

Acid attack: the punishment enough?

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Abstract

“Acid” attacks – where any sort of corrosive substance is thrown at a person – represent horrendous crimes. Intended to cause disfigurement rather than death, these attacks leave survivors with permanent physical and psychological scars. There is an increasing concern as to using acid as a weapon. India has the highest number of acid attacks in the world, but the worst conviction rates. As is often the case with other crimes against women, acid attacks are treated with official apathy and societal indifference. The victims are usually women between the ages of 14 and 35 years, and the attack often occurs as revenge for rejecting a marriage proposal or sexual advances, showing the peculiar mindset of male entitlement and power, and no right for a woman to refuse. Women have had acid thrown at them for not bringing enough dowries, for bearing a female child and for not cooking a good enough meal. But there is no specific and stringent legislation which deal with this problem because the acid attack is not like other offences in this the victim will have to survive with disfigured face whole life in which the victim has to face the ostracized not only from the society but some time from the family also. In India, there is no stringent law which can deal with this problem. This crime is mainly committed in four countries in the world namely, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Cambodia. The main aim of this paper is to trace out the history of acid attack in India. This paper deals with the causes and reasons for the increasing nature of such a crime. Then the focus shifts on analysing the consequences and effect of acid attack on the victim. This paper tries to explicit the laws relating to acid attack in India and the punishments given to the offender. It also tries to compare it with the laws of other countries. This paper is strengthened with case laws and illustrations. This paper ends with suggesting measures for solving such a heinous crime.

Keywords: women, acid, male dominated, physical, legislations, disfigured, convictions.

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Introduction

The incident of acid attack has been increasing phenomena in india and the most of the victim of the offence is especially women. While these attacks can be attributed to various factors such as the social; weakness of women and the existence of male-dominated society. Acid violence survivors face marginalization from society after the attack. Additionally, acid violence tends to create fear amongst women in society, as some women may feel that they might get attacked, if they failed to conform to traditional subordinate gender roles.² in order to emancipate and empower women in the society, it is this fear which the law is supposed to address. Deterrence by means of strict laws dealing with crimes against women is one way of addressing the issue. However, prior to 2013, there was no specific provision in law punishing acid attacks as an offence per se.³ the amendment in 2013 inserted various sections to the indian penal code, the criminal procedure code and the indian evidence act in order to tackle the menace of acid attacks. However, not much change has been witnessed in the incidents of acid attacks. The paper also analyses the data made available by the national crime records bureau, the legislative amendment, the judicial response to acid attacks and endeavours to suggest changes in the legal machinery in order to curb the menace of acid attacks.

Hypothesis

The height of brutality in acid attacks is more than that in the cases of rape since the victims have to move around with their bodies and one important way to combat acid violence is to limit the easy availability of acid.

Research methodology:

The methodology adapted for conducting the proposed research is doctrinal research method. Doctrinal research in law field indicates arranging, ordering and analysis of the legal structure, legal frame work and case laws to search out the new thing by extensive surveying of legal literature but without any field work.

Meaning and definition of an acid attack

²The Committee on International Human Rights of the New York City Bar Association, “*Combating Acid Violence in Bangladesh, India and Cambodia*”.

³ The perpetrators were tried under section 326 of the Indian Penal Code which penalizes voluntarily causing grievous hurt.

Acid attack, acid throwing, vitriol attack or vitriolage are synonymous and often used interchangeably to denote the severe act of violent assault on the human person.

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.⁴

Bellamy explains acid attack violence as being culturally, politically, legally, economically-sanctioned and often homicidal violence directed at girls, women and men, and perpetrated by both women and men who kill or seriously injure family and community members with impunity.⁵

Acid attack, more formally known as vitriolage, is an act of intimate terrorism that involves the premeditated throwing of sulphuric, nitric, or hydrochloric acid onto another with the main intention of disfigurement.⁶

Reasons of acid attack

Acid violence perpetuates gender violence and discrimination and creates fear among the women in society. Most of the reported acid attack cases have been committed on women, particularly young women for spurning suitors, for rejecting proposals of marriage or for denying dowry, etc. The failed suitor, then out of desperation seeks to destroy the body of the woman, he longed to possess. In certain few other cases, the cause of attack is that victim's rejection for love and marriage proposals motivated attacks in 35 % of the 110 new stories, robbery or land dispute, etc.⁷

Study of Indian news reports, from January 2002 to October 2012 uncovered providing a motive for the attack.⁸ News papers reports have also revealed that on Saturday the basis of different religious customs such as laughing loudly, not wearing hijab, moving colleges in jeans, men use this acid attack. Illustrative cases of acid attack include Sonali Mukherjee's

⁴Acid Attacks, ENDVAWNOW, <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/607-acid-attacks.html>.

⁵Jane Welsh, *It was like burning in hell: A comparative Exploration of Acid Attack Violence*, ASFI, <http://www.asfi.in/images/carolina%20papers.pdf>.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷ Law Commission of India (226th Report): *The Inclusion of Acid Attacks as Specific offences in the Indian Penal Code and a Law for Compensation for Victims of Crime.*

⁸ Sujoy Dhar, *India's acid attack victim*, THEGLOBALTIMES.

case of 2003 for protesting sexual harassment, and muhammad razaq's case in jammu and kashmir in 2014 for an attack on his wife for not bringing enough dowry.⁹

Not only single women, but also married women fall prey to such heinous act by their husbands or any other members of the family. A woman, who leaves behind her parental house to reside with her husband for a happy marital life, when she becomes a victim of such a crime, the perpetrator being her husband himself, there cannot be anything to compensate the loss suffered by such a woman. Men also impose such kind of cruel acts out of frustration, the reasons being mainly, "deteriorating economic conditions, high unemployment rates among male bread-winners, the increasing number of landless households, and the lack of agricultural work for male labourers."¹⁰

This shows the society's outlook on the women. Women are still regarded as "possession", and a man is supposed to take up all decisions in the family. And when a woman refuses a man, it is seen as destroying his reputation, prestige and honour, and he restores it by burning her face with acids. Men throw acid on women as a mark of their masculinity and superiority. By deforming her face, man derives a sadistic pleasure and his male ego gets satisfied.¹¹

Easy availability of acid

Data compiled by the aswwf reveals that west bengal recorded 220 cases of acid attacks between 2010 and 2016, which is about 20% of all cases recorded in the country. While there are no definitive studies explaining this phenomenon, the easy availability of acid is said to be a major reason for the wide prevalence of this ghastly crime.

Bapi dasgupta of the association for protection of democratic rights (apdr) has spent years fighting cases on behalf of acid attack victims, extracting information on compensation paid, and campaigning for tighter laws to control over-the-counter sale of acid.while varieties of acid such as muriatic acid and hydrochloric acid are available in hardware shops, the chemical most commonly used in attacks is nitric acid, sourced from local goldsmith shops.

⁹Acid Attack Case, TIMESOFINDIA, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/acid-attack-case>.

¹⁰ Afroza Anwar, "Acid Violence and Medical Care in Bangladesh: Women's Activism as Carework", 17 Gender and Society 308 (2003).

¹¹ Parvathi Menon, Sanjay Vashishtha, "Vitriolage and India- The Modern Weapon of Revenge" 2 IJHSSI 2(2013).

Over the past few years, murshidabad in particular has seen a spike in acid attacks. Between 2010 and 2016, at least 20 cases of acid attacks were reported in this district alone. In 2014, in the district's beldanga area, angura biwi's mother-in-law threw acid on her. In 2016, a class xii girl was attacked by one raqibur mondal with acid for spurning his advances.

In connection with another attack that took place in august 2016, a fast-track court in baharampur, murshidabad, sentenced both the attacker and the man who had sold him the acid to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment in december 2017. It had turned out that the shopkeeper, chandan pal, from whom rakesh mondal had purchased the acid, did not have the licence to sell acid. But his conviction has hardly been a deterrent; the sale and use of acid continues.

Effects

1. **Physical** - 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 even dissolve the bone. The deepness of injury totally depends on the strength of the acid and the duration of its contact with the skin.

When thrown on a person's face, acid rapidly eats into eyes, ears, nose and mouth. Eyelids and lips may burn off completely. The nose sometimes melts, closing the nostrils, and ears shrivel up. Acid can quickly destroy the eyes, blinding the victim. Skin and bone on the skull, forehead, cheeks and chin may dissolve. When the acid splashes or drips over the neck, chest, back, arms or legs, it burns everywhere it touches. The biggest immediate danger for victims is breathing failure. Inhalation of acid vapours can create breathing problems in two ways:

- a) By causing a poisonous reaction in the lungs.
- b) By swelling the neck, which constricts the airway and strangles the victim.

When the burns from an acid attack heal, they form thick scars which pull the skin very tight and can cause disfigurements. For instance, eyelids may no longer close, the mouth may no longer open; and the chin becomes welded to the chest¹².

¹² 226th Report, Law Commission of India, *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).

2. **Psychological** - acid assault survivors face many mental health issues upon recovery. Acid violence victims have been reported with higher levels of anxiety, depression, due to their appearance. According to the rosenberg scale, the women reported lowered self-esteem and increased self-consciousness, both in general and in the social sphere.
3. **Social and economic** - acid 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. They face a lifetime of discrimination from society and they become lonely. These dependencies are increased by the fact that many acid survivors are not able to find suitable work, due to impaired vision and physical handicapped. As a result, divorce, abandonment by husbands is common in the society. Moreover, acid survivors who are single when attacked almost certainly become ostracized from society, effectively ruining marriage prospects. They are embarrassed that people may stare or laugh at them and may hesitate to leave their homes fearing an adverse reaction from the outside world. Victims who were not married are not likely to get married and those victims who have got serious disabilities because of an attack, like blindness, will not find jobs and earn a living. Discrimination from other people, or disabilities such as blindness, makes it very difficult for victims to fend for themselves and they become dependent on others for food and money¹³

Legal effect of acid attack

In india, often incidences of acid attacks grab the headlines of indian media. Unfortunately in india, there was no separate legislation to deal with acid attacks before the passing of the criminal law (amendment) act. 2013. The offence was registered under sections 320, 322, 325, 326 and 307 of the indian penal code (i.p.c).

Section 320 - grievous hurt–

The following kinds of hurt only are designated as "grievous":-

Firstly- emasculation

Secondly - permanent privation of the sight of either eye.

¹³*Ibid.*

Thirdly - permanent privation of the hearing of either ear,

Fourthly - privation of any member or joint.

Fifthly - destruction or permanent impairing of the powers of any member or joint.

Sixthly - permanent disfiguration of head or face.

Seventhly - fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth

Eighthly - any hurt which endangers life or which causes the sufferer to be during the space of twenty days in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.

Section 322 - voluntarily causing grievous hurt –

Whoever voluntarily causes hurt, if the hurt which he intends to cause or knows himself to be likely to cause is grievous hurt, and if the hurt which he causes is grievous hurt, is said to “voluntarily to cause grievous hurt. Explanation. - a person is not said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt except when he both causes grievous hurt and intends or knows himself to be likely to cause grievous hurt. But he is said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt, if intending or knowing he to be likely to cause grievous hurt of one kind; he actually causes grievous hurt of another kind.

Section 325 - punishment for voluntarily causing grievous hurt

Whoever, except in the case provided for by section 335 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt on provocation), voluntarily causes grievous hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Section 307 - attempt to murder –

Whoever does any act with such intention or knowledge, and under such circumstances that, if he by that act caused death, he would be guilty of murder, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine; and if hurt is caused to any person by such act, the offender shall be liable either to imprisonment for life, or to such punishment as is hereinbefore mentioned. Attempts by life convicts - when any person offending under this section is under sentence of imprisonment for life, he may, if hurt is caused, be punished with death.

On 2nd april 2013 the indian penal code was amended with the passing of 'the criminal law (amendment) act, 2013. The amendment resulted in insertion of sections 326a and 326b specifically for dealing with acid violence.

Section 326 a

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.

Section 326 b states–

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 damage or deformity or burns 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.

Compensation for acid attack

Section 357 b has been newly inserted in crpc which reads as:

"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 or section 376d of the indian penal code."

Free medical treatment

Section 357 c has been newly inserted whereby all hospitals, public or private are required to provide first aid or medical treatment free of cost. The section reads as:

“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, 376b, 376c, 376d or section 376e of the indian penal code and shall immediately inform the police of such incident.” Apart from the above legislations, the supreme court of india has given state authorities three months to implement new rules to control over-the-counter sales of acids, which have been used to disfigure, maim and even kill people, particularly women, for decades.

The apex court has directed all 29 states and seven union territories to issue licenses to retailers selling acid. They are now required to keep details like the quantity sold and the addresses of buyers, who will need to present photo identification to purchase acids. The retailers are required to declare the amount of acid being stocked to the police and any case of failure in doing so would lead to undeclared stock being confiscated and a fine of up to 50,000 rupees (\$840). It has also barred anyone under the age of 18 from purchasing acids like hydrochloric, sulphuric and nitric. These acids, can burn through flesh, are easily available in shops for as little as 20 rupees (\$0.33) a litre¹⁴

Bangladesh

Bangladesh reports the highest number of acid attacks in the world. There was a sudden increase in number of acid attack cases in bangladesh in the mid 1990s. In 2001, 340 cases were reported which got to 336 cases in 2002. The government passed the acid offences prevention act and the acid control act in 2002 to check the increasing acid violence in the country.

The act¹⁵ punishes the culprit with a death sentence or rigorous punishment for life with the fine of one lakh takka in case of death¹⁶ or complete or partial mutilation of face or sexual organ of the victim. On damage to any part of the body of the victim, rigorous imprisonment of 7-14 years is awarded to the perpetrator.¹⁷ in addition to this, anyone who

¹⁴Utkarsh Anand, *309 Acid attack cases in '14, 300% rise in 3 yrs*, INDIANEXPRESS, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/309-acid-attack-/>.

¹⁵ Acid Offences Prevention Act, 2002.

¹⁶ S. 4, Acid Offences Prevention Act, 2002.

¹⁷ S. 5, Acid Offences Prevention Act, 2002.

throws or attempts to throw acid on any person is rigorously imprisoned for 3-7 years along with a fine of 50,000 takka even if no physical or mental harm is caused.¹⁸

The act also addresses the problem of delay of prosecution of cases by allotting fixed time for investigations. It provides a maximum of 60 days for investigation, failing which legal action is taken against the investigating officer. It also states that the trial of the case should be completed within a maximum of 90 days. The acid control act, deals with restricting and controlling the sale and supply of acid in bangladesh. A 15- member national acid control councils have been established around the country to take action to enforce the laws regarding acid sales and to assist in proper treatment, reporting and rehabilitation of victims.

Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (cedaw) was adopted in 1979 by the un general assembly. It is often described as an international bill of rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. It defines discrimination against women as-

"...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

A majority of acid attack cases occurs against women which exhibits gender inequality and discrimination in society. Acid attack is an attempt by the perpetrator to destroy and degrade a woman physically, psychologically and emotionally. It creates a sense of fear in the mind of the victim and makes her accept the traditional subordinate gender role in society. It prevents her from challenging the unjust social norms and to rise against her subordinate position in society.

Countries that have ratified the convention are legally bound to implement its provisions. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to meet with their treaty obligations. Countries with maximum number of

¹⁸ S. 6, Acid Offences Prevention Act, 2002.

acid violence cases like bangladesh, pakistan, nepal, india etc. Have ratified cedaw which creates a legal obligation on such countries to frame stringent laws to curb such violence against women.

In addition to cedaw, the united nations general assembly had passed a declaration on the elimination of violence against women in 1993. Article 4(f) of this declaration advocates member states to develop preventive approaches for violence against women by legal measures. Such a declaration gives credibility to new legislations which advocates stern punishment to the offenders provides appropriate compensation to the victims and regulates sale of acid in the member countries.

Acid attacks: the dark reality of growing numbers

Even after all the advisories, judicial directions and the legislative steps taken in order to curb the menace of acid attack, the numbers of incidents have not declined. The data of national crime records bureau¹⁹ for cases reported, arrested, charge-sheeted and convicted, both for offence of throwing as well as attempt of acid attack do not point to any change in the situation.

As per the data provided by ncrb, in 2014, for offence of acid attack under section 326a there were a total of 137 cases reported in respect of which 154 arrests were made. Of all the cases reported, only 135 were charge-sheeted of which finally there were just 08 cases of conviction. Of the 135 persons' charge-sheeted, only 12 persons were convicted. For attempt under section 326b, total incidents reported were 40 in respect of which 39 arrests were made. Only 23 cases were charge-sheeted of which only 3 lead to convictions. Total 28 persons were charge-sheeted of which only 3 were convicted. In 2014, total number of victims was 146 in cases registered for acid attack and 41 for attempt.

In the year 2015, there were a total of 123 reported cases of acid attacks in respect of which 192 arrests were made. Of all the cases reported, only 102 were charge-sheeted of which finally there were just 07 cases of conviction. Of the 141 persons charge-sheeted, only 12 persons were convicted. For attempt, total incidents reported were 30 in respect of which 37 arrests were made. Only 18 cases were charge-sheeted of which none led to conviction. Total 24 persons were charge-sheeted of which only no one was convicted. In

¹⁹ Provisional Data made available to the authors from National Crime Records Bureau.

2015, total number of victims was 147 for acid attack in cases registered and 30 for attempt.

It can very well be made out from the above figures that the ratio of cases reported to a final conviction is extremely low. The figures do not change in 2016 and for a total of 167 reported cases, 194 arrests were made. Of all the cases reported only 135 were charge-sheeted of which there were only 09 cases of conviction. Of the 166 persons charge-sheeted, only 11 persons were convicted. For attempt, total incidents reported rose to 46 in respect of which 39 arrests were made. Only 31 cases were charge-sheeted of which only 1 lead to conviction. Total 42 persons were charge-sheeted of which only 1 was convicted. In 2016, total number of victims dramatically rose to 182 for acid attack in cases registered and 50 for attempt.

The data prominently highlights two things-first, that the conviction ratio is abysmal in acid attack cases; second, that the number of acid attack incidents are steadily growing instead of declining. The whole purpose of the criminal law amendment was to increase the deterrent value against the perpetrators of the crimes which according to the data seems to not have been achieved.

Some cases before the inclusion of the section 326a of ipc

In *Marepally Venkata Sree Nagesh vs. State of A.P.*²⁰, the accused was suspicious about the character of his wife and inserted mercuric chloride into her vagina; she died due to renal failure. The accused was charged and convicted under section 302 and 307 ipc.

In *Devanand vs. The State*²¹ a man threw acid on his estranged wife because she refused to cohabit with him. The wife suffered permanent disfigurement and loss of one eye. The accused was convicted under section 307 and was imprisoned for 7 years.

*State of Karnataka by Jalahalli Police Station vs. Joseph Rodrigues*²² it is one of the famous cases involving acid attack. The accused threw acid on a girl, Hasina, for refusing his job offer. This deeply scarred her physical appearance changed the colour and appearance of her face and left her blind. The accused was convicted under section 307 of ipc and sentenced to imprisonment for life. Compensation of rs. 2, 00,000/- in addition to the trial

²⁰Marepally Venkata Sree Nagesh Vs. State of A.P, 2002 CriLJ 3625.

²¹Devanand Vs. The State 1987 (1) Crimes 314.

²²State of Karnataka by Jalahalli Police Station vs. Joseph Rodrigues.

court fine of rs 3, 00,000 was to be paid by the accused to hasina's parents.

Landmark cases related to the acid attack

Laxmi v. Union of india²³

This is a landmark case, in this case, the petition filed by the laxmi (acid victim). In this case, apex court issued the direction for the regulation of acid to the state and ut. The court also addressed the problem of compensation. The apex court held that section 357a²⁴this section provides for the preparation of 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 crime and who require rehabilitation. The apex court direct that the acid attacks victims shall be paid compensation of at least rs. 3 lakh by the concerned state government/ut as the aftercare and rehabilitation cost.

But in reality, no state has set victim compensation scheme and the compensation ranging is from 25,000 to 3lakh depend upon the state to state which is not sufficient for the victim because the acid attack victim will have to go through several plastic injuries in a whole life.

Parivartan kendra vs. Union of india²⁵

In this case the pil filed the petition for the plight of acid attack victims like free medical care, rehabilitative service or adequate compensation under survivor compensation schemes- highlighted plight of two dalit girls – acid attack victims. In this case, court also took a consideration that despite orders and directions of the same court in the laxmi case, acid still readily available to most of the population in india. In this landmark judgment supreme court issued a direction that the state governments/ ut should seriously discuss and take up the matter with all the private hospitals in their respective state/ ut to the effect that the private hospitals should not refuse treatment to victims of acid attack and that full treatment should be provided to such victims including medicines, food, bedding and reconstructive surgeries. The apex court said that there is no need to set up a separate criminal injuries compensation board and the court also clarified that the state government/ut concerned can give even more amount of compensation more than rs.

²³Laxmi v. Union of India 2014 4 SCC 427.

²⁴Inserted in the Code of Criminal Procedure,1973 by Act 5 of 2009.

²⁵Parivartan Kendra Vs. Union of India 2015 (13) SCALE 325.

3lakh.

The court also said that the state government/ ut should take a stringent action be taken against those erring persons supplying acid without proper authorization and also the concerned authorities be made responsible for failure to keep a check on the distribution of the acid.

State of maharashtra v. Ankrur panwar²⁶(preeti rathi case)

This is the first such order in an acid attack in maharashtra a special women's court here sentenced ankur panwar to death. The accused was convicted of the charge of throwing acid on preeti rathi at bandra station in 2013 after she chose to pursue her nursing career, declining his proposal for marriage. Special judge anju s. Shende said "according to the mitigating and aggravating circumstances, the facts of the case and the recent acid attack judgments by the supreme court, the accused to death.

Suggestions

- To make specific legislation this would deal with the regulation of the acid.
- Insert a section 114b: presumption as to acid attack in the indian evidence act, 1872 which was recommended by the justice j.s. verma committee.
- The indiscriminate retail sale of acid ought to be brought under the explosives act
- Center government and state government both would come forward and make a separate fund which deals with compensation payable to acid victims.
- The victim, who cannot work, should get a pension
- But, framing of laws is never enough unless it is properly executed. The indian judicial system is overloaded with cases. It takes years for the trial to take place. In addition to this, lawyers try to delay the prosecution of the accused by requesting the court to extend the date of trial. As a result of this, case remains pending for years and the criminal is not punished for his acts for years in spite of the stringent laws. Thus, a separate tribunal or bench can be formed to look after the cases of acid attacks. Such a body will be exclusively reserved for such cases which will ensure quick deliverance of justice and aid to the victim. The decision of the tribunal or bench should be binding and final which will save the victim from various appeals in different courts of the country.

²⁶State of Maharashtra v. Ankrur Panwar .

- In addition to the stringent penal laws, provisions have also been made to regulate the sale of acid. The acids used for attacks are easily available as they are used in domestic use as well as for scientific and research purposes. A monitoring system should be formed to check the effective implementation of the rules by the people.
- Many people in the country (particularly the shopkeepers and retailers) due to illiteracy or ignorance have no knowledge of the new rules of regulation on sale and purchase of acid. Steps should be taken by the government to make people aware of the new rules.
- The criminal law (amendment) act, 2013 is a welcome act which has brought positive and effective changes. Justice can never be delivered to the victim unless the law is properly implemented. Thus, steps should be taken to effectively execute the new laws to curb such violence.

Conclusion

Acid attack is one of the most heinous crimes a human being can commit. While analysing this critical act of violence a common question arises: where do acts of such gruesome violence against women originate- are they individual aberrations in the minds of men or a symptom of a much wider socio-political malaise? Whether we take it as an individual abnormality or socio-political-cultural conundrum, the individual always lies at the heart of this acute sin. The problem of violence on women is not primarily a social problem, but a moral and philosophical one. Like any other problem this also has its solutions. This gruesome act borne out of vengeance deserves to be punished in the most stringent manner.

The steps taken by the judiciary such as increasing the amount of compensation to be given to the victim and awarding death penalty to the perpetrator are laudable. However the state governments need to play a more active role in the implementation of the guidelines regarding supply and distribution of acid and the rehabilitation of the victims. Better job opportunities, training should be given to the victims so that they can earn their livelihood. A value-based education is the need of the hour. The police, doctors and judiciary need to be gender sensitized. The masses need to be sensitized regarding this issue so that the victims are not shunned or shamed. Acid attack leaves some indelible scars on the mind of the victim. Proper counselling should be made available to her so that she doesn't consider her face her prison and finds the strength to carry on with her life.