

Living in the Shadows of Eve-Teasing: A Case Study with Special Reference to District Una, Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The present study is on the problem of 'Eve-teasing' which is being faced by Indian women at every step of their life was conducted in Una district in Himachal Pradesh. The objectives of the study were to assess the extent of the problem. The outcome of the study pointed out that this problem is faced by almost all the women at some point of their life.

The proposed paper concludes with key message that no doubt laws has been made but there is need to enforce them more strictly and there should be stringent punishments for the offenders of this problem.

Keywords: *Eve-teasing, Laws, Women, Provisions.*

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Introduction

Himachal Pradesh lies between 30.22'40" to 33.12'44" North latitude and 75.47 to 79.04 East latitude. The total area of Himachal Pradesh is 55,673 sq.km. with population of 68,64,602. This State is divided into twelve administrative districts.¹ Una is one of the twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh which falls in the Shivalik range. This district is surrounded by Punjab.

The Researcher has chosen Una Bus Stand as the research area keeping in mind the fact that this bus stand is surrounded by schools, colleges, district headquarters and courts but still women is not safe from the evil of eve-teasing.

So, first of all to understand the problem, it is quite important to understand the location of this place. We can say that this Bus –stand is in heart of the city as the District headquarters and District Courts are less than a distance of one km on Una-Talwara road from Bus-stand. Government Degree College is also at least a distance of one km which is on Una-Chandigarh highway. There is government and other private hospitals at a distance of one km from bus stand on Una-Hamirpur highway. There are 8-10 schools which are less than a distance of 1 km from this bus-stand and main market of the city is just at a distance of 200 meters. Police headquarters is at a distance of less than 1 km from this bus-stand and there is police chowki at the entrance of this bus-stand. Now, there was curiosity in Researcher's mind that whether at such a place there is need of any escort for women or they can roam freely.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted at bus –stand Una, Una district of Himachal Pradesh. Primary data was obtained for the study through the structured questionnaire as well as personal interview with the women from different fields who in routine or occasionally board and de-board buses at this bus-stand.

The study was purposely planned to be undertaken at Bus-stand, Una. It is worthwhile to mention here that while selecting the study area, due attention was also paid to the directly affected population. To get deeper and thorough understanding of the objectives of the study, discussions were held with the targeted respondents. Gender perspectives were carefully observed while understanding complexity of the research problem. Through random sampling, 207 respondents of different age-groups comprising of students, working-women and house-wives were interviewed.

Personal interview method was applied for collecting data. Triangulation was also done to check cross-sectionally the reliability of data. Balanced weightage was also given to gender perspective. The data thus collected were analysed by and put into simple tabular method and inferences were drawn accordingly.

Observation: The variables chosen by the Researcher for the purpose of Data Analysis are:

- (1) Educational Qualification; and
- (2) Age.

After analyzing the sample chosen as shown in Table number 1, the Researcher found that the total number of women selected is 207, out of which 120 are students 40 are working-women and 47 of the total sample selected are house-wives which is shown in Table number 1 below.

The second variable chosen by the Researcher is age. And Table 2 shows that 85 of the sample chosen, women fall in age-group of 15-20 years, 62 women of the sample chosen, in the age-group of 20-25, 38 of the sample chosen, in 25-30, 15 of the sample chosen, in 30-35, 05 of the sample chosen, in 35-40, 02 of the sample chosen, in 40-45.

Result and Discussion: The majority of the Respondents responded that they face the problem of eve-teasing. And the laws enacted for their protection has not reached to them even in this 21st century.

Analysis of the Sampling: The response of the Respondents to whether the laws has benefitted them in eliminating the problem of Eve-teasing are as:

Table 3 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking whether they understand the meaning of the term 'Eve-teasing', 200 of the sample chosen, respondents said yes to it while 02 of the sample chosen no and 05 of the sample chosen, said that they don't know anything about it.

Table 4 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking whether they have ever faced this problem in their life, 160, i.e. 77% of the sample chosen, said yes they have faced this problem occasionally, while 47, i.e. 23% of the sample chosen said that they face this problem in routine.

Table 5 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking how they deal with this problem, 07, i.e. 3% of the sample chosen said that they complained to their family, 20, i.e. 10% Respondents said that they scolded the eve-teasers, 180, i.e. 87% of the sample chosen, respondent said that they did not complained to anybody, and none of the respondent ever complained to the police about this.

Table 6 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking how they generally dress up, 122, i.e. 28% of the sample chosen said that they dress up traditionally only, 85, i.e. 19% Respondents said that they wear western clothes also, 85, i.e. 19% of the sample chosen said that they dress up both traditionally as well in western clothes, 90, i.e. 21% respondents said that they put no make up at

all, 35, i.e. 8% of the sample chosen, said that they put some make up, and 20, i.e. 5% of the sample chosen, respondent's said that it they put some make up occasionally.

Table 7 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking whether they were helped by anyone during this harassment, 05 of the sample chosen, respondents said yes to it while 184 of the sample chosen no and 18 of the sample chosen, said that they don't know anything about it.

Table 8 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking whether they are aware of the laws relating to 'eve-teasing', 15 of the sample chosen, respondents said yes to it while 162 of the sample chosen no and 30 of the sample chosen, said that they don't know anything about it.

Table 9 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking whether they saw presence of police at bus-stands, 10 of the sample chosen, respondents said yes to it while 177 of the sample chosen no and 20 of the sample chosen, said that they don't know anything about it.

Table 10 shows the distribution of answers to the Question in the questionnaire, asking about the timings when they can go out all alone, 95, i.e. 46% of the sample chosen, Respondents said that it was between 8.00 a.m.-3.00 p.m., 105, i.e. 51% of the sample chosen, respondent said that it was between 8.00 a.m.-4.00 p.m., 07, i.e. 3% of the sample chosen, said that it was between 8.00 a.m.-4.00 p.m, and none can go out alone after 6.00 p.m.

Conclusion: The survey of this study has led to a number of conclusions about the problem of Eve-teasing, lacunas in the present laws and gaps between problem and laws. This survey has revealed shocking facts. The survey of this study has led to following conclusions:

1. One does not has to live in cities or wear western clothes or put up make up because whether a women uses all these things or not she is sured to be a victim of 'Eve-teasing' at some point of her life. And this survey that maximum victims of 'Eve-teasing' never wore anything else except traditional clothes in their whole life.
2. This survey clearly shows that majority of the women go out alone only between 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Most of the time they are escorted by the male members of their families even then they are victims.
3. The victims of this problem are rarely helped by anyone even if the co-passengers in the bus daily travel with them.
4. Most of the women are forced to face this problem and remain silent because it is generally considered that this is happening because of women's fault and it is their responsibility not to spoil family's name.

5. Police is also of no help because they are rarely present at bus stands.
6. Most of the women are aware of the laws but they don't know how these laws can help them because ultimately they have to live at same place and have to travel on these routes only. And using of laws will only harass them and their families it is the general thinking of these respondents.
7. Most of the women do not complain of this problem to their families because then their families will not allow them to go out, to carry forward their studies or job. And they will also lose respect in their family.

Una is a small town in the hilly state of Himachal Pradesh. And the most important characteristic of the small towns is that every second person knows each other. But the facts revealed by this survey are not only horrifying but clearly shows how the condition of women is deteriorating everyday. This ugly truth is the reality of the plight of women in India.

On the basis of the historical, analytical, comparative and empirical study made in this research paper, the following suggestions are made for so that the problem of Eve-teasing can be curbed and the laws may fulfill the purpose of their inception.

1. The facts revealed by this survey clearly show that it is high time that we include Eve teasing as a Tort under a new head of liability and curb this heinous practice.
2. Awareness is another important tool to curb the menace of 'Eve-teasing'. Most of the people are not aware that eve teasing is an offence and legal action can be taken against eve teasers.
3. Also our attitude towards the women who face eve teasing has to change. Instead of blaming them we should take action against the offenders.
4. The society has to change their thinking that women are only things to be used.
5. Another matter of importance is the punishment provided to the offender should not be minor but should have the impact of deterring him and others to commit such an offence again.

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Tables:

Table 1: Classification of respondents selected for the study Una

Sr. no.	Category	Number of Respondents
1.	Students	120
2.	Working Women	40
3.	House-wives	47
	Total	207

Table 2: Classification of respondents selected for the study on the basis of Age

Sr. no.	Age-Group	Number of Respondents
1.	15-20	85
2.	20-25	62
3.	25-30	38
4.	30-35	15
5.	35-40	05
6.	40-45	02
	Total	207

Table 3: Understanding the meaning of ‘Eve-teasing’

Yes	No	Don’t know
200	02	05

Table 4: Facing the problem of ‘Eve-teasing’

Problem faced	Category	Percentage
Occasionally	160	77%

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