

NAME : TANYA VERMA  
ADMISSION NUMBER : V-2022-03-066  
CLASS : FIRST YEAR

## RAGGING, RUINS

Any physical, mental or verbal abuse of new entrants, usually by seniors, is termed as ragging. Very often these events take place behind the facade of welcoming new students, and are mistaken for playful interactions until they become criminally offensive.

The intent and extent of ragging varies in every case thus it is important to know what counts as ragging, so as to desist from being a victim or an offender. Physical abuse is probably the most inhuman form of ragging, which apart from bodily damage, also includes sexual abuse, homosexual assaults and stripping. Such assaults have had numerous adverse outcomes in the past, even causing permanent damage to the victims. Brutal cases like the murder of Pon Navaseen in RM Medical College, Tamil Nadu by his senior can unfortunately also be cited as an example.

Mental and verbal abuse are rather common forms of ragging, which are often overlooked by the authorities. Some of the things this includes are teasing, abusing, making derogatory remarks on a person's attire, appearance or beliefs and subjecting them to answer questions that they would avoid in ordinary course. Cyber bullying and financial extortion are also frequently witnessed by newcomers.

The effects such episodes have on the psyche of the victims are endless. When in today's scenario, students are spending their blood and sweat to get into colleges, incidences of ragging prove to be their worst nightmare. A lot of students even quit their education and are haunted by this trauma for their entire life. This affects their future prospects and ambitions. A fairly common result is depression, anxiety, isolation and loss of self confidence. In a lot of rising incidences victims have even resorted to extreme measures like suicide.

Often students feel reluctant to report incidences of ragging due to the fear of retaliation if unheard. Here the role of governing authorities of the colleges comes into play. They should create an environment where the students feel safe in seeking support. This should definitely be a subject of interest for institutions since incidences of ragging also attract negative publicity for the college, and thus a degraded reputation. Anti-ragging movements should be initiated by all colleges and educational institutes, and proctorial committees should be set up for the same purpose. Management, Principals and the teaching staff should have personal interaction with the freshmen to make them aware about their rights and inform them about whom they can turn for information and help. This should also accompany taking undertaking from freshmen, their guardians and seniors before commencement of any new educational year.

Furthermore, fostering a strong support system for newcomers, such as mentorship programs or counseling services, can help ease the transition and reduce the vulnerability of students to ragging. Faculty should



identify and intervene potential ragging situations, thereby contributing to a safer and more nurturing campus environment.

Ragging is a punishable offence; thus anyone found guilty should be appropriately charged. In 2001, the Supreme Court banned ragging across India. Under the anti-ragging law, if a student is found guilty, he/she can be imprisoned for three years along with a fine. Legal actions can also be taken against colleges if they do not follow the rules or ignore the matter. UGC has separate guidelines for colleges in this matter.

Psychiatric help for the victim is of paramount importance since experiences like ragging can torment him/her if not addressed. The transgressor should also be provided similar therapy sessions to avoid nurturing a potential criminal and helping him or her to get back on right track.

Despite all these rules, incidences of ragging are still prevalent. While the institutions may have anti-ragging policies in place, enforcement remains a challenge. Students feel obliged to abide by the manner they are being treated because they feel that it is the only way they would get assistance and knowledge from their seniors. Authorities should keep a closer check on hostels and classrooms where ragging is more usual. Representatives from students should be given authority to keep a closer check and take necessary actions whenever required. Strict penalties for both the perpetrators and bystanders who do not report incidents should be enforced.

Ragging can only be eradicated if collective efforts are taken from educational institutions, students, faculty and society as a whole. By acknowledging the gravity of the problem and implementing comprehensive strategies to prevent and address ragging ~~we~~ can create an inclusive and secure educational environment.

Ragging ruins careers, personalities and societies. Thus report incidences if you are a witness, rebel if you are a victim and get professional help if you are the wrongdoer.