



## **Familiarisation & its Ways** **Is ragging an archaic model?**

We all move to different stages of life facing new set of people but never really understand the importance, which familiarization has for us. We hardly have to struggle with it until we attain adulthood or exposed to the outside world, which is very much different from a small sheltered niche, well protected by our guardians, where individual's identity is reflected by the identity of the parents.

Without familiarization the true human bonding is very difficult to be established or may take a longer time than normal or worst two strangers may forever remain as strangers and might never find any real connection between them. Therefore it is needless to say that familiarization assumes a great importance in our lives. Over the years several different ways of familiarizations have evolved, which we practice consciously or unconsciously. In today's era psychologists & human behavior experts in the west have worked upon familiarization techniques, and have evolved several new processes which are tailor made for different circumstances achieving superior results.

For most of us our first encounter with any formal process of familiarization occurs when we step into the college life and go through a traditionally notorious phenomenon termed as ragging (or hazing). We often hear a popular phrase that *ragging is a necessary evil*. I no doubt agree that it is an evil but is it really necessary? Familiarization is of course essential for human bonding but ragging is just one of the process which is proven to be ancient with several apparent flaws and harmful side effects.

Ragging as a familiarization process evolved several centuries ago when knowledge on human behavior and psycho synthesis was absolutely zero. It continued for ages merely because no effort was being made to find out a better and a friendlier substitute to this infamous culture of familiarization. Though it did show the success of familiarization to a small extent but it failed to be absolutely inclusive and thus has seen several losses of lives and career. I have so far experienced three different forms of familiarization each having a different degree of inclusiveness and success.

My first encounter with any familiarization process occurred when I entered the medical college and went through the rituals of ragging. This process was so heavily laced with physical and verbal abuse that the true essence of familiarization was completely lacking.



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Directly stepping out from a peaceful and a friendly school life, this practice completely failed to convince me that it was actually any process of familiarization. It rather filled me with feelings of intimidation, vengeance, hostility etc. It was the same feeling of the majority of my fellow batch mates too who chose to compromise with the situation for the sake of their career. After a point the violence finally brought down the curtains to my career in medicine. During the sessions of physical and verbal abuse there was no doubt lot of interaction with the seniors, which eventually led to acquaintance with them, but I still fail to understand the role of physical or verbal abuse for acquaintance. Later my fellow batch mates who somehow successfully graduated from this initiation process became the practitioners for the next year as they were merely indoctrinated by their predecessors that this practice is the only reason for their acquaintance, and must be done with the successors as well, thereby ensuring its legacy. Over the years this familiarization process has put an end to several innocent lives and bright careers all across the world.

After leaving the medical college I got admission in one of the prestigious college of Delhi University and came across another form of familiarization. As compared to the previous one this process seemed a lot friendlier to me. It involved no physical violence but had some verbal communication, which was aimed at making fun of the newcomers basically targeting their weaknesses. Majority of us took it non-seriously and soon forgot it but still a small section of my batch mates found it too humiliating, which filled them with a feeling of vengeance against the seniors forever. Though it didn't result in any loss of life or career and was more inclusive but not *absolutely inclusive*.

Recently I worked on International workshops by the UN and it was here that I came across third & a 21<sup>st</sup> century familiarization process, which is devised by the psycho synthesis experts and sans any sort of torture. In each of these workshops there were 40 odd participants from many different countries & cultures and in the absence of any proper familiarization things would have turned ugly. During the initial weeks we participated in some exercises, which were basically activities to memorize names, adventurous sports to build trust, sub-group mentorship, inter-personal communication, games involving physical contacts, dramas aimed at team building, informal dinners and dance parties in the evening etc. Initially I was not comfortable dancing in public but the best thing was that nobody forced me for it and after seeing others it automatically motivated me so much that gradually I started enjoying it. These exercises were loaded with so much fun that even the shyest person participated whole-heartedly and by the end of the initiation week closeness were seen even between the persons coming from two

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rival cultures. The best aspect of this process was that it had complete freedom of participation with no thrust on anyone & thus showed *absolute inclusiveness*.

Ironically the countries in which ragging was born as a familiarization process and nurtured for centuries is rapidly losing its ground to the modern techniques of familiarizations, which have total inclusiveness and better success. Unfortunately in India the influence of ragging is still so dominant that it has completely blindfolded us to the familiarization techniques of 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and not letting us to adopt them. There is an apparent tendency to defend this evil just for the sake of familiarization without realizing the fact that better ways are now available. The only way by which we can save innocent lives from this evil is by being more open & aware, willingness to change and above all *be dynamic with time*.

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