

Essay on Ragging: A Menace

The Supreme Court defined ragging following words: "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 other student indulging in rowdy or indisciplined activities which causes or likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in a fresher or a junior student or asking the students to do any act or perform something which such students will not do in the ordinary course and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the physique or psyche of a fresher or a junior student."

The apex court has taken into consideration while defining ragging all kinds of acts faced by a fresher or a junior while subjected to ragging by the seniors.

Ragging has become a menace, cause of fear and shock not only for a fresher but to his parents too who are sending the loved ones for pursuing higher education by investing a lot of hard-earned money. Several intellectual youths have become the martyr of ragging, some have suffered a nervous breakdown, some left the institutes after being suffered from ragging, some have committed suicide and some were murdered by the seniors on the pretext of ragging.

The court, the authorities, the principal, and every concern, have described ragging as a heinous practice, but a very paradoxical situation is, it still persists in spite of all the rules, regulations, and directives of courts, and authorities. None could claim to have stopped it 100%.

The most gruesome incidence of ragging came into light in Nov. 1986, when Navarasu a 17-year-old first-year medical student of Annamalai University, Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu, was brutal, murdered by a senior named 'David' who was said to be a Karate expert. He killed Navarasu because he refused to submit to his whims of ragging.

In Aug. 2003, an engineering student of Engineering College Jalpaiguri in West Bengal was admitted to hospital after he was subjected to night long brutal ragging by his seniors. The victim was beaten up with iron rods and cycle chains for refusing to strip before the seniors.

In Aug. 2003, IIT Delhi expelled five senior students for they were found indulging in ragging of a fresher who left the college after being ragged by these seniors. In the same month, a student of Pune Institute quit, just a few days after joining it in July due to the same reason of being subjected to inhumane ragging.

The governments, Central as well as States, have taken positive steps again to stop this practice. In 1997, the HRD Minister, Mr. S.R. Bommai, apprised the Raj ya Sabha that steps were being taken to ensure that those found guilty of ragging can be treated as guilty of gross misconduct and subsequently, the penalty of rustication or removal from the rolls of the universities could be imposed on the offenders. He also informed in the house that instruction has been issued to the universities, and institutions and the State Governments to take stern action to curb this menace and to invoke the provisions of law if needed.

A few years ago, the Governor of Kerala, promulgated the "Kerala Prohibition Of Ragging Ordinance" seeking to prohibit ragging in educational institutions in the State. The ordinance inter alia provides dismissal of a student from the educational institution, who

found indulged in acts of ragging and that student is to be further debarred for taking admission in any other educational institute for five years from the date of order of such dismissal.

The Supreme Court while dealing with public interest litigation in 2001 said that 'failure to prevent ragging by the management would mean an act of negligence in maintaining discipline in the institution. The Principal and other authority will be liable to face action in case a student is subjected to ragging'. The Supreme Court further directed that "If an institution fails to curb ragging the UGC/ funding agency may consider stoppage of financial assistance to such an institution till such time it implements the anti-ragging norms". A University may consider disaffiliating a college or institution that fails to curb ragging the court administered a clear warning. Though the Supreme Court has also issued very strict and stringent guidelines to curb the menace of ragging yet a point to ponder is why the students resort to such heinous practice, after all these so-called seniors are also from a decent home and belong to the intellectual group of students of the nation.

Why do few resort to such socially unacceptable behavior? Why the so-called seniors do not understand the problems of their own juniors and subjecting them to such intolerable inhumane acts?

Serious thought is given to the above questions, we find that our present education system is intended to create intelligentsia, but they are absolutely lacking moral and ethical values. We do not teach our students, philanthropic and moral values. There is no place for ethics in our education, we are just teaching them the importance of the materialistic value of money. The result has become meaningless. How alone the students are to blame, for such acts? Teachers and parents are also equally responsible for they are unable to cultivate in a good citizen. Academic qualification alone is of no value. If

education does not teach students to share the problems of others to love all serve all, it would become meaningless.

It shall be important to quote the following words of a great thinker that

If money is lost, nothing is lost
If health is lost, somethings are lost.
If a character is lost, everything is lost.

To stop the menace of ragging it is but necessary to inculcate among the students, importance of good character, the importance of love, and affection towards their juniors and fellow beings.