The Report Contains
“Annual Progress Status of ASF”

Presented By:
Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)
Mirpur, Dhaka.

Presented To:
BoT Members
Annual General Meeting
ASF Board Room
Mirpur, Dhaka.

July 29, 2017
TRENDS OF ACID ATTACKS

Since its inception, ASF has been working to reduce and eventually eliminate acid violence in Bangladesh through extensive awareness raising campaigns and by focusing different forms of prevention initiatives. Though acid violence in this country was more widespread than any other place in the world, ASF’s records show that the prevention initiatives have resulted in a steady decline in the number of acid attacks in recent years. The fall in the number of attacks has continued in the year 2016.

The chart above shows that between the years 1999 to 2016, there were 3347 acid attack incidents. This resulted in 3712 victims. In the year 2016, ASF recorded a total of 50 people who have been attacked in 44 incidents.
Gender Segregation of Victims of Acid Violence (2016)

The above pie chart illustrates the gender distribution of the 50 victims of acid attack in 2016. An overwhelming proportion (74%) of these survivors was girls and women.

Gender Segregation by Age Group (2016)

The above graph entails that a majority of the victims, 30 (60%) fall under the 19 to 35 age group. Among these survivors, 26 (52%) are women and 4 (8%) are men.
Reasons for Acid Attacks (2016)

Over the last few years the majority of acid attacks have occurred for land, property or money related disputes and this trend continued in 2016. Other significant causes that have been identified include marital and family disputes, dowry related violence and refusal of sex and love proposals, marital disputes, family related disputes, previous enmity, etc.

As like as previous years, the major reason (26%) for which acid attacks took place in 2016 was land, property or money related disputes. Other notable causes included family related disputes (24%), previous enmities (8%) and marital disputes (16%).

There were other causes, including dowry and refusal or rejection of sex/love. In some instances, the reason for the attack was not identified or wherein the perpetrator could not be identified.
Medical Support

Acid Survivors Foundation aims to provide survivors with essential burn care services to enable survivors to cope with the physical and psychological impact. The Bio Psychosocial approach incorporates physical, psychological and social care for the survivors and it starts from the moment ASF is notified of an attack. ASF in collaboration with brac developed a nation-wide notification and Referral system. ASF operates a 24 hour hotline for reporting attacks and once an attack is reported ASF takes measures to ensure that survivors have access to treatment and legal support. Once a survivor is brought to ASF hospital a multi disciplinary team including Nurses, Doctors, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, Physiotherapists, Nutritionists, Psychologists and Social Workers ensure the best possible care for the survivor.

Acid is a highly corrosive chemical which causes skin tissue to melt, often exposing or dissolving the bone. Acid violence is a heinous act of burning, deformation and destruction of the face and other parts of the body of the victim. Many survivors suffer from catastrophic physical deformity and psychological breakdown including identity crisis because of their distorted appearance. Many of them often face social isolation which further damages their self esteem and socio-economic status. In most cases, a series of reconstructive surgeries is needed to minimize disfigurement and prevent disability. Duration of hospital stay varies and can extend up to several months according to the extent of burn. Even after discharge, regular follow up is necessary for several years and in some cases survivors require lifelong treatment.

WHAT WE DO:

Demographically, victims of acid violence are usually from lower socio-economic status and are unable to afford quality health care. ASF provides complete medical services for free of cost. ASF runs a 20 bedded specialized hospital with fully equipped Operation Theatre and post-operative care facilities. The services provided by ASF hospital include Reconstructive surgeries by highly qualified Plastic surgeons. Intricate procedures are performed with usage of modern technological devices. Patients are taken care for 24 hours round the clock by doctors and nurses. All medication, pathological tests including their transport from ASF is also sponsored for both in and out patients. Other necessities are taken care of by medical unit of ASF. Community visits are arranged regularly to follow up all the patients of a specific area.

Treatment Supports

In 2016, 241 patients received 361 times treatment supports from ASF hospital. Among the patients, 54 patients were admitted and 187 patients were treated in the outpatient department. Among the admitted patients, 24 were new and 30 were old cases. A total of 37 patients received 83 different surgeries where around 300 procedures were performed. 13 patients were referred 18 times to other hospitals (DMCH & others) for admission. Altogether 141 survivors referred 205 times to other hospitals for receiving treatment supports (not admitted, however, cost provided by ASF)
Physiotherapy services

To regain functionality a patient needs extensive physiotherapy. Physiotherapy comprises of different active and passive exercise and maneuvers to regain the strength of the particular muscles and limbs and their normal functionalities. Skilled and trained physiotherapist in burn care conducts the physiotherapy at ASF to provide the maximum level of care to the patients. Physiotherapist of ASF also teaches and encourages the patients to continue with active exercise when they return home. Physiotherapists of ASF also provide this service to National Institute of Burn and plastic surgery (DMCH).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>No. of Patients</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Girl Child</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Boy Child</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Procedure-165</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pressure Garments for Survivors

Special physiotherapy is provided to every patient to prevent contracture and retain functionality of limbs to a major number of patients. Hypertrophic burn scars create a challenge for both burn survivors and health care providers. In many cases, they can severely limit a burn survivor’s level of function, including work and recreational activities. A widespread modality to prevent and treatment of hypertrophic scarring is the pressure garment therapy. Pressure Garment a garment made from elasticized fabrics that can apply continuous pressure over the healing skin after burns, trauma and surgery. A pressure between 25 and 32 mmHg is used to treat the scar. It limits hypertrophy and contracture of scar tissue. Burn scars mature in 1 to 3 years. These garments need to be worn for at least 6 months and perhaps as long as 2-3 years. In 2016, a total of 29 survivors received 65 times pressure garments from ASF pressure garments unit (PGU). ASF introduced the pressure garments unit in 2002 to provide comprehensive treatment to survivors. In 2015, ASF in collaboration with National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery (NIBPS), Dhaka Medical College started a “Pressure Garment and Brace/Splint Corner” in NIBPS at as a Public Private Partnership program. ASF has been delivering high quality but cost effective pressure garments to all kind of burn patients from there. In 2016, 171 patients with other burns received 279 items pressure garments from ASF, and ASF earned Tk. 4,99,250 by selling these products.

Psychological services

Burn injuries may be very distressing to patients and their families and it is often a devastating event with long-term physical and psychosocial effects. The rapidly increasing number of burn patients in the country has turned into a serious psychological problem for patients and families. They suffered from various psychological symptoms like- PTSD and anxiety like symptoms (recurrent thought/ memories, traumatic nightmares, detachment feeling, felt fear, anger, horror feeling, shame, inability to recall the traumatic event, helplessness, restlessness, vulnerable etc). From ASF hospital, professional psychotherapist
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provided by specialized psychotherapeutic services through different types of therapeutic modes like - Psychotherapy, Individual counseling, group counseling, family counseling, emotional support, pre-operative counseling, post-operative counseling, relaxation, social skill training, art therapy and music therapy etc. These psychological services helped them to ventilate their suppressed feelings, to cope with reality, to reduce their burn and pain sensations, to reduce their emotional disturbances, to increase self-confidence and communication skill, to increase self-esteem, giving evidence with rational to decrease their negative thought etc. In 2016, ASF provided the following psychotherapeutic services from ASF hospital as well as from SHNIBPS, DMCH and VSC:

- A total 168 survivors received different types of psychotherapeutic services at ASF through 753 sessions.
- 152 patients received Psychotherapy Support at DMCH through 185 sessions provided by ASF.
- 74 patients received Psychotherapy Support at Victim Support Centre (VSC) through 78 sessions provided by ASF.

Capacity Development of Burn Care Professionals

ASF, in supporting from Interburns has been implemented a project in partnership manner with National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery (NIBPS) and Bangladesh Society for Burn Injuries (BSBI) to reduce the impact of burns through a comprehensive approach encompassing training, education, research, prevention and capacity building. The aim of this collaboration is to improve burn care and to support the development of burn services and ensure there are well trained burn care professionals across Bangladesh. Under this project, ASF organized 3 Essential Burn Care (EBC) trainings, 2 at Khulna Medical College Hospital and 1 at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. A total of 63 participants (male-35 & female-28) participated in the training sessions. Different burn care professionals including Surgeons, Doctors, Nurses and physiotherapists participated in the training sessions, which ultimately helped to strengthen their capacities with the appropriate skill and knowledge to maintain a good standard of care at their respective hospitals. The learning of the trainings also helped to strengthen the burn-team work, which is crucial to decrease both morbidity and mortality of Burn injuries from Bangladesh.

In 2016, ASF also organized a 5 day long Advance Burn Care (ABC) training on Nursing in collaboration with Interburns at NIBPS. A total of 30 Nurses (Male-4 & Female-26) from different Govt. burn service centers participated in the training to learn standard advanced knowledge on burn care. The ABC training was extremely effective in engaging the leadership of ASF and NIBPS in Bangladesh. The five day long training really was full of learning new things, entertainment, and knowledge sharing.

In April 2016, ASF organized a Training for Trainers (ToT) on Essential Burn Care (EBC) by comprising 15 burn care professionals, mostly doctors (male-11 & female-4) from burns units or surgery. The ToT was conducted at ASF complex and the aim of this was to develop trainers with effective burn care knowledge who are able to conduct EBC trainings properly and effectively in future.
Rehabilitation and Reintegration

ASF is one of the few holistic service providers with the capacity to provide hospital based medical and psychological support and community based psychosocial support through case management system involving a multidisciplinary team. When a patient is about to be released from the hospital ASF prepares a plan to facilitate their re-entry and reintegration into life at home. For many survivors this means returning home to their families, but for some whose attackers are family members it means starting over a new life. Based on the specific needs of survivors ASF designs a rehabilitation plan for each survivor.

Rehabilitation Support Provided in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT SUPPORT FROM ASF</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family Assistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Women attacked by their husbands or who are sole earner in the family and who have children as their dependents are provided with an interim financial support to meet their immediate needs. ASF provided family assistance support to 5 survivors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support provided to selected survivors for continuing their education after an acid attack. In a few cases children of survivors who are women and head of the households and children of survivors with disabilities have received this support. ASF provided education support to 53 students including 35 women and girls and 17 men and boys in 2016 to enable them to continue their education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Generating Activity</td>
<td>The economic and financial burden following an acid attack increases the vulnerability of the survivor and their family members. Most survivors belong to a lower economic status and are unable to bear the loss of an income earner. In many cases the victim is the sole breadwinner of the family and in some instances the victim is unable to return to their family because a family member is the perpetrator. Many survivors feel compelled to return because they have no other income source. Therefore it is vitally important to set up a sustainable livelihood for survivors who are vulnerable. A total of 15 survivors (Male-2 &amp; Female-13) received IGA support in 2016</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ADVOCACY initiatives for local resource</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid from District Acid</td>
<td>The District Acid Control Committee (DACC) has a special provision of grant to provide financial support to acid survivors for medical treatment and socioeconomic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mobilization

Control Committee (DACC)

rehabilitation. The National Acid Control Council (NACC) under the Ministry of Home Affairs disburses the money to DACCs. ASF with the help of partner NGOs continues to advocate for distribution of DACC funds. DACC fund of Tk. 3,00,000 was distributed to 22 survivors (male- & female-) during this period.

Other Government supports

A total of 11 survivors received different government supports during this period. The received supports are as follows:

- DC Office Fund= 3 survivors
- Disabled Allowance = 2 survivors
- Received Khas land= 1 survivor
- Other Govt. Support (Cash/Rice/Home Materials/Training/ etc.) = 3 Survivor

Supports from NGOs

- IGA from BRAC & BNWLA=2 survivors

Community Based Reintegration Support Provided in 2016

Community Meetings

ASF conducts meetings to engage community elites and members to contribute in creating a safe and supportive environment to enable the survivors to reintegrate into their families and communities. A total of 1,668 participants including 862 women and 806 men participated in 56 community meetings held in 2016.

Door to Door Visit

Survivors working as ambassadors in six selected districts visit households of other survivors in that district to provide peer support and to assess survivor’s needs. It includes legal, medical and/or psycho-social support. A total of 581 door to door visits were conducted in 2016, and through which 582 survivors are reached.

Community Clinic

ASF conducts community clinics at the district level to identify and address rehabilitation and reintegration challenges that survivors face in their communities. The clinics focuses on legal, medical, psycho social problems of particular survivors identified through door to door visits. A total of 12 community clinics were organized in 6 districts in the year 2016, in where 190 survivors (male- 48 & female-142) received legal, medical and psycho-social supports.

Telephonic follow up

ASF Medical and Program staffs along with Program Officers and Survivor Ambassadors worked in six selected districts under UNICEF funded projects and continue to provide advice and emotional support over phone as required. A total of 714 telephonic follow up supports were provided during first 6 months in 2016.
Group Meetings

There are 29 survivor groups in eight districts who meet every month and these meetings act as a forum where survivors share their struggles and problems and identify possible solutions. These groups encompass around 400 survivors engaged in various local level activities including meeting with the community members and local government for survivors’ psychosocial support. A total of 127 group meetings were held in 2016, in where around 400 survivors participated 1881 times (repeatedly) in those group meetings.

Courtyard Meetings

In 2016, ASF organized 8 courtyard meetings by including 424 community people, in where 309 were female and 115 were male. The participants participated in these meetings, which ultimately helped to aware them on the cause and consequences of acid violence.

Survivors’ Coordination Committee Meetings

During this period, ASF conducted 2 coordination meetings at district level with the members of Survivors’ District Coordination Committee. A total of 32 participants (Male-21 & Female-11) participated in the meeting

Developing Survivors to become Change Agents

After ASF was established in 1999 the organization played an instrumental role in mobilizing civil society and government to ensure the state’s obligation to prevent acid violence and protect the rights of survivors. In 2010 ASF started developing survivors at community level to act as change agents to influence the government, civil society and community to be more accountable to the rights of acid survivors. Twelve change agents have been working in six districts raising awareness on acid violence as well as advocating for survivors’ protection and rights through mobilizing government, media, civil society and community elites.

Since 2006 ASF has arranged survivors’ conferences at the national and district levels to create an opportunity for survivors to meet, share any issues and concerns and celebrate their achievements. These forums have enhanced solidarity among the survivors and empowered them to raise a collective voice for their rights. This experience has identified the need to establish a sustainable support system for survivors at the community level. In 2012 survivors’ groups were developed to function as a platform for collective voices to demand justice, protect rights, and advocate for social change.

There are currently 29 groups in 8 districts. The groups are not only addressing issues pertaining to acid violence but group members are also involved in resolving other social issues. Moreover, all the groups have started a monthly savings schemes for its sustainability. Some group leaders have taken further initiatives to address violence against women, dowry related disputes and early marriage in their communities.
Capacity Development Initiatives

Capacity Development Initiatives for the Survivors

- **Leadership Training for Survivors**: In 2016, ASF organized training on Leadership by comprising 33 survivors (male-8 & female-25). The training included sessions on gender and gender based violence, leadership, empowerment, rights based approach and advocacy.

- **Training on Leadership, Rights, Advocacy and Self-help Group Management**: In 2016, ASF conducted 2 trainings (each was a three day long training) with the members of survivors’ group on rights and advocacy, leadership and group management during this period. A total of 59 survivors (Male-16 & Female-43) participated in the two trainings and enhanced their capacities on the respective issues.

- **Workshop for developing the draft operational guideline and the sustainability plan of survivors’ groups**: ASF conducted 2 workshops during this period at district level with the survivors, Project Officers, survivors’ ambassadors and PNGO staff for developing the draft operational guideline and the sustainability plan of survivors’ groups. A total of 66 participants (Male-31 and Female-35) participated in the two workshops.

- **Orientation session for the Group Leaders**: ASF organized one orientation session with the group Leaders on the operation guideline of the survivors’ groups. A total of 30 participants (Male-9 & Female-21) participated in the orientation session.

Capacity Development Initiatives for the Staff

In 2016, ASF organized different training sessions, workshop, and orientation for the staff to develop their capacities on the following issues:

- Workshop on Time Management
- Workshop on Organizational Culture and values
- Orientation on Gender Policy and its practice in ASF
- Training on Finance for Non-finance
Advocacy and Awareness
Raising Initiatives for Prevention

Over the last sixteen years, ASF has been focusing its prevention campaigns on raising awareness on acid violence and its legal and social consequences. In recent years ASF has widened its focus to build awareness on the root causes of acid violence. ASF has observed that acid as a weapon is used in a wide range of context from land and domestic dispute to sexual harassment. ASF’s prevention campaigns focuses on raising awareness on the multiple causes and consequences of acid attacks and the immediate steps that should be taken to minimize the detrimental effect of acid. The awareness raising campaigns target youth, families, communities, government and civil society.

Media

The media is a powerful instrument for social change and over the years ASF has been working with the media to prioritize anti-acid violence campaigns. ASF tries to reach a wider audience at the grassroots level through different types of mass media interventions. In 2013 the Government took initiatives to disseminate promotional materials developed by ASF on private and public TV channel free of cost. As a result in 2016 many public and private TV and radio channels broadcasted messages on legal consequences of acid violence and the importance of using water on burn injuries caused by acid. ASF also arranged four talk shows in 2016 on the following four issues:

- Necessity and Availability of Pressure Garments for the Patients of Acid and other Burn
- Ensuring Participation of Survivors in Development Works based on their Skills and Quality
- Delay Process of Judiciary to Establish Justice
- Ensuring Mental Health Supports for the Patients of Acid and other Burn

The talk shows helped to raise important issues for policy and decision makers. Around 12 (male-5 & female-7) people participated in the discussion sessions of these talk shows.

School Based Initiatives

ASF hosted events at various schools in 2016 to motivate students to take active roles to advocate for the prevention of acid violence in their communities. Multimedia presentations and docudramas are shown followed by interactive discussions which are held between students and ASF staff. The campaigns are also aimed to sensitize the youth on the social rehabilitation of victims and to encourage students to be supportive to survivors while reintegrating into schools and communities. Necessary information is also provided to the
students on where to go for help and what immediate steps should be taken if an incident of acid violence occurs. In 2016, ASF conducted 148 school campaigns with 33,579 students and teachers.

Advocacy

ASF has been instrumental in facilitating the process of the drafting and enactment of two Acid Acts. The Acts are holistic in their approach and do not only address the effects of acid violence but also has provision for awareness raising and providing medical, legal and rehabilitation support to victims. The government established the National Acid Control Council (NACC) and District Acid Control Committees (DACC) under the Acid Control Act 2002, which provides for an independent fund to “procure funds to fulfill the goal of creating public awareness about the bad effect of the misuse of acid and it’s dangerous aspects and to provide treatment and legal assistance to the victim and to rehabilitate them”.1 ASF’s advocacy strategy seeks proper implementation of the two Acts and for communities, government and civil society to take initiatives to prevent acid violence and protect survivors of acid violence.

Mobilizing Communities through Advocacy and Lobby Meetings with Govt. Officials

ASF has focused on advocacy at the grassroots level through a series of awareness raising campaigns and meetings. It created a forum for survivors to share their stories and strategies for overcoming legal and social barriers, and to express solidarity. ASF also conducts community meetings with community elites including UP members, Chairmen, teachers and other professionals to motivate community members to take active roles to enable survivors to reintegrate into the society. ASF has developed survivors to act as Ambassador to advocate for their rights and entitlements. Survivor Ambassadors hold advocacy and lobby meetings with members of the Union Parishad, local officials of DSS, MOWCA, police and the Deputy Commissioner’s office. In 2016, ASF conducted 151 advocacy and lobby meetings with 456 govt. officials along with local government representatives.

Dialogue with Local Administration

ASF arranges dialogue with acid sellers and users to prevent the use of acid for criminal offenses and for better implementation of the Acid Control Act 2002 (amendment 2010). The Act is meant to control ‘the import, production, transportation, hoarding, sale and use of acid, and to provide treatment to victims of acid violence, rehabilitate them, and provide legal assistance’1. The dialogue meetings were arranged between district authority and acid sellers and users aimed to increase awareness among acid sellers and users on their obligations under the Acid Control Act 2002 and for the authorities to take appropriate measures for the proper enforcement of the law. In 2016, ASF arranged 10 meetings with acid sellers and users in 6 districts of which 2 were at the district level and 8 were at the upazilla level. A total of 449 participants including 391 male and 58 female participated in these meetings.

1 Bangladesh Acid Control Act, Article 10
Influencing Policy Makers

ASF is an active member of the National Acid Control Council (NACC) and member of the Acid Crime Case Monitoring Cell under the Ministry of Home Affairs. ASF uses these forums to raise concerns about the challenges faced in providing medical, legal and rehabilitation support to survivors and advocate for effective implementation of the two Acts. ASF participated in one NACC meeting and one Acid Crime Case Monitoring Cell meetings which were held in 2016.
Legal Support Services

To address acid violence the Government of Bangladesh introduced two acts in 2002; the ‘Acid-Offences Prevention Act 2002’ and the ‘Acid Control Act 2002’. A National Acid Control Council and Acid Crime Case Monitoring Cell were also established under the Ministry of Home Affairs to regularly monitor acid crime cases and ensure effective implementation of the Acts.

Report of Acid Crime Case Monitoring Cell, Police Headquarters

(2002-2015 till October)

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>185</td>
<td>540</td>
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According to the Acid Crime Case Monitoring Cell of Police Headquarters, 59 cases have been filed till October 2015 and a total of 2019 cases have been filed during 2002 to 2015. Even though cases are supposed to be complete in 90 working days, out of total number of cases, 1200 cases, meaning of 59.4% filed in the last eleven years are still under trial. Among all the cases in which court has pronounced a verdict, approximately 25.5% of the accused case has been convicted and 74.5% has been acquitted.

ASF provides legal support to survivors of acid violence by referring acid cases to the legal aid partners who work at the grassroots to assist survivors in the day to day legal procedures and advocate for their cases at courts. ASF also communicate with survivors and their family and community members, police authorities including Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police (SP), Officers in Charge (OCs), Investigation Officers (IOs), national and local Government organizations, Civil Surgeons, doctors, judges and partner
organizations, Public Prosecutors (PPs), media personnel to follow up on cases and facilitate effective coordination from all different stakeholders.

Partnership

In 2014 ASF activated the Legal Advisory Group for a collaborative approach that focuses on providing comprehensive legal aid support to survivors of acid violence. The Group consists of seven partner organizations dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights of poor and marginalized groups in Bangladesh. Partner organizations include Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), brac, Naripokkho, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers’ Association (BNWLA), Jatiya Mohila Sangstha, Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR), and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST). ASF refers cases to the legal aid partners to provide necessary support at the local level. The Legal Advisory Group meets quarterly to discuss strategies for providing legal support and strengthen advocacy initiatives.

A total of 57 survivors’ cases (Male-9 & 48) have been referred during this period to legal aid partners for safety and security and legal support and follow up legal cases. ASF’s legal aid partners have engaged panel lawyers to represent the survivor and are closely monitoring the cases.

Legal advice to survivors and their families

A total of 165 legal advices (107 through phone & 58 directly) were provided to survivors and their families during this period.

Provide Medical Certificate and appeared in courts to testify before the Tribunal

- 11 medical certificates have been issued from ASF hospital during this period
- ASF doctors or advocate appeared in court 3 times to testify before the Tribunal
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Verdict of Cases

Verdicts were given in 5 cases under Acid Tribunals in Gazipur, Sirajganj and Sylhet. Brief summary of the 4 cases are given below:

Sheuli Akter, Gazipur

Sheuli Akter, Gazipur was attacked with acid throwing on 13 November, 2007 due to previous enmity by her neighbor Abul Hossain. She died on 12 February, 2007 in hospital under treatment. After 9 years the acid aporadh damon tribunal, Gazipur declared verdict on 24 February, 2016 against Abul Hossain as rigorous life imprisonment. The accused party has submitted appeal petition to high court division against the verdict of tribunal.

Jarina, Sirajganj

Jorina, Sirajganj was attacked with acid throwing by neighbor Sohorab Ali and Nazrul Islam on 11 February, 2011 for land related dispute. The acid aporadh damon tribunal, Sirajganj declared verdict on 10 February, 2016 against the two persons as rigorous life imprisonment. After declaration judgment from acid aporadh damon tribunal the accuse party has been submitted appeal petition to high court division. Now the accused persons are in bail by the order of high court after two months of the judgment of acid crime prevention tribunal, Sirajganj. The appeal case is pending now and it will take more time to start hearing in high court division.

Laki Begum, Sylhet

Laki Begum, Sylhet was attacked with acid throwing by Md. Layek Ahmed for refusing love proposal on 25 February, 2012. On 18 January, 2016 the acid aporadh damon tribunal, Sylhet declared judgment as 14 years imprisonment with 50 thousand taka as fine against the perpetrator. The accused party has has been submitted appeal petition to high court division.

Shipa Begum, Sylhet

Shipa Begum, Sylhet was attacked with acid throwing on 08 December, 2000 by neighbor. After 16 years the case was disposed in acid aporadh damon tribunal, Sylhet. The accused person Ayej Ali teased her and due to refuse of love proposal she was attacked by the perpetrator. The acid aporadh damon tribunal, Sylhet declared judgment on 01 March, 2016 as 7 years imprisonment with 40 thousand taka as fine against the perpetrator Ayej Ali. The convicted person is fugitive and didn’t submit appeal petition in high court division.
Brief Description on Survivors’ National Conference

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) organized 2-daylong national conference with acid survivors on March 4th and 5th 2016. ASF organized this conference with the support of UNICEF and Canadian High Commission. A total of 476 participants including around 300 survivors (Male-207 & Female-269) from 35 districts participated in the 2-day’s national conference. On 4th March council session of the conference held at Brac Learning Center, Ashkona, Dhaka. Selina Ahmed, Executive Director, ASF inaugurated the session. Through the Council session acid survivors elected their first national survivors’ committee comprising 40 survivors. They also prepared their declaration in this session. On 5th March Honorable State Minister of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Meher Afroze Chumki inaugurated a grand rally of acid survivors at Bangladesh Shishu Academy. After grand rally she participated in the discussion session as Chief Guest. She stated that she would take steps to ensure speedy trial of acid violence cases. She assured that the government would stand and support the acid survivors, she also urged the people of all strata, especially community elites, to stand with the acid victims. The conference was chaired by Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Chairperson of ASF. Selina Ahmed, Executive Director of ASF gave the welcome speech at the conference.
Established Institutional Linkages

- ASF actively represented in different organizations, forums/ networks advocacy initiatives (CIDV, WE Can, BHRF, NNPC, Men Engage, Girl Child Forum etc) at National level. As results of this kind of initiatives ASF’s credibility of work and positive image has been improved and recognized by other key actors. At the government level this can also added value through institutional linkages especially with the health professionals.

- Providing guidance and sharing knowledge and experience regarding psychosocial support and legal support to ‘Center for Rehabilitation for Acid Survivors’ through Skype discussion.

(Incomplete section, need to be included more in this section)
Important Visitors of 2016

Almost in every year different kinds of visitors from the country and abroad come at ASF to exchange their knowledge and skills. Some visitors wanted to explore future collaboration program and expressed their interest in working with ASF on behalf of their organization. Some visitors’ are intended to know more about the works of ASF. Like the previous year’s ASF received and welcomed some important visitors in 2016.

Pre visit team of Scottish under19 cricket team on January 18, 2016

Women for Women Visit at ASF on February 7, 2016
Visitors from IQRA TV on February 15, 2016

Standard Chartered Team Visited ASF on March 14, 2016

Multidisciplinary Team from UK visited ASF on March 17, 2016
Visitors from British High Commission, March 23, 2016

Singer Andrew Kishore Visit ASF
Engagement of Volunteers in 2016

Why ASF Engage Volunteer

Involving volunteers can add great value to what organization does and support to achieve mission and strategic objectives. Involving volunteers can help to:

- Engage a more diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge
- Raise awareness about ASF mission and vision
- Share and exchange knowledge from each other
- Build relationships within the community in which ASF work and contribute to supporting others.
- By providing volunteering opportunities ASF provide opportunities for social inclusion, skills development and potential routes to employment.
- Inform the development and delivery of the activities, projects or services by bringing in new opinions, ideas or approaches.
- Deliver the service or projects in a more effective and efficient way which can help to resources and tight budget.

Volunteers worked in 2016

Christina Saaby Jørgensen from Denmark worked in Psychology intern at ASF from 9th of May to 30th of June, 2016, She prepared a case study on Jesmin who has been attacked on 2nd February, 2016 by her husband.
Mayisha Rahman worked in organization and development management unit from June 11 to July 11, 2016. In first week she spent to going through annual reports and visiting the website in order to gain a clear understanding of what this prestigious foundation is all about. From 2nd week she started translating a few case studies from Bangla to English and completed in due time.

Legal Unit: Faria Habib Prova, British and Bangladeshi Citizen, From June 1 to June 30, 2016
Major Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Acid survivors are geographically scattered across the country and many survivors do not have permanent residences or migrate frequently. This makes it difficult to reach survivors to ensure proper services.
- ASF has no ICU facility and therefore it is unable to admit any patient with 30% burn or more. These patients are referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where ASF continues to follow up with the patients to ensure that their needs are met.
- Most survivors belong to the lower income status with little or no assets, poor health, poor education and social support system. An effective rehabilitation plan must take into account the different dimensions of vulnerability.
- There is a strong culture of impunity and the use of power and money is often used to influence the outcome of the trial. There is no victim and witness protection system during the period of the trial and survivors and witnesses continue to face threat and pressure from the perpetrator. As a result many witnesses either refuse to testify or turn hostile. In many cases where verdicts against the perpetrators were death sentence or life imprisonment in lower courts, the perpetrators received bail, were acquitted or got a lesser sentence from the higher courts. As a result of delays in the court proceedings survivors are often unable to bear the cost to continue the case.
- Survivors have to cope with the violent act and the consecutive pain and discomfort of the burn injuries. There is a little or no provision of mental health support in public institutions for a survivor when they return to their community. It is also difficult for survivors specially women and children to access physiotherapy services in rural areas. There is a general lack of awareness on the use and benefits of physiotherapy among vulnerable groups in rural Bangladesh.
- Most of the survivors have been subjected to other forms of violence and therefore have a history of violence and it is often very difficult for survivors to come to terms with their traumatic past.
- Land dispute is the leading cause of acid violence and it is difficult to address the complex nature of land related dispute which remains to be a serious concern in Bangladesh.
- Acid is widely used in small and large scale industrial capacities and it is challenging to ensure effective monitoring mechanisms for users who are working out of home or involved in small cottage industries.
Lessons Learned

- Acid violence and other types of gender based violence need to be addressed at grassroot and national level
- Awareness campaigns through electronic and print media is an effective tool to influence policy makers and other relevant stakeholders and it should be institutionalized and mainstreamed in government and NGO level interventions
- A thorough need assessment and rehabilitation plan is important to ensure that appropriate services are available and accessible to clients and resources are allocated appropriately and it requires cooperation and coordination between different stakeholders including government.
- A multidisciplinary approach with the engagement of different professionals and proper case management system is effective to address the multidimensional needs of survivors of acid and other burn violence. Thus, cooperation and coordination between a multidisciplinary team can provide holistic services to acid survivors.
- Establishing partnership with legal aid organizations and enhancing coordination between partner organizations has been effective to increase reach and impact of ASF’s legal services
- Survivors presence and their active voice create positive changes in advocacy and sensitization efforts. Regular dialogue with communities through meetings, workshops, orientations is effective to create a supportive environment for survivors
- Dialogue with District Administration and acid sellers and users to strengthen awareness on the Acid Control Act 2002 has been effective to increase the number of applications to obtain and renew licenses. Thus, there is a need for continuous lobby and advocacy for proper implementation of two acid laws
- More initiatives are required to work with youth and students to increase awareness on gender inequality and discrimination
- It is necessary to strengthen cooperation of duty bearers during the litigation process to ensure that survivors are well informed, aware of their rights, have willingness to seek legal support and have increased access justice.