



A Study of Ragging: Ragging is not stopping due to the authorities concerned of the institutions specially, for the chairman of the department and hall provosts in Bangladesh

Ashikujaman Syed

*Bioinformatics Research Lab, Center for Research Innovation and Development (CRID); Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Corresponding Author: Ashikujaman Syed*

Date of Submission: 27-12-2024

Date of Acceptance: 06-01-2025

Abstract:

Every university administration has a zero tolerance policy against ragging. Teachers' associations also speak against this but of no use. There are few causes of ragging one of the most important causes of ragging in Bangladesh is responsible institutional authorities. In this article, we discuss how ragging is not prevented due to educational institution's authorities responsibilities.

Keywords: Introduction, Ragging, Description, Guestroom culture, Classroom, Mental stress, Conclusion.

I. Introduction

Ragging involves abuse, humiliation, or harassment of new entrants or junior students by the senior students. It often takes a malignant form wherein the newcomers may be subjected to psychological or physical torture as well as mental torture.

II. Description

Every year around the month of January-February, many people of this country have to spend their days in an unknown anxiety. Because it is at this time that the first year classes of most public and private universities start every year. But what emerges as the biggest fear for freshers is not the curriculum, teachers or extracurricular but ragging. Every year we get at least one or two such news items where it is seen that the first year students have been subjected to a lot of harassment in the name of ragging by the seniors of the university.

When new batch students come to a university, senior students start ragging in the name of fun and teaching manners. Instead of welcoming new students, some senior students start teaching them the so-called university etiquette.

Sometimes, they make juniors sing and dance in public. It is quite humiliating and annoying for new students. According to senior students, these are quite normal. They don't want to treat these acts as crimes. It is very easy for them. And, they feel that junior students should put up with such unhealthy practices and harassment of their seniors. In fact, they are reluctant to admit their guilt. According to them these are not ragging, instead such nonsense activities will increase junior-senior bonding. They think the murder of AbrarFahad can be an example of ragging, but the crimes that they do are not ragging.

2.2. Guestroom culture:

In the residential halls, the juniors are kept aside to greet the seniors. To tell the truth, seniors try all kinds of ways to force respect from juniors. The greeting of the juniors is a fearful greeting. In the first case the juniors do not know all the seniors. Juniors are mentally tortured for not giving salaam by mistake.

Generally guest room culture and big ragging incidents start in late night or midnight and goes until dawn. When the surroundings are quiet, then this 'Maha Karma' begins. No one around can know what happens to the victims' heart or skin. Even if someone notices it, they don't have the courage to make a noise. The university authorities assign the responsibility of the teachers to manage the halls.

The team consists of House Tutors and Wardens headed by the Principal. But in the universities that have political practices, their activities are not noted in reality. The management of the hall is not done by the board of directors, but by the rulers. These teachers are aware of the guestroom culture but remain silent; because, at present, such posts are also given to teachers from the party circle. Many of whom are noticed to legitimize the misdeeds. Common students



sometimes complain against the authorities, but they are seen to make light of the matter.

As part of routine duties, teachers visit the fresher in the common room of the hall. But the new students don't dare to tell what kind of behaviour has been meted out to them a little while ago. Before the teachers came, these students were warned by the authorities not to make any complaint. After this, who dares to complain against the big 'brothers'?

2.3. Ragging in the classrooms:

Senior students come to the classes of the respective departments and torture juniors mentally and physically for hours. Each one was tortured for ten to twenty minutes in the name of teaching manners to the junior. They prove that they themselves have not learned anything about manners and etiquette; they have learned to be uncivilized and inhuman forgetting why they have come to institutes of higher learning.

The chairman of that department and other teachers live nearby. Fresh students are oppressed like this, about which they are fully aware. But juniors are not allowed to come even after the specified time. Even if a student's parent comes and waits in the campus, the student is not allowed to meet them.

2.4. Teaching manners everywhere!

Besides guestroom and classroom, torture also being continued in anywhere in the campus, in the tea stall or in the varsity bus. Seems the seniors are highly enthusiastic to humiliate and rag in the name of learning manners.

III. The actual narrative of ragging and its justice

In orientation programmes, the vice chancellor (VC) of the university assures the students as well as their parents that their children are safe in the university. Vice chancellor will be the new guardian of the students, he will take care of his 'childlike' students. Parents are reassured. Students feel safe. But when ragging happens and a student seeks justice from the VC, the scenario changes. Then the student stood in the position of the accused by the chairman of the department or the hall provost while the victim student deserves highest support. Then the authority (chairman of the department or the hall provost) questions the student, why did he/she go to the VC for justice? Why did the victim not inform the chairman first? Then it seems, the victim has committed greater sin by

seeking justice to the VC than that of his being ragged. But in most of the cases (not in all cases), the chairman of the department is unable to achieve enough trust of the student that they will get proper justice or evaluation of ragging from the departmental authority. When a chairman says, 'ragging is just fun and if you take it as fun then everything is okay in the department and if you are unable to take it as fun then you can inform me'. Ridiculous! When a chairman of a department possesses such an outlook regarding ragging, how will a student be interested in seeking justice from him? According to this type of department authority, seeking justice for ragging by a student or going to the proctor office or the VC is the discredit of the department. What a mockery about an offense like ragging!

University authorities say they are against ragging only in lectures. But they do not monitor the ragging situation in the university, only say that they would see the matter if they get a complaint.

4.1. Struggle for justice and the mental pressure

It is unbelievable how much mental stress, pressure, depression, and pain a victim has to go through just to seek justice for ragging, as if seeking justice was a crime or ragging was no longer a crime. After all these, the department authority tries conciliation without proper justice or even settlement through money or without taking any recognizance from the ragers. Moreover, department authorities discourage the victim to go to the proctor office or any extended action. Then they become sympathisers of the ragers. The victim becomes the one man army who really struggles for justice.

4.2. Mental stress of the ragging victim

Then in the post-trial of ragging, the batch mates, seniors isolate the victim student which is 'boycott' according to their language. Most of the time, they try to remind the victim student that he/she is responsible for bad relationships among the running senior batches, responsible for bad results of the batch. Even the teachers remind that the communication of the victim's batch is not good with the other senior batches. Ragers and their sympathisers do cyber bullying by humiliating the victim student. Batchmates, seniors, even teachers make the victims' life hell. No one says anything about the mental health of the victim. But it is the most significant part. The university authorities and their system focus on only the justice of ragging, not the mental stress of the victim student. But in



Bangladesh a victim student of ragging has to tolerate immense mental stress, pressure, depression as well as ignominy. And the trauma that he/she has to bear the whole university life.

5.1.Result:

As a result, some become mentally ill; some even start thinking of committing suicide out of humiliation. And the biggest thing is that the colourful dreams that have been cut in the mind about studying in the university for a long time, they fly away in one breath. Most of the students are familiar with the mental illness called depression after entering the university. A university is supposed to be a free platform for students to express themselves, but once they come here, they have to be imprisoned in a kind of mental slavery.

Conflicts of interest:

I am dedicating this article who have fought against ragging and faced mental harassment due to the irresponsibilities of the authorities concerned like chairman of the department, hall provost or proctor.

Conclusion:

Department authority of the university, specially chairman of the department and in the residential hall it's the hall provost are mainly responsible for injustice of ragging. The anti-ragging seminars should not be for the students, but for the teachers also. Along with students, teachers need counselling, as many of them support ragging in mind. Last but not the least, justice for ragging is not the last responsibility of the authority, they have to arrange psychiatrist counselling for the victim student to give him/her mental support. Otherwise, it will have a long lasting ill-effect on the victim students.

References:

- [1]. Only Expulsion from Halls Will Never Stop Ragging; Ashikujaman Syed, The Daily Sun Bangladesh, January 30, 2023.
- [2]. Ragging should be banned; Ashikujaman Syed, The Daily Financial Express Bangladesh, February 23, 2023.