



Ragging: A Variegated Phenomenon

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Abstract: Punishment should not be the only solution for the prevention of Ragging. It could be prevented if children are sensitized w.r.t Ragging at the school stage itself by inculcating sense of equality and the desirable value system. This article aims at reflecting upon implications of the existence of Ragging on education and attempts at providing solutions to curb Ragging.

Keywords: Ragging, UGC, University Education Commission, sensitization.

Introduction

Today in the era of globalization when we are emphasizing on making better international relations, somewhere it is resentful of the fact that we are unable to maintain even human relations with each other. Such cruel form of inhumanity is very evident in the Indian educational institutions in the form of Ragging. It has proved to be one of the greatest menace in the educational institutions in which dignity of an individual is completely destroyed and consequently may impact on the future well being of an individual. It was rightly stated by honorable President of India, Smt. Pratibha Patil (May 09,2009,TOI), "I saw the agony of parents who lost their child in a Ragging incident. These are intelligent and brilliant students. Those new students who are subjected to Ragging can go through a range of emotions from fear to humiliation. It is a crime against humanity". Ragging is not only about humiliation instead it is multi-faceted which has psychological, sociological, intellectual as well as academic impact on the individual. Every year a colossal amount of cases simply depicts the failure of educational institutions and the entire educational system of India as whole in terms of implementation of some strict laws as well as preventive, curative and

corrective measures to eradicate Ragging. It is a matter of consideration that of 1183 cases of Ragging reported to the UGC from universities and colleges in 2013 and 2014 from across the country, the Police filed an FIR in 66 cases(30 May,2015,TOI). This data on Ragging was revealed in a reply given by UGC to an RTI application filed by a student of school of Law in KIIT University, Orissa. The RTI applicant sought the information in Dec 2014 and got response only in May 2016, itself depicts our intent to curb Ragging.

Historical Perspective

Ragging is not an indigenous phenomenon rather it can be referred as the product of British system of education. This phenomenon can be traced back to as early as 7th or 8th century A.D. In Greek culture, new entrants to the sport community were subjected to all kind of humiliation and teasing to inculcate, a team spirit in them. It aims to make individual fail as an individual and succeed as a team. Gradually, with the passage of time this technique was subjected myriad modification and was later adopted by the military forces, from there it finally entered in the educational system. Ragging underwent several modifications



before emerging into an organized form of campus violence.

The first Ragging related death occurred in 1873, when a freshman from Cornell University fell into a gorge as a consequence of Ragging. Ragging underwent massive transformation after World War I. It started to acquire its real brutal form during this period. Soldiers returning from war re-entered the college and brought with them the techniques of Ragging learned in military camp. These students didn't understand the purpose or usage of these techniques and Ragging became a brutal and hazardous exercise. Gradually in the early 20th century Ragging related violence started to escalate in the western countries. In India, Ragging existed in the army and English public schools much before the country's independence and it became conspicuous only after independence. Till the late 60's Ragging was not a serious problem in India. During this period it was relatively in a milder form. It was primarily because higher education during this period was confined to civilized section of the society. Gradually as the higher education became more and more accessible to different communities, ragging became a soft weapon to settle the animosity between students of different castes, communities, religion, etc. In India, the problem of students indiscipline is not new. As rightly stated by University Education Commission (1948-49) that students indiscipline in universities and colleges during that period, was continuously increasing. There were many causes for this growing indiscipline-social, political, economic and academic. During 80's media (particularly Indian Cinema) has played a very crucial role in glorifying the practice of Ragging in Indian educational

institutions. It became more brutal and violent during that time. It became a measuring tool to test the grit of seniors. Many seniors, who were reluctant to rag their juniors, finally succumbed to peer pressure. It is still an important factor in Indian ragging. During 90's rapid mushrooming of private medical and engineering colleges resulted disastrous experiments of Ragging. It made Southern India a hub of this brutal activity. In 1997, Tamil Nadu which was one of the worst affected state, became the first province in India to bring legislation against Ragging. In 2001, the hon'ble Supreme Court of India banned Ragging throughout the country. It was then left to the college authorities to enforce this law. This led to complete disappearance of day-time Ragging in-campus which was much healthier and safer mode of interaction while more threatening and violent Ragging in the hostels continues to thrive in most of the colleges.

The Expansive Existence

Ragging is not an issue related to a particular person, but it is a social problem with the questions and answers both lying with the society. Ragging may also be referred to as a Public health problem. Indian Journal of Medical Sciences presented an article on "Ragging: A Public health problem in India" (2009) by Rajesh Garg. The article presented the view that Ragging should be declared a public health problem because it involves the physical, mental and social exploitation of not only an individual but also of his/her family and the society as whole.

In present times, much emphasis has been given to make global education but



we are not still able to evolve as a concrete educational system which free from curse of Ragging. One of the main reasons behind it is that proper measures has not been implemented widely, it is still believed that Ragging is confined to higher education only .But it is not so. This menace in educational institutions is spread to school education also. School period plays a very significant role in an individual's life where his/her overall personality has been shaped in which his/her personal experience holds a crucial role. So humiliation caused because of Ragging may hamper overall development of a child. It is very important that proper and effective measures should be implemented at the grassroot level. But the dilemma lies here that many cases in India still remains either un-reported or adequate steps are not being taken towards this direction.

The existence of such heinous phenomenon called Ragging clearly indicates that somewhere our government has failed in providing basic human rights to an individual and simultaneously ,it is the failure of the regulatory bodies that the recommendation of the committees are not being properly implemented. Many committees were appointed ,laws has been enacted, guidelines were given to eradicate Ragging. But still it is a matter to ponder that then where the educational institutions are lacking. Much has been talked on how the menace of Ragging could be curbed but the matter of serious concern is how much of it are implemented in the educational institutions. Every year several students lose their lives because of Ragging. If all the Universities ensure that they will not tolerate a single minor case of Ragging, then only the educational institutions

could free themselves from curse of Ragging. This can only be accomplished if the educational institutions ensure proper implementation of law. Most importantly sensitize various stakeholders and functionaries.

Ragging is a global phenomenon. In India, although Ragging is strictly banned in the educational institutions but this ban has not been very effective, as evident by the number of cases reported by the media by time to time. However, India has taken a strong step towards eradication of Ragging as it has been declared a criminal offence. According to the Dr. Raghavan Committee (2007) which had been constructed by the Union Human Resource Development Ministry on the orders of the Supreme Court of India ,the medical colleges are the worst affected in India. The UGC has issued guidelines against Ragging across the country but how much of it is being implemented in the educational institution is a matter to study.

Educational Implications

1. There should be provisions in the universities for the identification of potential raggers so that Ragging does not become a vicious circle where victim became the perpetrator.
2. Assistance of the professional counselors should be provided to the freshers for their adjustment in the university life and making them feel at home.
3. There should be mandatory professional training of wardens in counseling so that they could perform their duties more effectively.



4. There should be mandatory numbers of meeting involving DSW, Proctor and Wardens to be held in order to discuss disciplinary concern.
5. Steps should be taken in order to display statements that inform the freshers of their rights and seniors of the penalties and punishment (legal) that could be imposed upon them in event of Ragging. Students need such vital pieces of information the most.
6. Ragging should not be considered as a means of interaction. It is a criminal offence which impacts the standards of higher education. It should be curbed from all the educational institutions and everyone in the society should be stakeholder in it.
7. Ragging has different forms with various dimensions. It should not be considered as mild leg pulling activity rather students should be aware of its all forms with its various implications.
8. During school stage , student should be acquainted with human rights education awakening them against the evil of Ragging, so that they do not indulge in it.
9. Ragging neither develops interaction between seniors and freshers nor does it make freshers obedient to the seniors. It is social evil and should not be allowed in any manner.
10. A victim of any Ragging incident should raise his/her voice against it as Ragging through human rights perspective involves injury caused to the fundamental right to human dignity through humiliation. More attempt should be made by various stakeholders in order to make students aware of anti-ragging laws in practice.
11. Punishment of the Ragers should be exemplary and justifiably harsh to act as deterrence against the recurrence of any Ragging incident.

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