

A STUDY ON EVE TEASING IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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What is Eve Teasing

Though eve teasing is not defined in any act by a thorough definition, it is well known as “making of unwanted sexual remarks or advances by a man to a woman in a public place”.

Cambridge dictionary defined eve teasing as” the act of annoying a woman or women in a public place, for example, by making sexual comments”.

According to the Author: Eve teasing is nothing but harassment upon any girl child or women or woman in a harassing manner which either that woman or society feels it as harassment.

Eve teasing according to Indian Laws:

No Act or Rule in India defined the word Eve-Teasing. Still, many judgements were derived out of this concept. Many Acts relates Eve-Teasing concept indirectly like,

Section **294** of Indian Penal code says that, whoever, to the annoyance of others—

- (a) does any obscene act in any public place, or
- (b) sings, recites or utters any obscene song, ballad or words, in or near any public place,

shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine, or both.

Section **354** of Indian Penal Code says that, Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty, [shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.]

State of Andhra Pradesh amended the said Section as “which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine”:

Provided that the court may for adequate reasons to be mentioned in the judgement, impose a sentence of imprisonment of either description for a term which may be less than five years but which shall not be less than two years.

Section **509** of Indian Penal Code says that, Whoever, intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, [shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and also with fine.]

All these provisions deal with the concept of Eve-Teasing indirectly and one can relate these to the concept. Not only in the Indian Penal Code, but also there are many acts which protect women or girls from Eve-Teasing. Some of them are Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Eve-Teasing concept can be related as a Tort also. By way of it, a woman may go into emotional distress and whereby it can be called as Assault in which there are several tortious liabilities.

Types of Eve-Teasing

There are many types of Eve-Teasing by which a woman may go through. They are:

- i. Stalking
- ii. Abusing
- iii. Bad touch
- iv. Harassment
- v. Vulgar gestures
- vi. Groping
- vii. Sexual remarks

(Note: above mentioned types are regarded as per the cases registered in Police Stations)

Eve-Teasing in Andhra Pradesh

Cases regarding Eve-Teasing in South India are far different from cases in North India. Most of the cases in Andhra Pradesh revolves around Much of Stalking and less of Abusing. And also, the author has collected around 5000 cases on Eve-Teasing in Andhra Pradesh. From them, some of the points and insights are stated below,

- Nearly, 65% of the Eve-Teasers are Students. In those students, 40 percent are studying Intermediate (class xi and xii) (i.e., age group of 15-17) and 30 percent students are studying B. Tech and some technical courses, and 20 percent are studying degree and the rest 10 percent are in some professional courses like CA, CMA and Graphic designing.
 - As per the collected data, there is every kind of student from 9th class to MBA whether it may be the victim or the wrongdoer.
 - Another fact is no student have undergone Eve-Teasing inside their respective campuses.
 - No one have the consent of parents for that act.
 - And also, no one knows that it is a mistake to take minor girls with them without their parents' consent.
 - A common thing which has been observed is that no one were able to accept the same thing if happened to their cousins or siblings.
 - Most of the students were claiming that they were not aware of their mistake until they got caught.
 - More than 80 percent of the students, who were got caught, were under Below-Poverty line (their parents).
 - More than 60 percent of the students were not having their mother or father (single parented) or both of them.
 - Many of the students those are at least 80% were caught while riding bikes or sitting on bikes on the roads with girls.
 - Around 80 percent of the students were caught because they were roaming with minor girls upon their own consent
 - All of them had mentioned that, they were in love with each other
 - Another gathering is that, less than 10 percent of the students told that they are having some political influence
 - And coming to the 20 percent of the students, who were caught while riding bikes in some overcrowded places and near some girls' colleges,
 - 60 percent of the students are not having any driving licenses

- More than 95 percent of the students who were riding bikes at that places are not having helmets.
 - Most of them had lied that they came to that area because they are having some friends around there, but after investigation those statements were turned into lies.
 - These 20 percent students were mostly regarded as stalkers and a tiny part of them only were caught while using some abusive signals or while groping.
 - Another fact is that, more than 90 percent of the students have bunked their classes to do these kinds of activities.
- Nearly 33 percent of the Eve-Teasers caught are in small occupations and in some kinds of daily labour and some small businesses.
 - These kinds of persons are under age-groups 18- 25
 - People under this category are daily labourers to contractors, drivers to Car Owners, painters to pharmacists.
 - Nearly 30 percent of them were not having either mothers or fathers or both (single parented)
 - All these people were caught while they were with minor girls or while misbehaving with them.
 - In this scenario also, there is consent given by minor girl but not by their parents.
- Nearly 2 percent of the Eve-Teasers caught were Un-employed.

Parental status: It is clearly understandable from the data that, parenting plays a vital role but, 65 percentage of the youth are living with a single parent i.e., almost with mother. In such cases the father is either died, separated, irresponsible, or divorced. In less than 40 percent of youth, although having mother and father but do not get a proper guidance and timely mentoring of what is required for development of behaviours, attitudes and actions.

(all this information has been collected while counselling the Eve-Teasers)

Reasons for the acts:

Parenting: Family (parenting) is considered as one of the main important institution that a person should have. As we have observed that many of the detained ones are lacking either mother or father or both, we can say that, proper organisation of family is an essential feature for the wellness of a society. If there is no organisation in between the family members, there will be an outrageous idea in youth and they will be very badly motivated. Here, the main problem is, parents are getting all the requirements for their children, but they are not teaching how to use them and also, in what manner to compile with them.

Financial stability: As we can notice that most of the people who were caught in Eve-Teasing were not financially good. Most of the people were below poverty line or lower middle-class families. From this, we can say that, financial stability is also a factor which is playing a major role in proper mindset.

Proper education: As in many of the cases students were involved mostly, one can observe that, Education is an important aspect that determines the attitude of a person.

Age factor: Age factor should be considered as one of the important aspects while determining the reasons because, 90 percent of the Eve-Teasers were in between the age of 18-25 years.

Awareness: Most of the people were not aware of the rules that they should not take minor girls outside without the consent of their parents or they should not roam on the bikes unnecessarily in the areas of girls' colleges etc.,

Steps by the police departments and NGOs for reduction of Eve-Teasing

Smt. Chennupati Vidya (Former member of Lok Sabha) has suggested to police department that, not to arrest or punish students, but to give them some rigorous counselling by which they may gain some knowledge over these issues and also, they may encourage public not to do Eve-Teasing

A new mission called Mahila Mithra has been started by Police department which was supported by Vasavya Mahila Mandali (VMM) which was organising by Dr. Keerthi, to eradicate Eve teasing and also some kinds of harassments against woman like domestic violence. Members of Mahila Mithra will be taking awareness sessions on Eve-Teasing in colleges and also in work places. They will be helping women to get rid of Eve-Teasers in many ways. The aim of Mahila Mithra is not only to punish the Eve-Teasers, but also to make them productive in different ways and also this is one of the unique features that only Andhra Pradesh state police has initiated.

After all these steps and after counselling sessions has started for the Eve-Teasers, the number of cases over the months has reduced and there is not even one percent of repetition has been registered in the police stations.

According to **Mr. V.V. Naidu** (Asst. Commissioner of Police, Vijayawada), “There is a lack of quality education with values, Proper disciplinary Education should be given to each and every student. First of all, Student should not miss the classes. Minor girls also, must be aware of the rules and act accordingly. For the prevention of eve teasing we are having a well-organised Shakthi teams, they will be reacting to problems as quickly as possible. There is a vital role of parents in making their children to possibly outcome these kinds of behaviours. We have initialised numerous numbers of programs for safeguarding the rights of women and also for the safety of girl child and created a huge impact”.

According to **Dr. Keerthi**, President VMM “Some of the youth are constantly teasing girls or women but some are incidental or accidental. So, what I feel is, punitive action can be secondary and the primary action should be counselling of the youth and make them to understand their behaviours and actions are not normal. Counselling of Youth, those who were involved in various forms of teasing is essential to give them a space for self-review and also, to understand the behaviours of other youth. Now-a-days, many of the parents are not monitoring their teenage children’s behaviour. Hence, it is the role of the community, civil society organisations to bring a reformation among the youth and use their power for creating a change. That will have a repel effect on their siblings and the peers particularly and in general among younger population. Hence, as part of Mahila Mithra, the counselling of Eve-Teasers an innovative and creative intervention was taken up by the Vijayawada city police and the success of it is more than 7000 youth were counselled for Eve-Teasing, there is no repeat offender. Hence, it clearly shows youth need guidance and mentoring which paves them be a good citizen

As we can observe that, change of mindset of youth plays a vital role in eradication of Eve-Teasing, AP police has been taking copious number of steps like giving double counselling to the confined persons and also balancing their mindsets through innovative programs. These types of measures have been started since 2018 and undergoing a great amount change in a positive and timely manner.

After the counselling sessions, the reflections of the eve-teasers are

“It is useful for me, in future, I will not do any misbehave and all with anyone”

“It is very useful and Unconditional”

“It helped me to become a god person”

“I should obey the rules and regulations of the society and follow the good manners”

Still there are some little amount of Eve-Teasing complaints, which were primarily of consent given by girls. For these some special care should be taken.

Conclusion:

As Eve-Teasing is the growing phenomena that the society is facing it as a social devil, it should be eradicated and eliminated from the roots as fast as possible with the help of some innovative ideas.

(This article is developed as part of the internship at Vasavya Mahila Mandali in December 2019by Phanindranath Chowdary)