

Awareness on Laws Relating to Ragging Among Undergraduate Science Students in Mangaluru City

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Abstract- Ragging is a practice where new students are subjected to harassment, abuse, or humiliation by their seniors in educational institutions. This phenomenon, though prevalent worldwide, is particularly notable in South Asian countries, including India. Ragging can range from mild forms of teasing to severe instances of physical and psychological abuse, sometimes leading to tragic consequences such as suicide. To address this issue, in India various laws and regulations have been established. For example, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and other state authorities have introduced strict anti-ragging measures.

After the analysis of secondary data about the ragging cases, it is clear that there is a need to diminish ragging to lead a joyful student life and to safeguard the youths. Hence, the researcher had planned to take up a study with the objective to ascertain the awareness on laws, to find out the necessity of improvement in laws, to spread awareness. This study aims to measure students' knowledge of these laws, assess the sources from which they obtain this information. The Undergraduate science students of Mangaluru city are respondents for this study and the data was collected through interview method. Simple random technique is adopted for the selection of sample. The present study focuses on the students' perception about the role of laws in preventing ragging in the city of Mangaluru which would also give an insight to the various stakeholders of Law enforcement agencies to work together to reduce the ragging problems in the society. This study emphasizes on need of creating more awareness about anti-ragging laws and provisions of support system for the victims.

Keywords: Ragging, Awareness, Anti-ragging laws, Punishment.

INTRODUCTION

The educational life of a student is a transformative journey marked by diverse experiences. From the early

years of primary education to the advanced stages of higher learning, students navigate through a dynamic landscape of academic challenges and personal growth. The educational life of students is marked by intellectual growth, personal development, and the acquisition of skills necessary for future endeavours. However, amidst the pursuit of knowledge and personal evolution, a dark shadow often looms over the college experience — the menace of ragging.

Ragging, in the context of educational institutions, refers to the act of subjecting newcomers to various forms of harassment, both physical and psychological. This issue has plagued campuses for years, posing a serious threat to the well-being and mental health of students. Ragging is a disturbing reality in the higher education system of our country. Despite the fact that over the years ragging has claimed hundreds of innocent lives and has ruined careers of thousands of bright students, the practice is still perceived by many as a way of 'familiarization' and an 'initiation into the real world' for young college-going students.

In common parlance, ragging means playing practical jokes on somebody or teaching someone a lesson. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India perhaps has given a more comprehensive meaning of ragging as "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 indiscipline activities which cause or are likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to 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 student."

To address this issue, in India various laws and regulations have been established. For example, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and other state authorities have introduced strict anti-ragging measures. These regulations aim to create a safer and more supportive atmosphere within academic institutions by prohibiting any form of ragging and establishing mechanisms for reporting and addressing incidents. However, the effectiveness of these measures heavily depends on the awareness and understanding of the legal framework among the student population.

A study conducted by *Jaya V Suryawanshi et al* on the topic 'Awareness and perception about ragging amongst medical undergraduate students: a cross-sectional study' which was aimed to assess the perception about ragging among undergraduate MBBS students found that most of the male and female participants were unaware of fact that formal introduction is a type of ragging and majority of male and female students were unaware of any legal action. According to the anti-ragging cell, there were 511 cases of ragging reported across the country in 2023. The All India Survey on Higher Education (2013-14), by University Grants Commission (UGC) on the directions of Supreme Court has found the total enrolment in higher education to be around 32.3 million. Among them 40 percent students in colleges across India faced some kind of ragging, only 8.6 per cent reported the incidents. Hence there is a need of assessing the level of awareness on laws relating to ragging. This study intends to provide insights into the current state of awareness among science undergraduates.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process and techniques used by researchers to conduct a study or investigation. The present study has been taken up with following objectives

- To ascertain the awareness on laws relating to ragging among respondents.

- To assess the sources spreading the awareness on laws relating to ragging among the respondents.
- To spread the awareness on laws relating to ragging among respondents.

The present study is descriptive research design conducted in Mangaluru city. The primary data was collected from Undergraduate Science students who are aged between 18 to 21 years using pre-planned interview schedule consisting of 23 open ended questions. After obtaining the consent from the respondents the researcher collected the data through face to face verbal communication. Further, the collected data has been scrutinized and code book has been drawn. Altogether, 43 variables have been found, of which 9 variables are used for the present study. Thereafter, the coded information has been entered into computer using SPSS Software. The coded data has been presented in bi-variant tables for the analysis.

DATA INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using logical and methodical procedures and presenting an impartial inference. The data from bi-variant tables has been cross-related for interpretation.

1. Gender of the Respondents in relation to their Awareness of Anti-Ragging Committee in the College

An Anti-Ragging Committee in colleges is a regulatory body mandated by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in India and similar regulatory bodies in other countries. Its primary objective is to prevent and address incidents of ragging within educational institutions, particularly colleges and universities. The committee comprises faculty members, administrative staff, student representatives, and sometimes external stakeholders such as local authorities or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The students of different gender might face ragging in different forms and different instances, the awareness of Anti-ragging committee in the college enables them to timely report the incidents hence the researcher compared the gender of the respondents and awareness of Anti-Ragging committee in the college.

Table No. 1: Gender of the Respondents in relation to their Awareness of Anti-Ragging Committee in the College

			Awareness of Anti-Ragging Committee in the College		Total
			Aware	Not Aware	
Gender	Male	Count	24	10	34

	Female	% of Total	24.00%	10.00%	34.00%
		Count	53	13	66
		% of Total	53.00%	13.00%	66.00%
Total		Count	77	23	100
		% of Total	77.00%	23.00%	100.00%

The data shown in Table No.1 presents an overview of awareness about the Anti-Ragging Committee among students in relation to their Gender. Out of the total student population of 100, 77% are aware of the committee, while 23% are not. When broken down by gender, 24 out of 34 male students (70.59%) are aware of the committee, whereas 10 (29.41%) are not. For female students, 53 out of 66 (80.30%) are aware, and 13 (19.70%) are not. This indicates that a higher proportion of female students are informed about the committee compared to their male counterparts. The data highlights a significant overall awareness level, but also suggests that awareness efforts might need to be more targeted towards male students to address the observed gender disparity.

2. Residence of the respondents in relation to their Awareness of National Anti-Ragging Helpline

The National Anti-Ragging Helpline is a free phone service in India (1800-180-5522) that helps students

Table No. 2: Residence of the respondents in relation to their Awareness of National Anti-Ragging Helpline

			Awareness of National Anti-Ragging Helpline 1800-180-5522					Total
			Not Aware	Posters	Anti-Ragging Cell	Internet	Class	
Residence	Home	Count	40	5	1	6	3	55
		% of Total	40.0%	5.0%	1.0%	6.0%	3.0%	55.0%
	Hostel	Count	24	1	1	2	1	29
		% of Total	24.0%	1.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	29.0%
	Paying - Guest	Count	14	1	1	0	0	16
		% of Total	14.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.0%
Total		Count	78	7	3	8	4	100
		% of Total	78.0%	7.0%	3.0%	8.0%	4.0%	100.0%

The data shown in Table No. 2 depicts the overview of awareness regarding the National Anti-Ragging Helpline in relation to their residence. Out of a total of 100 students, 78% are not aware of the helpline, while the remaining 22% have some level of awareness. Among students living at home, 40 out of 55 (72.73%) are not aware of the helpline, with a small fraction having seen it on posters (9.09%), learned about it through the Anti-Ragging Cell (1.82%) and discovered

who are being bullied or harassed in schools or colleges. The helpline was created as part of the efforts by the Government of India, specifically the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), to address the serious issue of ragging in educational institutions. This helpline operates 24/7, providing a confidential and safe platform for students to report incidents of ragging and seek assistance. It works in collaboration with educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, and anti-ragging cells to effectively tackle ragging. Residence refers to a place where someone lives or stays. For this study the residence was classified into Own House, Hostel and Paying-Guests. Students staying in different type of residences have access to different types of resources. Awareness on this helpline can enable them timely reporting of incidents of ragging from their place of residence.

it through the internet (10.90%). Only 3 of them are aware from class discussions. For hostel residents, 24 out of 29 (82.76%) are not aware, with minimal awareness from posters, the Anti-Ragging Cell, or class (each contributing 3.45 – 6.9%). Paying guests show the lowest awareness, with 14 respondents out of 16 (87.5%) not knowing about the helpline, and similar low levels of awareness from other sources. Overall, the majority of students across all residence

		Awareness on Anti-Ragging laws or acts					Total	
		Indian Penal Code	Karnataka Education Act	Indian Penal Code and Karnataka Education Act	UGC Regulations on Curbing the menace of Ragging	Not Aware		
Gender	Male	Count	4	4	0	4	22	34
		% of Total	4.00%	4.00%	0.00%	4.00%	22.00%	34.00%
	Female	Count	7	12	1	15	31	66
		% of Total	7.00%	12.00%	1.00%	15.00%	31.00%	66.00%
Total		Count	11	16	1	19	53	100
		% of Total	11.00%	16.00%	1.00%	19.00%	53.00%	100.00%

types lack awareness of the helpline, indicating a need for improved communication and outreach strategies to increase its visibility and effectiveness.

3. Gender of the respondents in relation to their Awareness on Anti-Ragging Laws or Acts

In India, there are several laws and regulations aimed at preventing ragging. One of the key laws is the "UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009," issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC). This regulation provides guidelines for preventing and combating ragging in universities and colleges across India. Some Sections of Indian Penal Code – 1860 deal with the definition and punishments of certain acts involved in ragging. Focusing on Karnataka, The section 116 of Karnataka Education Act – 1983 deals with the penalty for ragging. Additionally, the Supreme Court of India has issued directives regarding ragging, emphasizing its zero-tolerance policy. The Knowledge on the Laws or Acts concerning about crimes might vary with the gender of people. The awareness on Anti-Ragging Laws or Acts can make students to identify and report the incidents of ragging. To assess their awareness the researcher compared the gender of respondents and Awareness on anti-Ragging laws / Acts.

Table No. 3: Gender of the respondents in relation to their Awareness on Anti-Ragging Laws or Acts
The data shown in Table No.3 reveals awareness of various anti-ragging laws and regulations in relation to their gender. Among a total of 100 students, 53% are not aware of any anti-ragging laws or acts. Of those who are aware, 19% familiar with the UGC

Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging, 11% know about the Indian Penal Code related to anti-ragging, 16% are familiar with the Karnataka Education Act, and only 1% are aware of both the Indian Penal Code and the Karnataka Education Act. Breaking this down by gender, 22 out of 34 male students (64.70%) and 31 out of 66 female students (46.96%) are not aware of these laws. Awareness is notably low overall, with minimal recognition of specific regulations among both genders. This suggests a significant gap in knowledge about anti-ragging measures, indicating the need for enhanced educational efforts to improve students' understanding of these important regulations.

4. Locality of the respondents in relation to their Awareness on Section 116 of Karnataka Education Act – 1983

Section 116 of the Karnataka Education Act, 1983, is a legislative provision aimed at addressing the issue of ragging within educational institutions in the state of Karnataka, India. The section specifically focuses on preventing and prohibiting ragging. It with Penalty for Ragging i.e. – “(i) No person who is a student in an educational institution including an institution under the direct management of the university or of the central Government shall commit ragging. (ii) Any person who contravenes sub-section (i) shall on conviction be punished with imprisonment for a term

which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees or with both”. A locality refers to a specific area or neighbourhood within a larger geographical region, typically characterized by distinct features such as its physical environment,

demographics, socio-economic status, and community dynamics. The researcher has divided the locality into three areas namely Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban areas.

Table No.4: Locality of the respondents in relation to their Awareness on Section 116 of Karnataka Education Act – 1983

			Awareness on Section 116 of Karnataka Education Act – 1983		Total
			Not Aware	Aware	
Locality	Rural	Count	49	2	51
		% of Total	49.0%	2.0%	51.0%
	Semi - Urban	Count	19	10	29
		% of Total	19.0%	10.0%	29.0%
	Urban	Count	17	3	20
		% of Total	17.0%	3.0%	20.0%
Total		Count	85	15	100
		% of Total	85.0%	15.0%	100.0%

The data shown in Table No.4 illustrates the awareness levels of Section 116 of the Karnataka Education Act – 1983 among the respondents in relation to their localities. Out of 100 students surveyed, 85% are not aware of Section-116, while 15% are aware of it. Breaking this down by locality, the highest proportion of unawareness is found in rural areas, where 49 out of 51 students (96.07%) are not familiar with this section of the Act. In contrast, only 2 students from rural areas (3.92%) are aware of it. In semi-urban areas, 19 out of 29 students (65.52%) lack awareness, while 10 students (34.48%) are aware. Urban areas also show the lower levels of awareness, with 17 out of 20 students (85%) not aware of Section 116, and only 3 students (15%) aware of it. Overall, the data indicates a significant lack of awareness across all localities. This suggests a need for targeted educational initiatives to increase awareness of Section 116 of the Karnataka Education Act – 1983.

5. Age of the Respondents in relation to their Awareness of ‘UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions – 2009’ regulations

The UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions - 2009 are a set of guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to address the issue of ragging in colleges and universities. One of the key pillars of the regulations is the establishment of a zero-tolerance policy towards ragging. It prohibits any form of ragging within educational institutions. The Knowledge on the Laws or Acts concerning about crimes might vary with the age of people. Hence the researcher compared the age of respondents and awareness of ‘UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions – 2009’ regulations.

Table No. 5: Age of the Respondents in relation to their Awareness of ‘UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions – 2009’ regulations

		Awareness of ‘ UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions – 2009’				Total	
		Not Aware	Internet	Anti-Ragging Committee	From Teachers		
Age	18	Count	18	1	2	1	22
		% of Total	18.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	22.0%

19	Count	24	5	1	1	31
	% of Total	24.0%	5.0%	1.0%	1.0%	31.0%
20	Count	26	1	2	1	30
	% of Total	26.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	30.0%
21	Count	13	0	2	2	17
	% of Total	13.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	17.0%
Total	Count	81	7	7	5	100
	% of Total	81.0%	7.0%	7.0%	5.0%	100.0%

The data shown in Table No.5 reveals the awareness of the UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational institutions – 2009 among respondents in relation to their age. A substantial 81% of students are unaware of these regulations. Among those who are aware, information is predominantly sourced from informal channels. Specifically, only 7% of students have learned about the regulations through the internet, another 7% have gained awareness via anti-ragging committee, and just 5% have been informed by their teachers. When breaking down the awareness by age, among Eighteen year olds 18 of them out of 22 (81.81%) are unaware of the regulation whereas among Nineteen year olds 24 respondents out of 31 (77.41%), among Twenty years old respondents 26 out of 30 (86.66%) and among Twenty One years old respondents 13 out of 17 (76.47%) are not aware of this regulation. In summary, the data highlights a general lack of awareness among students about this anti-ragging regulations, with a small proportion of students receiving information from formal sources.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The study was focused on the awareness on laws relating to ragging among undergraduate science students in Mangaluru city. Following are the major findings of the study:

- A significant number (23%) of respondents are not aware of the Anti-Ragging Committee in their institution irrespective of their Gender
- 53 percent of the respondents are not aware of any Anti-Ragging Laws or Acts irrespective of their Gender.
- 78 percent of the respondents are Not aware of the National Anti-Ragging Helpline irrespective of their residence.

- Among the students who are aware of National Anti-Ragging Helpline 08 percent of them came to know through the Internet.
- 85 percent of the students are Not aware of the Section 116 of Karnataka Education Act – 1983 irrespective of their Locality.
- The students residing in Rural areas have lowest level of awareness (3.92%) on Section 116 of Karnataka Education Act – 1983.
- 81 percent of the respondents are not aware of ‘UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions – 2009’ regulations irrespective of their Age.
- Internet and Anti-Ragging Committee are found to be major contributors (7% each) for spreading awareness on ‘UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions – 2009’

SUGGESTIONS

The present study indicates that there must be increase efforts to raise awareness about the existence of ragging, its various forms, and the associated laws and regulations. The utilization of various modes such as posters, seminars, workshops, and social media platforms to spread the information about anti-ragging measures is important. The steps to ensure that students are informed about the presence and functions of Anti-Ragging Committees within their institution and conducting of regular orientation sessions and distributing of informational materials to educate students about the roles and responsibilities of these committees need to be taken.

The students need to be made aware on relevant anti-ragging laws and acts, such as the Karnataka Education Act - 1983 and the UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of ragging in higher educational institutions - 2009. There need to be efforts to increase

awareness about national anti-ragging helplines through targeted communication strategies and encouraging students to utilize helplines for reporting incidents of ragging anonymously and to seek for assistance. Proper measures need to be taken to encourage active student participation in anti-ragging campaigns and initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights concerning gaps in awareness and understanding of ragging among college students. Despite a significant portion reporting experiences with ragging, a notable percentage remains unaware of anti-ragging committees, laws, and helplines. Lack of knowledge about legal provisions and institutional mechanisms indicates the need for intensified awareness campaigns. The findings suggest the importance of enhancing education on anti-ragging laws, promoting the role of anti-ragging committees, and increasing accessibility to support services. Institutions must prioritize creating a safe and inclusive environment through proactive measures and institutional support. By addressing these deficiencies and promoting a culture of zero-tolerance towards ragging, colleges can effectively combat this menace and ensure the well-being of all students.

In conclusion, preventing ragging requires a proactive and collaborative approach involving education, enforcement, support services, and the promotion of positive campus culture. By implementing comprehensive preventive measures, educational institutions can create safe and nurturing environments where all students can thrive.

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