

STATUS OF RAGGING IN INDIA

The custom of canning (Ragging) is indeed poorly-thought out. A report from 2007 highlights 42 instances of physical injury, and reports on ten deaths purportedly the result of ragging: Ragging has reportedly caused at least 30–31 deaths in the last 7 years. In the 2007 session, approximately 7 ragging deaths have been reported. In addition, a number of freshmen were severely traumatised to the extent that they were admitted to mental institutions. Ragging in India commonly involves serious abuses and clear violations of human rights.

In many colleges, ragging has been strictly banned and is proving effective . However, this ban has not been the case elsewhere, as seen by the number of ragging cases still reported by the media. Ragging involves gross violations of basic human rights. The seniors are known to torture juniors and by this those seniors get some kind of sadistic pleasures.

Though ragging has ruined the lives of many, resistance against it has grown up only recently. Several Indian states have made legislatures banning ragging, and the Supreme Court of India has taken a strong stand to curb ragging. Ragging has been declared a *criminal offence*.

The Indian civil society has also started to mount resistance, only recently.

However, the Anti-Ragging NGO, **Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE)** has supported that ragging is also widely and dangerously prevalent in Engineering and other institutions, mainly in the hostels.

Following a Supreme Court Order, a National Anti-Ragging Helpline was created which helps the victims and take action in cases of ragging, by informing the Head of the Institution and the local police authorities of the ragging complaint from the college. The main feature of the helpline is that the complaints can be registered even without disclosing the name by the victim, through email at **helpline@antiragging.in**, or through phone at **1800-180-5522**

2012

College of Engineering and Management, Kolaghat

A first-year student of electronics and instrumentation at Kolaghat engineering college was allegedly assaulted by his seniors outside the college campus while the West Midnapore boy was on his way back home. On 29 August, seniors with their faces covered slashed the boy's arm, neck and back and threatened him with dire consequences if he ever returned to the college. His parents lodged a complaint with the college director Naredra Nath Jana and Kolaghat police on Monday.

This isn't the first time that Subhro Samanta, a bright student from Daspur resident, has met with such fate.

"My son often used to complain of being assaulted and tortured by seniors. We told him that it was a passing phase and urged him to concentrate on his studies," Subhro's father Tapas Samanta said. Jana has ordered a probe into the attack.

Oxford College of Science and Management, Bangalore

A second-year student of Management, Shobhonesh Naskar died due to ragging done by his own roommates. The college is denying the case since it may deteriorate the reputation. C.I.D investigation is in progress. According to the father of Mr. Shobhonesh, on 13 February 2012, his roommates threw him down from roof while he was talking to his mother.

Ragging Deaths

2010

- **Nagedra AV**, 25, was found dead in Chandigarh's prestigious Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research on 19 April. The doctor had joined this post-graduate institution just two months ago. The police said he jumped to death from the hostel building, his father said he had been pushed. His father said a day ago he had said he was finding it difficult to continue there due to ragging.
- **Sinmoi Debroy**, 21, was found hanging from the ceiling fan, dead, in his hostel room in Chennai on 4 April. It was a private hostel shared by students of various colleges. Most of the 42 SMSes in the Assamese engineering student's mobile phone were threats and abuses from seniors, who also demanded money.
- **Ajub Ajith**, 19, hanged himself to death from the ceiling fan in his house in Thiruvananthapuram on 31 March. He was a student of at the Sarabhai Institute of Science and Technology. He had told his mother that he was being ragged badly, but prevented her from complaining to the principal as, he said, that would make matters worse for him.
- **Satwinder Kumar**, 28, ended his life on 3 March. He was a student of the Advanced Training Institute, Mumbai. In his suicide note he named seven seniors who had ragged him so much that he left for home for Kurukshetra rather than take mid-term exams. Before he could reach home, he committed suicide by throwing himself before a goods train in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district.
- **Premlatha**, 22, committed suicide by consuming sulphuric acid in the chemistry lab of the B.S.Abdur Rahman Crescent Engineering College on 5 February. Her brother singled out one senior, Yogesh, 22, a fourth year student, as the person ragging her the most.
- **Gaurav Sadanand Raut**, 22, strangled himself to death on 9 February in his hostel room in Nashik's Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj Medical College. His father named his roommates Mandhar Monde and Anil Kavade as the culprits. Although the police detained four students, the local NCP MLA, Vasant Pawar, also the general secretary of the college body, denied that the student had been ragged.

2009

- **Anusha** Hyderabad 5 November
- **Ayan Adak** Kolkata 9 October 2009
- On 7 March, **Aman Kachroo**, 19, a first year student of Dr Rajendra Prasad Medical College, Tanda, Kangra, HP, India, had repeatedly complained to his parents about the brutal ragging that took place on the Medical College campus – often by

completely drunk third-year students. On Friday night and Saturday morning (6–7 March 2009), the boy was beaten so badly that he died of brain haemorrhage.

2008

- In September–December 2008, a student of Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad was ragged by 3 of his seniors, namely, Ravi Shankar, a resident of Vadodara; Naveen Tomar, from Hisar; and Ajmer resident P C Gupta. The victim (name withheld) complained that three fellow management students at IMT-Ghaziabad forced him to undress and threw lit matchsticks at his private parts in the campus on 27 September. The Ghaziabad police initially refused to register his complaint, but finally lodged a case on Thursday (4 December) after intervention from the Ghaziabad SSP.

2007

- On 22 October **Amit Tiwari** 22, who was studying Mechanical Engineering at Government Polytechnic in Pratapgarh near Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh died of poisoning, the seniors used to make him strip in front of others and were beaten up when they resisted.
- On 18 September **Durgesh Shukla** hanged himself from a ceiling fan in his hostel room in Pioneer College, Bhopal. He blamed seniors in his suicide note.
- On 8 August **Manjot Singh**, an MBBS student, committed suicide by consuming a poisonous substance. He did so at his residence in Chandigarh, due to ragging in his hostel at the Government Medical College, Chandigarh.
- On 20 September **Chetan Raj**, 18, committed suicide in **Mysore**. His body was found hanging from the roof of his lodge room. He had already complained to his parents that he was being ragged in his college.

2006

- In November **S. P. Manoj** committed suicide in his hostel room at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad.
- On 5 November **Azad Nair**, 22, a cadet at the Officer's Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai. He had hanged himself from the fan of his room. Prior to his suicide he had told his brother Soumendu over telephone that he was being ragged and humiliated at the OTA and he had pleaded to his father Padmanabhan Nair to rescue him from the OTA.

2005

- On 14 December **C Abraham**, a first year engineering student, hanged himself to death at his residence in Hyderabad. In his suicide note, he mentioned that he was not interested in studies. His parents suspected his suicide to be a result of ragging. On 5 December **Sridhar**, 18, hanged himself to the ceiling fan in his hostel room in Chennai. In the English press, only one newspaper in Mumbai reported the incident.
- In July **Kamlesh Sarkar**, 19, committed suicide in a private hotel management institute in Kalyani, Nadia district, West Bengal. The police filed an unnatural death case and not one of ragging.

2004

- On 19 December **Mohan Karthik Tripathy**, 19, hanged himself from a ceiling fan in his hostel room at the SKR Engineering College in Tambaram, Tamil Nadu. His written complaint about ragging to the college authorities had gone unheeded. He had been forced to bathe in his own urine.
- In June, **Sushil Kumar Pandey**, 18, hanged himself to death after the humiliation of being paraded naked by his seniors at the Madan Mohan Malviya Engineering College, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh
- **Aakriti Dhar**
- **Ehsan Saba**

2002

- In September **Anup Kumar**, 19, committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan at his residence in Kanpur. In his suicide note, Anup said that he was going through mental agony due to the sexual harassment by second-year students of the Institute of Engineering and Technology, Lucknow, in the name of ragging.

1996

- Pon Navarasu was murdered by senior student John David. David, a second year medical student, brutally murdered Navarasu, a first year MBBS student of Muthaiah Medical College, Annamalai University, Chidambaram and son of former Madras University vice-chancellor P K Ponnusamy, during a ragging session in his (John David's) hostel room on the night of 6 November 1996. Naavarasu had refused to submit to... a humiliating demand, in the name of ragging, to lick the soles of his chappals. The 19-year old senior used his karate skills to fatally attack Naavarasu. He then dismembered the body, cut it into pieces with surgical instruments and dispensed with them in different parts of the state..."
- According to data, boys are more victims of ragging than girl students. In UP, out of 398 victims, 374 were boys while remaining 24 were girls. In West Bengal, 202 victims were boys while 31 were girls. In Odisha, 173 victims were boys while 20 were girls; in Maharashtra, it was 87 boys and 11 girls; in Delhi, 40 victims were boys while six were girls. So far, 3,89,342 students (seniors and freshers) have submitted affidavits which are available on the Central government's anti-ragging web portal. Activists from Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE), a non-profit organisation closely working with the anti-ragging helpline, say the number of affidavits would touch 5-lakh mark by the end of academic session 2013-14. The overall complaint status as recorded by the Anti-Ragging Helpline between April 17, 2012 and June 28, 2013.

The total number of complaints received during this period was 459, of which 324 have been disposed of. Eleven complaints are active in call centre while four are active in the monitoring agency (Aman Satya Kachroo Trust). The number of complaints active in the UGC is 120. Ninety three out of 459 ragging victims belonged to UP. The data shows that 65 of 93 complaints have been closed. While 25 complaints are active in UGC, one complaint is active in the monitoring agency and two in the call centre. Experts cite two reasons for high number of ragging cases in UP. "Firstly, UP has the maximum number of institutions to

suffice high population of students. Secondly, it shows an increased awareness among the students," said SAVE spokesperson Kushal Banerjee. Another SAVE activist Gaurav Singhal said, "Be it sexual abuse, harassment or physical assault, the complaints keep pouring. While half of the ragging cases are kept under wraps, the remaining are discouraged by the UGC's anti-ragging helpline." Singhal added that engineering institutions, mostly private and medical colleges, report maximum ragging cases. In UP, technical university is the hub of ragging incidents.

UGC started a 24-hour helpline in 2009 on the direction of the Supreme Court. Every complaint lodged with the helpline is pursued till justice is secured. But RTI queries reveal that only 1% of the actual number of cases are registered with the helpline because students are too scared to complain, fearing a backlash from seniors. "It has been noticed that the helpline does not register any anonymous complaint," said an activist.