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Acid Violence in Bangladesh: A Burning Issue and Devastating Violence against Women
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Abstract:
Bangladesh is surrounded by a number of problems. Some of the fundamental issues also available in this country. Acid Violence is one of them, serious issue in Bangladesh. This paper means to recognize acid attack against women in perhaps one of the worst forms violation of morality and legal codes in the contemporary age. It is not because of its high frequency on women, rather because of its high frequency on women, rather because of its severe impact on the human body and mind. The rate of acid attacks though is decreasing in a satisfactory level, against women this rate is not yet satisfactory. Specialized collaboration to legislatures, non-administrative associations and different offices in this attempt should be emphatically advanced.

Keywords: Acid Violence, fundamental issues, domestic disputes, negative connection, legal actions.

1. Introduction:
Acid violence is indeed a tragic and devastating form of violence, particularly against women, and it has been a significant issue in Bangladesh. Acid attacks involve the deliberate throwing or pouring of acid on individuals, resulting in severe physical and psychological damage. These attacks often target women and girls, causing lifelong disabilities, disfigurement, and emotional trauma. All of these injuries are considered as 'grievous hurt' under section 320 of (Bangladesh Penal Code). The perpetrators are mostly men and adolescent boys. The overwhelming majority of the victims are women and many of them are girls and young females. This review article is aimed to focus on the present situation of this barbaric act of vengeance against women and young adolescent girls with regard to frequency, causes, long term consequences and creating public awareness on the issue by tightly regulating the sale and transport of acid as well as enacting harsher penalties for perpetrators.

The reasons behind such attacks can vary and may include personal disputes, rejection of romantic advances, refusal of marriage proposals, land disputes, or even revenge. The consequences for the victims are profound, as they often face physical pain, social isolation, and stigma within their communities. Efforts have been made to address this issue at various levels. The Bangladeshi government has introduced legislation to regulate the sale and use of acid, impose stricter punishments on perpetrators, and provide support to victims. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups have also played a crucial role in raising awareness, providing medical and legal assistance, and advocating for stricter laws and social change. The Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) in Bangladesh is one such organization that has been actively working to support survivors and combat acid violence. They provide medical treatment, rehabilitation, counseling, and vocational training to survivors.

2. Conceptual Framework:
Casualties don't pass on yet they consume gravely. In some cases, the tissue as well as liquefied by this. Corrosive spreads either through the entire body or for the most part in upper piece of the body. Customarily, the casualty is left dazed, hard of hearing or imbecilic. This likewise breaks their boldness to live and drains their resolve to battle against this savage society. It appears to be that the individuals what die's identity is feeling much better and those are alive kick the bucket every day. They can have no typical

1https://www.lawyersnjurists.com/article/acid-attacks-in-bangladesh/
life. Alongside actual anguish, corrosive survivors need to manage mental injury too. Numerous casualties are baffled, and some of them have self-destructive inclinations. They need occasional directing via prepared psychotherapists to recuperate from the shock and disappointment. Casualties normally become discouraged and are treated as pariahs by family members, neighbors, and companions. The most significant part is corrosive assaults leave casualties horrendously distorted in light of the fact that most goes after are aimed at the face to for all time scar the person in question and annihilate her actual appearance. Casualties don't pass on yet they consume seriously. In some cases, the tissue as well as dissolved by this. Corrosive spreads either through the entire body or for the most part in upper piece of the body. Intermittently, the casualty is left dazed, hard of hearing or stupid. This likewise breaks their mental fortitude to live and drains their resolve to battle against this horrible society. It appears to be that the individuals what die's identity is feeling better and those are alive bite the dust every day. They can have no typical life. Alongside actual anguish, corrosive survivors need to manage mental injury also. Numerous casualties are baffled, and some of them have self-destructive propensities. They need occasional advising via prepared psychotherapists to recuperate from the shock and dissatisfaction. Casualties for the most part become discouraged and are treated as untouchables by family members, neighbours, and companions. In addition to the fact that the casualty endures, likewise, the entire family is endures with her similarly, both intellectually and socially.2 Bangladesh is the country with the biggest number of corrosive casualties in the entire world. The powerless legal framework is the main motivation for this issue. Corrosive assailants for the most part partake in the unfortunate design of the law and furthermore partake in the social and legal advantages. It takes extremely lengthy to excuse a case in Bangladesh. Corrosive assaults is characterized as a movement with pessimistic effect on individuals who is associated with it. Albeit corrosive assaults is risky principally to the female, Despite the way that watchmen could act reasonably by sending their children to attempt to grow their probability of perseverance, they may not see the long awful implications of adolescent work for their own friends and family. Since kid work battles with school interest and capacity, kids who are delivered off work don't gather (or under-accumulate) HR, bungling the opportunity to work on their convenience and future pay limit. This cuts down the compensation of their future families, and assembles the probability of their family being delivered off work. Hence, poverty and young person work is given starting with one age then onto the next.

Definition of Acid
In chemistry, an acid is a substance that donates protons (hydrogen ions, H+) or accepts a pair of electrons in a chemical reaction. Acids are characterized by their ability to increase the concentration of hydrogen ions in a solution, lowering the pH value. Acids are typically sour-tasting and can cause a burning sensation on the skin. They often have properties such as corrosiveness and reactivity with metals. Common examples of acids include hydrochloric acid (HCl), sulfuric acid (H2SO4), nitric acid (HNO3), acetic acid (CH3COOH), and citric acid (found in citrus fruits). Acids can be categorized as strong acids or weak acids based on their ability to ionize in water. Strong acids completely dissociate into ions in water, while weak acids only partially ionize. Acids have various applications in industry, research, and everyday life. They are used in chemical synthesis, cleaning products, batteries, food preservation, and pH regulation in various processes.

Causes of Acid Violence
Acid violence is a complex issue with multiple underlying causes. While the specific reasons can vary in different contexts, some common factors that contribute to acid violence include:

Gender Inequality: Acid violence is often rooted in deep-seated gender inequality, where women and girls are seen as subordinate to men. It can be a means of exerting control and power over women who challenge traditional gender norms or assert their rights.

Rejected Advances or Refusal: Acid attacks may be carried out as a form of revenge or punishment when a person's romantic or sexual advances are rejected or when marriage proposals are declined. Perpetrators may resort to acid violence as a way to assert dominance and control over the victim.

Dowry Disputes: In some cases, acid attacks may be related to dowry disputes, where a woman's family is unable to meet the demands of the groom's family for dowry payments. Acid violence may be used as a form of retaliation or punishment for not meeting these financial expectations.

Land and Property Disputes: Acid attacks can also occur as a result of land or property disputes, where individuals seek to intimidate or harm others to gain control over valuable assets. Acid is used as a readily available and destructive weapon to inflict harm and instill fear.

Social Stigma and Honor: Acid violence can be driven by notions of honor, shame, and reputation within certain communities. Perpetrators may carry out acid attacks to punish women who are perceived to have brought shame or dishonor to their families, often through actions such as eloping or engaging in relationships deemed unacceptable.

Weak Legal Framework and Impunity: Inadequate legal frameworks, weak law enforcement, and a lack of accountability contribute to the prevalence of acid violence. Perpetrators may believe they can escape punishment, leading to a culture of impunity.

Availability and Accessibility of Acid: The easy availability and low cost of acid in some regions contribute to its use as a weapon. Acid is commonly used in various industries and can be purchased without strict regulations or monitoring, making it easily accessible to potential attackers.

Past cases reveal motives of revenge, sadism, and coercive action. The main causes are:

i. When it’s a matter of family disputes; domestic violence; relationship conflicts
ii. After refusing indecent proposals or unacceptable propositions
iii. Disputes with land or money like business conflicts
iv. Vengefulness and status jealousy
v. Suspicion of infidelity
vi. To cover theft or robbery
vii. Mistaken identity; accidental; collateral
viii. Nemesis: perpetrator inflicts self-injury
ix. Sex crimes, rape, and sodomy - leading to victim’s death in worst cases.

3. Acid Violence Bangladesh Context:
This research is very closely related to the status of women in Bangladesh society. In the context of Bangladesh, the term "acid violence" refers to a specific form of gender-based violence in which perpetrators intentionally attack victims, usually women or girls, by throwing corrosive acids on them. These attacks result in severe physical and psychological harm, leaving victims with disfiguring injuries, pain, and emotional trauma.Acid violence has been a significant issue in Bangladesh, with a high number of reported cases in the past. These attacks are often motivated by reasons such as rejected marriage proposals, land disputes, family conflicts, or personal vendettas. Perpetrators use acids, which are easily accessible and inexpensive, as a means of inflicting harm, disfiguring the victim, and exerting control and power over them. The consequences of acid violence are long-lasting and devastating for the survivors. They face physical challenges, including loss of eyesight, facial deformities, and disabilities, as well as psychological and social ramifications. Survivors often require extensive medical treatment, surgeries, and psychological support for their recovery and rehabilitation.

Efforts have been made in Bangladesh to address acid violence. The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act was enacted in 2002, which criminalizes acid attacks and provides for legal measures to prevent such incidents and support survivors. Organizations like Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) Bangladesh and Acid Survivors Trust International (ASTI) work towards raising awareness, supporting

4 [www.asfi.in, last visited on 6 August 2022].
survivors, providing medical assistance, and advocating for legal reforms and social change. Despite these efforts, acid violence continues to be a pressing issue in Bangladesh, and further work is needed to prevent attacks, support survivors, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The fundamental rights granted under part three of the Constitution specifically deal with women. Article 28 states:

1. The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
2. Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and public life.
3. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard access to any place of public entertainment or resort, or admission to any educational institution.
4. Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making special provisions in favor of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.

Thus, while providing equal rights for women in several respects, although only in the public sphere and not in the private sphere, the legislature could affect the typical stereotyped image depicting women as the weaker sex in need of protection. While providing for equality of opportunity for women, the Constitution under Article 29(3) (c) has explicitly given the right to the state to reserve certain employment and offices to men alone, if they are seen as unsuited to women. This urge of the legislature can also be seen in other provisions of the Constitution.

**The Penal Code 1860**
The Penal Code in Bangladesh contains chapters and provisions aimed at protecting women from various kinds of violence. Some of the different forms of violence it lists are kidnapping, wrongful confinement, trafficking, slavery, assault, battery, causing, miscarriage, rape, acid-throwing and forced labour. The throwing of acid, usually sulfuric acid or battery acid, on the bodies and faces of young women and girls became such a common means of 'revenge' by jilted or spurned lovers or suitors that in the 1980's new provisions were added to the Penal Code to prevent this sort of act of violence. In response to the demand from women's groups and human rights organizations, to improve laws to contain violence against women. According to s.4 of the penal code following hurt designated as grievous hurt. They are firstly emasculation, secondly permanent privation of the sight of either eye. Thirdly permanent privation of the hearing of either ear, fourthly privation of any member or joint, fitly permanently disfiguration of the head or face, sixthly permanently impairing of the powers of any member or joint, seventhly fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth, eighthly Any hurt which is dangerous or which causes the sufferer to be during the space of twenty days in severe bodily pain. Permanently disfiguration of the head or face is occurring by acid throwing.

**The Acid Crime Control Act 2002**
The Acid Crime Control Act 2002 is particularly pertinent to this research. It is intended to robustly control acid crimes. It is one of the measures against acid violence in Bangladesh context. Through this act the government wants to ensure the legal justice for victims. According to this act, the government is also committed to eradicate this form of violence. The main components of this act are:

Definition of this act: - Unless otherwise described by sentences, in the Act.
a. "Crime "will mean as any offense punishable by this act;
b. "Acid" will mean any corrosive, burning or poisonous chemical;
c. "Tribunal" will mean a Tribunal set up under this act;
d. "Criminal Procedure" will mean the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (Act v of 1898);
e. "High Court Division" will mean High Court Division of Bangladesh Article 3. Priority of the Act: - This act will supersede all other current acts.

Article 23. Acid Crime Control Tribunal,

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5 *Ibid.*, Art. 28 (1) (2) (3).
(1) To judge crimes under this Act, the government can set up one or more Acid Crime Control Tribunals by notification in the Government Gazette.

(2) In cases where more than one Tribunal is set up, the catchments area of each Tribunal must be publicized in the Government Gazette mentioned in sub-clause

(3) The tribunal will include one judge appointed from District Judges and Sessions Judges.

(4) The government, if necessary, may assign the responsibilities of being the judge of the Tribunal to a District Judge or Sessions Judge in addition to their regular responsibilities.

(5) To fulfill the aims of this act, the meaning of District Judge or Sessions Judge may include Additional District Judges or in some cases Additional Sessions Judges.

This act also provides that: The maximum sentence for acid throwing is the death penalty;

• All crimes under this act will be cognizable, non-compoundable and non-bail able;

• A tribunal has to complete the whole trial within ninety days of receiving the first written instruction;

• Once a Tribunal starts hearing a case, the hearing will continue every working day until it finishes.

Investigation of any crime under this act must be completed by a police officer within thirty days of being informed or being ordered by a magistrate. The defendant can appeal against a decision or order or punishment given by the Tribunal to the High Court Division within sixty days of the date on which it is given; If someone assists/helps to commit the crime of acid throwing, he/she will receive the same punishment/penalty as the perpetrators. All these types of case must comply with Criminal Procedures. The whole procedure should comply with the Criminal Justice System. It also had been cited that the person representing the plaintiff at the trial would be considered as a public prosecutor. Acid violence cases are also prosecuted under the criminal judiciary. There are Special Courts established under the Acid Crime Control Act 2002. The act provides for setting up of a special court in each district. Actually these courts can be compared with courts of special jurisdiction under the Special Power Act 1974. In 1983 there was another ordinance as mentioned before, to control oppression and violence against women called "Cruelty to Women (Deterrent Punishment) Ordinance". Special tribunal courts established under the Acid Crime Control Act 2002 must follow a similar procedure to those governed by the Special Power Act 1974. This court has the power to hand down death sentences which must be confirmed by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.8

According to ASF statistics, 95 cases of acid violence have been tried and sentenced up to May 2003. Only eight of these 95 have been tried by the Acid Crimes Tribunal formed under the Acid Crime Control Act 2002. This law provides for summary trials for acid violence and the record time for the disposition of such a case in the lower courts is 6 months. This is extremely rare in a country where litigation takes years and thousands of cases lie pending in the courts. Acid cases filed under other (previous) laws took three to four years to complete in the lower courts and there are acid cases which took up to 10 years to be disposed of. In the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, which is where appeals are first sent, the wheels of justice are even slower. Research conducted by the ASF between 1996-2002, shows that during that time no appeals relating to acid crime cases had been heard. After enacting this new law it is a hopeful sign that, the judiciary recently handed down a number of harsh sentences. It is notable that, in two cases, death sentences were issued after convictions in acid burn attack.

In the three years since the Acid Crime Control Act 2002 was enacted, the conviction rate is still not satisfactory. To understand why, we have to understand the whole criminal justice system of Bangladesh. One problem is the lack of criminal justice management. According to documents reviewed, the number of incidents has not decreased. Large numbers of incidents have not yet generated formal legal proceedings, and many cases have not yet been finalized. Ultimately only small numbers of perpetrators are punished simultaneous increases in acid violence aggravates the situation. The result of this apparent impunity, despite enactment of the new law, creates another new devastating dimension to the problem of acid violence.

New Laws
To prevent acid throwing violence, the present government has taken steps such as legislative initiatives. In 2002, the Naripokkho, ASF and some other organizations were instrumental in assisting the Government of

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Bangladesh to implement two new laws regarding acid and its use, namely the Acid Crime Control Council Act, which provides penal measures to perpetrators of acid violence, and the Acid Control Act which controls and regulates the procurement of acid. The President of the State approved the passage of these two laws in National Parliament with the consensus of all political parties. They were then notified and given effect on 17th March 2002. Acid violence involves the collection and procurement of acid from specific sources. If all acid users (those using acid in their daily professional / trade) obtained the legally required license to trade in, sell and procure acid, the illegal and illicit trade/sale of acid would be curtailed. This is why, since mid-1980's women's organizations have been continuously pressuring the government to take steps against the perpetrators of acid violence. At the same time these activist groups have played a very important role against acid violence around the country. As a result of their campaigns the present government was obliged to enact 2 specific laws, namely the Acid Crime Control Act 2002 and the Acid Control Act 2002. Under the Acid Control Act 2002, the government established a 'National Acid Control Council'. This committee is mandated to provide legal assistance for acid victims.

The enactment of the Acid Crime Control Act 2002 superseded all other relevant acts. Previously, acid violence related cases were treated as criminal offences under Section of 350 of Penal Code 1860. In the early 1980's when the acid-throwing crime emerged, the government introduced a new separate section in the Penal Code by virtue of the Penal Code (Second Amendment) Ordinance 1984. Section 326A provides that whoever voluntarily causes grievous hurt in respect of both eyes, head or face by means of corrosive substances shall be punished with either death or life imprisonment.

The Acid Control Act 2002

This Act was passed in order to prevent the misuse of acid as a corrosive substance and to provide legal support for acid victims. Therefore, it was intended to provide acid victims with access to legal assistance. The Acid Control Act 2002, also known as the Acid Offense Control Act, is a legislation enacted in Bangladesh specifically to address the issue of acid violence. The act was introduced as a response to the alarming rate of acid attacks in the country and aims to regulate the sale, use, and control of acid.

Here are some key features and provisions of the Acid Control Act 2002:

Regulation of Acid: The act provides for the regulation of the production, import, transport, storage, sale, and use of acid. It requires individuals and businesses involved in the sale or purchase of acid to obtain licenses and maintain proper records.

Restriction on Sale and Purchase: The act prohibits the sale of acid to individuals under the age of 18. It also prohibits the sale of acid without proper documentation, and any sale made must be recorded in writing.

Control and Monitoring: The act establishes a regulatory authority, known as the Acid Control Authority, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the act. The authority has the power to issue guidelines, conduct inspections, and take action against violators.

Offenses and Penalties: The act categorizes acid offenses into different levels based on severity, including throwing or attempting to throw acid, causing grievous hurt or disfigurement through acid, and abetment of acid offenses. The act imposes stringent punishments, including imprisonment ranging from 3 years to life imprisonment, and fines for offenders.

Compensation and Rehabilitation: The act emphasizes the importance of providing compensation and support to acid attack survivors. It requires the government to establish a fund to provide financial assistance for the treatment, rehabilitation, and support services for victims.

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9 Ibid, p.482.
10 Ibid, p. 482.
Special Tribunals: The act provides for the establishment of special tribunals to expedite the trial process for acid-related offenses. These tribunals are intended to ensure swift justice for victims and enhance accountability.

The Acid Control Act 2002 reflects the efforts of the Bangladeshi government to address acid violence comprehensively. However, despite these legislative measures, the effective implementation and enforcement of the act, as well as continued awareness campaigns and support for survivors, remain crucial to combating acid violence and protecting the rights of women in Bangladesh.

4. Social Life of Acid Victims
Many social implications exist for acid survivors, especially women. For example, such attacks usually leave victims handicapped in some way, rendering them dependent on either their spouse or family for everyday activities, such as eating and running errands. These dependencies are increased by the fact that many acid survivors are not able to find suitable work, due to impaired vision and physical handicap. This negatively impacts their economic viability, causing hardships on the families/spouses that care for them. Moreover, acid survivors who are single when attacked almost certainly become ostracized from society, effectively ruining marriage prospects.

The social life of acid attack victims is significantly impacted by the physical, emotional, and psychological consequences they endure. While each victim's experience may differ, here are some common challenges they may face in their social lives:

Stigmatization and Social Isolation: Acid attack survivors often face social stigma and discrimination due to their disfigurement and scars. They may encounter negative attitudes, prejudice, and misconceptions from others, leading to social isolation and exclusion.

Emotional and Psychological Impact: The trauma caused by the attack can result in severe emotional and psychological distress for the victims. They may experience anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and low self-esteem, affecting their ability to engage in social activities and maintain relationships.

Altered Physical Appearance: The visible scars and disfigurement caused by acid attacks can significantly impact a victim's self-image and confidence.11

5. Acid Victims in Low-income Families
In most cases, victims come from the low-income group of families and because of being illiterate most of the time they are not aware of government initiatives to prevent and make solution of acid attacks. Most of the times, the stigma attached to such cases obstructs the families to reach out to police and report the crime.

Dowry, which is a known cause of violence against women, in general, is also a source of acid attacks. As it happens mainly in low-income families, spouses may dis-agree on each other and commit the crime of acid attack. It is very common in rural areas of Bangladesh that the husband tortures the wife for not receiving dower money. It is also common that the husband showers his wife with acid for not receiving the dower money.

It is also a leading cause of acid attack that poor families do not live a secure life. Their houses are made of cheap materials and anybody can come at night and cause harmful attacks. The biggest reason for the high frequency rate of acid attacks in Bangladesh is that concentrated acid is cheap and easily available in the market, for as low as tk 16-25 per litre12. Due to cheapness, it is easily available in all places. Acids and bases are chemical compounds that have distinctive properties in water solution, this acids and bases

11 [http://www.stopacidattacks.org/p/medical.html, last visited on 15 August 2022].
12 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5133410.stm, last visited on 15 August 2022].
have different characteristics of taste and this taste are based on the concentration of those chemicals. Both the acids and bases have a characteristic of corroding the metals and other articles.

9. Recommendations:
Viciousness against ladies is a worldwide peculiarity relying upon the degree of improvement or fair and square of luxuriousness of the general public, however changes as far as seriousness and indication among the different brutality against ladies, corrosive tossing is a net infringement of the common liberty of ladies. With the acknowledgment of ladies' neglected commitment to the economy and the need to consolidate ladies' viewpoints being developed arranging ladies' issues were step by step put in the front of dynamic strategies. Alongside the progressions in the idea of ladies' status word wide, the general public of Bangladesh began to feel the effect of progress. A few regulations have been ordered with mean to work on ladies' parcel, yet rarely have the changes in these regulations assisted with serving ladies' objective.

i. The government ought to go to up lengths to select two separate head people, one to direct the rule of peace and law circumstance and one more to regulate the issue of corrosive viciousness. The people picked, reefs have no political alliance. Their obligations ought to remember assortment data for existing rule of peace and law circumstance and occurrences of corrosive brutality on month to month premise; distinguishing the general example and patterns of episodes; recognizing the wellsprings of acquisition of unlawful corrosive in the nation and recommending separate measures to battle every one of the issues.

ii. The Government ought to set up a co-appointment board of trustees, including individual from's the common society, basic freedoms activists, legitimate activists and others, to help the workplace of the relegated people to regulate by and large exercises and screen what is happening.

iii. The government ought to likewise go to lengths to decentralize organization and guarantee the autonomy of legal executive, to lay out open responsibility of all parts of regulation authorizing organizations.

iv. Women's issues, especially orientation based brutality ought to be consolidated in the secondary school level of review to eliminate orientation predispositions structure a youthful age. The instruction Board ought to kill job generalizations structure course readings and change the conventional good examples.

v. The survivors of orientation based brutality ought to be given quick clinical offices a treated by female clinical staffs.

vi. This survey article is expected to zero in on the current circumstance of this uncouth demonstration of retaliation against ladies and youthful young adult young ladies concerning recurrence, causes, long haul outcomes and making public mindfulness on the issue by firmly managing the deal and transport of corrosive as well as ordering more brutal punishments for culprits.

10. Conclusion
To capture this rising pattern of viciousness against ladies, appropriate intercession methodologies should be attempted. Existing regulations in regards to security of ladies' freedoms ought to be authorized actually. Regulation upholding organizations need to deal with the circumstance with earnestness, genuineness and with solid responsibility without a second thought and predisposition. Mindfulness and limit working among the ladies are likewise significant. Under the current social qualities and standards, guys' mentality and conduct towards females should be changed too. In such manner important organizations of the Government, NGOs, specialists, legal counselors, activists and media need to approach and cooperate for support and mission against savagery on ladies in Bangladesh.

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