

Menace of Ragging: An Observation of the Stakeholders



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Abstract

There is a need of awareness among the students, parents and teachers community about harmful of ragging. Active people participation and government initiative needs to play a vital role in eradication of ragging in the institutions. The educational institutions are facing a number of problems in India and Ragging is one the evil. Now, it is a very critical problem, it is effect human dignity, even sometime victims attempt to suicide by fresher's and lost their life. The cause of indulging in ragging is deriving a sadistic pleasure or showing off power, authority or superiority by the seniors over their juniors. Ragging can, be stopped by creating awareness amongst the students, teachers and parents through various mode of communication.

Keywords: Teacher, Ragging, Teasing, Institution, Practice.

Introduction

The first decade of the 21st century was very important in the history of higher education in India. There were three major ragging incident took place in various institutions such as Medical College in Himachal Pradesh, Sardar Vallbhabhai Patel National Institute of Technology, Surat and recently in Bhopal etc. During this decade two path breaking ideas have been rolled out by two agencies namely the national knowledge commission and national committee on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education in India¹. It has been rightly said that the end may not justify the means. Behind the facade of "inviting" new students to the institution, ragging, in actually, is a notorious practice wherein the senior students get an excuse to harass their junior counterparts, and more often than not, make them easy targets to satisfy their own wicked sadistic pleasure.² Ragging develop the fear to live in present and future in the concern institution. For any student who struggles day and night to secure admission into a prestigious institution, ragging can be his or her worst nightmares come true. So, now-a-days ragging has taken the shape of serious human rights violation in various institutions in India.

Review of Literature

The existing work shows that, Duke of Exeter³ introduced the term 'ragging' in England. Rack was used to torture the victim whom was gradually mixed-up with gagging. Egyptians, Romans, Greeks were also following up which was introduced in England. In army Schools of England it existed as tradition. If we observe the historical development of ragging it is traced back to 7th and 8th century A.D., referring to Spanish game of bull fighting. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury,⁴ introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha and he discussed about the new rules and regulation which may restrict the ragging in the institutions. The report of the Supreme Court contains several specific recommendations based on the observations and analysis of direction by the committee of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. It is the complete guideline for the institutions about the rule and regulation against the ragging.⁵ S. K. Ghose, in his work described the origin and development of the concept ragging in various historical period in the globalised perspectives, in the colleges and other places.⁶ Recently the work of Venketeswarlu,⁷ highlight what are the effects of ragging in human dignity and also discussed the report of United Nation human right commission.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to identify the major problems of ragging, to check out the awareness among the students, parents and teachers and to examine the danger and its impact on society.

Adopted Methods

Standard anthropological tools and techniques have been applied for collection of empirical data. The case study method and interview

techniques using detailed questionnaire schedules were adopted to understand the people's practices and opinion regarding the Menace of Ragging which is prevalent in the institutions. The population consists of the parents, teachers and students of H.P. University, Shimla. From among the sample selected were 15 groups. There are three groups of teacher and parents respectively and nine groups are student. Each group consists of six persons and the male and female ratio is same. The tool used in this work was opinion with three points (*Yes, No, No Comment and Agree, Disagree and No Comment and some subjective questions*), so as to make the analysis and interpretation tangible. After the responses from the stakeholders the percentage technique is used in excel to analyze the data more statistically.

Definition and Meaning of Ragging

We understand that "ragging is 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 undisciplined activities which cause or are likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or 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"

Structure of Ragging

Ragging is a criminal offence in India. However, unfortunately ragging is still rampant in many campuses across the country. Many youngsters have been suffering from inhuman abuses, in the hand of some seniors. Still, innocent teenagers die and many get badly injured. Some of the most popular forms of ragging in institution are:

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.

Formal Introduction

This involves asking the freshmen to introduce themselves in "Shudh Hindi". The introduction includes the freshmen name, address, school, marks, hobby etc.

Dress Code Ragging

The freshmen are asked to dress in a specific dress code for a particular period of time. But this is not as easy as it seems. For the dress code prescribed is generally weird that is dressing totally in white or black with the hair oiled and combed in a particular style. The dress code ragging may make the freshmen feel awkward and uncomfortable as it often brings them unnecessary attention from everybody.

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 complements their assignments.

Sexual Abuse

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

Drug Abuse

This can be the worst form of ragging wherein the freshmen are forced to try drugs thereby driving them into addiction.

Description of Ragger Psychology⁸

It is to be understood that ragging is not merely a social-legal problem. It has a certain psychological basis too. Just as every crime has a motive, what is it that propels a 'professional ragger' to indulge in ragging? The following are the possible reasons that initiate ragging:

1. Ragging gives a sense of authority: by having the freshmen always at his command, a senior student nurtures a sense of authority which boasts his morals and puts him on a high.
2. Ragging can be a mean of retaliation: a senior who has some previous history of ragging may like to get back by venting his frustration on the freshmen.
3. Satisfaction of sadistic pleasure: a potentials ragger sees ragging as a good opportunity to satiate his sadistic pleasure all at the cost of a poor freshmen's imagination.
4. Peer pressure: 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 group.
5. Ragging makes a fashion statement: 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.

Affects of Ragging

An unpleasant incident of ragging may leave a permanent scare in the victim's mind that may haunt him/her for years to come. The victim decline into a shell forcing him into humiliation and alienation from the rest of the world. Ragging demoralise the victim, who joins college life with many hopes and expectations. Though incident of physical assault and previous injurious are not new, ragging also simultaneously causes grave psychological stress and trauma to the victim. Those students who choose to protest against ragging are very likely to face ostracism from their seniors in the future. Those who succumb to ragging may drop out thereby hampering their career prospect. In extreme cases, incident of suicides and homicide have also been reported.

The Family Unit of the Sufferer

One can imagine the plight of a ragging victim family, especially his or her parents and relatives who see their child suffering in pain and stress. Moreover incurring medical and other incidental expenses to rehabilitation their children, they also have to bear the trauma of seeing his or her prospective career coming to an end.

Asian Resonance

The Institution

A severe medium barrage in extreme cases of ragging lowers the character of the educational institution and destroys 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.

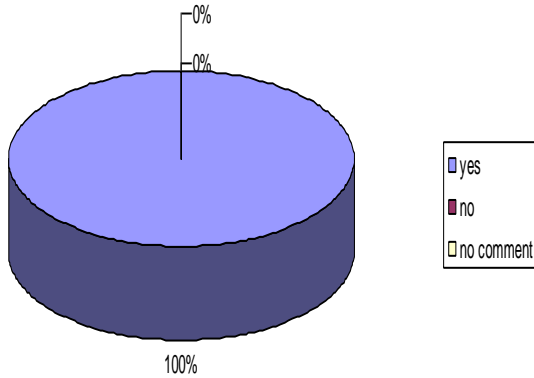
The Ragers

Ragging does not spare even its perpetrators. Those found guilty of ragging may be suspended, blacklisted and even permanently expelled from the college. Thus we see that the practice of ragging does not do well to any. From those who are victims of ragging to those who commit or encourage it, ragging spares nothing.

Interpretation of Data

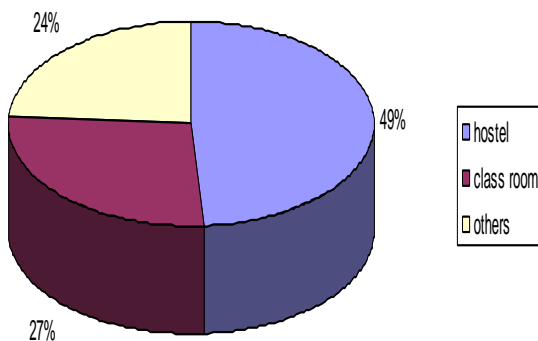
The data was interpreted based on the given questionnaire to the stakeholders i.e. the parents, teachers and students respectively. Each statement was examined and displayed in the following manner:

Statement No. 1: Aware About Menace of Ragging



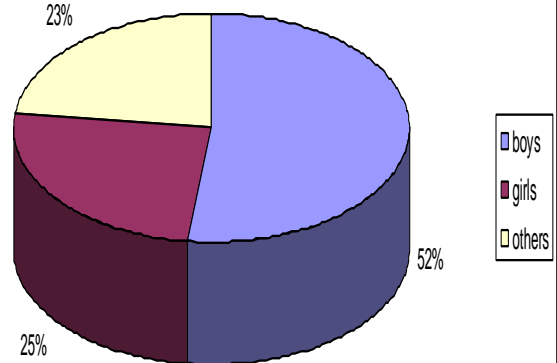
For the above statement 100% of the stakeholder were agree about the menace of ragging in the institution.

Statement No. 2: Place of the Ragging Incidents



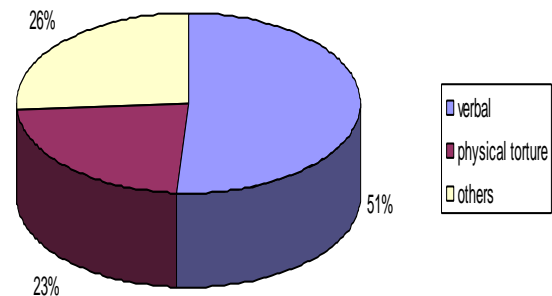
Above statement shows that 49% agree that ragging takes place in the hostel, 27% in the class room and rest 24% in other places like canteen, bus, private boarding and during fresher and excursion. This means that menace of ragging is high in hostels with regard to other places.

Statement No. 3: Persons those who are Engaged in Ragging



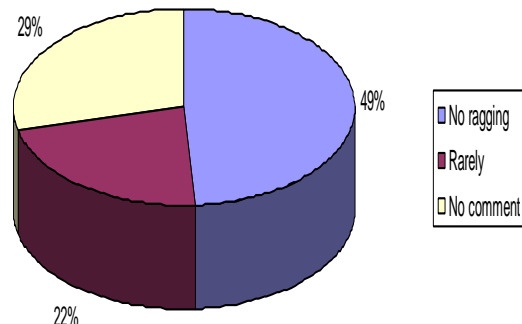
Above statement shows that 52% boys, 25% girls and 23% others (outsiders) are active in ragging. This table shows that more than half of the ragers are boys who engaged in ragging activities, where one can find girls are in the second position.

Statement No. 4: Nature of Ragging



If we examine the nature of the ragging one can find that 51% ragging is verbal, 23% is physical torture and 26% is others like molestation, financial exploitation etc.

Statement No.5: Frequency of Ragging in Institution

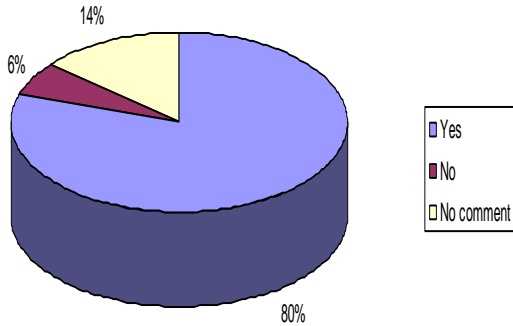


Above statement depicts that 49% of the stakeholders are of the opinion that since last five years there is no any ragging in the institution. Whereas, 22% says that ragging took place rarely

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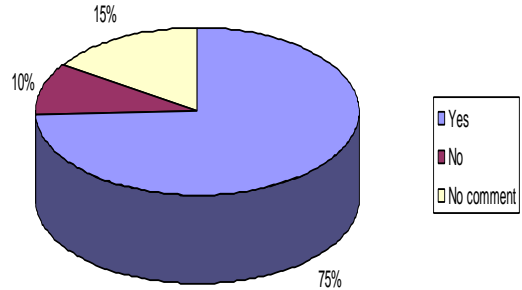
during admission and freshmen social interaction and 29% have not given their comments on this issue.

Statement No.6: Laws Concerning Ragging



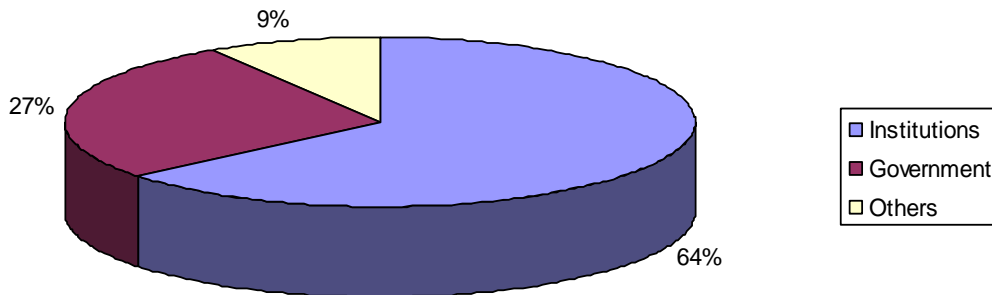
Above figure shows that 80% of the respondents are aware about the laws. 6% are not aware and remaining 14% have not given their opinion regarding the existing laws.

Statement No.7: Awareness about Anti-Ragging Committee(S)



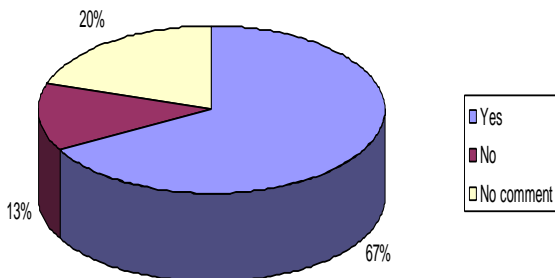
Above statement inferred that 75% are aware of the anti-ragging committee(s). On the other hand 10% are unconscious and 15% of the respondents are passive.

Statement No.8 Organizations that Control Ragging



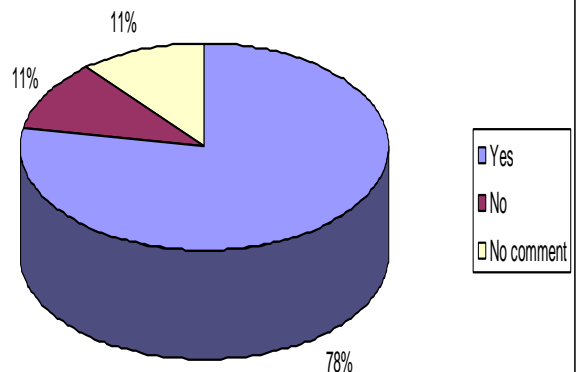
For the above figure, 64% of the incidents are controlled by the institutions, 27% by the government and 9% by others like social groups and NGO's. This figure shows that institutions are playing a major role to eradicate the menace of ragging.

Statement No.9: Application of Laws Made by Institutions



Above statement depicts that 67% respondents agreed that the institution is able to apply the laws made by the authority and 13% are not agreed whereas, 20% of the respondents did not comment on this issue.

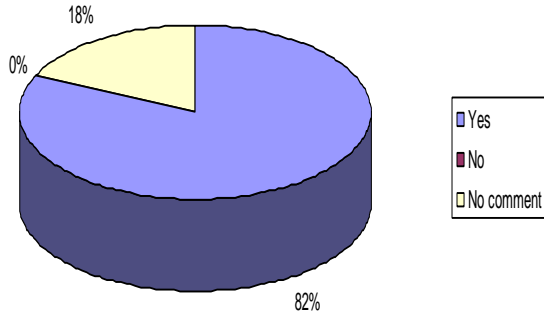
Statement No.10: Status of Anti-Ragging Cell in the Institution



This above table shows that, 78% are for the establishment of the anti-ragging cell, 11% are against the establishment of anti-ragging cell and remaining 11% did not made any comment on it.

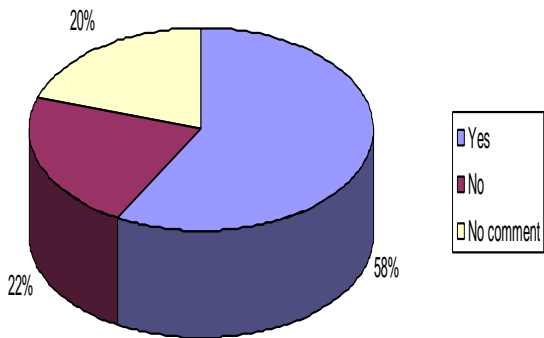
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Statement No.11: Function of UGC Anti-Ragging Cell.



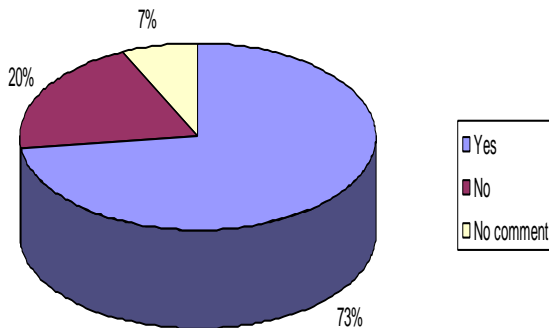
In the above statement it is interpreted that 82% are of the opinion that the institution is following the procedure of UGC anti-ragging cell whereas, 18% did not made comment regarding this statement.

Statement No.12: Ignorance of Teachers on Ragging



The given statement says that 58% feels that ignorance of teachers is one of the causes of ragging, 22% did not support while 20% did not made any comment.

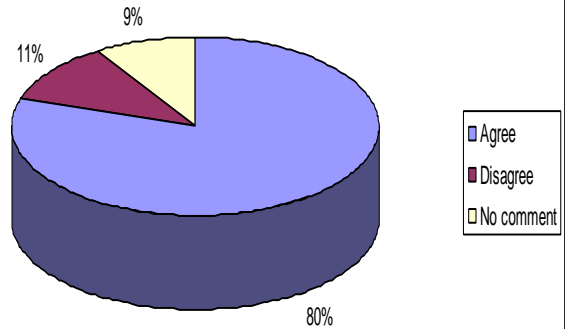
Statement No.13: Factor of Stress



In the above statement it is seen that 73% of the respondents supported that ragging is the major stress among the youth. While 20% did not support

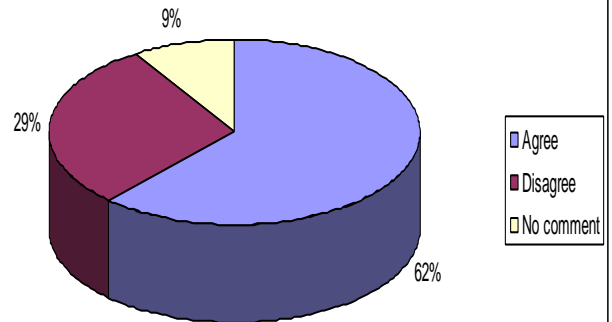
and 7% could not decide. Here, ragging acted as one of the strong factor of stress among the youth.

Statement No.14: Influence of Ragging in the Academic Performance of Students



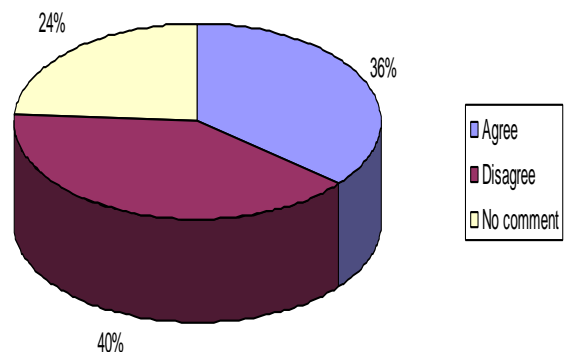
The influence of ragging in the academic performance of the students is supported by 80% and 11% are not agreed. It is also seen that 9% did not made any remark.

Statement No.15: Serious issue for New Generation



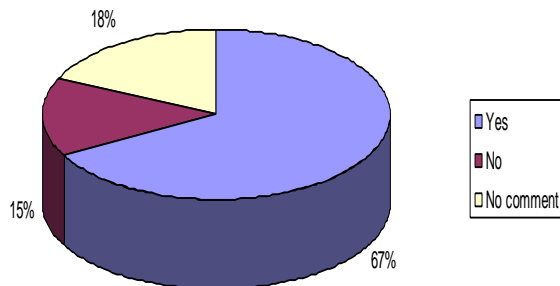
Above statement shows that 62% agree that ragging is a serious issue for the coming generation while 29% did not agree and 9% could not decide.

Statement No.16: Ragging-the Main Cause for Suicide



This table shows that, 40% are of the opinion that ragging is the main cause for suicide whereas, 24% could not agree and 24% made no comment.

Statement No.17: Role of Society



In the above statement it is observed that 67% of the respondents said, society should perform a major role to remove the nuisance of ragging. Another 15% did not think so while 18% remained unanswered.

Statement No.18: Role of Security Guard

Majority of the respondents given the positive role of security. They can only report their higher authority in this matter whereas; very less percentage had no comment in this matter.

Statement No.19: Complaint on Ragging

There is hardly any ragging incident takes place in the university since five years.

Statement No.20: Punishment for ragers

Majority of the participants said that punishment should be given on the basis of grade of the ragging. It should be on the rank basis like, Warning-Fine-Rustication-FIR in Police station etc.

Focus Discussion Group: (FGD)

We have arranged a group discussion with the thirty students from department of social work headed by Jitendra Debariya. The discussion was based on ragging and their situation in the present context. Most of the student's opinion that ragging is a criminal offence and it should not be happened in any institutions. The major forms of ragging are verbal and physical whereas the girls take only verbal mode. The major cause of the ragging is the identity crisis. There should be the punishment for ragging but it depends on the type. There should be the psychological treatment for those who engaged in the ragging. It is danger for the coming generation.

Research Findings

1. All the respondents are aware about the menace of ragging.
2. Most of the ragging takes place in hostel.
3. Boys are mostly engaged in ragging activities and are in the form of verbal.

4. There is hardly any ragging incident takes place in HP University.
5. Majority of the respondents are aware about the laws and anti-ragging committee.
6. It is found that the institution is able to implement the UGC rules on ragging.
7. Ignorance of teacher is one of the causes of ragging and it is a serious issue for new generations.
8. The study reveals that ragging creates stress among the youth and influence academic performance of the student.
9. Majority of the respondents are of the view that punishment should be given to the ragers.
10. Psychological treatment should be given to the ragers.

Conclusion

Ragging is becoming a national and international issue affecting thousands of students across the globe. Various countries, especially the supreme court of India too could not remain muted and seriously condemned the issue. Ragging is an offence and has been banned in almost all the States of our country. However, the existing laws are not sufficient to end this menace. Ragging in educational institutions is a malady that affects youths. The first and foremost being lack of proper care of children during their growing years. A neglected, misguided youngster turns into a pervert and begins to indulge in bullying and in all sorts of wrong doings just to show his machismo. Some who indulge in ragging are those who had themselves suffered.

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