

Ragging in Indian Universities and Colleges



Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education
(CURE)

Estd. 2001

www.noragging.com



CURE

CURE is a non-profit organisation dedicated solely towards the elimination of ragging and promoting more positive ways of interaction among seniors and freshers in Indian universities and colleges



Our Focus

- To establish public opinion against ragging
- To dispel the myths about ragging through research and advocacy
- To present a platform for every individual who wishes to share his/her opinion against ragging



About CURE...

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- CURE was started as a discussion forum on Yahoo! in 2001 but soon launched its website to create awareness against ragging.
- CURE website receives an average of 50-100 hits everyday.
- CURE has a network of activist in several major cities and colleges across India.
- CURE has been exclusively engaged in research and advocacy on ragging since past six years.



...About CURE

2

- Featured in several major news channels and newspapers in the country
- Conceptualized and anchored a show on ragging for Doordarshan
- Have participated in several discussion panels and seminars on ragging
- Annual newsletters are distributed through the network of volunteers
- CURE website and its research work have been referred by many institutions and individuals
- CURE has a database of ragging incidents for the last 10 years



Ragging

- A traditional and systematic human rights abuse practiced by seniors upon freshers.
- Forms of ragging may vary from a healthy and mild interaction to a severe physical and traumatic mental abuse leading to victims' death.
- Though it was practiced all around the world but is now confined mainly to South-Asia.



History of Ragging... 1

- Started in its mild form in the 8th century A.D. during the Olympics in Greece.
- Later the armed forces of several countries started practicing this ritual.
- During the 18th century several students organizations were formed in the Europe and the US and started practicing this with the new entrants in their community in its mild form.
- During the world war I ragging underwent a massive transformation. Students who returned from war and rejoined college brought with them the techniques of severe form of ragging practiced in army camps.



...History of Ragging 2

- Gradually in the 20th century ragging related violence started to escalate in the west.
- Soon it became a tool to take out revenge between the Blacks and Whites.
- Ragging came to India during the British Empire and was practiced mainly in the army and English public schools.
- Till the early 70's it remained in its mild form. From 1980 onwards media played a vital role in influencing ragging in India and it gradually became brutal in its form.
- Rapid mushrooming of private engineering and medical colleges during the 90's made ragging more rampant and severe. South India became the hub of this activity.
- In 1997, Tamil Nadu became the first state to bring a legislation against ragging.



Around the World

- Ragging is termed with different names in different parts of the world eg. Hazing, fagging, pledging horse-playing, bullying etc.
- First ragging related death occurred in 1873 in Cornell University in the US.
- Ragging became a major problem in the west after world war I. It started to decrease in 70's and 80's. Strict laws were made and Universities and Colleges devised alternative methods of interaction.
- Bullying, a milder form of ragging is still being practiced in some schools in the west . It involves teasing of students coming from different backgrounds.



Effects of Ragging

- Physical injury through beating, hitting by objects or by forcing to perform dangerous tasks
- Sexual abuse by forced stripping, masturbation, forced unnatural sex etc.
- Psychological trauma generated because of intense fear.
- Human Rights abuse
- Forceful initiation to alcoholism, smoking and drugs
- Dropping out from college
- Group Violence
- Leads to mob mentality & violent mindset
- Deaths



Myths and Facts... 1

- **Myth** Ragging makes a student bold and prepares us for the difficult circumstances in Life. It makes us strong.
- **Fact** Boldness as instilled by ragging is a weak acceptance of fate by victims. It teaches us how to be exploited and mutely, non-resistively accept it.
- **Myth** Ragging helps in breaking the ice between the seniors and freshers. It helps in their interaction and developing friendship between them.
- **Fact** Ragging is an archaic method of interaction with several harmful effects. Today with advance psychological science there are many other healthy ways of interaction which are more effective and without any human rights abuse.
- **Myth** Ragging generates a feeling of unity and Oneness.
- **Fact** Ragging divides the students on the lines of caste, region, class etc. It sets mob mentality in the students.



...Myths and Facts

2

- **Myth** Severe Ragging is not prevalent anymore.
- **Fact** Severe ragging is widely prevalent in most of the college hostels. There have been more than 25 deaths due to ragging in last 7 years. The problem is not yet solved, it is just hidden.

- **Myth** After the ban on ragging, colleges have geared up against it.
- **Fact** Many colleges now try their best to keep the incident under the cover to save themselves from embarrassment and the reputation of the college.



The Psychology Behind Ragging

- Discrimination based on caste, region, language, class etc plays a vital role in influencing it, especially in small cities and towns.
- Ragging is used as a measuring rod to test the courage of the seniors. Many seniors who are reluctant to rag, finally succumb to peer pressure. Many seniors rag just to stay in their group of friends.
- In many instances it starts as a healthy interaction but due to adrenaline rush and excitement in the group the seniors get carried away and ragging turns ugly.
- Students consider ragging as an old ritual having social acceptance.



The Vicious Circle

- Students believe that they were ragged so they have the right to rag their juniors.
- Students believe that it is the only way by which seniors and freshers can interact.
- Students are inculcated with the logic that seniors who rag them will help them later.
- Students feel that they are familiar with their seniors only because they were ragged and thus it ensures the legacy of ragging.
- Every student has a different level of emotional sensitivity. Students are unaware of this and they expect that what they have gone through during their ragging must be endured by their freshers too.



The Denial

- Ragging is not considered a social evil.
- Colleges deny its acceptance in campus for their good reputation and to avoid the possibility of strike and hooliganism by students.
- Most people have indulged in it as seniors and later justify it morally.
- People consider ragging as simple teasing, dancing etc. as usually portrayed by the media and doesn't know its real extent in hostels.
- If people come across any severe case of ragging they take it as an exception.
- Many a times when a ragging incident is reported, then since it involves a severe punishment, it generates sympathy towards the senior and leads to compromise and suppression of the case.

All these facts hamper in establishing a public opinion against ragging



Possible Solutions... 1

• The Hard Approach

- ♦ More accountability of the college staff in case of any ragging incident.
- ♦ Surprise checks by the hostel warden especially during the nights.
- ♦ System of ragging complaint to be made friendlier and safer for the freshers. Faculty members to stay in close contact with the freshers and instill in them a sense of confidence.



...Possible Solutions... 2

● The Soft Approach...

1

- ◆ Promote alternative methods of interactions eg. Dramas, community work, adventurous sports, short trips, evening games and gathering in the presence of hostel warden, Dance, Competitions, name game and various other activities devised by psycho-synthesis and human behavior experts.
- ◆ Second year students must be sensitized about the evils of ragging and the various myths about it.
- ◆ Introduce the concept of sub-group mentorship, with few chosen seniors responsible for the well being of different groups of freshers.



...Possible Solutions 3

• ...The Soft Approach 2

- ♦ Create a massive nationwide awareness about ragging.
- ♦ In an event of severe ragging, victim must be given an option to change the college.
- ♦ Funding for intensive research on ragging.
- ♦ Efforts to be made to make ragging a social evil, by highlighting its ill-effects and thus establish a public opinion against it.



Campaigns

RAGGING-JUST SAY NO!

"The author of silence never had a good ending"



Issued in Public Interest by

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CURE

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Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education



Don't Rag.... Interact!!!

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Victims





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