WALKING THE TALK: LET'S HELP HASEENA

MONTH 4
MANY THANKS TO ALL THE READERS WHO SENT IN THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE FUND

The story of the acid attack on Haseena Hussain, published in *Marie Claire India* December 2006, was a wake-up call for us. Overwhelming feedback flooded our office. We decided to walk our talk and open a relief fund for the 12 surgeries she still needs to be able to live independently. "I want to stand on my own feet; I want to work; I want to live," says Haseena. She is disfigured, visionless, unemployed and has no life outside her house. She lives with hope. We can give her a life. Let's help her.

The anguish in Haseena Hussain's voice is almost too painful to bear. "I thought it was over, but the fear and the waiting has started again." Last year, when the Karnataka High Court sentenced her attacker, Joseph Rodriguez, to life imprisonment, Haseena and her parents thought justice - of some sort - had been served. Cruelly enough, the legal system that took seven years to punish Rodriguez has let him file an appeal - this time in the Supreme Court.

Haseena was 20 when Rodriguez, her former employer, drenched her in sulphuric acid for rejecting his advances. Today, she has lost her sight and has undergone 27 plastic surgeries. More remain, but there is no money left. She cannot move out of her home in Bangalore due to her disfigurement. The High Court had directed Rodriguez to pay her Rs 5 lac; he paid only Rs 3 lac - which the court put in a fixed deposit for her. He will probably not pay the rest.

When *Marie Claire* carried Haseena's story last December, the response was overwhelming. Readers from across India expressed their concern, even sent money for her surgeries. To channelise these resources, *Marie Claire* and *Outlook* have set up a fund - 'Outlook Relief Fund A/C Haseena Hussain'. To kick-start this effort, every *Marie Claire* staffer will donate a day's salary. We will run the fund for six months; the money collected will be given to Haseena to enable further surgeries. Donations above Rs 2,000 will receive a special mention in *Marie Claire*.

Remarkably, Haseena has not lost hope; she wants to work. Her case will take long to be settled but she is steadfast. "The truth *will* win," she says. "That is all I can dare to believe."

SEND YOUR CHEQUES IN THE NAME OF 'OUTLOOK RELIEF FUND A/C HASEENA HUSSAIN'

JOIN IN OUR EFFORTS: Mail your cheques or drafts to Marie Claire, Outlook Group, 8th Floor, Nafed House, Ashram Chowk, New Delhi 110014. Donations m to Outlook Relief Fund are received u/s 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and eligible for deduction vide notification No. DIT (E)2004-2005/0-93/99/1785 dated 23.09.2004 valid from 01.04.2004 to 31.3.2007 (renewal applied for and pending). For queries or to offer Haseena a job, mail *marieclaire@outlookindia.com* or call (011) 43538200

HELPLINES FOR ACID ATTACK VICTIMS: Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI), AHMEDABAD: 079 27475815 ■ CJI, ALLAHABAD: 0532 2623893 ■ Campaign and Struggle against Acid Attack on Women, BANGALORE: 094484- 44252 ■ Samvaad, Chandigarh: 0172-543689 ■ CJI, CHENNAI: 044-42165131 / 42165121 ■ CJI, HYDERABAD: 040-27661883 ■ Pratyasha, KOCHI: 0484-2239 0680 ■ Aastha, KOLKATA: 033-24970155 ■ CJI of HRLN, MUMBAI: 022-23439651 / 23436692 ■ Maadhyam, NEW DELHI: 011-24324503 ■ CJI, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: 0471-22460652