



# Hothur Foundation

**Road to Recovery**



**HOTHUR FOUNDATION**  
CELEBRATE GIVING

# Hothur Foundation : Spearheaded by Kulsum Shadab Wahab

Hothur Foundation, spearheaded by Kulsum Shadab Wahab aims at addressing and uplifting the economically backward and providing the challenged with educational, medical, maternity, psychological and matrimonial guidance, rehabilitation and counselling for survivors of acid attacks and more.

Giving back has been a tradition conscientiously followed by the Hothur family, especially when India is reeling from the worst hit of COVID-19. Hothur has been actively seeking out measures to help aid patients with providing medical resources such as oxygen cylinders and installing oxygen plants in rural areas around the country. While also including other medical facilities such as beds at hospitals which are in scarcity due to the falling of a poor health care system.

COVID-19 is exposing, exploiting and exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, especially gender inequalities and Hothur plans on giving relief in the form of aid related to hunger, medical care, shelter and support.

By heightening risks for those already exploited, increasing the risks of exploitation, it's usually the poor and discriminated who are paying the price.

Our main goal and focus is to change that.



# Acid Attacks :

Acid Attacks or also called acid throwing, vitriol attack, or vitriolage, is a form of violent assault, usually a gender based assault against women. Involves the act of throwing acid or a similarly corrosive substance onto the body of another "with the intention to disfigure, maim, torture, or even kill".

Perpetrators of these attacks throw corrosive liquids at their victims, usually at their faces, burning them, and damaging skin tissue, often exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. Acid attacks can often lead to permanent blindness and other deep rooted physical disabilities.

## Shalini's Story :

Shalini ( name changed to protect her identity) excited about starting her new job at the medical college. With the job market hard, it was an achievement that Shalini did not take lightly, facing many hardships she had finally earned the right to earn, gain independence and achieve a sense of identity. Her celebration was short-lived. On her way to the medical college, a few men on bikes in a random act of cruelty threw acid on her face. Shalini's neatly plaited hair fell, her clothes started dissolving, meshing with her skin. Immediately rushed to the hospital, doctors told Shalini that she had lost vision from one eye, and one ear. Due to wed in 8 days, Shalini never saw her wedding day, instead her life for the past 13 years has been an endless circle of visiting hospitals and courts to bring her perpetrators to justice. Shalini received no aid, no help and the perpetrators still roam free. Shalini still knocks on the doors of government officials, who promise her a job or justice, with no avail.

The story of Shalini's not an exception to the rule, but the norm. The reality of potentially 2000 unaddressed victims of acid attacks in India. India has made international headlines for horrific rape cases in recent years, but acid attacks although common have received less attention.

# Acid Attacks in India :

In India, acid attacks are at an all-time high and increasing every year, with 600-700 reported incidents every year, while the actual number could exceed 2000 victims per year. It is difficult to gauge the true scale and prevalence of the issue for a number of reasons. Victims of acid attacks often do not report the true cause of the injuries out of shame or fear.

The intention of the attacker is often to humiliate rather than to kill the victim.

Acid attacks often occur as revenge against a woman who rejects a proposal of marriage or a sexual advance, women are also attacked as part of domestic violence or for 'dowry'. Gender inequality and women's position in the society, in relation to men, plays a significant role in these types of attacks.

## Preferred Mode of Violence Against Women in India :

Acids are found easily and cheaply across the country, and are increasingly being used as a weapon against women. No official figures exist on the number of attacks in the country, but a helpline for women in distress set up in the national capital, New Delhi, received 56 complaints of acid attacks in the span of three months in 2019.

The circumstances that lead to the victim's injuries due to acid or any other form of chemical are varied, from domestic disputes to jilted lovers throwing acid as a means of revenge.

# History of Acid Attacks in India :

India, not new to the heinous crime of acid throwing--having had multiple occurrences making the practice of acid throwing all too common.

Acid attacks were also used in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, where people were dragged from their houses and had acid thrown to their faces. Incidents have also been recorded of police in India to use on individuals, particularly on their eyes, causing blindness to the victims. However, the most affected demographic from acid throwing are women and girls.

Violence against women is the most widespread form of systematic abuse worldwide, affecting one third of all women in their lifetime. In India, a jilted lover, or a case of disputed dowry is too common a trigger for a perpetrator to attempt to take away a woman's life.



# Challenges :

Challenges include not having a comprehensive national system for recording and monitoring burn injuries, focus of resources in urban areas and the social stigma and pressure not to come forward against perpetrators.

Even though these cases are supposed to be in fast-track courts, the path to justice continues to be long and exhaustive leaving survivors with no choice but many times to relinquish it midway.

Nearly, 90 per cent cases a year are transferred for trial, hence, the survivors can't exactly hope for swift closure. This slow rate of investigation and conviction means that the number of cases that remain unsolved keeps adding up with the police and courts.

Most of the burn victims are women and belong to a vulnerable group of the society - ill equipped to afford treatment which requires prolonged hospitalization and multiple corrective plastic surgeries, leading to economic hardship, not to mention the psychological and social trauma.

The social acceptance of an acid attack survivors is poor and this ultimately demoralises them, resulting in some to feel like outcasts, and others to take extreme measures such as suicide.

In light of such dire circumstances the process of erasing the physical scars through skin banking plays an essential role in expediting their road to recovery.

# Skin Banking :

Skin Banking is a process in which skin is removed from a donor body, tested for suitability as a graft material, packaged, stored, and finally reused as a graft. The process is similar to that for blood banking. Skin grafts can be autografts or allografts.

Skin Revision or "skin banking" procedures and facial reconstruction surgeries for acute contractures along with a supply of medications for a few months can cost extensive funding for one survivor.

Skin Banking is complex and requires continuous updating. Physically and psychologically.

Science and technology has made great strides in aiding the acid attack survivors recovery through the process of skin banking. Skin grafting procedures can successfully heal survivors with 50- 60% burns. But in order for skin grafting to take place, healthy donors must donate their skin post their death. And unlike blood donation or organ donation, there is a lack of awareness and stigma attached to donating skin.

Survivors of Acid or Burn Attacks need a minimum of 22 to a maximum of 60+ surgeries. However, the lack of donations made at a skin bank along with the lack of resources required to go forth with a procedure makes it an impossible process to go with. Most people are not even aware that this procedure is available and it can save lives.

If only communities together could step up and make it more accessible to survivors through pledging to donate and combating the misconceptions. It would make the already difficult journey, slightly more easier to combat.

# Rehabilitation :

Rehabilitation homes, better termed as “safe homes” provide housing for the recovery of acid attack survivors and their families. These safe homes also include other women who have dealt with other traumatic crimes related to abuse.

An acid attack is an attempt to dehumanize and undermine one’s identity and dignity. An attempt to cause irreversible damage, physically and especially, mentally.

The idea of a safe home is to allow women to uplift themselves and each other by giving them their space and right to privacy, along with financial aid and protection. With the hope that they eventually use the education and therapy to reintegrate themselves back into society.

These safe homes allow survivors to truly rehabilitate themselves and become an individual of their own.

# Road to Recovery :

The Road to Recovery for a survivor is harsh with its reality. However, through procedures such as skin revision and extensive therapy. Along with an uplifting environment that is catered to listening and giving a voice. The goal is to make this journey at least significantly easier.

This journey is exhaustive. Not only dealing with physical wounds but also deeply rooted psychological wounds of a survivor. Hothur Foundation is always ready to dive deeper and deeper for its survivors. Until they rise again, as empowered individuals.



# Ara Lumiere :

Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. But our survivors have shown that true beauty is much more than what meets the superficial eye.

Their beauty is reflected in the resilience of their spirit. Their beauty lies in the sheer will and hope that transcends them from being victims to real heroes.

With this ethos in mind the Ara Lumiere initiative was launched.

The project aimed to support victims of acid attacks. The project started as an initiative to rehabilitate acid attack survivors in the society, but has transcended the purview of economic rehabilitation.

Through Ara Lumiere designs, acid attack survivors find a voice within themselves to once again discover the beauty that their perpetrators attempted to take away from them.

Designs of Ara Lumiere are inspired by the resilience and beauty of the acid attack survivors. Ara Lumiere has successfully given a voice to acid attack survivors lifting the burden the survivors face while being reintegrated into society, economically and socially, giving them a renewed purpose and dignity in society.

For More Information:

@ara.lumiere

[www.aralumiere.com](http://www.aralumiere.com)

# The Shadow Pandemic :

The implementation of lockdown to combat this pandemic has documented a profound impact on the entire human environment. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified.

Domestic Violence is usually the leading cause of an acid attack or burn attack. The steep rise in violence conducted against women, in their own homes or neighbourhood is alarming. Victims of domestic violence or violence against women such as, acid and burn violence often do not report the true cause of the injuries out of shame or fear. This trauma, going ahead without any assistance leads to multiple mental health issues slowly paving the path to suicide.

Hothur Foundation is currently at work fighting against The Shadow Pandemic through their campaign called #HothurEmpowers. Considering The Shadow Pandemic as the virus that has no cure.

Other than raising awareness through the campaign, Hothur Foundation also helps in the form of medical aid to safe homes, along with rehabilitation can help provide a safe space for the survivor of abuse as well as their families, especially their children.

Along with constructive aid to support their basic needs. Especially by giving a voice to the survivors of acid attacks and abuse.

# Child Acid Attacks :

Acid attacks are a serious problem all over the world, even children are becoming victims of acid attack in many cases. Most of the victims of acid attacks in children are usually girls, many below the age of 18, who have rejected sexual advances or marriage proposals.

Acid attack or vitriolage is defined as the act of throwing acid onto the body of a person "with the intention of injuring or disfiguring (them) out of jealousy or revenge".

Hothur Foundation is currently participating in raising awareness, along with giving children the same treatment paved in the road to recovery, while making sure that the environment and aid given are child friendly. As early childhood trauma as such develops and grows into an adult who has very little joy left to live for.

Raising awareness not only protects children from injuries that will put their life at risk but also systematically gives light to the exploitation of children in the country.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION :**

**[www.hothurfoundation.com](http://www.hothurfoundation.com)**

**[@hothurfoundation](#)**

**[CONTACT@hothurfoundation.com](mailto:CONTACT@hothurfoundation.com)**

**[@ara\\_lumiere](#)**

**[www.aralumiere.com](http://www.aralumiere.com)**

**Celebrate Giving!  
Hothur Foundation**