

## **A hope of life and courage giving to victims by a famous salon owner in Pakistan**

In Pakistan the women are assailed in different cruel ways by using acid or kerosene oil. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, that every year between 33 and 40 women burnt in acid attacks and 45 burnt on fire. The accurate numbers are more but shame and trepidation proscribes them from reporting the crimes.

The most well known groups working to facilitate and emphasize the dilemma of victims run by beauticians who own Pakistan's most well known salons. The owner of Deplix beauty salon chain Mrs. Masarat Misbah 48 years old has taken up the cause of caring for and rehabilitating the victims through Deplix Smileagain Foundation. After discharging the hospital the non-governmental organization, take care of the women by trying to organize further surgery and looking after their wellbeing.

Mrs. Misbah said, "It is usually a suitor, the in-laws wanting more dowry money or a jealous husband who commit the crime." The Pakistani private television channels have initiated the social revolution by broadcasting the graphic images of such types of attacks but now it is limited only in newspaper columns. The old euphemism carried by the newspaper reports was that a woman had killed or mutilated in a "burst stove incident". Mrs. Misbah said, "I feel embarrassed that as someone working in the business of beauty I did not take notice earlier." She added, "I regret now the time I wasted."

Ms. Haleema 22 years old had brought to Lahore's Hospital recently when she was assassinated with acid. Moreover, she lost her both eyes. Mrs. Misbah said, "Most of these girls do not survive. Those who do are left to rot like vegetables." She showed the photographs of different women who have survived with a first round of surgery. The imperfections show they require further surgery so that they can perform basic human requirements: noses and eyes that have melted need to be open so the women can breathe properly or see.

In 2003, Mrs. Misbah started work when a veiled woman stopped her outside her office after work. She said, "She had no eyes and was totally disfigured. I helped her by taking her to hospital for reconstructive surgery. I placed an advertisement in the newspaper asking for victims of acid or kerosene attacks to come forward." Moreover, after the advertisement "42 girls walked in here"

Mrs. Misbah has 400 women registered. However, she helped only 93 because of high costs involved. Some of them need 25 to 30 surgical operations that cost on average of Rs. 60,000 (\$ 750 approximately). An Italian non-profit organization Smileagain, provide the medical services to burn victims in other countries. They also send surgeons to Pakistan who work free of charge. She employed eight women who were victims of attacks in her Lahore salon and many work in 32 salons in other countries.

The three works Saira Liaqat 22 years old, Arooj Akbar 28 years old and Bushra Khan 35 years old are working in Lahore salon. Sara said, "Every person wishes that he or she is beautiful. However, in my view, your face is not everything. Real beauty lies inside a person, not outside."

This is the story of victim Ms. Saira Liaqat, she was not ready to marry and she rejected the proposal from her fiance. She said, "He came to my house and asked me for a glass of water. As I handed it to him, he threw acid in my face." She further added, "Now I have had five or six surgeries. The cornea in my eye has melted."

Arooj Akbar 28 years old came back from Islamabad after her latest operation. She covered her face with bandages. Her husband has an argument when she wanted to meet with her mother. Her husband old jealous man poured kerosene oil when she was sleeping. Her left arm fused to her body and she had to have her neck restructured. Her in-laws warned her family not to take her to a hospital in their district of Sarghoda and so they brought her to Lahore.

Bushra Khan working as a tea woman in a salon is 35 years old. She said my husband asked me for money. When I said, I do not have then my husband and in-laws beaten me. After that, rubbed rags dipped in acid all over her face. She said, "I screamed and so they put the rags in my mouth and burnt a chunk out of my tongue." Her in-laws hanged her from ceiling fan, set fire to house, and run away. Her life saved by the neighbor and took her to hospital.

The Pakistan's squeak corrupt judiciary is responsible for these types of injustice attacks. The majority in them is set free and those who jailed never punished by the judiciary. Mrs. Khan said, "I spent all my money trying to keep them in jail but then they would pay bribes and get out." She added, "But now I need money to try to look better." She said, "My life is over," But the other two women chastised her. Mrs. Liaqat said, "No it has only just started." Mrs. Akbar said, "Don't be a silly."

"In the salon where they trim, clean and paint clients' fingernails, cut hair and apply make-up, there are posters of glamorous models. However, there is another poster depicting a woman with an acid-ravaged face, which reads, "Help us bring back a smile to the face of these survivors."

Mrs. Misbah said, some of her clients had stopped coming "as they did not want to have disfigured girls doing their hair. But I don't care." She appeals the government of Pakistan that gave jobs to these victims and gave suggestion that they work as a telephone operators or office clerks.

Mrs. Misbah started collecting funds by asking friends and customers, hospitals and doctors to help, compensate and postpone payments. But due to the large numbers of victims she needs more funds.

At Lahore's Jinnah hospital, Dr Mozzam Nazeer is beginning a reconstructive surgery and burns wing. He said the country besieged by the level of the dilemma and wanted more surgeons, more funds for welfare and a much better co-ordinate system that allowed hospitals and NGOs to co-operate and use funds transparently.

The lives of these women have changed everlastingly. However, Mrs. Liaqat faces it with amazing bravery. She said, "I cannot possibly think of getting married now. I could not face an abusive husband. I do not want people to pity me. Right now I want to stand on my own feet and earn a living."