
AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIO- LEGAL ASPECTS OF RAGGING IN INDIA

Rohini Attri*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the crucial plank in the process of development in any nation. It empowers the citizens of a country to become active stakeholders in the functioning of the country. Especially in a country like India where illiteracy is still a crucial factor, the importance of education becomes all the more pronounced.

¹ It is a pity that education system in India is facing a number of problems. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) are often regarded as sanctuaries and temples of learning providing protected environments where young people explore great ideas in a collegial atmosphere. But incidents of violence on campus evoke questions about whether there is any safe haven. An abundance of evidence indicates that in fact campuses are not immune from such incidents. Ragging is a rampant social menace that has led down humanity on several occasions but unfortunately due to the involvement of only one section of the society i.e. the students, not much attention has been paid to combat it.²

In India, Ragging is one of the evils in general as well as professional courses. It has become one of the serious forms of violence in educational institutions which not only affects human dignity but even sometimes, leads to loss life though suicidal attempts. Ragging is a form of abuse of newcomers to educational institutions, wherein some senior students force the unorganized new comers to undergo several forms of mental, physical and sexual torture.

2. MEANING AND DEFINITION OF RAGGING

The term 'ragging' has been perceived differently by different people. To some of us it constitutes just fun and frolic, including singing and dancing, in front of seniors. To some others, it means working on assignments for seniors and doing their daily chores. For many others it constitutes physically tiring, verbally abusive or even sexually assaulting acts. There are conflicts and several opinions on the same.

*Assistant Professor, Punjab School of Law, Punjabi University, Patiala.

¹ M.I. Hussain, "The education system: A critical overview", *The Indian Express*, 12 March 2012, at p. 8.

² 'Ragging: The Bane of Educated Society', *Competition Success Review*, Special Issue June 2009, at p. 14.

The juniors are usually too frightened to resist this organized group of tormentors. The torture of innocent students often runs for months and involves the same batch of students being physically and mentally abused by the same and/or different group of seniors (including those from the opposite sex) over and over again. Ragging can be thought of in terms of verbal, physical and sexual aggression. A single act may be a combination of more than one of these.³

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'Ragging means the act of practice of playing, singing or dancing in ragtime.'⁴ Ragging means any noisy disorderly conduct, annual parade of students in fancy dress to collect money for charity, playing rough jokes, or throwing into wild disorder a person's room etc.⁵

Ragging is an outburst of organized horseplay, usually in defiance of authority, riotous festivity, especially of under-graduates in British Universities, associated with the raising of money for charity.⁶

Ragging constitutes one or more of any of the following acts⁷:

- a. any conduct by any student or students whether by words spoken or written or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness a fresher or any other student;
- b. indulging in rowdy or indisciplined activities by any student or students which causes or is likely to cause annoyance, hardship, physical or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in any fresher or any other student;
- c. asking any student to do any act which such student will not in the ordinary course do and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame, or torment or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the physique or psyche of such fresher or any other student;
- d. any act by a senior student that prevents, disrupts or disturbs the regular academic activity of any other student or a fresher;
- e. exploiting the services of a fresher or any other student for completing the academic tasks assigned to an individual or a group of students;

³ Rajesh Garg, "Ragging: A Public health problem in India", *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences*, Vol. 63(6), July 2009, p. 263- 271

⁴ Second Edition, Vol. XIII, Oxford University Press , 1991

⁵ Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedia Dictionary, First Edition, 1964

⁶ The Chambers English Dictionary, Thirteenth Edition, 2014

⁷ Reg. 2, UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009

- f. any act of financial extortion or forceful expenditure burden put on a fresher or any other student by students;
- g. any act of physical abuse including all variants of it: sexual abuse, homosexual assaults, stripping, forcing obscene and lewd acts, gestures, causing bodily harm or any other danger to health or person;
- h. any act or abuse by spoken words, emails, post, public insults which would also include deriving perverted pleasure, vicarious or sadistic thrill from actively or passively participating in the discomfiture to fresher or any other student;
- i. any act that affects the mental health and self-confidence of a fresher or any other student with or without an intent to derive a sadistic pleasure or showing off power, authority or superiority by a student over any fresher or any other student.

Ragging could be considered positive if it is done within decent limits and in a healthy manner, or if it aims to help ease the pen up tensions of modern students without harming anyone; help freshmen to shake themselves out of inhibitions and inferiority complex and to smoothen their angularities; helps dispelling the tendency among newcomers to remain isolated. But over the years the word 'ragging' ceased to denote the healthy practice it used to be and has acquired more negative connotations and notoriety.

3. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT: A WESTERN CONCEPT

Ragging is not new phenomenon. It existed even in older times and was a part of civilized societies. In ancient seats of learning like *Berytus* and *Athens* ragging was prevalent.⁸ This phenomenon can be traced back to as early as seventh or eighth century A.D. in Greek culture where new entrants to the sport community were subjected to all kinds of humiliation and teasing to inculcate a team in them. After the passage of time this type of activities were subjected to myriad modifications and was later adopted by Armed Forces in which new entrants have to pass out by obeying the seniors in off-duty time.⁹ In Army schools of England, ragging existed as a tradition. Later on, this tradition took its root in medical and engineering colleges. In English society ragging took the form of freshmen

⁸ Harsh Agarwal, 'Ragging: History and Evolution', *Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education*, available at http://www.noragging.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=36 (last accessed 12 December 2017)

⁹ [Dhananjay Mahapatra](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/Ragging-needs-social-ban-more-than-laws/articleshow/4298362.cms), 'Ragging needs social ban, more than laws', *The Times of India*, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/Ragging-needs-social-ban-more-than-laws/articleshow/4298362.cms> (last accessed 22 January 2018)

being paraded on street which caused much annoyance not only to freshmen but even to general public especially girls.¹⁰

Earlier ragging was a harmless practice rather permissible in the society but it had taken shape of brutality, humiliation and harassment after the First World War. This concept was later adopted by the U.S. universities as well. In the period 1828-1845, several student organizations popped up in the U.S. campuses.¹¹ Gradually in the early 20th century ragging underwent several modifications before morphing into an organized form of campus violence.

Ragging is not limited to a particular country or continent; rather it has been an international phenomenon. The word is mainly used in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.¹² Ragging is a practice similar to 'hazing' in U.S, U.K and Philippines. In other parts of the world it has different nomenclature like fagging, bullying; *baptême* in French; *doop* in Dutch; and *Mopokaste* in Finnish.

Although ragging originated as a western concept but today, it has become deep rooted in the Indian educational set up as well. India, which inherited ragging as a legacy from the British Raj, has not been able to free itself from the clutches of this inhuman practice. It can be said, without any room for doubt, that the worst form of ragging is being committed in India. According to a research conducted by Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education (CURE), India and Sri Lanka are the only two countries in the world where worst form of ragging exists.¹³ It is generally observed that such perverse forms of ragging is more prevalent in professional colleges and institutes mainly because of large number of students staying in hostels.¹⁴

4. FORMS AND CAUSES OF RAGGING

It is said that man's imagination knows no bounds. But when it comes to ragging, it can be rightly said that man's perverted imagination too knows no bounds. From what was intended to provide good humor and harmless fun to students, ragging today has assumed torturous, vulgar and inhuman forms that defy all norms of decency and morality. There is

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ C. H. Venkateswarlu and N. Satyasri, "Effects of Ragging on human dignity- A Critique", *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, Vol. 1(4), September 2012, p. 229-242

¹² Ragging. available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ragging> (last assessed 11 January 2018)

¹³ Madhavi Chopra, 'Ragging In Educational Institutes: A Human Rights Perspective', available at <http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/ragging.htm> (last accessed 18 January 2018)

¹⁴ Report of Committee to curb the menace of Ragging in Universities/ Educational Institutions (1999), available at <http://www.ugc.ac.in/page/Ragging-Related-circulars.aspx> (last accessed 10 January 2018)

no strict categorization of ragging but some of the most popular forms of ragging of residential and non- residential students have been categorized as:¹⁵

- I. Formal introduction: This involves asking the freshmen to introduce themselves in 'Shudh hindi' or other vernacular language. The introduction includes the freshmen's name, address, school, marks, hobbies etc.;
- II. Dress code ragging: The freshmen are asked to dress in a specific dress code for a particular period of time. The dress code ragging may make the freshmen feel awkward and uncomfortable as it often brings them unnecessary attention from everybody;
- III. Verbal torture: Verbal torture involves indulging in loose talks. The freshmen may be asked to sing the lyrics of any vulgar song or use abusive language while talking to the seniors;
- IV. Sexual abuse: This is the severest form of ragging that takes place in colleges. In many cases, the freshmen have been asked to strip before the seniors;
- V. Playing the fool: The freshmen may be asked to enact scenes from a particular movie or mimic a particular film star. In many cases, the seniors may also ask the freshmen to do silly things like climbing a tree, kissing a tree, proposing to someone from the opposite sex, etc.;
- VI. Hostel ragging: Outstation students who stay in the hostel are most vulnerable to ragging. They may be asked to do all odd acts from cleaning the room of seniors to washing their clothes, from fetching them water or milk to completing their assignments; and
- VII. Drug abuse: This can be the worst form of ragging wherein the freshmen are forced to try drugs thereby driving them into addiction.

Besides this, certain acts like addressing seniors as 'Sir' or 'Madam'; perform mass drills; to copy class notes for the seniors; to serve various errands; to do menial jobs for the seniors; to ask/answer vulgar questions; to look at pornographic pictures to shock the fresher out of their innocence; to force to drink alcohol, scalding tea, etc.; to speak one particular language during conversation; to force to do acts with sexual overtones,

¹⁵ Mohit Garg, 'Forms of Ragging', *Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education*, available at <http://www.noragging.com/analysis/forms-of-ragging.html> (last accessed 12 January 2018)

including homosexual acts; to steal eatables; to force to do acts which can lead to physical injury/mental torture or death; to strip, kiss, etc.; to do other obscenities also constitutes different forms of ragging in educational institutions.

The factors contributing incidents of ragging is not a single but various. The major reasons responsible for ragging are that it gives a sadistic pleasure and satisfaction in showing off the power, superiority and authority over the fresher students. Even as means of retaliation, a senior who has some previous history of ragging may like to get back by venting his frustrations on the freshmen. Peer pressure and means of retaliation also encourages such problems amongst students. It is also a reality that not all seniors who commit ragging enjoy doing it at their sweet will. Seeing most of their batch mates indulging in ragging, they fear being left out. So in order to avoid isolation, they too join the herd. Many senior students live under the misconception that ragging makes a style statement and thus will put them in the 'influential crowd' of their college.

5. VISUALIZING THE PROBLEM THROUGH SOCIAL PRISM

The social aspects of ragging clearly state the plight of a ragging victim's family, especially his or her parents who see their child suffering in pain and stress. Besides incurring medical and other incidental expenses to rehabilitate their child, they also have to bear the trauma of seeing his or her prospective career coming to an end. The Indian cinema has depicted the plight of ragging victims in movies like *3 idiots* and *Table No. 21*. Severe media barrage in extreme cases of ragging lowers the character of the educational institution and destroy the respect and faith it commands from society. Those who indulge in ragging bring a bad name to their college thereby hampering its reputation and goodwill in society.

Besides this, there are so many myths in the minds of general public about ragging. Most people think ragging is mild involving verbal interaction or funny acts for a laugh. The general perception of society is that it helps in breaking the ice between the seniors and fresher and leads to interaction and developing friendship between them. These superstitious beliefs about ragging are getting strength from the society and the college administration. In the society either people have already gone through ragging or else they see it as a mild practice of singing and dancing.

According to a recent UGC funded research study led by scholars of Jawaharlal Nehru University, it was found that 40 per cent students in colleges across India faced some kind of ragging, only 8.6 per cent reported the incidents. The study also found language and

region to be the basis of more than 25 per cent ragging incidents, while caste was a factor in 8 per cent cases.¹⁶

Ragging does not spare even its perpetrators. Those found guilty of ragging may be suspended, blacklisted and even permanently expelled from college. Many of them are listed in criminal cases, crime graphs and as habitual offenders. Thus we see that the practice of ragging does well to none. From those who are victims of ragging to those who commit or encourage it, ragging spares none. In many cases it has resulted into physical injuries, sexual abuse, psychological disorders, human rights abuse, group violence, forceful initiation to alcoholism, smoking and drugs, suicidal attempts and even deaths. The ill-effects of ragging reflects that ragging is associated with a broad spectrum of physical, psychological, behavioral, emotional and social problems among the victims and its consequences are also multidimensional.

6. LEGAL MECHANISM TO CONTROL RAGGING IN INDIA

Ragging has caught the attention of legislators, law enforcers, Courts and other sections of the society in the past decade due to the sharp increase in the number of incidents of ragging. Consequently, various committees had been established, recommendations formulated, regulations passed, guidelines directed and state laws have been enforced to curb the menace of ragging. Some of the efforts in this direction at central, state, institutional and judicial level are as under:

6.1. At Central level

6.1.1 Legislative measures

The Constitution of India guarantees a fundamental Right to Life and Personal Liberty which expresses that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.¹⁷ Under the ordinary Criminal Law, *Indian Penal Code, 1860*¹⁸ provides punishment for various offences such as assault, criminal intimidation, wrongful restraint, wrongful confinement, abetment to suicide, culpable homicide, murder, etc. The complaint can be lodged by the victim in the police station and the procedure under the *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973* can be established. In addition to this, the *Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993* provide for the constitution of a National

¹⁶ Deepthiman Tiwary, '40% are ragged, less than 9% speak out: UGC-funded', *The Indian Express*, 21 January 2016, available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/40-are-ragged-less-than-9-speak-out-ugc-funded-study/> (last accessed 29 January 2018)

¹⁷ Article 21

¹⁸ Act No. 45 of 1860

Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission in States and Human Rights Courts for better protection of human rights and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.¹⁹ The *Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012* is a special law which provides to protect children, below eighteen years of age, from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. It also provides for establishment of Special Courts for trial of such offences and matters connected therewith or incidental too.²⁰ Besides this, the *Right to Information Act, 2005* is yet another legislative tool to bring the governmental or public institutions into action. It empowers the citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority. Therefore, the ragging victims can ask what action has been taken by the college or police on the ragging complaint made or action taken by RTI- helpline on the ragging complaint.

6.1.2 Role of University Grants Commission and other Regulatory Bodies

In India, the higher education is coordinated by various regulatory bodies. These bodies are very much professional in character. The University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) and other bodies like Medical Council of India (MCI), Bar Council of India (BCI), Central Council of Indian Medicine, The Homeopathy Central Council, The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Indian Nursing Council, The Dental Council, The Pharmacy Council, The Bar Council of India (BCI), and The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) etc, works in co-ordination up to certain degree and performing the role of laying down professional standards, helping institutions with funds in certain cases, and in general, help them to maintain professional standards.

In pursuance to the Judgment of the Supreme Court of India,²¹ the University Grants Commission framed '*UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009*'.²² These Regulations are in force from the date of notification. The UGC has made it mandatory for all institutions to incorporate in their prospectus the directions of the Government regarding prohibition and consequences of ragging. It reminds all Universities every year before the start of the academic session

¹⁹ Act 10 of 1994

²⁰ Act No. 32 of 2012

²¹ University of Kerala v. Councils, Principal's college in Kerala and ors, (2009) 7 SCC 726

²² Available at <http://www.ugc.ac.in/page/Ragging-Related-circulars.aspx> (last accessed 10 January 2016)

through public notices, UGC website and letters to Universities to ensure strict compliance of anti-ragging measures

A nationwide toll free anti-ragging helpline in twelve languages has been established which can be accessed by students in distress owing to ragging related incidents. The Helpline directly receives complaints from the complainant/victim of ragging. The same is forwarded by the Helpline to the respective institutions and the local administration for taking necessary corrective action. On receipt of complaints about ragging, the UGC seeks the action taken report from the concerned institutions.

A documentary video film on anti-ragging has been uploaded on UGC website and all universities have been asked to give it wide publicity amongst students, staff, other stakeholders and colleges under their jurisdiction. Being the premier institution dealing with the issue of higher and professional education in India, the University Grants Commission has been playing a proactive role in directing the Universities and other educational institutions in curbing this evil practice.

6.1.3 Committees

6.1.3.1 Prof. K.P.S Unny Committee:

It can be seen that the UGC constituted a committee in 1999 under the chairmanship of Professor K.P.S. Unny which had made some important recommendations.²³ The committee in its report explained the concept of ragging, its various forms and cause for ragging. It also traced the vulnerable locations of ragging, causes for the increase in the incidence of ragging and ineffectiveness of measures against it and existing governmental/institutional efforts in curbing ragging. The Unny Committee in its recommendations suggested a three-pronged system to curb the menace of ragging in educational institutions, namely; Prohibition, Prevention and Punishment System, commonly known as PPP System, which means prohibition by law, prevention by following a set of guidelines and punishment in case ragging takes place in spite of prohibition and prevention.²⁴

6.1.3.2 Dr. Raghavan Committee

The Supreme Court of India has been a strong stand to prevent ragging. In 2006, the Apex Court directed The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) to form a panel which will suggest guidelines to control ragging. The panel was headed by the former

²³ G.B. Reddy, *Prohibition of Ragging and Law*, Gogia Law Agency, Hyderabad, 2009

²⁴ Available at www.ugc.ac.in (last accessed 10 January 2018)

Director of C.B.I. Dr. R.K. Raghavan.²⁵ In May 2007, the committee submitted its report to the Supreme Court with various recommendations to curb ragging in which it was perceived as a 'social menace'. It recommended certain measures, including stricter punishment for the offenders, and a written undertaking from students entering the hostel, countersigned by their parents that they would not indulge in ragging.²⁶

The focus of the Committee was on preventive action rather than prohibition as while the former may result in the latter, the converse is not true. Furthermore, the Committee observed that a law which is prohibitive in nature involves a top down approach while a law which is preventive is a bottom up approach and involves a participatory approach. Thus, it is essential to have a law which imbibes preventive aspects as well so as to make it more acceptable and also to ensure that it has a lasting impact.²⁷ The key recommendations made by Committee include setting up of anti-ragging cells at the Central, State and College Levels,²⁸ setting up toll-free helpline for ragging victims,²⁹ ragging to be an important factor while dealing with accreditation of the institution,³⁰ strengthening laws dealing with ragging and shifting the burden to the accused to prove that he is innocent,³¹ staggering the entry of juniors and seniors,³² having interactive sessions between faculty and students and amongst students themselves, engaging professional counselors during the beginning of the term,³³ having psychological counseling on anti-ragging and human rights at high school levels and including a chapter on the same in NCERT, SCERT school textbooks to increase awareness about ragging. It was also recommended that the school leaving certification which has information about the character of a student is taken seriously by colleges and that such students are watched when juniors join.³⁴ The efficacy of this is questionable as most schools do not give negative character certificates and hence, this will not act as a useful tool to deter ragging. Consequent to this report, certain selective recommendations were implemented by the Supreme Court with immediate effect to curb ragging incidents in educational institutions.

6.2 At State level

²⁵ This Committee was constituted by the Supreme Court in SLP 24295/2006

²⁶ *Supra* note 23

²⁷ The Raghavan Committee Report (2007), Para 3.15

²⁸ Paras 5.02 and 5.03

²⁹ Para 5.43

³⁰ Para 5.42

³¹ Para 5.26

³² Para 5.12

³³ Para 5.14

³⁴ Para 5.06

Despite incidents of Ragging being reported from almost all states in India, only few states, namely, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and Chhattisgarh, have enacted legislations to deal with it and the provisions of all the concerned Acts are applicable only to the concerned State respectively. As for other states and union territories in India, Ragging is banned but only through circulars and administrative orders. Following are the legislations of various states³⁵:

- I. *The Karnataka Education Act, 1983*
- II. *The Tripura Educational Institutions (Prevention Of Ragging) Act, 1990*
- III. *The Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1996*
- IV. *The Andhra Pradesh Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1997*
- V. *The Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1998*
- VI. *The Assam Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1998*
- VII. *The Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1999*
- VIII. *The West Bengal Prohibition of Ragging in Educational Institutes Act, 2000*
- IX. *The Chhattisgarh Shaikshanik Sansthan Me Pratarna Ka Pratishedh Act, 2001*
- X. *The Himachal Pradesh Educational Institutions (Prohibition of Ragging) Act, 2009*
- XI. [*The Jammu and Kashmir Prohibition of Ragging Act, 2011*](#)

These Acts prohibit the practice of ragging within or outside educational institutions. Most of these legislations prescribe a punishment of two years of imprisonment and a fine but still there is a great disparity between these states on the basis of punishment. While in Karnataka, the punishment which is prescribed is one year; in the case of Chhattisgarh, a person who commits, participates, abets or propagates ragging within or outside an educational institution will be punishable with five years' imprisonment and fine. This shows an inherent inequality on account of the offence being committed in a different State. This calls for a uniform law to deal with this aspect of ragging instead of diverse State laws dealing with the same issue.

7. ATTITUDE OF THE JUDICIARY

With ragging becoming a national issue affecting thousands of students across India, the Supreme Court of India too could not remain silent and has seriously condemned the issue.

³⁵ Available at <http://www.no2ragging.org/rulesregulations.html> (last accessed 12 December 2017)

The Supreme Court of India, in *Vishwa Jagriti Mission v. Central Government*, perhaps has given a more comprehensive meaning of ragging in as any disorderly conduct, whether by words spoken or written, or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness any student, indulging in rowdy or indisciplined activities which cause or are likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in a fresher or a junior student and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the psyche of a fresher or a junior student.³⁶

In another significant case of *University of Kerala v. Councils, Principal's college in Kerala and ors*,³⁷ the Supreme Court observed that ragging in essence is a Human Rights abuse. Ragging can be in various forms. It can be physical abuse or mental harassment. In present times, shocking incidents of ragging have come to the notice. Sometimes violence is used. The student is physically tortured or psychologically terrorized. All human being should be free to claim, as a matter of right in the society in which they live, for life of dignity but when it is intentionally or recklessly damaged or departed then the person's human right is abused; in that sense ragging is the best example of human rights' abuse. Besides this, the court laid down certain guidelines to curb the menace of ragging. Brief guidelines are as under:

- I. Anti-ragging movements should be initiated by the institutions right from the time of advertisement for admissions. The prospectus and forms for admission must clearly mention that ragging is banned in the institution and any one indulging in ragging is likely to be punished appropriately with punishment which may include expulsion or suspension from the institution or class for a limited period or fine with a public apology.
- II. The application for admission/ enrolment shall have a printed undertaking to be filled up and signed by the applicant to the effect that he/she is aware of the institution's approach towards ragging. A similar undertaking shall be obtained from the parent/guardian of the applicant.
- III. The institutions which are introducing such a system for the first time shall take undertakings from the students already studying in the institutions and their parents/guardians before the commencement of the next educational year/session.

³⁶ AIR 2001 SC 2814

³⁷ (2009) 7 SCC 726

- IV. Printed notices to be Issued indicating where to approach for redress in case of ragging along with the addresses and telephone numbers of such persons.
- V. The management, Principal and the teaching staff should interact with the freshmen and take them in confidence by apprising them of their right as well as to generate confidence in their mind that any instance of ragging shall be promptly dealt with
- VI. At the commencement of the academic session, the institution should constitute a committee consisting of senior faculty members and hostel authorities like wardens and students to keep a continuous watch and vigil and to promptly deal with the incidents of ragging brought to its notice and summarily punish the guilty.
- VII. All vulnerable locations in the college such as the canteen, the playground, etc. shall be identified and specially watched.
- VIII. The local community and the students in particular must be aware of the dehumanizing effect of ragging inherent in its perversity. Posters, notice boards and signboards wherever necessary, may be used for the purpose.
- IX. Failure to prevent ragging to be constructed as an act of negligence in maintaining discipline in the institution on the part of the management, the principal and the persons in authority of the institution. Similar responsibility shall be liable to be fixed on hostel wardens/superintendents.
- X. The hostels/accommodations where fresher are accommodated shall be carefully guarded, if necessary by posting security personnel wherein the entry of seniors and outsiders shall be prohibited before and after a specified hour of night except under the permission of the person in-charge. Entry at other times may also be regulated.
- XI. Migration Certificates issued by every institution should have an entry apart from that of general conduct and behavior whether the student had participated in, and in particular, was punished for ragging.
- XII. If an institution fails to curb ragging, the University Grants Commission/Funding Agency may consider withdrawal of financial assistance to such an institution till such time as it achieves the same. A university may consider disaffiliating a college or institution failing to curb ragging.

- XIII. In case of any incident of ragging, the students must approach the Disciplinary Committee of their respective colleges, and only if the said Committee does not take cognizance of the matter or if they feel dissatisfied with its decision that they should approach the police. The objective behind this is to restore the faith in the ability of educational institutions to maintain discipline and protect the interests of their students.

8. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Ragging is a widespread multidimensional problem covering various legal, educational, social, psychological and behavioral aspects. Although the Centre and the States have shown deep concern to eradicate the menace of ragging through implementation of various legislations, guidelines and directions but, still there is no central legislation so far in this regard. It is often argued that measures to eliminate ragging should go beyond law, but it is equally reasonable to believe and argue that through the intervention of law, ragging can be effectively curbed and uprooted, as has been the case in countries like Canada and Japan. Moreover, relevant data on ragging is not at all available. Colleges and universities are reluctant to share their data with our research work, if at all they do have any. This creates a big hurdle for the researchers, field workers and analysts to analyze the problem for finding out some 'cause and effect relationship' which would also indicate the best possible solutions for necessary corrective and preventive measures.

Following are some of the suggestive measures to control and prevent the menace of ragging:

- I. All state legislations and circulars should be replaced by a Central Legislation on ragging, whereby UGC should be made the main agency to devise ways of proper implementation of Supreme Court guidelines and provisions of such legislation. UGC should be given wide powers in this regard.
- II. Educational Institutions and police should be reoriented regarding the existing laws and regulations. Tough action must be ensured against institutions which fail to put a curb on ragging. Accountability of management or concerned authority in the institution must be defined by law.
- III. The authorities should make sure that whenever such introductory session has to be taken place it must be done in a decent, comfortable and friendly manner and that too in the presence of the authorities, faculty or the staff of the institution.

- IV. A periodical review of the implementation of the guidelines needs to be undertaken to gauge the efficacy of the same. The co-relation between the implementation of the guidelines and the reporting of incidents needs to be analyzed in order to determine whether the implementation of the guidelines is having a positive effect.
- V. The regulatory bodies like University Grants Commission (UGC) and The Medical Council of India (MCI) must also act against the colleges and universities, with action against the erring dean/ principal along with de-recognition of that college or university and suspension of grants if college authorities were found unable to curb ragging in campus.
- VI. Installation of CCTV cameras within campuses should be made mandatory. The college authorities must get the CCTV cameras within the classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, canteens and other places within the institution as a preventive measure to control ragging.
- VII. Government should ensure its support for building Anti-ragging activism in India. Activism, advocacy and research in this regard must be extended financial and institutional support by Government.
- VIII. Creating mass awareness in the society regarding ill-effects of ragging and debunking the social myths and perceptions can do wonders. Involvement and participation of general public and NGO's can be an effective measure. Along with this, television, radio and print media like news papers, journals and magazines may be involved immediately. Anti-ragging campaigns and movements by students, parents and general public can also play a great role in curbing the menace.
- IX. Short documentaries/ films on ragging should be prepared and screened in regional languages. Such movies should be exempted from taxes by the government and the entertainment industry.
- X. Effective anti-ragging measures should be made the part and parcel of the election manifesto of every registered political party and student welfare organizations.

Unless and until we act on the above issues seriously, educational authorities will continue to label ragging deaths as suicides due to academic pressure; majority of the ragging incidents will continue to go unreported; seniors and teachers will continue to believe that

ragging is a healthy interactive and personality development exercise; media will continue to report only sensational stuff about ragging; parents, relatives and society will fail to understand the pain of the ragging victim

The definition of health as given by World Health Organization in the preamble to its constitution says- 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity.' In the light of this definition, ragging is a health hazard as it disturbs all the parameters of health of the newcomers. Remedial measures as enumerated above and some more novel ideas must be invited from different quarters and be implemented without any delay. The society must come forward to condemn ragging in any form, and the media must spread awareness about the perils of ragging and bring people on a common platform with regard to this issue. Let us hope that ragging should not be 'an annual tradition' anymore.