
A RESEARCH ENDEAVOUR EXAMINING THE CONSCIOUSNESS AND VIEWPOINTS OF THE POPULACE REGARDING ACID ASSAULTS IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

The findings of a study conducted on perceptions and awareness regarding acid attacks among respondents in Karnataka, India. A diverse age range, predominantly female respondents, residing mainly in urban areas, participated in the study. Key insights include the perception of acid attacks as deliberate acts of violence, fuelled by rejection or jealousy. Media, especially visual and social platforms, play a crucial role in awareness dissemination. The majority view acid attacks as a grave crime, primarily targeting women due to societal vulnerabilities. Despite this, many cases remain unreported due to fear and inadequate legal redressal. Lack of awareness about acid types and legal ramifications persists, highlighting the need for educational campaigns. Recommendations include stricter laws, enhanced public education, gender equality promotion, victim support initiatives, and partnerships with survivor groups. Further research and platforms for survivor advocacy are crucial for societal change and victim empowerment. These findings underscore the urgency of preventive measures and holistic support systems to address the scourge of acid attacks effectively.

I. INTRODUCTION

In acid attack, a form of violence involving the deliberate throwing of acid on a person, is intended to inflict harm, disfigurement, or even torture, typically out of jealousy or revenge. This act causes severe burns and damages to the skin, tissues, and bones, often resulting in lifelong physical and psychological trauma (Vij, 2011; Swanson, 2002). Despite its historical occurrence, acid attacks have garnered increased attention globally due to a surge in incidents and victims, including in India. These attacks, recognized as heinous offenses, now carry severe penalties under Indian law, reflecting the escalating severity of the issue.

In India, acid attacks predominantly target women, reflecting deep-seated gender discrimination in male-dominated societies. Karnataka, in particular, has witnessed numerous high-profile cases, drawing attention to the gravity of the problem. Despite media coverage, the prevalence of acid attacks continues to rise, with Bangalore standing out among metropolitan cities for such crimes.

Various factors contribute to acid attacks, including entrenched patriarchal beliefs, peer pressure, and easy access to corrosive substances. The societal expectation for women to adhere to traditional roles often leads to violent reprisals when they challenge these norms or reject advances.

The consequences of acid attacks are far-reaching. Physically, victims endure severe burns, scarring, and disfigurement, often accompanied by permanent disabilities such as blindness and hearing loss. Psychologically, they suffer from depression, anxiety, and social isolation, compounded by societal stigma and rejection. Economically, survivors face financial burdens due to medical expenses and lost job opportunities, exacerbating their plight.

In addition to individual suffering, acid attacks have broader societal implications, perpetuating cycles of violence and reinforcing harmful gender norms. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach, including stricter enforcement of laws, enhanced public awareness campaigns, and efforts to challenge patriarchal attitudes. Moreover, providing comprehensive support services for survivors, including medical, psychological, and economic assistance, is essential for their recovery and reintegration into society.

Ultimately, combating acid attacks demands a concerted effort from policymakers, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and the public at large. By working together to address the root causes of this

violence and support survivors, we can strive towards a society where such atrocities are eradicated, and all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

II. METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study:

- Assess public awareness of acid attacks in Karnataka.
- Gather public opinions on the causes of acid attacks.
- Understand public views on the effects of acid attacks on victims.
- Gauge public awareness of punishments for acid attacks.
- Collect public suggestions on preventive measures against acid attacks.

Significance of the Study:

The rising incidence of acid attacks in Karnataka, coupled with increased media coverage, has heightened public awareness of these incidents. This study aims to explore public awareness and opinions regarding the causes and effects of acid attacks, perceptions of punishments, and suggestions for preventive measures. By filling a research gap, it contributes to the limited body of knowledge on public awareness and opinions on acid attacks in Karnataka, providing insights that could inform policy and prevention strategies.

Research Design:

A descriptive research design was used to assess the level of public awareness and opinions on acid attacks in Karnataka.

Sample and Sampling Technique:

The study employed a convenient sampling method to select 100 respondents from Karnataka, India.

Data Collection Tool:

Data were collected using a Google Forms questionnaire containing 29 questions tailored to the study's objectives.

Coding and Analysis:

Data were entered into Microsoft Word and manually coded. Responses were categorized, tabulated, and quantified. For open-ended questions, similar responses were grouped and converted into percentages for analysis.

Statistical Analysis:

Data were graphically represented using pie charts and tables in Microsoft Word. These visual tools helped interpret the findings based on the study's objectives, leading to primary results

III. ANALYSIS

FINDINGS

- Respondents are aged 13-70, with 34% aged 13-19, 20% each aged 20-30 and 50-60, and 2% aged 60-70. Among the 100 respondents, 62% are female and 38% male.
- 75% are from urban areas of Karnataka, 14% from rural areas, and 11% from semi-rural areas.
- 68% see acid attacks as intentional violence using harmful acids, while 11% attribute them to rejection or jealousy.
- Visual media (documentaries, movies), social media, and print media are primary sources of awareness, with minimal influence from parents, teachers, and friends.
- 98% view acid attacks as serious crimes, comparable to murder, while 2% have no clear opinion.
- 70% believe acid attacks are common due to easy access to acids, 17% think they are rare, and 13% are neutral.
- Respondents highlight both physical disfigurement and psychological trauma, with 95% believing women are more likely targets due to societal position and relationship issues.
- 90% believe many cases go unreported due to fear and lack of justice, while 10% think all cases are reported. Only 11% are unaware of acids being used as weapons.

- Major causes identified are rejected marriage proposals (38%), revenge/hatred (31%), denial of sex (8%), and jealousy (1%).
- 52% lack awareness of types of acids used in attacks, and 69% are unaware of punishments for offenders.
- 46% think offenders and victims are related; 49% view offenders as heartless criminals, while 9% see them as having a patriarchal mindset.
- 62% believe buying and selling acids is legal. Punishments suggested include imprisonment (45%), lifetime imprisonment (20%), and the death penalty (12%).
- 96% support compensation for victims' medical expenses and cosmetic procedures.
- Respondents advocate for stricter laws, regulated acid sales, and increased public awareness. 43% believe society should offer timely support, and 33% stress societal acceptance of victims.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Leverage television, movies, documentaries, radio, and social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter to spread awareness about acid attacks. Incorporate word of mouth in schools and workplaces to educate the public on the harmful effects of acids and promote positive messages for both victims and the community.
- Increase public knowledge about laws and punishments for acid attacks to help victims seek justice and support their healing process. Educate people on their legal rights and the consequences of committing such crimes.
- Advocate for stricter laws and harsher punishments to deter potential offenders, prosecute perpetrators, and ensure justice for victims.
- Implement strict regulations on acid sales, requiring mandatory ID proof and thorough documentation to prevent illegal sales and misuse.
- Work towards reducing patriarchal attitudes to decrease the risk of acid attacks on women by men seeking control or punishment for perceived disobedience.
- Educate the public on gender equality to challenge male-dominated norms, provide equal opportunities for women, and reduce male inferiority complexes. Pay special attention to male victims, who are a minority among acid attack survivors.
- Encourage society to accept acid attack victims as normal individuals, avoiding ridicule and exclusion. Provide timely support and care to prevent further psychological issues.
- Identify common acids used in attacks, develop preventive strategies, and monitor their sales specifically.
- Research underlying causes such as rejected marriage proposals, denial of sex, relationship changes, and jealousy to inform preventive measures and warn the public about potential threats.
- Ensure Victim Compensation: Maintain adequate compensation schemes for acid attack victims, providing timely financial assistance for medical and cosmetic treatments.
- Collaborate with Survivor Groups: Partner with survivor groups and local organizations to provide prevention methods, show compassion, and create platforms for self-expression.
- Ensure availability of emotional support, medical care, legal assistance, and rehabilitation services for survivors and their families.
- Enhance the skills of healthcare professionals, mental health workers, law enforcement agencies, and emergency responders to address the specific needs of acid attack victims.
- Provide skill-based vocational training and employment opportunities for survivors to support their economic independence and reintegration into society.
- Support detailed research to gather and evaluate data on acid attacks, tracking public opinion and behavior changes over time.
- Establish platforms for survivors to voice their experiences, insights, and advocate for local, national, and international policy changes

V. CONCLUSION

This research offers insight into public opinions on acid attacks in Karnataka, India. It highlights public awareness about acid attack cases, their causes, effects on victims, and relevant laws and punishments. Various

media forms, including visual, auditory, and social media, alongside information from family, teachers, and friends, significantly contribute to public awareness about acid attacks.

Despite these efforts, a significant portion of the population remains uninformed about specific acids used, the legality of acid sales, and the year acid attacks were legislated with specific punishments. Misinformation hinders collaborative efforts to support victims and mitigate their suffering, emphasizing the importance of accurate information.

The study reveals that gender inequality and patriarchal mindsets are perceived as the main reasons women are targeted by men in acid attacks, often as punishment for perceived disobedience. A minority believe male victims are also increasing.

Regarding punishment, many respondents favor severe penalties, including life imprisonment and the death penalty, viewing offenders as mentally unstable and cruel. The perceived effects of acid attacks on victims include physical disfigurement, psychological issues like low self-esteem and depression, social exclusion, and financial difficulties.

Survey responses underscore the need for collective action involving the public, law enforcement, government, healthcare providers, mental health professionals, and community workers to spread awareness and enforce laws. Ensuring victims receive compensation and societal support is crucial for their recovery.

This research stresses the importance of updated knowledge and public education to form well-informed opinions and effective strategies against acid attacks. Public support for community services for acid attack survivors, timely medical and psychological treatment, and long-term rehabilitation is evident. Additionally, creating platforms for victims to share their experiences can raise global awareness, reduce future acid attacks, and inform preventive strategies.

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