

# RAGGING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A FASHION OR AN ABUSE

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## ABSTRACT

Education plays a crucial role in the process of development and growth of a nation. Education empowers the citizen of a country to become active stakeholders in the functioning of a nation. Ragging in educational institutions cause a fear, shock, harassment at educational institutions which is a regular phenomenon. Ragging is associated with physical, behavioral, emotional and social problem among victims. Ragging is done by the seniors for sense of being superiority, and a form of introduction. Ragging is an abuse of newcomers in educational institutions, where some senior students force the newcomers to go through different verbal, mental, physical, sexual, other combination of tortures. “Ragging means doing an act which causes or is likely to cause insult or annoyance of fear or apprehension or threat or intimidation or outrage of modesty or injury to a student. Students are being forced to go through this experience. Various incidents of suicides, violence, physical injuries, sexual abuses and psychological disorders, resulting because of ragging. Ragging is traditional and systematical human right abuse in educational field.

**Keywords:** *ragging, human rights, psychological disorders, suicides, sexual abuses.*

## INTRODUCTION

Ragging is a term that makes newcomers of institutions frightened and its severity can vary from a simply cracking a joke to a traumatized incident. Today ragging has become deep rooted in the Indian educational set up, but many would be surprised to know that ragging is originally a western concept (Chopra, Singh G.G. 2016). In India, ragging is one of the evils in general as well as professional institutions. It has become one of the serious forms of violence in educational institutions which not only affects human dignity but even sometimes, lead to loss of life through suicidal attempts. Ragging is a very disturbing factor in the higher education system in India. It has taken hundreds of lives of the innocents and destroyed the career of thousands of bright students. The highest number of ragging cases were found in Punjab, 35% and lowest in Karnataka, 6% and West Bengal, 6% as per the English media report between 2007-2013 (Rao, M. Sonper, S. Sen, Agarwal, Padalla, 2015). Ragging is an old age practice where incoming junior students are subjected to a certain amount of “good natured” teaching by seniors (Nallapu, SS, 2013). Ragging is practiced all over the world, with different nomenclature such as hazing, fagging, bullying, “bapteme” in French, “doop” in Dutch; “Mopokaste” in Finnish. The word hazing was later appropriated in the West for the ridicule and rough jokes forced on newcomers. As far as the history of ragging is concerned, the first case of ragging was recorded in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. during the Olympics in Greece. The practiced spread fast and menacingly first to the armed forces and then to the educational institutions (Garg, R. 2009). Ragging is intended to break the ice and allows junior to get to know seniors. The practice of ragging spread fast and menacingly first to the armed forces and then to the educational institutions. Even though it claimed its first victim, the son of a former civil war general, at Cornell University in US in 1973. It was World War-I that injected cruelty into ragging. Student that had gone to war returned to college, grimly determined to use on the campus newly learnt methods of torture (Mahapatra, D. 2019). The ill effects of ragging include all the dimensions – right

from the physical injury through beating, hitting by objects or by forcing to perform dangerous task to sexual abuse by force stripping, forced masturbation, forced matorral sex etc. The psychological effect of ragging includes constant fear, loss of concentration, inferiority complex and built guilt because of decline in academic performances and feeling of insecurity arising out of financial exploitation, ultimately leading to suicide risks (Desai, C. 2009). Ragging is a problem of the students; and therefore, the solutions to it also lies with the students (Chopra, M. 2016). Medical colleges are said to be the most notorious when it comes to the cases of ragging, according to the representatives of the National Anti-Ragging helpline (Deepika, C.K. 2015). According to the observations by the Dr. Raghavan Committee, which has been constructed by the Union Human Resources Development Ministry on the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, medical colleges are the most affected in India. Ragging should not be "an annual tradition". A loss of self-control in search of fun is the initiator of ragging. Victims are solely the freshers (Rao, 2010). The initiation of ragging includes a sense of authority to seniors, being a means of retaliation, satisfaction of sadistic pleasures, peer pressure and that ragging makes a "Fashion Statement". Many senior students live under the misconception that ragging makes a style statement and will put them in the "Influential Crowd" of their institutions (Chopra, 2009). In India, a myth that ragging makes students bold has always existed. This has given a passive social acceptance to this practice. As long as this exists ragging will never see its demise (Agarwal, 2005). One thing is clear that ragging, which was originally thought to be a mere joke, has cross bounds of decency and had entered the arena of physical and mental torture. It needs to be dealt with iron hands (Raghavan, et.al. 2006).

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the research work are to understand the meaning, concept of ragging in details, secondly to always the causes of ragging, thirdly to find out the forms and cause in violation of human rights, fourthly, to combat the evil of ragging and legal mechanism to control ragging activities in the country.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

The methodology used in this research article is based on descriptive in nature. Most of the information are from available literature, primary and secondary data, the present article has used books, journals, research articles, websites for the preparation of the same.

### NATURE, MEANING, CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF RAGGING

Ragging is a rampart 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 (CSR, 2009). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Ragging means the act of practice of playing singing or dancing in ragtime. Readers Digest Great Encyclopedia Dictionary describes ragging as 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. The Chambers English Dictionary describes ragging as an outburst of organized horseplay, usually in defiance authority, riotous festivity, especially of under graduates in British Universities, associated with the raising of money and charity.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has given a comprehensive meaning of ragging has "Ragging is any disorderly conduct, weather 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 indiscipline 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 psycho of a fresher or a junior student.

Ragging means the following: Any act, conduct or practice by which dominant powers of senior students, former students or outsiders, is brought to bear on students freshly enrolled or students who are in any way considered juniors by the other students and includes individual or collective acts or practices, which involved physical or psychological assault or threat or use of force or wrongful confinement or restraint; violet the status, dignity and honor of such students: or expose students to ridicule and contempt and affect their self-esteem; or entail verbal abuse and aggression incident gesture and obscene behavior (Chitkara University, 2009).

## FORMS OF RAGGING

- ***The Verbal Torture:***

Verbal torture involves including in loose latkes. The fresher may be asked to sing the lyrics of any vulgar songs or use abusive language while talking to the seniors.

- ***Dress Code ragging:***

The freshers are asked to dress in a specific dress code for a particular period of time. The dress code ragging may make the fearless men awkward and uncomfortable as it often brings them unnecessary attention from everybody.

- ***Formal Introduction:***

Formal introduction involves asking the freshmen to introduce themselves different style. The introduction includes the fresher's name, address, school, marks, hobbies etc.

- ***Sexual Abuse:***

This is the severest form of ragging that takes place in educational institution. The seniors are mainly interested in juicy details such as the anatomical description of one's body part, his or her sexual interests. In many cases, the freshmen have been asked to strip before the seniors.

- ***Playing the Food:***

The freshers may be asked to enact some scene from a particular movie or mimic a particular film star. In many cases, the seniors may also ask the fresher men to do silly things like climbing a tree, kissing a tree, proposing to someone from the opposite sex etc.

- ***Hostel Ragging:***

Outstanding students who stay in the hostel are most vulnerable to ragging. They may be asked to do all odd acts from cleaning the rooms for seniors to washing their cloths, from fetching them water or milk to completing their assignments.

- ***Drug Abuse:***

This can be the worst form of ragging wherein the freshmen are forced to try drugs thereby driving them into addiction etc. (Shinde, 2017)

## CAUSES OF RAGGING

1. Importance, the seniors get in the initial stage of admission by helping and guiding the newcomers for various things in the absence of or ineffectiveness of institutional mechanism to help them at that point, resulting in their getting indebted to seniors and thereby feeling compelled to do their buildings.
2. Eagerness of seniors to show off their power, authority and superiority and influence over their junior students.
3. Being a means of retaliation, seniors were ragged, so they also do the same thing to the juniors,
4. Introduction to the juniors.
5. Use of alcohol in the hostels.
6. Satisfaction of sadistic pleasures.

7. Making a “Fashion Statement”, many seniors students live under the misconception that ragging makes a style statement and will put them in the “Influential Crowd” of the institutions.
8. Lack of supervision and lack of implementation of serious anti-ragging measures by the institute’s authority.
9. Vacant or no posts of wardens in the hostels. Many wardens are not actually staying in the hostels.
10. Ragging not considered as a social evil. (Chopra, 2009)

## NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE EFFECTS OF RAGGING

Negative effects of ragging include development of psychological, physical, emotional and behavioral problems. It is stress which is believed to be caused mostly by external events. Ragging mainly induces stress. Even the very thought of ragging provokes enough stress among the students taking admission at various courses. It has physical, emotional and behavioral effects on students and can create negative feeling. Stress is a mind and body response or reaction to a real or imagined threat, event or change. It is somewhat nonspecific biological, emotional and behavioral process that occurs when physical or psychological wellbeing is disturbed or threatened. It produces severe anxiety. Any environmental condition or event that disrupts or is perceived as a threat to physical or psychological well-being, may evoke stress. Stress is one of the most important variables of ragging which leads a person towards psychological, physiological, cognitive and behavioral problems.

Positive aspects of ragging, ragging could be considered positive if it is done within the decent limit 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 practices it used to be and has acquired more connotations and notoriety.

## THE LAGISLATIVE MEASUR

In order to control and eradication of evil of ragging from the educational institutions, the state government have enacted legislations to deal with ragging and made some effective provisions in these legislations, but implementation of this legislation can be prevented menace ragging. The following are the important legislations in few states to deal with ragging.

1. The Karnataka Education Act, 1983.
2. The Tripura Educational Institution (Prevention of Ragging) Act, 1990.
3. The Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1996.
4. The Andhra Pradesh Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1997.
5. The Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1998.
6. The Assam Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1998.
7. The Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1999.
8. The West Bengal Prohibition of Ragging in Educational Institutes Act, 2000.
9. The Chhattisgarh Shaikshanik Santhan Me Pratarna Ka Pratishedh Act, 2001.
10. The Himachal Pradesh Educational Institutional (Prohibition of Ragging) Act, 2009.
11. The Jammu and Kashmir Prohibition of Ragging Act, 2011.



**GUIDELINES TO CRUB THE MENANCE OF RAGGING**

- ❖ More accountability of the staffs, like surprise visit to the hostel etc.
- ❖ A comprehensive anti-ragging laws by the parliament.
- ❖ Ragging should be treated a severe nature of crime and abuse of human rights.
- ❖ Anti-Ragging committee should be established in the educational institutions.
- ❖ Moral support towards victims of ragging.
- ❖ Encourage intellectual and physical and cultural activities towards educational institutions.
- ❖ Institutions must take up steps to install Closed Circuit Television (CCTV).

**CONCLUSION**

Ragging is considered as an act of humiliation to socialize newcomers into educational institutions. It can cause physical, behavioral, emotional and social problems among victims. The practice cannot be curbed only by enactment of legislation, but there need of proper implementation of laws and follows preventive measures suggested by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in different cases, and guidelines published through the regulation published by the VGC. To curb the trend of ragging, anti-ragging committee or squad or patrol can reduce the burden of ragging. Ragging can be stopped by creating awareness among students, teachers and parents. Ill effects of ragging must be coordinated through an orientation program among students, teachers, parents and the media. Finally, a policy of zero tolerance on ragging is essential.

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