospital, public or private, whether run by the Central Government, the State Government, local bodies or any other person, contravenes the provisions of section 1357C of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or with both.

4. SECTION 357A of The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 – Victim Compensation Scheme

(1) Every State Government in co-ordination with the Central Government shall prepare a scheme for providing funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim or his dependents who have suffered loss or injury as a result of the crime and who, require rehabilitation.

(2) Whenever a recommendation is made by the Court for compensation, the District Legal Service Authority or the State Legal Service Authority, as the case may be, shall decide the quantum of compensation to be awarded under the scheme referred to in sub-section (1)

(3) If the trial Court, at the conclusion of the trial, is satisfied, that the compensation awarded under section 357 is not adequate for such rehabilitation, or where the cases end in acquittal or discharge and the victim has to be rehabilitated, it may make recommendation for compensation.

(4) Where the offender is not traced or identified, but the victim is identified, and where no trial takes place, the victim or his dependents may make an application to the State or the District Legal Services Authority for award of compensation.

(5) On receipt of such recommendations or on the application under sub-section (4), the State or the District Legal Services Authority shall, after due enquiry award adequate compensation

by completing the enquiry within two months.

(6) The State or the District Legal Services Authority, as the case may be, to alleviate the suffering of the victim, may order for immediate first-aid facility or medical benefits to be made available free of cost on the certificate of the police officer not below the rank of the officer incharge of the police station or a Magistrate of the area concerned, or any other interim relief as the appropriate authority deems fit.

5. SECTION 357B of The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 – Compensation to be in addition to fine under Section 326A or Section 376D of Indian Penal Code

The compensation payable by the State Government under section 357A shall be in addition to the payment of fine to the victim under section 326A, section 376AB, section 376D, section 376DA and section 376DB of the Indian Penal Code.

6. SECTION 357C of The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 – Treatment of Victims

All hospitals, public or private, whether run by the Central Government, the State Government, local bodies or any other person, shall immediately, provide the first-aid or medical treatment, free of cost, to the victims of any offence covered under section 326A, 376, 376A, 376AB, 376B, 376C, 376D, 376DA, 376DB or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code, and shall immediately inform the police of such incident.

V. HEALTH CARE, MEDICAL FACILITIES AND ASSISTANCE TO THE ACID ATTACK VICTIMS

In many developing nations treatment for burn victims remains inadequate where incidence is high.

Medical underfunding has resulted in very few burn centers available for victims in countries such as Uganda, Bangladesh, and Cambodia.

In addition to inadequate medical capabilities, many acid attack victims fail to report to the police due to a lack of trust in the force, and a fear of male brutality in dealing with their cases. Most of the female victims suffer more because of police apathy in dealing with cases of harassment as safety issues as victims refused to register a police case despite being attacked thrice before meriting police aid after an acid attack.

These problems are exacerbated by a lack of knowledge of how to treat burns. Many victims applied oil to the acid, rather than rinsing thoroughly and completely with water to neutralize the acid. Such home remedies do not counteract acidity so in fact lead to increase the severity

of damage.²²

(A) Provide first aid to the acid burn patients

It is very important to give a first aid to the acid burn patients as soon as possible because there are chances of penetration of acid into the bone which could be fatal for their life.

The first step at all times is to ensure that you call for an ambulance immediately and alert the nearest medical Centre.

In the meanwhile, here are the steps one should follow immediately in case of an acid attack:²³

Step 1: Douse the affected area

Continuously douse the acid-affected area of the skin immediately with clean water to disperse the chemicals and arrest the burning and melting of the skin. The dousing needs to be continuous for a minimum of 20 minutes, and ideally until the burning sensation subsides.

Note: Use only clean, cool water for the washing. Do not rub the affected area with your hands, clothes or other materials.

Step 2: Remove jewelry & clothes

Remove any piece of jewelry (earrings, rings, necklaces, chains etc.) worn by the survivor at the earliest. This will stop any adverse chemical reaction from taking place.

As soon as possible, remove the survivor's acid-drenched clothes.

Step 3: Protect the eyes

In case the acid has affected the survivor's eyes, stop them from rubbing or touching their eyes as it might worsen the condition. Gently pour water on the affected eyes continuously until burning subsides.

Step 4: No bandage, No Cream

It is advised not to put any sort of antiseptic ointment or household cream on the burnt skin as it will only delay the standard treatment procedure by doctors. Also, the affected area should not be bandaged with any gauze or cotton fabric.

Step 5: Post-treatment support

Perhaps the hardest part comes after the primary medical intervention, when the survivor has to

²² Sayantani Nath, How to provide emergency medical care in case of an Acid Attack: The Do's & Don'ts. (Dec. 12, 2019) <https://www.thebetterindia.com/206130/chhapaak-acid-attack-how-to-help-victim-emergency-treatment-helpline-india/>

²³ id At 2

battle immense pain and mental strain. It is at this time that the unflinching support from everyone around is a necessity.

(B) Treatment of wounds of acid burn patients

Those treating the acid attack survivors should always keep the below mentioned points in mind:²⁴

i. Hygiene: The most common cause of death in acid burn patients is infection. The burn skin is very sensitive and can be easily infected. It is therefore very important to maintain a strict hygiene until the wounds are completely healed. The room and washroom used by acid burn patients should be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant 2-3 times a day. Food containers should be properly sterilized before use. Acid burn patients must strictly avoid outside food.

ii. Proper Dressing: While doing dressing of movable body parts of acid burn patients utmost care has to be maintained. Take care that burnt skin do not come in contact with each other, otherwise they would stick with each other and it could worsen the situation.

iii. Physiotherapy: In acid burn patients nerves under the skin may get permanently damaged leading to inability in the movement of body parts and it could lead to physical handicap, if ignored. Therefore, regular sessions of physiotherapy are important to ensure that nerves are trained properly and body parts remain movable.

iv. Skin Grafting: In Acid burn patients surgery is performed to cover the open flesh with a skin which is taken from other parts of body where there is no burn e.g. thigh or lower back.

v. Protein Rich Food: Acid burn patients need lots of proteins and carbohydrates for damaged tissues to heal. Consult nutritionist to arrange a proper diet for the patients throughout the course of treatment.

vi. Monitor Hemoglobin: Large amounts of blood loss occur in acid burn patients which results in very low hemoglobin level. In such cases doctors cannot perform any surgery therefore patients should take diet which helps in improving hemoglobin level. In some cases blood transfusion should also be considered.

vii. Corrective Surgery: After the healing of wounds acid burn patients require a series of corrective surgery for correcting the contracted skin. Consult a plastic surgeon for planning out the sequence of operation.

²⁴ Delhi: Cashless treatment for accidents, acid attack, (Oct 10 2019) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/cashless-treatment-for-accidents-acid-attacks/articleshow/71512064.cms>

viii. **Long Term Maintenance:** After the wounds heal maintenance of skin is utmost important so that scarred tissues settle well. Regularly massage with coconut oil and contratubex two times a day. Gel sheet application on affected area at least twice a day. Wear pressure garment at least 10-12 hours a day.

ix. **Counseling of Acid Burn Patients:** At times acid burn patients have a very low self esteem due to pain, social stigma and they lose hope to live therefore patients should be provided good counseling support as the long course of treatment. There are several instances when acid burn patients have bounced back in life. Citing such instances would help the patients to regain faith and look ahead for their long battle with life.

x. **Social reintegration support:** In many cases acid burn patients are disowned by their own family due to social stigma attached to the patients and the expensive cost of the treatment. Without proper social reintegration support patients at times tend to alienate themselves from the society. Therefore, we should encourage them to step outside and participate in all the activities that they can.

xi. **Provide Shelter to the acid burn patients:** Acid burn patients may need to travel to different cities and hospitals due to various surgery needs. In many cases they cannot afford shelter for themselves and their family members at these locations. They should be provided shelter during the treatment course and also after that.

xii. **Occupational training:** We should help acid burn patients to become financially independent as it would help in reinstalling confidence in them. With proper occupational training they can work and earn money for themselves and their family. This would help them in building up their self-esteem and motivates them to look ahead in life.

xiii. **Education support:** Several acid burn patients come from very weaker section of the society and they may not have enough education. Providing educational support would open new opportunities for these patients and also makes their chances of rehabilitation better.

xiv. **Society support:** Our society needs to be mature and progressive and people should look and think beyond the mere physical appearance. Instead of hiding their children from acid burn patients, they should make them understand that it happens to some unfortunate people and they should not be scared and run away from them. People should help them, talk to them and smile at them.

Citing a prominent example of the Delhi government, it in 2019 issued a slew of guidelines to ensure that the families and good samaritans' who take acid attack survivors to hospitals were aware of their rights. All hospitals, including private ones, are bound to admit and provide such

victims a cashless treatment. Under the 'Farishte Dilli ke scheme', the health department of Delhi government had directed all private hospitals and nursing homes to put up information boards at 3 prominent locations on their premises saying that, they provide patients of acid attacks cashless treatment. It should be put up at the entrance of the hospital, to be visible from the roadside, the entry point of casualty and the emergency ward and reception or any other prominent spot where the movement of public is high. Moreover, in case of any case reported, where the private hospitals and nursing homes refuse such cases, it would be a punishable offence and the government would initiate the suspension of the certificate against such hospitals.²⁵

VI. INITIATIVES TAKEN BY VARIOUS NGOS IN INDIA

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been formed in the countries with the highest occurrence of acid attacks to combat such attacks. Acid Survivors Trust International is the only international organization whose sole purpose is to end acid violence. The organization was founded in 2002 and now works with a network of six Acid Survivors Foundations in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Uganda that it has helped to form. Acid Survivors Trust International has helped to provide medical expertise and training to partners raised valuable funds to support survivors of acid attacks and helped change laws.²⁶

Besides that, there are several NGOs in India which provide acid attack survivors with financial assistance as well as psychological therapy. Here are some NGOs in leading Indian cities working in this domain. Incidentally, most of these are managed by survivors themselves.²⁷

- Bengaluru: Atijeevan Foundation
- Mumbai: Acid Survivors Saahas Foundation
- Delhi: Make Love Not Scars
- Kolkata: Acid Survivors & Women Welfare Foundation
- Chennai: International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC)
- Noida: Chhanv Foundation

Elaborately discussing on one of the above, the Chaanv Foundation is a Delhi based NGO which has been relentlessly working for the betterment of acid attack survivors since 2014. They believe in providing equal opportunity to the survivors, along with good quality treatment and

²⁵ id At 2

²⁶ id At 22

²⁷ id At 4

care. Towards this mission, the Foundation has set up a one-of-a-kind fundraising initiative i.e. The Mega Medical Treatment Drive, to ensure free treatment to all acid attack survivors. They have also redefined rehabilitation, by advocating for medical assistance, legal aid, education, employment and other opportunities for survivors of acid attacks. Furthermore, through their campaign 'Stop Acid Attacks', they are engaged in research, tracking acid attack cases and compiling data to understand the situation of survivors. They're also actively campaigning to bring about legislative reforms to curb the heinous crime and uplift survivors.²⁸

VII. CONCLUSION

Acid attacks are horrific, inhumane and devastating. With thousands raising their voices against this harsh reality, the country needs to fight it relentlessly. And while changing our social evils is a sustained process, it is necessary for every concerned citizen to know the immediate steps to take if an acid attack ever happens before them.²⁹ As the Acid Survivors Foundation of India (ASFI) noted, “With the alarming increase of acid attacks in the country, there is a dire need to address the issue, and above all provide compensation and rehabilitation for the victims of acid attacks”.³⁰

In 2015, the Supreme Court had censured the central government for inadequate and improper rehabilitation measures. However, as noted by the Bombay High court in its recent judgment³¹, compensation for acid attack survivors must go beyond monetary payments paid to a victim of violent crimes. The person is entitled to additional payments, free medical aid such as reconstructive surgeries, and rehabilitation facilities to lead a meaningful life.³²

The number of acid burn victims is increasing in countries where rehabilitation services are the lowest. Surgery and medicine can deal with the scarring and the physical deformity but complete rehabilitation must involve psychiatric and psychological therapy as well. The government should form separate public help centers for such patients. Rehabilitation becomes difficult as cosmetic surgeries and treatments are expensive.³³ There are also wide discrepancies between cities and towns when it comes to care. Specialized treatments may be available in only a handful of hospitals across the country, and one has to travel hundreds of miles to receive them. Many times, people give up hope and never receive treatments. Medical procedures are

²⁸ *id* At 22

²⁹ Saumya Kalia, Acid Attack Survivors Are Entitled to Rehab and Medical Aid, Not Just Compensation: Bombay HC, *The Swaddle* (Oct 8, 2021) (Nov. 14, 2022, 11:30PM) <https://theswaddle.com/acid-attack-survivors-are-entitled-to-rehab-and-medical-aid-not-just-compensation-bombay-hc/>

³⁰ Kavita Nityanand Shetty Vs. State of Maharashtra WP (ST.) NO.6115 OF 2021

³¹ *id* at 30.

³² *id* At 3

³³ *id* At 4

lengthy and necessitate numerous hospital visits as well as resources - resources that these survivors often do not have. Regional medical care centres and hospitals in India are inadequate and unequipped. With nearly 70% of acid survivors hailing from economically weaker backgrounds, they cannot bear the costs of outstation stay and treatment. Government hospitals don't have basic first response facilities such as first-aid, diagnosis or dressing that they can access, either.³⁴

The community of acid survivors does not appear to be small, as neither the number of such incidents nor the quality of medical care provided to them seems to be improving. As members of society, it is important for us to come forward and help acid survivors in all possible ways and defeat the purpose of attackers all together.³⁵

However, instead of alienating or pitying acid attack survivors, people should accept them as human souls with dignity. They should not be identified as survivors, rather as brave hearts whose spirits cannot be thwarted at any cost.

³⁴ id At 4.

³⁵ id At 22.