Ark attack trend (May 1999-Aug 2010)

Acid attack statistics: age group (May 1999 - Aug 2010)

Rehabilitation Services (2000 – Aug 2010)

Number of Person convicted by Acid Violence Case from 2000-2010

Acid attack statistics: gender perspective

From May 1999 - Aug 2010, 2104 (88.35 %) were females, 717 (31.30%) male.

ASF Annual General Meeting held

Acid Survivors Foundation held its 11th annual general meeting (AGM) on 28 June 2010. The expected outcome of the AGM is that the preventative of three thousand acid survivors, Fatimurahima was elected as the Treasurer. The meeting also decided to elect a few important persons as ASF Board Members and based on that decision, Executive Director of Transparency International, Bangladesh TIFB Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, plastic surgeon Dr. A.JM Salek, Professor, Dhaka Medical College Burn Unit, and writer and human rights activist Salina Hossain have accepted the proposal to become board members.

The new board members Dr. Iftekharuzzaman and Dr. A.JM Salek attended the special meeting on 28 June. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman was awarded the responsibility of Acting Chairperson. After the meeting, he visited ASF hospital along with other board members.

Fatema Pervin Putul, Manager PSSU
Acid Survivors Gathering and rally with Jessore district community to prevent acid violence

The ASF, along with the Jessore district community, organized a huge gathering on Saturday, 12 June 2010 at 1000am in order to raise public awareness on the problems of acid victims, proper implementation of Acid Law, extending legal and medical assistance and public-private initiatives for rehabilitation of the victims. The rally was held at the Jessore Municipal Community Centre. A colourful rally was brought out from Deputy Commissioner’s office premises. The honourable deputy commissioner of Jessore, Nurul Amin, inaugurated the rally. People from various professions and acid victims in Jessore took part in the rally.

The additional district magistrate, Manjurul Rahim, was the chief guest at the rally. He said: “It would not be possible to prevent acid violence by formulating laws and holding seminars, if we cannot raise the moral value in the society.” He added that acid terrorists should be given exemplary punishment.

Deputy Director of Social Welfare Directorate Abdul Hamid, Jessore Sadar Upazilla Vice-Chairman Advocate Siratul Khatun, and District Women Affairs official Kawar Parveen were special guests at the rally. Poet and journalist Faibre Alam spoke at the rally. He said: “My question is how can the criminals secure bail?”. He also urged to lay emphasis on false cases. The operations director of Jagorani Chakra Foundation, Hasan Arif, delivered the keynote speech. ASF representative Fatema Permin Putul gave an overall picture of acid violence. Another ASF representative AK Azad explained the objective of the gathering. The deputy director of Jagorani Chakra Foundation, Kazi Mofeed Hasna, gave an overall picture of acid violence in Jessore district.

The acid victims raised their various problems which mainly were related to getting justice. ASF representatives Sabina Yasmeen, Rangib Akhter, Annuul Islam Monir, Tanya, Rabia and Abdur Razzaq also spoke at the rally. The occasion was convened by Executive Director of Jagorani Chakra Foundation Kazi Mofeed Hasna. The ASF representative Arjunam Banu, Khaleda Yesmin & JFC representative played a vital role to organize the program.
Acid Survivors gathering and rally with Narshingdi district community

A rally of acid survivors was organized in Narshingdi on 2 August 2010 at 1000am to raise extensive public awareness to prevent acid violence. Seventy acid survivors took part in the rally by freeing pigeons and the first part of the rally was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner of Narshingdi Omrito Baroi.

Apart from them, journalist Abu Taher, Mm. Children & women Affairs official Rashida Begum, ex-principal of Narshingdi Government College Mohammad Ali, Vice-Chairman of Narshingdi Sadar Ummel Saima Ela and Women Affairs official Roushan Jahan Afroz also spoke at the rally. The acid survivors who spoke and talked about their problems at the rally were: Tahmina Sultana, Abid Rashid, and ASF representative acid survivor Harina. The rally ended with a cultural function. ASF representative Atiyamun Banu, Khaleeda yesmin & from PAPRI Sabina Tesmin played a vital role to organize the gathering.
ASF special inspection to seek information on acid survivors

We selected ten districts where incidences of acid violence have taken place and seven of our teams have gone out to those districts. Our objective was to know about the present situation of men, women and children who suffered acid violence in these districts and take necessary steps.

As ASF wants that 'not a single face gets burnt by acid', it also wants the acid victims can lead normal and nice life like others in the society.

Different experience of different teams:

It was May; extremely hot. I was drinking bottles of water, so my thirst wouldn't satisfy my thirst. However, the pace of my work didn't stop. Each of us was busy finding out acid survivors as many as we could in area. We didn't even have enough water. The most interesting thing was that we were calling up each other to know how many acid survivors were traced by the teams. The reason behind this was that each team wanted to do better than others. The sense of competition in childhood did not go away even after growing up.

Let me tell you about a small incident. One acid survivor named Jahana Begum Hena in Mymensingh went missing. Everyone went on a combing search. We had received the news of the village till 0000 hours starting a little after noon time. At a point everyone became tired and was giving up the search. But just before ending the search, one village told us about one VIP member whose house was beside Jahana's house. He took us to the shop owned by the VIP member. We asked the owner of the shop (VIP member) about Jahana's whereabouts, and we found her. But unfortunately, we were not happy after finding out this sought-after person; the opposite happened. It was learnt that the person helped us to find her out was the accused VIP member. Not only that, the accused gang surrounded us with their motorcycles. It was very difficult to come out alive.

I remember another interesting incident. We had lunch and headed for Sherakandi Thana in Bogra. It started raining on the way. Out car got stuck in the mud. We started walking in the rain. After some time, we arrived in front of a house where we saw a plenty of litches on the terrace and our colleagues looked around and grabbed some of litches and ran. On our way back after meeting the acid survivor; we saw the people of that house standing there. We first got scared, but cooked down when we saw they greeted us with smiles.

Fatemu Pervin Putul
Manager, PSSU

We had some interesting experience in visits, but at the same time, in between these, we also had interesting experience regarding acid survivors' lives. When we went to acid survivor Nasima's house in Narsingdi, we saw she was spending days in extreme hardship and oppression. The accused has grabbed their land and filed counter-case against Nasima and her family. On one hand, her poverty made her life miserable, and on the other, she had to go through the various inflictions from the accused. No-one even dared to speak in favour of them.

The 30-year-old child and husbandless lady in Bogra worked as a housemaid or beggar from village to village. Our questionnaire meant nothing to a person who had to go through such hardship. Even after that they were helping us, thinking that the situation would improve. We have also seen such incidents like an 18-year-old girl could not bear the ignorance of the society and wanted to commit suicide.

Our objective was not only to monitor incidents, collect information; we also wanted real change. It is time to turn around and we wanted to widen that path. We wanted these disadvantaged people to join in the mainstream. It is only then our inspection will be successful.

Mandapa Tohed
Manager, PSSU

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ASF forms human chain, demands justice to Nimtoli fire tragedy

A human chain was organized by Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) demanding justice to Nimtoli fire tragedy at 3pm on 7 June, Monday 2010 at the front gate of Dhaka Medical College. The fire tragedy took place on Thursday 3 June 2010 which left 120 people dead. A number of others were critically wounded. Some were burdened with the wound of losing their dear ones.

According to different sources the presence of the chemical Toluene disocyanate and Methyl Chloride ignited the fire to its worst. The Acid Regulation Law of 2002 says that acid means something that burns, something that has destroying and poisonous effects. This definition would make both the above substances inclusive in the 2002 Acid Regulation Act as they are both highly inflammatory.

According to ASF, apart from these inflammable chemical substances, acid is being sold openly in old Dhaka without abiding by any regulation. This can lead to more serious incidence than Nimtoli tragedy. Despite reports in the press in the past, the situation has not changed. There were no actions on the part of the government. Now it’s time for taking tough actions against that. Earlier on 6 November 2008, thirty people were acid-burnt at Buloshi in Comilla while carrying acid openly on a truck. And 18 people died in that incidence. However, the legal process of those deaths have completed ever after two years.

The people participating in the human chain said the lack of implementing the Acid Regulation Act 2002 and ignorance and negligence of the businessmen, the inflammable chemicals, including acid, are being imported, exported, transported, sold and used without any sort of control and safety. Many are losing their lives and many are being subject to gruesome tragedy.
Pressure garments project run by acid survivor women

Pressure garments are amazingly effective method for burns and injured skin.

Pressure garment is clothing that presses on the body, which is tailored to perfectly fit on the body and made of special cloth. This shrinkable and expandable dress puts pressure on surface of the body. The pressure garment is needed for them who have injured skin from burns and when the burn marks are widening. Apart from them, this garment is required for many other reasons. The dress needs to be worn with suggestion form the physician.

The Pressure Garments Unit was launched on 21 July 2002 with three trained acid survivors three years after the launch of Acid Survivors Foundation. After that, they were trained up from time to time to become skilled. Presently, there are four workers in this unit.

The great aspect of this is that it is only ASF that has achieved the skills of making this garment on proper way. Those who make this garment are all acid survivors. A famous and internationally reputed pressure garment trainer Mary Dolan in Australia has extended a helping hand for implementing this phenomenal project. She has given an advance level training to a team of seven, including these four survivors, from May 2010 to June 2010 (two months) with utmost care. As a result, they are doing the work with more skill.

We believe that one day these four acid survivors would be able to take their skills and amazing creativity the international level.
Planning Meeting with partners organization held

A two-day planning meeting with partner organization titled ‘Strengthening psychosocial services for acid victims at mass level’ held on 25-26 August. The meeting was initiated by ASIF’s Psychosocial Services Unit and held at Civic Inn, Gulshan. The prime objective of this project, funded by Unicef, is to ensure psychosocial and rehabilitation services for the acid victims and prevent violence against children at the local level. The other objective is to inspire and mobilize the people at local level in order to prevent acid violence and violence against children. Unicef’s Bangladesh Coordinator Yuko Oasa delivered the welcome speech. In his speech, he highlighted the overall operation of Unicef and the importance of psychosocial services through ASIF and possible future areas of cooperation.

The chief of Psychosocial Services Unit, Fatema Pervin Putul, elaborated the overall operation of the unit and the unit’s successes earned in Bogra-Sirajganj region. Unicef’s Project Officer Asra Jerin spoke on the important aspects of the ongoing project.
The community-based psychosocial service is a new addition in the development arena. The Acid Survivors Foundation, through its partner organization Lighthouse and Manab Mukti Shangstha, started rendering this service since 2008. The districts of Sirajganj and Bogra top in acid violence and that is why these two districts have been chosen for extending this service.

The 35-year-old Manaja in Bogra became a victim of acid violence by her second husband on 1 May 2007. Her whole body got burnt with acid. And with it, her marriage ended. The irony of fate is that she had to file a case against the person whom she married with dreams after the death of her first husband. Although she received medical treatment from Acid Survivors Foundation and recovered from her wound, yet she could not recover psychologically. Life’s needs took her back to her own district. Bogra. Manaja settled in her paternal house along with her only child Mustafa. She forgot about her own body and mind while tackling poverty and insecurity. When ASF went to visit Majena, it was observed that she was living aloof from her neighbors. She has even lost the courage to go out of the house. The accused has, by then, secured bail and come out of jail and has been threatening her. The neighbors were also against Manaja. In place of extending a helping hand, they have cut down the trees she planted. She even could not rear poultry at her residence. Her only child was in college, but his studies also stopped. The mother and son have been living with all socio-economic obstacles. We can easily imagine what can happen to a person in this situation.
The Acid Survivors Foundation, from the beginning, has successfully been organizing various training and orientation courses to increase skills and efficiency of its officials, acid survivors and partner organizations. ASF has been implementing its extensive operations across the country through advocacy, lobby and partnership.

A three-day residence-training session titled “Training on RBA and Advocacy” was organized on 18-20 April 2010 on advocacy and rights-based approach for officials of ASF and its partner organizations. The officers, senior officers and managers of ASF and project officers of the partner organizations took active part in the training.

Conflicts resolution and management are known as important strategies to mitigate violence against women at the local level. The preconditions of implementing this strategy is to increase skills and efficiency of the workers on this issue at the local level. Keeping this in mind, ASF organized two training sessions in two batches on “Refresher Training on Local Level Conflict Management” on 25-29 April and 24-28 June 2010. The partner organizations of ASF, especially RDRS, SHAMS, Acid Comilla and Ongogoti Shanthits authorities at various levels took part in the sessions.

There’s a need to focus on the psychosocial aspects of acid survivors for bringing them in mainstream after rehabilitating them. With objective to improving their skills through the improvement of knowledge on psychosocial issues, two training sessions titled “Follow up and Refresher Training on Essential Psychosocial Capacities” were organized on 6-10 April and 22-26 April 2010. Partner organizations of ASF, especially RDRS, SHAMS, Acid Comilla and Ongogoti Shanthits authorities at various levels took part in the sessions.

Three training sessions on “Orientation on Essential Burn Care” were organized in order to increase skills of doctors and nurses at the local level for giving primary treatments to acid victims and normal burn injury patients on 22-24 June 2010. The first batch worked at Nolta Hospital in Shatkira and the following two batches received training at 200-bed special hospital in Jessore. Doctors and nurses of Jessore district participated in the orientation course.

Moshkur Rahman
Service Officer, Training.
UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE STATEMENT FOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL EVENT ON ACID ATTACKS & WOMEN

"From my position as Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, I have tried to ensure that the torture and ill-treatment protection framework is applied in a gender-sensitive manner to ensure that women are effectively protected from any form of violence that may constitute torture and/or ill-treatment. I have previously focused on several types of gender-specific violence among which domestic violence in the form of intimate partner violence might be of interest to this panel since often, women victims of acid throwing are attacked by husbands, ex-partners and/or partners. In the case of women victims of acid attacks, they are faced both by physical challenges, that may require long term surgical treatment, as well as by psychological challenges, which require long-term intervention from counsellors at each stage of the physical recovery. When viewed through the prism of the anti-torture framework, the fight to end violence against women can be strengthened and provided with a broader scope of prevention, protection, justice and reparation for women."

Please visit www.acidsurvivors.org for full statement of the UN SR Torture.

From left Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Sergeo A. Ordzhonikidze, Director General, UNOG; Dr. Theodor H. Winkler, Ambassador, Director, DCAF; ASF Treasurer & Acid Survivor Representative. Ms. Fazliatun Nessa and ASF Executive Director Ms. Monira Rahman at session on women, peace and security: from resolution to action. Ten years of Security Council Resolution 1325, took place on 15th September 2010 in Geneva.