

Monzila Khatun Sathi was attacked by acid allegedly by her husband, Liton

Fact Finding Report

Odhikar

On the evening of 9 July 2011, at around 7.30pm Liton, the son of Kader Ali and Khadeja Begum of Chadkathi village of police line area of Satkhira threw acid on and burnt the face, neck and breast of his wife Moshammot Monzila Khatun Shathi (20), the daughter of Yunus Ali and Moshammot Rokeya Khatun of Itgacha. Hearing Monzila Khatun scream, local people rushed to the spot and rescued her and poured water on her injury and got her immediately admitted to the Satkhira Sodor Hospital. In hospital, Monzila was given emergency treatment for 5 days. Treatment for acid victims is not advanced in Satkhira which is why she was transferred to the Acid Survivors Foundation in Dhaka. After getting treatment for 12 days, she is staying in her father's residence at Itagacha. Monzila's mother as a complainant filed a case against Md. Liton in Satkhira Police Station. Case is numbered-42, dated: 10/07/2011 under section 5(Kha) of the Acid Control Act 2002. The case is under investigation under SI, Mahbubur Rahman of Satkhira Sadar Police Station. Liton has not yet been arrested, though it is known that he is staying in his house.



Photo- Monzila Khatun Shathi

Human Rights organisation, Odhikar, conducted a fact-finding mission in to the matter. During this, they interviewed:

- Moshammot Monzila Khatun Shathi, acid victim
- Moshammot Rokeya Khatun, Monzila's mother
- Liton, accused acid thrower
- Abdul Khalek, Liton's uncle
- Sumon Kumar Das, Doctor of Satkhira Sodor hospital
- Madhob Datt, Director of NGO Shodesh
- The Officer-in-Charge of Satkhira Sodor Police Station
- SI Mahbubur Rahman, the investigating officer

Moshammot Monzila Khatun Shathi (20), acid victim

Moshammot Monzila Khatun Shathi told Odhikar that she had been in a relationship with Liton for five years. Promising to marry her, Liton took her to Bhoirob and he confined her there forcefully and raped her. With the help of Abdul Ohab, Liton's brother-in-law they brought them Satkhira to get married. After coming to Satkhira, Liton refused to marry her that is why Monzila filed a rape case against Liton. Therefore, Liton was bound to marry Monzila and got married on 17 March 2010. The marriage was registered in Registry book no-A (10), page no-64. After the marriage, Monzila was not taken to her in-laws home formally, so she continued staying at her father's home. Liton asked Monzila to withdraw the rape case and she did. After the case was withdrawn Liton started coming to Monzila's father house and beat her. After some days he stopped coming to Monzila's father's house and stopped paying maintenance. On 29 November 2010, Monzila, along with her two sisters, went to her in-laws house where Liton used to live. There Monzila's mother-in-law misbehaved with the three of them and Liton hit Monzila on the head with a large knife. Monzila filed a case against Liton, Liton's mother Moshammot Khadeja Begum and Liton's sister Rojina Khatun for assault and hurt for demanding dowry, under section 11(GA)/30 of the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Ain 2000 (the Suppression of Repression on Women and Children Act 2000), in Satkhira Court.

Being injured by the knife Monzila was admitted to the Satkhira Sadar Hospital and she came to know that Liton had married a second time on 25 November 2011. Later on, after she recovered, she called Liton's new wife and told her about Liton's violence. Liton became furious.

At around 6.50 pm on 9 July 2011, Liton called Monzila on her mobile phone and asked her to meet him near the Rosulpur Police Line of Satkhira. When Monzila approached the road before Rosulpur Police Line, Liton threw acid on the left side of her face and ran away. Hearing Monzila's screams the people around came and poured water on her burns and took her to the Sodor hospital by van. She was given treatment in the Sodor hospital for 5 days and then she was moved to the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) at Banani in Dhaka by an NGO called Shodesh for better treatment. At ASF, Monzila took treatment for 12 days and then returned home. Monzila said that the doctor at the ASF told her that she would need to take further treatment after few days. The left side of Monzila's face, neck and right side of her breast were burnt by acid.

Moshammat Rokeya Khatun (50), Monzila's mother

Rokeya Khatun told Odhikar that on 17 March 2010 Monzila got married to Liton (26), the son of Abdul Kader of Chadkathi of Tala upazila. After the marriage, Liton used to beat Monzila for dowry and other reasons. On 29 November 2010, Monzila went to Liton's home and he injured her on the head with a big knife and then threw her out of the house. Liton's parents got him married for the second time without informing Monzila. When Monzila decided to file a case against Liton, he got angry and threatened her.

At around 6:50pm on 9 July 2011, Liton called Monzila's mobile and asked her to come in front of Rosulpur Police Line at Satkhira. Liton ran away from there after throwing acid on the left side of her face. Monzila's face, neck, and breast were burnt and singed by acid.

Hearing Monzila's screams the people around came running to save her and admitted her to the Satkhira Sodor hospital.

Robiul Islam (witness of the case), Journalist, daily Jai Jai Din

Journalist Robiul Islam informed Odhikar that when the incident of acid throwing took place he was at the Satkhira Press Club. He got the information through his mobile phone and went to see Monzila at Satkhira Sodor Hospital. Monzila was badly burnt and they were pouring water on her injuries.

Liton, accused acid thrower

When the fact finders of Odhikar went to Liton's home, everyone there hid. Fact finders guessed that they had not gone far. They communicated with the help of the neighbours and then one by one Liton's elder uncle, his mother and finally Liton himself came in front of the fact-finding team. Liton admitted marrying Monzila also said he knew about the case but denied throwing acid on her. Liton said that on 9 July 2011 he was weeding and cleaning the turmeric field until noon.

Abdul Khalek, elder uncle of Liton

Liton's elder uncle told Odhikar that on 9 July 2011 Liton did not throw acid on Monzila. From the morning there was work going on at home. Liton was assisting in the work. He also said that on 24 November 2010 Liton sent a divorce letter to Monzila.

Dr. Sumon Kumar Das, Sodor hospital

Dr. Sumon Das, the doctor of Satkhira Sodor Hospital told Odhikar that on 9 July 2011 acid victim Monzila was admitted to the hospital. She was given the primary treatment and sent to the Acid Survivors Foundation at Dhaka for proper, specialised treatment.

Madhob Datt, the director of NGO Shodosh

Madhob Datt told Odhikar that he got Monzila admitted to Acid Survivors Foundation in Dhaka from Satkhira Sodor Hospital through his NGO Shodosh. He also said that the injury on Monzila's face is completely due to an acid attack.

Mohammad Shahjahan Khan, Officer-in-charge, Satkhira Sodor Police Station

OC Shahjahan Khan told Odhikar that after getting the written complaint from the plaintiff he took the case under section 5(KHA) of the Acid Crime Control Act 2002 for the crime of injuring someone by throwing acid. At first, the case was given to SI Borhan to investigate. Later on, it was given to SI Mahbubur Rahman. The case is under investigation.

SI Mahbubur Rahman, the Investigating Officer, Satkhira Sodor Police Station

SI Mahbubur Rahman of Satkhira Sodor Police Station told Odhikar that on 10 July 2011 Monzila's mother as a plaintiff filed a case in Satkhira Sodor Hospital on the fact that on the road in front of the Rosulpur Police line of Satkhira municipality, Monzila's husband Liton threw acid on her. The case no is 42 under section 5(KHA) of the Acid Crime Control Act 2002. To catch Liton, the only accused of this case, police searched his home but Liton was absconding. Within two months, the investigation report will be sent to the Court. On 31 July 2011, Satkhira Sodor hospital was asked to send the report regarding Monzila's treatment. As well as this clothes that Monzila was wearing at the time of the incident have been sent to Mohakhali for chemical testing. SI Mahbubur Rahman also said that after getting the report, the charge sheet will be sent to the Court on the completion of investigation.

On 7 August 2011, during the interview with SI Mahbubur Rahman, the fact finding team of Odhikar informed him that Liton was not absconding and he was in his home; and that the team had talked to Liton.

Later on when Odhikar's representative inquired about the case, the investigating officer SI Mahbubur Rahman said that Liton's home is in Chadkathi which is under the Tala Police Station and that he had sent a requisition letter to the OC of Tala Police Station on 6 September 2011.

Odhikar's statement

It is apparent that on 24 November 2010 Liton sent a divorce letter to Monzila and on 25 November 2010 Liton got married for the second time before the divorce was finalised.

Police informed Odhikar that Liton was absconding, but the fact-finding team of Odhikar talked to Liton at his home on 6 August 2011. During fact-finding Liton said that on the day of the incident, he was cleaning his turmeric field until noon but his uncle informed Odhikar that Liton was helping in some work at home. There are huge contradictions in their statements.

Odhikar demands the accused Liton be arrested as soon as possible and tried under the prevalent criminal laws; and that the government ensure enough security for Monzila.