



## ACID ATTACKS SURVIVORS IN PAKISTAN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study is to indicate the psychosocial and cultural experiences of women victims of Acid Attack in Pakistani society. They faced multiplies problems as they have facial disability owing to acid violence. By using of a qualitative research study design, five in-depth interviews were conducted with Acid attack victims' women. They were selected with the help of a non-profit organization in Pakistan called, "Depilex Smileagain Foundation" (DSF). Five respondents (married and unmarried women) were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Their ages were from 25 to 55 years old. To collect the data, an interview guide was developed to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews. For analysis purpose thematic analysis method was used to explore insight stories of acid attack women victims. The victims' perceptions revealed the male dominating psychosocial/cultural context of infirmity persist in Pakistani society. The victims described that in contemporary Pakistani society, masculine controlling, traditional patriarchy trends and disbelieving exist in their personal lives, particularly in relation to marriage, employability, equality, and seeking justice; however, respondents strongly support and appreciate the role of DSF in regaining their lost self-reliance following the attack, as well as some employability and skill development training and socioeconomic empowerment at DSF. Their life stories might be solicitous to the policy makers, government agencies and other stakeholders to know the interminable cultural pressures that women with facial disabilities face. Women Acid Attack victims' psychosocial and economic rehabilitation is also the obligation of Govt. agencies, NGOs, and community activists.

**Keywords:** Acid attack, victims, Qualitative data, Rehabilitation, empowerment

## INTRODUCTION

Acid violence is widespread and prevalent in our society that remains often invisible. Women are unsafe and are frequently victim even in their homes and often by their immediate family members. Acid attacks, sometimes referred to as "intimate terrorism," include putting out the victim and their family in hydrochloric, nitric, or sulfuric acid to cause them to suffer for the rest of their lives (Mujeeb & Kamal, 2018). It is a widespread occurrence that was first documented in the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1800s. From there, reports of it have expanded to Southeast Asia and Africa, with developing nations like Bangladesh, India, and Cambodia reporting a sharp increase in the number of cases (Khoshnami *et al.*, 2017). In South Asia, a number of socioeconomic factors are important in these property crimes. According to studies, these elements include social isolation, unemployment, poverty, inequality, and demographic trends (Hasan & Khatun, 2020; Gull *et al.*, 2021; Raj *et al.*, 2023). One of the most serious kind of violence against women in Pakistan is "acid violence," "acid attack," or "acid throwing". It's a type of targeted attack that uses sulphuric, hydrochloric, or nitric acid as a weapon to "torture, maim, disfigure, or kill" the victim (Patel, 2014). The skin's layers are badly affected, and in certain circumstances, the bones may dissolve. Skin and tissue damage is affected by the type of acid and the amount of time the skin is exposed to it (Cambodian League for the Promotion of Human Rights, 2003). Families frequently forcibly remove women from their homes, forcing them to live in isolation with no legal protection (Patel, 2014).

Acid attacks prepared on women and women are used to permanently scar the survivor – they may be a severe form of violence towards women. In an Acid assault, corrosive is tossed at the face or edge of the sufferer with chivalrous motivation to consume and distort. The limit of casualties are women, numerous younger than 18, who have refusal lewd gestures or propositions to be engaged. Acid assault or nastiness age is depicted as the demonstration of tossing corrosive onto the body of an individual "to harm or deforming [them] out of envy or vengeance". Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world are working with women who have been victims of acid attacks. In Pakistan, the Depilex Smileagain Foundation (DSF) is actively working to rehabilitate acid attack survivors by providing them with not just counselling, medical care, social and emotional well-being, but also the opportunity to become active, self-sufficient members of a community that has previously neglected them...

In Pakistani society, the harrowing experiences and enduring challenges faced by survivors of acid attacks. It highlights the significant challenges they face, including societal stigma, limited opportunities, and barriers to justice. Despite these obstacles, survivors receive support from organizations like DSF, which offer vital assistance in rebuilding their lives. The paper emphasizes the importance of addressing the systemic issues and cultural pressures faced by survivors and calls for comprehensive measures to facilitate their rehabilitation and societal integration (Ambreen & Yousaf, 2023).

Pakistan's ranking of 145 out of 146 regarding political participation and economic opportunities for women showcases the gender disparity prevalent within the country (UNICEF, 2023). Many government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan are working to help victims of acid attacks, but the frequency of certain attacks is on the rise. Non-governmental organizations reported "1,300 cases of unaccompanied honor killings in 2003, and the number of women who face different kinds of domestic violence are many times higher" (Khan & Hussain, 2008). In Pakistan, 7571 cases of violence against women were registered in 2008, compared to 8548 in 2009, an increase of about 13%. But "from 2007 to 2013, about 949 cases of acid attack have been reported. Among the total number, 519 were women while majority of cases (589) were reported from Punjab district" (Khan, 2015). According to the Acid Survivors' Foundation, Punjab accounted for 56 percent of acid attacks. Furthermore, Aurat Foundation reported that, between January to September 2014, nearly 42 cases of acid attack were present in Punjab only. In comparison to 2012-13, this proportion has risen dramatically, as "a 13 percent decline in acid assaults was documented in 2012-13, but just the first nine months of 2014 show a rise" (Jalil, 2014). "In 2015,

the overall number of documented acid attack cases was 69, decreased from 153 in 2014 and 109 in 2013," according to Acid Survivor Foundation (2016, Imran).

According to the findings of an independent study conducted by Depilex Smileagain Foundation (DSF), "there were 242 cases of burn victims in Pakistan in 2011. Among them, 153 cases were an outcome of planned violence whereas 89 were accidental cases" (Depilex Smileagain Foundation, 2012). This could be due to weedy rules and easily accessibility of acids in shops. This information was also substantiated by a BBC News report by Shaima Khalil, who spoke with victims of acid attacks who were belonged to the Depilex Smileagain Foundation. She acknowledged in her report that "Women are seen as easy targets. For less than 50 rupees, you can buy a liter of acid and mostly extinguish someone's life" (Hills, 2014).

A famous filmmaker and journalist Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy from Pakistan described, "But, of course, there are unreported numbers, because acid violence is generally occurred by members from one's own family, and given the culture that exists in Pakistan, many are unwilling to press charges against the criminals. So, we be certain of there are dozens more that go unreported" (Waliji, 2012). Acid attacks can be influenced by a wide range of factors. The most prevalent and obvious cause is "love rejection," in which the victim rejects the proposer of marriage, love, or sex. The ability of young women's families to marry is a source of concern for them. Women's connection in romantic relationships before marriage is prohibited because, in addition to her physical appeal, a woman's virginity is a valuable resource in the marriage. When women or their families reject them for marriage, vindictive lovers' resort to acid attacks to destroy the woman's appearance and condemn her to a fate worse than death. A study of Indian news reports from January 2002 to October 2012 revealed that in 35 percent of the 110 new stories, the victim's refusal of love and marriage proposals motivated the attack, providing a motive for the crime. Furthermore, a report released by a leading organization that works with acid attack victims, "The Campaign and Struggle against Acid Attacks on Women (CSAAAW)," discovered that sexual harassment or assault in response to a woman or girl rejecting such advances or demanding that the violence stop frequently leads to such attacks. These demonstrations influenced society's attitude toward women. Women are still unable to stand up for their rights, which are a fundamental human right. As a sign of their masculinity and dominance, men throw acid on women. Man arouses a harsh yearning by distorting her face, and his male ego is fulfilled. Another important factor could be dowry or marital issues. According to a survey of media reports in India, approximately 20% of the attacks occurred between unrelated people as a result of business competition, sales disputes, land conflicts, or family revenge. Females aged 11 to 30 are the most vulnerable to such attacks, with 36 percent of victims being targeted for refusing marriage proposals. As a result, the most common reason of acid attacks is rejection of sexual advances. One of the most serious forms of human rights abuse is acid violence. It is not restricted to a specific race, religion, or geographical location (Haque & Ahsan, 2014). Sexual advances or marriage proposals rejected by women, a failed love connection, and betrayal, "for not wearing Islamic veils, for not behaving well, for laughing loudly" are also reasons for acid attacks (Nasreen, 2012).

**Objectives of Study:** The objectives of this study aimed to identify the causes of acid attacks on women, find out the psychosocial effects of acid burn victims and fears for their families, explore the perception about quality of medical services provided to burn victims, highlight the perception of respondent regarding the legal assistance after the incidence and to help to prevent abusive situation in order to help in the prevention of such abusive situations in Pakistan.

**Literature Review:** In Pakistan, few studies have been performed on this subject. The majority of the acid violence research has taken place in India, Bangladesh, and Cambodia. Welsh (2009) conducted an acid violence study in Cambodia, Bangladesh, and India to determine the various reasons and causes of acid attacks. According to research, there is a link between gender-based violence and acid throwing. Poverty, a violent culture, and aggression were also identified as important factors of domestic violence in Cambodia.

Patel (2014) performed acid violence studies in India from January 2009 to December 2013 using newspaper accounts. In India, he discovered that females "suffer from psychological trauma and

reconstructive surgery expenses". The dowry death is another type of violence at home. Economics and the subordinate role of females are the main motive and conditions. As described by the author, A bride burning issue is a common occurrence among Pakistani women. "In the burning of a bride, it is claimed that a spouse or husband's family douses the man's wife with kerosene or gasoline oil and brings the woman to light by burning her alive" (Barlas, 2019).

Similarly, DSAFP is actively engaged in addressing the issues surrounding acid burn cases, operating on a national scale compared to ASFP. Their efforts encompass a wide range of initiatives, including gender equality programs, self-grooming and women empowerment activities, domestic violence awareness, peace conferences, and seminars on topics like hijab. Moreover, DSAFP conducts awareness campaigns in rural areas, focusing on women empowerment, game changer strategies, and disaster management, while also hosting seminars specifically for acid violence survivors. They provide essential services such as wound and burn emergency care and offer traditional housing for women victims of violence, alongside initiatives like the Depilex beauty for a cause program in the USA. Furthermore, DSAFP actively participates in conferences, such as the plastic surgery conference at AKHU Karachi, where they address the causes, reasons, and prevention of acid attacks. Additionally, they conduct seminars on the health and personality development of burn victims. Through over 50 workshops, awareness programs, and training sessions, DSAFP demonstrates a strong commitment to ending the pervasive culture of suppressing women and destroying their beauty as a means of asserting dominance. These efforts are viewed as positive steps towards supporting and empowering victims. (ASFP, 2023).

According to Ellis et al. (2011), females with impairments are abused not only by their husband, but also by those who have more power. The attacker is sometimes a caregiver with a lot of power or influence over the victim. However, a less literature available to explain how females with disabilities deal with these challenging conditions. Asian females with disabilities ' intimate relationship experiences. She recognized Asian women with disabilities facing obstacles due to the attitudes and cultural insensitivities of their own community (Bui & Dutta, 2014).

According to Khan (2011), Pakistan's government passed two bills protecting women's rights on December 12, 2011. "The 2010 Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill and the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2008) rendered acidic throwing a crime against the state," with a 14-year sentence to life imprisonment and a minimum Rs1 million fine.

Malik & Khan, (2013) stated that, government and legislatures have made attempts to create a thorough Acid and Burn Crime Bill since December 13, 2011. Atiya Inayat-Ullah presented this idea to the National Assembly on October 3, 2012, for complete consideration.

Imran, 2013 stated that It was presented after 11 parliamentarians had co-signed it. Section 6 of the Acid Throwing and Burn Crime Bill (2012) states: "I if such act has resulted in the death of any individual, such act shall be punished with severe life imprisonment (ii) anyone who intentionally causes injury to the assault by Acid and Burn shall be punished with severe life imprisonment" (Pakistan National Assembly). The "Acid and Burn Crime Bill" has yet to be supported at the federal and provincial levels.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The researcher used qualitative study methodologies to gather information from acid violence survivors. The benefits of a qualitative method of research over a quantitative method of studies perceived that it can provide a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

A narrative method helped me obtain wealthy data about "signs, symbols, and feeling expression in language and other symbols, validating how the narrator makes sense". It also made it easier for me as a scientist to preserve an empathic connection with respondents in the studies. The narrative method, according to Patton (2002), "honors the narratives of individuals as information can stand alone as a mere depiction of experiences.

The psychological, physical, socioeconomic, and cultural consequences of acid attacks on women are investigated in this study. For this research, the case study method is used. In hand was carried out at Dimplex Smile Again Foundation (DSF) Head office at Lahore Pakistan. The DSF is an NGO

established the DSF in 2003 by Ms. Mussarat Misbah, dedicated to not only providing medical care providing assistance to acid survivors, as well as a suitable job opportunity for them to become productive, self-sufficient members of the community. This organization serves survivors of the burning of male and female acid / kerosene. Annual Report (2016) of DSF says that "DSF has more than 701 registered victims from across Pakistan, 298 of whom have been treated effectively or at various phases of their therapy." Together with her team, Mussarat Misbah is very involved in "keeping track of burning occurrences through journal and TV reports" (DSF, 2016). She has also provided females with disabilities the chance to work as hair stylists or make-up artists in her Depilex salon. Most survivors work or train seven days a week in her salon. With its policies on women's career choices, DSF is quite helpful and adaptable. Women with impairments have the option of working at a spa or starting their own business.

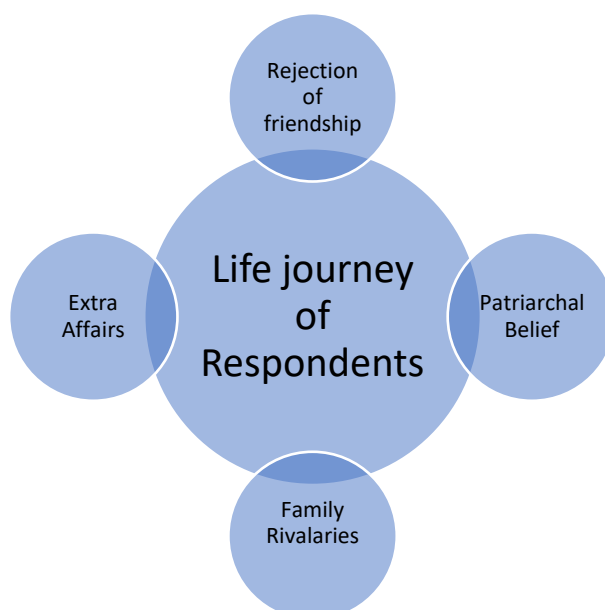
Purposive sampling was used to approach 5 respondents (married and unmarried women). Their age ranged from 25-55. Interview schedule was used as a tool of data collection. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted by interview guide to collect the data. Thematic analysis was done through all transcribed data of interviews. Major themes which emerged were physical and psychological violence. However, occurrence of eternal trauma and social isolation has also been found.

## RESULTS

***The Life Journey of Respondents:*** In the Asian context, this research highlighted the socio-cultural aspects associated with facial impairment. In a patriarchal society, researcher aim is to draw attention to the unseen obstacles that Pakistani women face after facial impairment. The research is linked to women's self-perceptions of facial disability, which could lead to new definitions of what it means to be a disabled woman in the context of culture and social norms. Rather than beginning in an abstract conceptual realm, Davis (2001) states that it has meant beginning with individuals' own narratives and reflections, as well as their understanding of the reality in which they live. Each of the chapter's themes is accompanied by Researcher observations that create a vivid picture of the lives of the participants. The names and some personal details of participants are not provided due to confidentiality.

### ***Figure: 1 Diagrammatic Representation of the Life Journey of the respondents***

Pakistani society is overwhelmingly male dominated. Males are usually believed to be superior to females. These patriarchal views are passed down to the next generation as moral principles. The concept of honor has a strong influence on male behavior in Pakistani society. The narrative of case studies deliberated as:



***Figure 1: Diagrammatic Representation of the Life Journey of the respondents***

**Case Study #1:** S was a young woman of 25-year-old, living in Pakpattan city of Punjab Pakistan. She was unmarried and she got education of at primary level. The acid affected her face neck, sleeves and legs as well badly. After this incident she was immediately taken to DHQ Hospital Pakpattan and given the first Aid treatment. The injury was so severe therefore, she was taken to Jinnah Hospital (Burn Center) where her treatment continued for 6 months. Then she was referred to CMH Hospital Lahore and later she was sent to Raceview where her Surgery was conducted. The treatment was very painful and long procedure and expensive. The early expenditure was bear by her family and later was Depilex Smileagain Foundation. She faced many psychological and social problems during that time. She got frightened when she saw her face in the mirror. People's behavior was not cooperative, and they treated her differently. Therefore, she became isolated and frustrated. She also faced problems in going to public events.

The culprit was arrested after her declaration she came to her senses after a while. The culprit was socially powerful and got release after few months. Because he was politically connected. He considered himself above the law. Now she is being trained as a beautician at Depilex Smile Again Foundation. It is her dream that she may become able to open her own beauty salon. She is happy that her family supports her, and they do not forbid her to go anywhere. But people behavior is still a problem for example people stray at her. She still faces social, and cultural difficulties.

**Case Study #2:** P was a 45-year-old. She was middle pass housewife she was living with his family in Gulberg 4, Lahore. In a rented house, she lived with her second husband. She was attacked by her first husband who has been divorced her a year ago. When her first husband came to know her 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage, he got angry. He decided to throw acid on her by saying that "AGR Tm Meri Nai Ho Sakti Main Tume Kisi Ka Ni Hone Do Ga" (if you are not with me, how you could be for other). He was arrested red handedly and also was sent to jail according to the count of law. She was taken to the Services Hospital Lahore where she was gone under many surgeries and then she was referred to Ravi Hospital it was a private hospital. The expensive of the hospital was very high. Her parents were old, and they afforded her initial expenditures and by taken brow money later on when it come into the knowledge of Diplex Smileagain Foundation it began to bear the burden of her expenditures. The treatment was very painful and time consuming. She faced many psychological and social problems during that time. She got frightened when she saw her face in the mirror. People's behavior was not cooperative, and they treated her differently. Her relatives and neighbors spread different rumors about her character because the second marriage was the love marriage, her relatives was not happy with it. Therefore, she became isolated and frustrated. She also faced problems in going to public events.

She appealed the government to punish the culprit so that nobody can dare to do such a heinous act. The sale of acid should be banned, and the government should take steps to spread awareness to prevent such types of incidents. The Government should help the victims through financial aid medical aid and by providing the shelter homes. She asked some questions

The researcher found cause of acid throwing on women is the extra martial affair. This case also highlights the male dominance in the society. Women are not allowed to take decision even parents not take permission of her own marriage. Government should take steps to socialize children at school, colleges and university levels about the religion values and cultural issues.

**Case Study # 3:** U was a resident of Sheikhpura Firoz Watwan Punjab Pakistan. She was divorced woman with three daughters and one son living with her father's house. She was divorced due to some controversy between her and her husband. In Pakistani society family pressure or family matter a cause of big issue. Her father took her to his home after matter. Her husband came and requested to her father and he assure that he does not do such things again. She came back to her home but after some days. They fought again and she went to her father's house. Her husband many times tried to take her back home, but she refused, and her husband got furious and threw acid on her when she was going to her uncle's house. Acid affected her face and upper part of her chest. She was taken to Sheikhpura Hospital where first aid and some surgeries was done and then she was referred to Mayo Hospital Lahore where she got treatment for few days. Later NGO Duplex

Smile Again Foundation began to bear her expenditures and her children as well. The criminal was arrested on the spot and was sent to jail according to the coda of law.

She faced many psychological and social problems during that time. She got frightened when she saw her face in the mirror. She suffered from depression and anxiety as well. People were not cooperative, and they treated her differently. Therefore, she became isolated and frustrated. She also faced problems in going to public events.

Government should regulate sales and purchase of the acid. Government should provide shelter homes for the victims and gave financial aid. She has only one dream that her children would become good persons and they may have good future. The cause of acid throwing is Family rivalries.

**Case Study # 4:** N was a divorced middle class woman was living with her 3 daughters in a rented home in Siddiq Abad, Lahore. Her home was run by her Beauty salon's wages. Her husband returned Pakistan from Malaysia eventually. He has no money to start business and he tried to find some work to earn money but failed. He worked on the base of daily wages and his company full of addicted persons so he started smoking but with the passage of time he took drug and do nothing. Once he got furious and threw acid on her which affected her face and one side of the body. She lost her one eye. She was taken to Mayo hospital where first aid some basic surgeries was done then CMH and later Raceview hospital where her surgery was operated. Initial expenditure of her treatment and education of the children are being afforded by her parents later on Duplex Smile Again Foundation take this responsibility. The cause of acid throwing is poverty and domestic violence. Poverty force the man to done wrong thing like robbery corruption and addiction. In this case the environment of the criminal was not good all colleague of him addicted. He started smoking in start but afterward he was taking drug and become addicted. At the end when he has not money start fighting with his wife for money and one day, he throws acid on her. This case also highlights the educational and socialization issues.

**Case Study # 5:** M lived in Nishtar colony Lahore. She is about 55 years old woman and lives in a joint family system. A man liked her and he send her marriage proposal. But she refused him and he took this personal. He tried again to excess her but that time she told him to her family about that boy, he forced or threatened her for marriage. Her family took action against him. For that he took revenge from her he hired a criminal person to take revenge for his disrespect. Her This terrible incident occurred when she was going home near Governor house Dharam pura. A person unknow to her throw acid on her. It affected both her face and back badly. She was taken to Race view hospital and then MAYO Hospital Lahore for further treatment. The treatment was very painful and time consuming. The initial expenditure was bear by her father and later on the burden of expense was faced by Duplex Smile Again Foundation. It helped her a lot in her rehabilitation and in the matter of finance as well. The NGO is still bearing her expenses. The culprit was arrested red handed and sent to jail after the legal procedure. All this happened due her controversial marriage. On the other hand, she is criticized by the people whom she meets the ask awkward and odd questions which have no answers. She requested the Government to take extreme steps to prevent such type of incidents and it must deal with the culprit with iron hands. The cause of the acid thrown is the mar. Family issues, lack of socialization, and lack of education. Also shows the intolerance and ego issues in the society. It also shows that weakness in the laws and problems in the security issues for women.

## **DISCUSSION**

Most of the acid attack have the motive of taking revenge in this context the previous researcher Women's rejection of marriage offers or sexual advances, betrayal, a broken love connection, and other common reasons, according to Nasreen (2012) "for not wearing Islamic veils, for not behaving well, for speaking too much, for laughing loudly". The motive of the acid attack to take revenge Welsh (2009) reported that this serious crime is prevalent in nations such as India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Pakistan "perpetrated by men as a result of shame and loss of face or loss of honor". As the same motive Cambodian League for the Promotion of Human Rights, 2003

found that Acid crime is a planned and purposeful act that is frequently motivated by rage, jealousy, or hatred. The criminal always blames on victims for all that issues and wants to impose on mental as well as physical pain. The culprit blames the victim for the problem and wants to impose as much physical and mental suffering as possible. The male committer's goal appears to be, "If I can't have you when I want you, no one can" (Agarwal, 2008).

***Change Begins at Home:*** The majority of the respondents said that they married at a young age. Despite the fact that the legal age of marriage for women is 16, marriages are sometimes arranged just after puberty. Women activists are currently raising their voices to "raise the minimum legal age for marriage from 16 to 18 years old" (Ghani, 2016). Early marriage, in my opinion, should be completely prohibited. It is totally unacceptable when women begin to experience physically, emotional, or mental violence from their in-laws or husbands from a young age, when they lack the ability to explain themselves. In a study of Indian women, Speizer and Pearson (2011) reported that women who marry at the age of 18 or younger are more likely to experience intimate partner violence. As a result, the involvement of parents is critical in two ways. First and foremost, they should encourage for their girls the confidence to speak up for themselves. Second, if their daughters are forced to violence after marriage, their parents should stand by their side like a shadow so that they can face life's hardships with courage. Unfortunately, acid survivors in Pakistan are forced to suffer psychological, physical, and mental pain for the rest of their lives. Jannat stated, "When a woman earns money to run a household, she ceases to be a lady and becomes a "son" or "man."

***Improvement in Police and the Legal System:*** It is the role of the state to ensure that police officers, judges, and lawyers perform their all responsibilities honestly and truly. So, criminals should face severe legal consequences and punishments. Police should act quickly to register and investigate acid attack complaints. Sona, a 21-year-old woman, stated, "If we are burnt, he should get punishment to be burnt as well.

In that way, he would understand the pain and won't even think of doing it to anyone again." Similarly, the police station must provide a barrier-free and secure environment. Female police officers should be hired so that crime victims can report crimes without hesitation (Social Policy and Development Center, 2012).

***Speedy Trials:*** In Pakistan, one of the most serious issues is long delays in court hearings. Generally, these unnecessarily prolonged delays force a woman to suffer from long-term financial and emotional difficulties. "Legal delaying tactics are a loophole in the law and are often used against women with the knowledge that if the process continues for an extended period of time, they will very often give up their legal battles; especially since the nature of some cases requires a quick decision," Zia et al., (2002) wrote about Pakistan's judicial system. In two to three months, these (acid attack) decisions must be made. The fact that these cases typically take years to resolve is frustrating.

***Adequate Health Care System:*** Today's irony is that the country with the greatest need lacks the resources to treat and rehabilitate burn victims. In Pakistan, there have been no publicly sponsored burn units or centers. The respondents claimed that the hospital officials would not even provide them with first-aid treatment. The hospital officials refused to admit me, according to their comments, revealing the hostile attitudes of health-care personnel toward them. It appeared to be a suicide attempt, according to the police. Before being admitted, they required a police report [a copy of the police file number]. My family took me to three different hospitals, but none of them were able to help me. My treatment was completed at a nearby clinic. (25-year-old Kainat) "No one was looking after me at the hospital besides giving me some ointment," Rabia, 32, explained. When the media arrived, they began my treatment." Burn damage therapy also is painful and costly. The government should pay for all burn victims' expenditures. They should prosecute those who refuse to admit ladies with serious injuries. "In Lahore, there is just one specialized burn unit," Mussart Misbah explained. However, in one corner of hospital wards, you can see many of them lying naked [helpless] covered by a sheet."



**Role of Media:** The significance of the media cannot be overstated. Characters, pictures, and story lines from dramas about violence can readily be presented through the media. It has the opportunity to support programs that focus on women's rights and the punishment of violence against women. A Pakistani human rights activist Rukhsana Bibi, who was attacked with acid in 2012 by a gang of men (Bhattachariya, 2020). Due to the extensive media coverage of Bibi's case, more people became aware of the targeted violence that Pakistani women endure as well as the pressing need for improved legal protections for those who have survived acid assaults. Furthermore, the government should impose restrictions on the media's portrayal of women with disabilities in society. Justin Trudeau, Canada's Prime Minister, made a statement that is worth noting here. While speaking on a panel about gender equality, he referred to himself as a "feminist." He stated, "We should never be afraid to use the word feminist. Men and women should use it to describe themselves anytime they want".

**Awareness in Schools:** The state is responsible for developing and implementing curricula that highlight women's status and function in Islamic society. As a result, males learn from the beginning that women are equal to men. They will not abuse them.

**Strict Regulatory Authorities:** Different forms of acid are sold without a license in Pakistan. Companies that employ acid should be granted licenses by the government. On the sale and purchase of acid, proper checks and balances should be in place. Given the significance of Mussarat Misbah's and the respondents' suggestions, Pakistan's government and non-profit organizations may create awareness of the rights of women with facial disabilities.

**CONCLUSION:** The victims' perspectives demonstrated how Pakistani society's persistently male-dominated psychosocial and cultural framework of infirmity still exists. The victims stated that they experienced disbelieving, traditional patriarchal trends, and masculine control in their personal lives in modern Pakistani society, especially when it came to marriage, employment, equality, and seeking justice. On the other hand, the respondents highly value and support DSF's role in helping the victims regain their lost self-reliance after the attack, as well as some employability and skill development training and socioeconomic empowerment at DSF. Policy makers, government entities, and other stakeholders may find their life stories helpful in understanding the ongoing cultural pressures that women with facial deformities must deal with. Community activists, NGOs, and government organizations all have a responsibility to support the mental and economic rehabilitation of women who have been the victims of acid attacks.

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