

Stop! say no to ragging



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Monjib Mochahari 12 March 2009 14243 views

He would have saved many lives. He would certainly have given smiles to the sufferings. But it's very unfortunate, on Sunday evening; Amann Kuchroo, 19 a first year medical students in Dr. Rajendra Prasad Medical College, Tanda, Himachal Pradesh was allegedly ragged to death by four seniors students. It's deeply inconsolable to the Amann's family that they lost their only son in such an inhuman manner.

In the west it's the frequent campus shoot-outs, whereas in India, it's certainly the ceremonial and criminal raggings in academic institutions that turn students' lives into nightmare. Though ragging has been strictly banned in some colleges and universities in India, but how far the ban is effective appears clear on the campuses, hostels and in the media. Amit Sahai was a student of NIT Jalandhar, Punjab and he committed suicide on October 11, 2005, by jumping in front of a speeding train. He blamed nine senior students of NIT Jalandhar in his suicide note for having had mercilessly ragged him. Durgesh Shukla hanged himself from a ceiling fan on September 18 2007. He blamed seniors in his suicide note.

On August, 2003, an electrical engineering student of IIT Delhi ran away from his hostel after he was force to perform "sexual acts" by his seniors. The victim returned only after the seniors were suspended for a

semester. In the same year, a student of Chemistry in Hindu College was asked to strip and walk in the corridor of the college hostel. Similarly, on August, 2006 a first year student of Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture was allegedly ragged by two of his seniors in the boy's hostel in Maharani Bagh. Worst still, on October, 2007 a first year student of St. Stephen's College, Delhi received burn injuries on his hands and knees after four senior allegedly lit a matchstick after spraying deodorant on his body.

A report from 2007 highlights 42 instances of physical injury, and reports on ten deaths purportedly the result of ragging. In the 2007 session, 7 ragging deaths have been reported. Ragging has reportedly caused at least 30-31 deaths in the last 7 years; all of which are those of freshers. C. Lalitha, the mother of Mukesh, ended her life due to the controversy surrounding the sexual abuse of her son during ragging on September 2006 in Andhra Pradesh.

These incidents are enough to prove that freshers are subject to regular and undeterred criminal ragging, physical bashing and in some case even sexual manhandling. Analytically, ragging involves gross violations of human rights. The seniors commonly torture the innocent juniors and by this those seniors get some kind of sadistic pleasures. Truly speaking the nature of ragging in most of the hostels in India may be as severe as what we know about the infamous Abu Ghraib prison of Iraq. The Supreme Court of India in its judgment on February 11, 2009 termed ragging as: "It is a form of systematic and sustained physical, mental and sexual abuse of fresh students at a college, university or any other educational institution at the hands of senior students of the same institution and sometimes, even outsiders".

Though ragging has ruined the lives of many, resistance against it has grown up only recently. With the situation of ragging worsening yearly,

there is an urgent need for spontaneous anti-ragging movement to stop such an inhuman activities. 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. India's first and only registered Anti Ragging NGO, Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE) has supported that ragging is also widely and dangerously prevalent in many colleges and institutions, mainly in the hostels. Online groups like Coalition to Uproot Ragging from India (CURE), Stopragging and No Ragging Foundation became the major Anti Ragging groups on the Internet. However, the success of these anti-ragging movements far from the reality. The need of the hour is that who ever engages in any form of ragging – either physical, mental or sexual must made to pay for life for the crime he or she has ever committed in the campus. Unless and until such an exemplary punishment is given, raggings will continue to break the headlines.

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