

**Scars and Stories: A Literary Exploration of Laxmi Agarwal's Quest for Identity and Justice**

**Aimen Batool**  
Lecturer MNSUAM

**Mamoona Asif**  
Lecturer NUML

**Nimra Ijaz Cheema**  
MS Scholar, University of Sialkot  
**Corresponding Author:** \*Aimen Batool [aimen.batool@mnsuam.edu.pk](mailto:aimen.batool@mnsuam.edu.pk)

**Received:** 02-11-2025

**Revised:** 27-11-2025

**Accepted:** 08-12-2025

**Published:** 18-12-2025

## **ABSTRACT**

*This research delves into the multifaceted struggles experienced by Laxmi Agarwal and critically examines how she transformed her suffering into strength and advocacy. A survivor who shattered the silence and pioneered a path for others to reclaim their voices. The paper reveals how in fact the art of storytelling (literature in general) has helped Laxmi to fight triumphantly against the psychological injuries of her trauma and the societal stigmas that were inflicted on her because of her trauma. The journal effectively demonstrates the aforesaid by evaluating a brief in depth narrative on her life along with four interviews that were offered by her to various newspapers. The research highlights that the problems that she faced as an acid victim affected not only her personal self but all her relations and all aspects of her life. In aim of doing this research the paper takes its methodological framework from Arthur W. Frank's "The Wounded storyteller" (Frank, 2013), "Trauma Within the Limits of Literature" by Geoffrey Hartman (Hartman, 2000), Jill Bennett's "Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art" (Bennett, 2005) and Naomi Wolf's "The Beauty Myth" (Wolf, 2002). The paper brings into focus the various phases of her trauma and her struggle against it, her initial position as a passive victim of male violence when her whole being is inflicted with the wound of acid attack by a chauvinist patriarchal male whose proposal she denied, how that wound distorted her face as well as crushed her dreams, how the society shunned and stigmatized her for her wound, and what economic troubles she had to face because of her wound and finally how she struggled with her trauma by making her wound a means of telling her story an act that liberated her from her physical and psychological trauma.*

**Keywords:** acid victim, physical and psychological trauma, social and economic traumas, struggle on multiple battlefields, transformation from passive victim to storyteller.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of our analysis is to highlight the miserable lives of acid attack survivors. Usually in our society people avoid to highlight this topic but this issue should not be neglected. For conducting our analysis, we applied the frameworks from Arthur W. Frank's "The Wounded Storyteller", Geoffrey Hartman's "Trauma Within the Limits of Literature", Jill Bennett's "Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art" and Naomi Wolf's "The Beauty Myth".

The researcher applied Arthur Frank's "The Wounded Storyteller" to highlight her psychic wounds and trauma. She is not only physically wounded but mentally as well. Naomi Wolf's "The Beauty Myth" is

applied to highlight economic problems that Laxmi has faced after her incident. Her beautiful looks are gone completely because of acid attack and just because of this reason she got rejected wherever she goes for a job. Geoffrey Hartman's "*Trauma within the Limits of Literature*" is used to express Laxmi's wounded self through literature and art. She used literature to express her deepest pain.

Laxmi's identity was formerly recognized as nothing but an acid assault conqueror, who is now referred to as mere Laxmi. The one mother who is widely recognized as the epitome of gallantry, hopes, and had a profound and undying love for life. She serves as a spokesperson and motivational speaker for a multitude of subjugated voices. At just fifteen years old, she was attacked by an abusive pervert with acid. Thinking he had killed her dreams and aspirations of an impeccable future, Laxmi holds her narrative and future in her own charge and states, "usne acid mere chehre pa daala hai sapon par nahin". Laxmi never failed to give up dreaming. She never forfeited hope. Today, she has emerged as an emblem of fortitude and exceptional resilience worldwide. Laxmi was awarded the International Women of Courage award by US inaugural lady Michelle Obama. She also received recognition as the NDTV Indian of the year, along with many other prestigious honors. She has been invited by diverse corporations, schools, colleges, and other institutions for inspirational speeches.

### **Research Questions**

- How Laxmi is the one who suffered and is stigmatised instead of the malefactor?
- How Laxmi emancipates herself from her trauma by breaking her silence over it?
- How Laxmi is still struggling to gain economic stability and society's acceptance?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Welsh (2009) said that acid attacks are the types of extreme violence which are carried out by throwing acid on someone intending to damage the face of the person. There may be various reasons for acid attacks. Sometimes it is due to jealousy, extra-marital relationships, distorted relationships in business or to take revenge from rivals. In case of India, it is noticed that usually these are carried out against women and the main reason involves love or hate as compared to other cultures where acid attack victims may be the male members of the society. Haseena Hussain was viciously assaulted in India by her fellow worker because she had dared to reject his love advances (Ammembala, 2013). She is now blind and in spite of going through various operations she could not get her eyesight back. Also, the societies where males are dominant over females, in the name of honour of the family, such violent attacks are seen to be conducted. So, from region to region and from culture to culture, reasons of acid attack violence changes. He summarized his work in this way that people's lives have greatly been affected due to damaged face.

Ali (2008) carried out the research on the phenomena of acid attack violence. He reported that the countries where this phenomenon is more common includes the regions of South Asia like India and Pakistan. Data regarding these attacks is not properly available therefore they can be investigated. Victims of acid attacks thus continue to suffer because it has become an underestimated phenomenon. These people hardly get justice in the society. Also, the people from lower class cannot afford money to do something for themselves. NGO's working in this regard hardly finds such people and do something for them. Later on in his study, it is explained that acid is easily available in the market. People use it for different reasons to polish gold, or to clean kitchen as well as in car batteries. Thus, purchasing it has become normal. Easily availability of acid has increased its use. People throw acid on others without considering that it would greatly affect their lives. They undergo psychological and social issues and they may feel ashamed due to the scars on their body and due to the burned skin. Moreover, it makes survival of a victimized woman difficult in the society because she could not be to get job to earn money. Such women are socially treated as others or marginalized.

Halim (2007) while researching on acid attack victims talked about Nurun Nahar. Nuran Nahar is the citizen of Bangladesh who at the age of 15 was attacked by the local school boy because she rejected his love advances. Halim reveals that in spite of support given to her by government, Nurun could not get justice. These governmental institutions have thus failed in their attempt to provide her protection. But the non-governmental agencies like NGO's have tried to play their role in order to help acid attack victims. These NGOs in spite of having some financial issues tried to devise their own strategies so that the severity of the situation can be reduced.

Durani (2013) called acid attacks as "gender-based violence" in which the person is intended to damage the flesh of other person causing them to suffer mentally, emotionally and as well as socially. Usually this is carried out against the female members of society. They mostly do not die but this trauma is no less than death. Their scars on the skin constantly remind them what has happened to them and they suffer a lot emotionally. She noticed that the most basic purpose behind such incidents was to hurt or to punish the victim. In Pakistani society males are usually motivated by their ego to punish woman in the name of honour. As a member of Pakistani society where males are in power, it becomes difficult for the acid attack survivors to protect themselves in such a patriarchal and discriminatory society. Although laws have been made for such cases but still there is need to work hard to give acid attack survivors justice. They are generally been expected to remain silent. Even their cases are not properly registered by the legal government institutions. Moreover, proper data must be gathered and policies according to such incidents should be made. Acid attack victims may commit suicide. It is necessary to make sure that they are given social and financial support.

### **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The topic of this research is vast as it concerns human experiences of an acid victim at the psychological, physical, social and economic levels therefore various methodological frameworks are employed to analyse her struggle at various battlefields of her life. Acid attacks are severely inhumane crimes because the malefactors plan the disfigurement of the victims rather than their death. The victim is deprived of free will, their individual choice and independence in such events and thus, their life is ruined. On one hand the physical injuries may heal after countless, laborious operations, but the mental injuries and trauma remains for life. Therefore, the first framework that this paper adopts for analysing the trauma and struggle of Laxmi against that trauma is *Arthur W. Frank's "The Wounded storyteller"* (2013). The framework is used to depict how Laxmi transformed her wound i.e., her acid attack from the reason of her trauma and social stigmatization to a means of telling her story to the world. Frank's (2013) conception of a wounded storyteller rejects the narrative of victimisation that is imposed on the traumatized individual who becomes the object of pity. He does this by recasting the wounded person as being in charge of the narratives of their wounds. It enables them to come to terms with their traumatic event, and it helps them to reflect on the ways in which the wound or trauma has shaped them as persons. Frank creates an analogy between the wound and the self and social perception of the wounded i.e., the wound or trauma not only changes the physical stature of the victim but it also changes the way in which the victim perceives the world, moreover, trauma also changes the ways which the victims employ to achieve their goals. As stated in accordance to "*The Wounded storyteller*":

"Fatal illness (wound/trauma) is an erasure of the "destination and map" that had previously steered the ill (wounded) individual's life: ill (wounded) people have to learn "to think exceptionally." They acquire perspectives by hearing themselves tell their stories, absorbing others' reactions, and experiencing their stories being shared." (Frank, 2013, p.1)

According to Frank the wound gives the traumatized the power to tell the stories of their wounds and to heal themselves and others through this act of story-telling, in fact Frank relates this whole concept as an

ancient practice that was present even in Greek mythology. As Frank in “*The Wounded storyteller*” (2013) states that,

“The portrayal of the wounded storyteller is legendary: Tiresias, the skeptic who reveals to Oedipus the reality of whose son he is, has been blindfolded by the gods. The wound he has sustained has given him his narrative power.... The ill (wounded) person who turns trauma into story transforms inevitability into experience; the wound/trauma that sets the body apart from others becomes, in the story, the unifying bond of misery that ties together bodies in their shared vulnerability.” (Frank, 2013, preface, para1-2)

To highlight the callousness with which the society deals with the victims of acid attack the paper uses Hartman’s “*Trauma within the Limits of Literature*” (2003) as its framework. The author points out that though the victims are portrayed in media quite excessively but rather than helping the victims it creates a general mutism and lack of empathy in the public. As Hartman mentions in his book “*Trauma within the Limits of Literature*” (2003) that,

“The prevalence that stimulus-flooding incidents are now routine in the media, fosters to a vicious cycle of escalation and desensitization..... The one Luc Boltanski has proposed as ‘distance suffering’ (*souffrance à distance*).” (Hartman, 2003, p. 258)

Hartman points that literature is the medium through which trauma can be put into words in such a way that will in turn create a compassionate response towards victims from the society, Hartman refers to this as Literary Verbalisation and expresses that,

“The use of literary verbalization...remains as a foundation for rendering the wound palpable and the silence perceived.” (Hartman, 2003, p.259)

Hartman's work on the role of literature is broadened to the artistic disciplines by Bennett (2005) in “*Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary*.” Accordingly, documentary and biopics are thus part of literature and art that makes the society more considerate towards the victims. Last but not the least, the paper tries to reveal the financial instability of the acid victims from which they suffer not because they are incapable of maintaining themselves economically but because they are shunned by the society due to their physical appearance by making use of Naomi Wolf's “*The Beauty Myth*” (2002). Naomi points out that women are employed by powerful institutions not on the basis of their intellectual calibre but on the basis of their appearance as she expresses in “*The Beauty Myth*” (2002) that, “A woman must look like a million dollars, she should be a first-class beauty, her face is her fortune.” (p. 20)

She raises the point that the patriarchal society though claims that it has given economic independence to women, but in fact, the beauty was primarily exploited by the power structures to undermine women's progression. Wolf (2002) stresses her point by giving the following example in “*The Beauty Myth*” in which she explains that as,

“A transformer transforms an inefficient current from a power source into a usable one for the equipment. The beauty myth glimpses at the accomplishments of women's contributions through an outlook that aligns with existing power structures. (p.21)”

The research points that therefore the malefactors who inflict acid attack on female victims deliberately do such heinous crimes because the surviving victims are subjected to perpetual social stigmatization and economic instability and the paper highlights the ways in which Laxmi is fighting against these economic and social restrictions.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Analysis of documentary**

If we had just heard the news that an acid attack survivor Laxmi is struggling to get control of her life, we would have remained insensitive towards her plight because of the effect of “distance suffering” as described by Hartman (2003) in “*Trauma within the Limits of Literature*”. Literature or art are the ways in which trauma is depicted in such a way that it becomes believable and emotionally accessible by the masses as writer in “*Trauma within the Limits of Literature*” (2003) states;

The correlation within words and wounds has been investigated in a narrative endeavour trauma study....Despite this, anguish originates from the overwhelming deficiency of what is heard or read, when the words observed for cannot address or rectify other shocks, featuring horrific visual images. Literature both recognizes and amends that inadequacy. (p. 259)

Therefore, the analysis of the documentary enables an in-depth probe into the innermost recesses of her life, depicting in an aesthetic and effective manner the ways in which trauma affected her at the physical, psychological and social levels. In the opening scene of the documentary we are told that there are thousands of acid attack victims every year, such a huge number of acid attack victims reveal the bitter truth of the male's envious nature that reigns free in a patriarchal society because an acid attack is not meant to kill rather it is performed with the sole purpose of distorting the face as well as the will of the victim which she has asserted in some way in front of her perpetrator. Laxmi is introduced in the documentary as a “survivor” and this word highlights the fact that this is the story of Laxmi and her “will” that has survived in the face of extreme trauma that was inflicted on her by the attacker and the society. As Laxmi begins narrating her story an image appears in which a female is writing the word “History” on the whiteboard, the appearance of this word is highly significant because it pinpoints the fact that this is the story of Laxmi's life and her dreams and her free will but the path which her life takes is not chosen by her actions rather its opted for her by a chauvinist male member of the patriarchal society, so the word “History” signifies that its ‘He’ who plays the role of an active agent in setting the course of her life story rather than she herself.

Laxmi has dreams of becoming a famous singer and getting wealth and fame, she aspires to earn a name for herself with her own efforts. At the age of 15 she is shown to be stalked by her best friend's brother who is 32 years old. In the beginning she silently bears him because she is afraid that if she told her parents they will not allow her to go outside and study anymore. Laxmi's fear reflects a patriarchal system that unjustly privileges men and routinely holds women responsible. However, one day he confronts her boldly and she out rightly rejects him and this act of rejection on her part hurt his ego and became the sin for which she was punished with an acid attack on her face. The fact that he threw acid on her face at a busy public place brings forth the point that he had no fear of punishment from the patriarchal society or the patriarchal judicial system. After being attacked Laxmi cried for help in vain as she states in the documentary that she persistently kept pleading for help, but no individual stepped forth and everybody dashed in the opposite direction. This cold-hearted attitude towards Laxmi's pain reveals the extent to which the society is indifferent towards a female's suffering. Laxmi spent ten weeks in hospital and the doctors had to strip off the skin of her face, her wholesome was shattered by the trauma of this vicious assault. When she first had her glance in the mirror after the attack, she was shocked and went into depression, in fact that tarnished image of herself intensified her trauma. She was not able to see herself and she couldn't muster up the courage to show her face to others. Her trauma has left deep scars and burns not only on her face but also on her psyche. She has lost her courage, her confidence, her will to strive due to her trauma. This was a time in Laxmi's life when she needed the support of her family and

friends the most, but it was only her parents who accepted her as she was and supported her, whereas the society shunned her and avoided her as if she was responsible for what had happened to her. This alienation and stigmatization, traumatized her even more than the attack itself, as Laxmi quotes in the documentary that, “*But what hurts the most is the society’s reaction, no one was by my side except for my parents*” (Agarwal, 2019). This biased behaviour on part of society was typical of its patriarchal inclinations but at that time Laxmi was unable to grab that fact instead she became extremely tormented by this rejection of society. She went into extreme depression and shut herself indoors for eight years. The trauma of acid attack changed her whole perspective, analysing this phase of Laxmi’s life through the lens of Frank’s “*The Wounded Storyteller*” we can say that it was this trauma that made her realise that her wound has changed her completely and that she has to acquire an entirely new outlook of the world outside, gradually she realised that just alienating herself from world will be of no benefit to her, it cannot bring any solace to her inner turmoil, it can neither give her justice nor save others from becoming victims of a same fate, as Laxmi at this point quotes that, “ My main attacker was out on bail within a month and got married and lived a normal life, and I lived indoors for almost 8 years and couldn’t hope to have a lover or a husband” (Agarwal, 2019). As the narrator in “*The Wounded Storyteller*” describes that whole viewpoint and the destination that one has set for oneself undergoes a shift when one faces trauma, Frank expressed this as,

Serious illness (trauma) is a loss of the " destination and map" that had previously guided the .... (Traumatic) person's life: .... (wounded) people have to learn "to think differently." They learn by hearing themselves tell their stories, absorbing others' reactions, and experiencing their stories being shared. (Frank, 2013, p. 1)

Similarly, Laxmi turned the trauma faced by her into a narrative through words (literature and art) and broke her silence and in that process, she became the voice of several other victims. She quotes in the documentary that, “*Speak up for justice, for freedom, for your mind, for truth, and make our world a better place and save yourself*”

The analysis of the documentary reveals the extent of rejection that Laxmi had to bear at the hands of society, when she finally mustered up the courage to go out and look for some job, all that she received was total denial, her face was not acceptable for the society. Analysing this fact from the point of view of Wolf’s work in “*The Beauty Myth*”, the biased workings of the patriarchal society become evident. As Wolf mentions that the claims of economic freedom and equal opportunities for women are merely hollow slogans because in reality a woman is still being judged by her face value and her physical appearance instead of her intellectual calibre and her hard work and Wolf explains that it is far more difficult to fight against this beauty myth because it resides in the collective conscious of the patriarchal society, she cites Virginia’s quote in her book “*The Beauty Myth*” that reflects the same concept as,

“It is considerably more challenging to murder a phantom than an actuality—Virginia Wolf’. (Wolf, 2002, epigraph)

Similarly, in order to attain economic stability in this patriarchal society Laxmi is courageously fighting this beauty myth as she was rejected by a number of institutions solely on the base of her appearance as if she is responsible for what has happened to her. Sometimes the interviewers were cruel enough to mention that they cannot give her job because people will be afraid of her face. In an interview to Nikita Thakker Laxmi expresses the same views as Wolf (2002) expressed in her book that,

“I reached out at a call centre and stipulated them that the customers wouldn’t see my face, but they specified that ‘In order to secure a job, I need to have a face to begin with.’” (Ammembala, 2013)

Imagine the extent to which such remarks would have tortured her but she did not creep back into oblivion, rather once she broke her silence then she kept on fighting her inner trauma as well as the outer effects of that trauma.

In the book, "*The Wounded Storyteller*" Frank explains that when a wounded person becomes a narrator, then the narration can be of three distinct categories, namely the Chaos narrative, the Restitution narrative and the Quest narrative. Frank (2013) expresses that,

Restitution stories intend to outdistance fatalities by proclaiming illness (wound/trauma) transitory. Chaos narratives are sucked into the shadowy realm of illness (trauma/wound) and the disasters that attend it. Quest stories meet suffering head on; they accept illness and seek to *use* it..... In the restitution narrative the active player lies outside the body of the wounded.... Restitution stories are self-stories only by default. Chaos stories remain the sufferer's own story, but the voice of the teller gets lost as a result of the chaos, and this loss then perpetuates that chaos. Though in both restitution and chaos, the wounded remain as background voices whereas in the quest the voice of speaker comes in the foreground. (p. 115)

At this stage analysing the documentary of Laxmi from the lens of Frank's "*The Wounded Storyteller*" it becomes evident that at this phase in her traumatic life she adopted the role of a Quest narrator, and in that role she found a new destination, a new guiding star for her journey of life, a new purpose of her life all of which are provided by means of her trauma as Frank in "*The Wounded Storyteller*" reveals that,

"Quest stories articulate yearning..... Of a fresh perspective of a purpose, the impression that illness (trauma/wound) has been a expedition emerges (in the assaulted)." (Frank, 2013, p. 117)

Laxmi in this phase gave words to her trauma and raised rhetorical questions on social media and on NGO's websites regarding the acceptance of acid victims in the society in various arenas of life as Laxmi quotes in the documentary that,

"Is it our fault? Society acknowledges those who are visually impaired or physically challenged, then why not us? If you ask me, we are worse than the rape perpetrators, we seem to have lost our identities...why nothing is done yet?" (Agarwal, personal communication, 2019)

Laxmi's transformation into a quest narrator from a passive victim of trauma gave her the strength to move on and she started socializing with other female acid attack victims. She started an online petition and 27000 people signed it and this immense social support gave her the courage to file that petition in the court as well. Laxmi expresses in the documentary that, "After the hearing in the court my attacker was sentenced for 7 years, soon he would be free." Being a Quest narrator Laxmi doesn't see this step as an active remedy of her trauma and the trauma of others like her. Rather she takes a step farther in the direction of a new destination, a new goal, a goal to stop the revenue of acid, a goal to offer assistance to the acid victims in such a way that they become active participants in the society, a goal to stabilize them financially. Frank in *The Wounded Storyteller* (2013) expresses that such horrifying stories of violence and abuse are also essential for listeners, because illness does not only affect just one person, it affects the general population as well (what Frank calls 'other-relatedness'). Similarly, Laxmi invokes her listeners both victims and the others as she quotes in the documentary that,

"I hope you perpetually possesses it, I do hope you understand, don't attempt to shake off my confidence, I have recently discovered to move on.....though the law has been passed, we still get acid bottles easily in stores why is it so, are you waiting for your turn. My legal fight will continue. Speak up, be heard. If you don't say a word, everything will remain the same! There comes a time when silence is betrayal.... Break the silence."

### **Analysis of Laxmi's interview to Times of India newspaper**

Analysing this interview of Laxmi the first thing to be noticed is that here she has fully embodied her role as a quest narrator therefore her words are confidant and vibrant, she no longer laments over her fate rather she confidently talks about the changes that have come in the lives of other victims as well as the changes that have come in the attitudes of general public towards the victims due to her courageous act of stepping forward and turning her trauma into a story that needs to be told, as Frank reveals in "*The Wounded Storyteller*" that,

"The tale was illustrated through a traumatized body of a victim. The stories that ... (wounded) people disclose emanate out of their bodies. The bodies ..... Recovered, are simultaneously cause, topic, and instrument of .... guidance." (Frank, 2013, p. 2)

In her interview she talks about this change in detail that now the social stigma that was attached with the acid attack victims is gradually diminishing and even those victims who were silent before about their attacks are regaining their voices and coming out in the open about the causes of their scars and burns, this is the effect of "literary verbalisation" as expressed in Hartman's "Trauma Within the Limits of Literature." Victims are no more ashamed of showing their scars and telling the real reason behind them, they are transforming their traumatised selves from passive wounded victims to quest narrators. As Laxmi tells in the interview that,

"Girls used to hide the reason behind their scars..... but they are now going to events and interacting with people. When they are asked about their scars, they say, 'Hum par acid attack hua hai'. They are not ashamed anymore. Girls have started giving it back to their naysayers" (Purkayastha, 2018).

The part of her interview where she tells about taking part in fashion shows can be analysed in two ways, firstly analysing it at the level of action i.e. her walk on the ramp through the lens of Bennett's "Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art (2005)". The work of literature aims to focus on what makes visual expressions distinctive, contending that the "affective" feature of art empowers a new understanding of the experience of catastrophic incidents and loss. By enlarging the notion of humanity, it also demonstrates how we might employ art, make connections with people all around the world whose perspectives differ from those we have. This analysis reveals that her act of taking part in a fashion show which is a kind of visual art, not only shows her courage in revealing her face but that this act of hers shattered the chains of oblivion for other such victims and at the same time made the society more sensitive towards their ordeal. As Laxmi expresses in the interview that,

"When I went for the show, my friend, who is also an acid attack survivor, got high fever, thinking how I am going to face the world! But that show also boosted her confidence and she thought, 'If Laxmi can do it, so can I'. Through such shows, we reach out to survivors who are too scared to talk about their plight and come out of the confined walls of their homes. Though I've never liked fashion shows, I've realised that if this gives survivors the strength to face their fears, then it's a blessing" (Purkayastha, 2018).

Secondly, her narrative in the interview, particularly her reflections on the transformative experience of becoming a showstopper, may be critically analysed as a form of embodied speech through the theoretical perspective of Arthur Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller*. This analysis shows that Laxmi basically describes her experience in print media so that she can reach even those victims who don't have access to electronic media, therefore she uses the power of words to reach those victims, she narrates her experience so that it influences the lives of the listeners as well. Frank mentions that,

“People tell stories not just to figure out their own evolving identities, beside to direct others who will follow them. They intend not only to provide a map that can navigate others – each must create his own – but rather strive to witness the tedious task of reconstructing one’s own outline. However, witnessing is a duty to the prudent mind and to others” (Frank, 2013, p. 17).

As of June 2014, Laxmi hosts a television show, Udaan, on New Express.

## **CONCLUSION**

The real story of an acid victim, Laxmi, has been analysed through her documentary and her interviews in which she has shared the sufferings and difficulties faced by her in the society. The theoretical lens applied to give voice to her silence is Frank’s “*The Wounded Storyteller*”, Hartman’s “*Trauma Within the Limits of Literature*”, Naomi Wolf’s “*The Beauty Myth*” and Jill Bennett’s “*Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art.*” Through these frameworks it is revealed that is trying to overcome the trauma of her acid attack in different aspects of her life. This paper focuses over the ways in which she makes her wounds her means to reach out to people and the complexities of Laxmi’s struggles are highlighted which she is trying to overcome to make her dreams come true which were shattered by the patriarchal society. Her attacker got released easily after ruining her life and her fate. This paper pin points the economic instability of Laxmi on which the government should take some measures to support her and other acid victims in the society whose voice cannot reach the government as Laxmi is regarded as a spokesperson for women being exploited in the patriarchal society. The government must provide Laxmi and other victims like her with economic means to earn and get stability in their lives both socially as well as financially. Moreover, the future researchers might focus on the steps which government can take in order to help Laxmi and other victims like her in the society.

## **REFERENCES**

Ammembala, N. (2013, July 30). *I was seen only as a commodity: Acid attack survivor Haseena Hussain.* Hindustan Times. Retrieved from [https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/i-was-seen-only-as-a-commodity-acid-attack-survivor-haseena-hussain/story\\_OSJNGmLPWbzDZqQIKOcOGP.html](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/i-was-seen-only-as-a-commodity-acid-attack-survivor-haseena-hussain/story_OSJNGmLPWbzDZqQIKOcOGP.html)

Ali, S. M. (2008). Causes and consequences of acid attacks on women: A case study of district Lahore, Pakistan. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(2), 123–130

Bennett, J. (2005). *Empathic vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. Stanford University Press.

Durani, S. (2013). *Acid attacks in Pakistan: A gender-based violence perspective*. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 22(3), 45–59.

Frank, A. W. (2013). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Halim, E. (2007). *Feminist negotiations: Contesting narratives of the campaign against acid violence in Bangladesh*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Clark University.

Hartman, G. H. (2000). *Trauma within the limits of literature*. In C. Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (pp. 257–272). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Purkayastha, P. D. (2018, May 12). *Laxmi Agarwal: Acid attack survivors, who had closed their cases, are now reopening the files*. Times of India. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/spotlight/laxmi-agarwal-acid-attack-survivors-who-had-closed-their-cases-are-now-reopening-the-files/articleshow/64125673.cms>

Welsh, J. (2009). *It was like burning in hell: a comparative exploration of acid attack violence.* <https://doi.org/10.17615/2fdx-dt47>

Wolf, N. (2002). *The beauty myth: how images of beauty are used against women.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers.